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Digging into the Collection

January 31, 2018

Archaeological repositories have a constant flow of incoming collections containing a range of different artifacts, and typically a collection's common connection is the location in which the artifacts were found. The repository at Georgia Southern University accepts collections primarily from sites in Georgia, and cataloguing the University's collections is a daunting task on its own. However, Amanda Sexton (anthropology '18) has taken on the larger challenge of cataloguing collections from approximately twenty repositories in the southeast.

Sexton's research focuses on the repositories' means of choosing collections based on price. "I want to see the state of these repositories, which were surveyed in an archeological report in 2002, and their collections now that they've had more time to work with their budget and determine whether these prices will be sufficient. I also hope that another effect of this project will be that archaeologists will have an easier time finding a place to house the collections since this project will produce an updated list of the currently active facilities," she said.

She began working on this project with Dr. Matthew Compton. Initially, he needed volunteers to participate in the management of Georgia Southern University's collections. This work evolved into her current honors thesis: "Costs of Curation: A Comparative Analysis of the Southeastern United States."

Sexton's research caught the eye of the Curation and Collections Committee of the Society of Historical Archeology (SHA).

"I am excited that Amanda has been able to make this connection with the Society for Historical Archaeology through her honors thesis project. It's unusual for an undergraduate student to have the opportunity to serve on a committee of a national organization such as the SHA. I think this is a great opportunity for her to share her research while also making connections with others in the field," Dr. Compton said.

The SHA team is working on a similar project, except on a larger scale. She attended the 2018 Society for Historical Archaeology Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, in order to meet and to network with SHA's team members.

"We discussed my plans for the future and how I might achieve my goals with my research. I was one of the youngest people at the conference, so the professionals were interested in me starting research at a young age. It was incredibly interesting to hear the ideas that they had for what this research could be used for. They would like to use the data we compile to make an interactive map that archaeologists could use to find the best place to house their collections," she said.

The 2018 Society for Historical Archaeology Conference allowed Sexton to gain hands-on experience and talk with professionals in her desired field of work. While at the conference, she attended several sessions and met with many professionals in her field. One session discussed the idea of material culture.

"One of the speakers had photos from some of the residents who live around a lighthouse that his team was excavating. Some of the artifacts that they had found could be seen in the photos," she said. "For me, it's always an incredible experience when I get to see someone interacting with a recovered artifact in a photo, because it gives life and depth to what I'm looking at. I think that feeling can get lost sometimes because we study people who have been deceased a long time."

Looking back, Sexton said she began her research like many other students, unsure about what subject she wanted to pursue. "Don't be afraid to start talking about research early. Even if you are not sure about what you would like to do, talk to people about it. They may know of opportunities that you would never hear about otherwise," she said. "Let people know what you are interested in so that they can help you. Our mentors are here for us and want to see us succeed."



Balancing Student and Parent Life

January 31, 2018

Parenthood is a feat like no other, but balancing academic life and parenthood may seem impossible to some. However, Paige Peterson (writing and linguistics '19) decided to create a resource for herself and other student-parents at Georgia Southern University. Peterson, a first time mother, started an organization reaching out to other parents on campus. She formed a Student-Parent organization designed to provide support to other fathers and mothers balancing parenting and school.

"When I was pregnant with my daughter, I was shocked by the lack of resources and support for student-parents on campus. Being a parent and a student is isolating, and I thought that there should be an easier way to find other students in similar positions. I wanted to start a group to make more friends as well as create a safe support system for other student-parents in a place free of judgment," she said.



The group meets bimonthly in the Russell Union. The Student-Parent group currently has five registered members. They bring their children, ranging from 11 to 18 months of age. This group benefits not only parents, but the children as well. At a young age, children need socialization. "With a student income, most of us cannot afford daycare. This group allows our kids to socialize with others around the same age. The kids are all very close! It is always fun watching them interact with each other," Peterson said.

Paige has been constantly confronted with opinions that tell her she cannot and will not succeed in both roles as student and mother. She wants to be an example that proves that you can.

"My advice to mothers on campus who want to be full-time students is pretty simple: Don't listen to the negative people. Many people believe you must choose between an education and a family. They couldn't be more wrong.

Like I said, it is a lot of work. With enough effort and prioritizing, anything is possible. Find a good support group and work hard. Don't forget to enjoy the little things with your child, because those matter just as much as grades. You can succeed in both school/career and family," she said.

Peterson's goal is to be an advocate for other mothers on campus. She uses her love of writing as a means to reach a large number of people.

"As a writer and a young mother, I have made it a goal to help spread my experience in order to help others. I share stories and experiences on my personal blog. I like to show people the raw side of motherhood as well as being a student. I don't sugar coat things, and share with honesty. In the end, I want to prove that you can be successful in multiple areas of life," she said.

Alumni Update: Alex Allmond Joins Ronald McDonald House Charities

January 31, 2018



Alex Allmond (child and family development '18) has already completed her honors thesis, and all that stands between her and graduation is completing a required internship. Her final semester, however, had much more in store for her, as she received a scholarship from the Trinity Hospital of Augusta Auxiliary Committee and an internship from the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Augusta (RMHC), which began this January.

The competitive scholarships are open to all students studying a field related to healthcare. "I applied last summer and was accepted after submitting my transcripts and information on my Child Life practicum. They awarded me \$3,000 which I can use in any way I want to further my education," she said.

Ronald McDonald Houses aim to directly improve children's health while providing a comfortable place where the family can stay. This charity believes that families must be together rather than separated during hard times.

During Allmond's internship, she will create a welcoming environment through specialized activities. She will also work on organizing fundraisers for the charity.

"Mainly, I will be working underneath the Volunteer Coordinator to offer support to the families of children who are receiving treatment at the Children's Hospital of Georgia through providing opportunities for normalization and family centered care. I will also assist in planning and implementing several charity and fundraising events during the course of my internship to maintain the ability of RMHC of Augusta to offer their services for families at little to no cost," she said.

Allmond will be able to implement her undergraduate studies in a professional setting. For four years, Allmond studied child and family development, and now she will be interacting with families first hand that are dealing with straining situations.

"Having a child who is hospitalized is a challenge for any family, and I am thrilled that I will get to work alongside an organization that has such a strong reputation as a beacon of hope for this population," she said.

The unique atmosphere of the Ronald McDonald House Charities will provide Allmond with real-life experiences that she can use in her future endeavors. She plans on returning to school next fall to pursue a graduate degree.

"After I complete my internship, I plan to attend graduate school the following fall semester and pursue my M.Ed/Ed.S in School Psychology," she said.