

Department of Anthropology

Dear Andreas,

Greetings from the [Department of Anthropology](#), at Stony Brook University!

Winter is finally gone on Long Island. And with the spring starting I am hopeful that not only the days are becoming longer and brighter, but life itself will return to (a new) normal soon. There are plans for socially distant graduation ceremonies in May, exclusively for our graduating students. And in the fall, we may be able to fully return to campus. I think I speak for us all in that we grieve with those who lost loved ones and thank those who risk their life every day to get us all through this pandemic. And I am grateful to our students, staff and faculty, who against all odds continue with their learning, teaching, service and research. This newsletter should give you a small glimpse of this work.



As always, please send us your updates so we can include them on our forthcoming Alumni News page!

Stay safe and healthy,

Andreas Koenig, Professor and Chair

Alumni Spotlight: Meet two of our recent Graduates

Dana De Sando '20, Tayla Straub '20

Dana S. De Sando and Tayla R. Straub, two of our December 2020 Graduates, were featured on the CAS webpage. Over the last years, both Tayla and Dana were driving forces in our Undergraduate Anthropology Society (UAS): Tayla as President and Dana as Vice-President. Despite the pandemic, the UAS was very active organizing a series of socially distant meetings and zoom discussions. Moreover, thanks to support from USG the undergraduate lounge received a deep cleaning and new furniture. Thanks to the new E-board for picking up after winter graduation and creating a marvelous new lounge (which waits for students to return in the fall).



[Learn more about Dana here >](#)

[Learn more about Tayla here >](#)

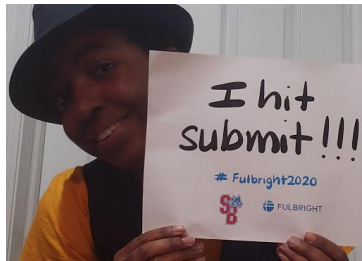
Alumni Spotlight: They hit submit!

Durr-E-Ajam Riaz '20, Jhinelle Walker '20

In case you missed it: Stony Brook University is a top producer of [Fulbright U.S. Student Program recipients](#) and our (former) students are part of this success story.

Approximately 50 undergraduate and graduate students from SBU have applied in this cycle and this includes our Spring 2020 graduates Durr-E-

Ajam Riaz (double major in Anthropology, Human Evolutionary Biology) and Jhinelle J. Walker (pictured on the right; major in Anthropology, minor in Creative Writing, Honor's College). We keep our fingers crossed!



Graduate Student Spotlight

Amanda Rowe

Amanda K. Rowe, who is a doctoral candidate in our IDPAS Program, is slated to study the community dynamics of nocturnal lemurs in Southwest Madagascar (advised by Pat Wright and Andreas Koenig). Among other methods she will use DNA metabarcoding to describe the diet of these hard to study animals. Amanda has been highly successful in securing grant funding for her future work. In addition to support through an [NSF DDRIG](#), she received an award from the Leakey Foundation and from the [2020 Fulbright U.S. Student Program](#).



Because of the COVID pandemic Amanda's departure was delayed for one year, and she had to apply again in the current Fulbright competition. After she made it again into the second round, she learned that she can use her 2020 award for her work starting this summer.

[Learn more about Amanda's Fulbright award >](#)

Faculty Spotlight

Amy Lu

Amy Lu (@sbululab) and her colleagues kept track of the age at maturity for 80 female geladas over 14 years of research in the highlands of Ethiopia, the only place geladas are found in nature. Their results unexpectedly revealed that immature females delay reproductive maturation when living with their fathers but accelerate maturation immediately after exposure to a new adult male. Thus, female gelada development appears particularly sensitive to male cues - a phenomenon that has thus far, only been well-demonstrated in rodents and some New World primates.



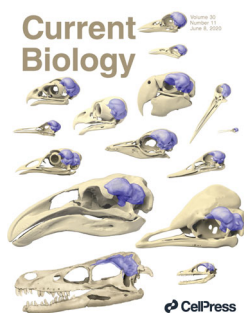
[Read more about this story here >](#)

Reference: Lu A, Feder JA, Snyder-Mackler N, Bergman TJ, Beehner JC 2020. Male-Mediated Maturation in Wild Geladas. *Current Biology* 31:P214-219. DOI:[10.1016/j.cub.2020.10.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2020.10.003).

Faculty Spotlight

Jeroen Smaers

Jeroen B. Smaers is senior author of a paper by a team of paleontologists and evolutionary biologists describing the results of research that used an exceptionally large dataset of brain volumes from dinosaurs, modern birds, and extinct birds such as the Great Auk to reconstruct avian brain evolution. Among other findings, published in the journal *Current Biology* they were able to demonstrate that prior to mass extinction at the end of the Cretaceous Period, birds and non-avian dinosaurs had similar relative brain sizes.



[Read more about this story here >](#)

Reference: Ksepka DT, Balanoff AM, Smith NA, ... Smaers JB. 2020. Tempo and Pattern of Avian Brain Size Evolution. *Current Biology* 30:P2026-2036.

DOI:[10.1016/j.cub.2020.03.060](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2020.03.060).

Faculty Awards

Patricia C. Wright

Patricia Wright, Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology and Herrnstein Professor of Conservation Biology, has been named recipient of the Wildlife Conservation Award by the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden.

[Read more about this story here >](#)



Richard E. Leakey

Richard E. Leakey, Professor of Anthropology and chair of the [Turkana Basin Institute](#), was recently inducted as an honorary fellow into the African Academy of Sciences (AAS).

[Read more about this story here >](#)

Resources for faculty and students support and strengthen the educational experience. The Department of Anthropology depends on our alumni and friends to expand field opportunities for our students and provide seed money for senior honors theses and summer research experiences.

Your generosity, whether it's the renewal of your support or the decision to give for the first time, allows us to do what we do best – innovative, creative research and teaching that's the hallmark of a great public research university. I hope you'll consider investing in our faculty and students by [making a gift today](#) or speaking with the College's Advancement Representative, Assistant Dean Hodan Hassan, hodan.hassan@stonybrook.edu, or (631) 632-6178.

Thank you!