



## A letter from Dean **Jeff Crane**



It is a hot and muggy day, the heat index in the triple digits deep in the Belize tropical rainforest while I and the howler monkeys in the tree above carefully observe an Anthropology alum in action. Raylene Borregos, also an employee of the Cultural Resources Facility within the Department of Anthropology, supervises a team of workers carefully excavating a Maya Temple Shrine three miles from the road in the rainforest. She bends to talk quietly to the Belizean men as they brush away dirt and stone, stands to take notes, and continues with her work. Around her faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and even I work carefully and steadily excavating and gathering the pot shards and other material as we engage in this exciting archeological research. Dr. Marisol Cortes-Rincon oversees this important excavation site and also co-directs the Programme for Belize Archaeology Project (PFBAP) and Field School in Belize serving multiple universities and hundreds of students.

Two weeks later I stand on a wind and rain-swept plateau in Northern Macedonia. To my

east stretches the battlefields where Philip V of Macedonia contested control of his kingdom with the expanding Romans and lost. To the south, the landscape of the Battle of Monisera lies concealed under farmland and roads. Beside me, Cal Poly Humboldt faculty, alum, staff, and students work with Macedonian archeologists and laborers to excavate a Roman and Macedonian building. Coins, pot shards, animal bones, lead ingots, loom weights and other items provide evidence for better understanding the history and culture of this region. Our students and alumni apply the skills they learned as students in careful excavation, analysis, and record keeping at this research site under the supervision of Nicolas Angeloff, Director of the Cultural Resources Facility.

In a bright and lively elementary school classroom in Kobylanka, Poland, Dr. Marissa Ramsier (Chair of Anthropology), Dr. Ariel Gruenthal-Rankin, and Katie Gaddis (all Humboldt alumni) conduct a day-long seminar on osteology, working with 4 groups of 4-5 students to learn how to identify bones and

*Photo Description (top): Dr. Marisol Cortes-Rincon with students excavating a Maya Temple Shrine in Belize.*



Photo (top): Anthropology students sifting through material excavated at the Cistercian cemetery site in Zelewo, Poland. Photo (bottom): Anthropology students excavating a burial at the cemetery site in Zelewo, Poland

handle them properly as they prepare for the excavation, analysis, and removal of a Cistercian cemetery dating back to the 13th through 15th centuries. At the field site of Żelewo, which sits atop a plateau overlooking a landscape of interconnected lakes and fields, Humboldt students spend the next several weeks working side-by-side with students and faculty from Humboldt, Poland, and beyond to salvage remains at risk from erosion and agricultural activity and prepare them for eventual reburial. The site tells not only the story of this medieval village, but stretches back millennia into the paleolithic, and so encounters with lithics, coins, pottery, and burials from hundreds and even thousands of years ago are interwoven throughout. Żelewo lies in the historical region south of the Baltic Sea known as Pomerania, and this project is part of a concerted effort to retell the story of the region and its people that was lost during World War II. Dr. Ramsier, Gruenthal-Rankin, and faculty from universities in Poland have been running field programs together successfully since 2014 and trained hundreds of students from Humboldt, Poland, and beyond.

Scattered across 3 countries on two continents, Cal Poly Humboldt students are participating in student-centered research with direct academic and cultural benefits that we would normally associate with a Tier 1 research university. Unlike such universities this program is accessible to all of our students, allowing them to learn in ways that are difficult in the classroom. Where in the lesson plan do you address the issue of spider monkeys on the attack or the beauty of a Eurasian skylark singing its ebullient song above you while helping to salvage a medieval cemetery? This is an authentic hands-on experience that allows students to apply classroom-gained knowledge to real-world work and analysis, helping them to grow intellectually and developmentally while also collecting a set of adventures and memories they will treasure for years.

**Discovery!!** Who does not thrill to that word? Our students are deeply integrated into the process and scholarship of discovery, thereby contributing to our understanding of Maya, Macedonian, Roman, and Polish history and culture.

We plan on providing more support for students, such as travel scholarships, to increase the number of students able to participate in these types of important, engaging opportunities. **Your support** makes this possible. If you would like to know more about our anthropology and archeology programs contact Dean Jeff Crane at [jlc241@humboldt.edu](mailto:jlc241@humboldt.edu) or Dr. Marissa Ramsier at [marissa.ramsier@humboldt.edu](mailto:marissa.ramsier@humboldt.edu).