Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we near the holiday season, we members of the IMS have much for which to be thankful. With colder weather settling in, it is important to reflect on the support we received from the broader community for our research and from the exceptional people in our field sites whose expert knowledge is indispensable to our respective projects.

In this issue, the IMS faculty associates’ accomplishments are many and diverse, ranging from the publication of books, Marilyn Masson’s *Kukulkan’s Realm* and John Schwaller’s *The First Letter from New Spain*, the unparalleled success of the archaeologists (Masson, Verónica Pérez, and Robert Rosenswig) at winning National Science Foundation research grants, and the monumental indigenous language dictionaries by Aaron Broadwell and John Justeson. IMS faculty have presented presidential addresses, such as Louise Burkhart to the Society for Ethnohistory, and won book awards, as I, Walter Little, did for the Society for the Anthropology of Work’s Best Book for 2014. One aspect of our participation of our IMS faculty roles that brings us exceptional pride is the ongoing successes of the IMS student associates. This newsletter is primarily to let them shine, to share their research and achievements. The DeCormier recipients, Collin Gillenwater and Rebecca Mendelsohn, describe their research in Mexico, illustrating how important these awards in helping students make contributions to Mesoamerican scholarship. Likewise, the First Encounter Award, won this year by Isabelle Poitras, allows students new to Mesoamerica to gain valuable experience, upon which to develop competitive research grants.

The student associates describe a range of archaeological and ethnographic projects in Mesoamerica in the following pages, including Caroline Antonelli’s research in Mayapán, Jeff Bryant’s project in the Mixteca Alta, former DeCormier winners Mounia El Kotni’s and Crystal Sheedy’s respective projects in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas and Xocen, Yucatan, James Shuford’s research on Mexican Farmworkers, and the emerging projects of Emi Tomaszweski and Brynna Tussey. As you read the details of these students’ research projects, take note that they are also winning grants and presenting their research at professional conferences. Their brief profiles and research descriptions are a glimpse into the future of Mesoamerican studies.

Because one of the primary goals of the IMS is to support student’s research, I encourage you to make a donation to either the DeCormier Endowment or to the Mesoamerica Endowment; information on how to do this is at the end of this newsletter.

To close, I want to announce that Robert Rosenswig will take over as the IMS director, beginning Fall 2015. After four years, it is time for the IMS to have new leadership and an infusion of new ideas. He and I have begun the transition and the IMS will thrive under his direction. I have enjoyed my tenure as director and have been proud to work with some many talented colleagues, be they faculty or students.

Enjoy your holidays with friends and family, however you may choose to spend them.

Best wishes,
In April, members of the local Triqui community, the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies and the Department of Anthropology hosted a IMS’s first Day of Triqui Culture. The occasion recognized San Juan Copala Triquis’ distinct cultural contributions to the Albany area. There were traditional foods, a dance performance, and handcrafts. Dr. Aaron Broadwell, Triqui language consultant, Román López, and their students highlighted their research, especially a massive Copala Triqui-Spanish-English audiovisual dictionary. We thank the New York State Office for New Americans and the General Consulate of Mexico in New York for their participation. Photos of the event can be found on the IMS facebook page. We look forward to hosting this event again in April 2015.

In addition to the Day of Triqui culture, IMS plans to present a symposium in the spring of 2015, with the theme “Triqui Transnational Migration Experiences: Health, Labor, & Language.”

This fall, IMS student associates Ashley Bishop, Mounia El Kotni and IMS director Walter Little presented a poster: “A través de las Tramas del Tiempo: Conectando el Pasado al Presente con los Textiles en la Era Digital” and a paper: “Reforzando Vínculos Transnacionales: los Textiles Como Expresión de la Identidad Triqui en el Norte de Estados Unidos” for the 1er Encuentro de Textiles Mesoamericanos (TEXTIM I) at the Museo Textil de Oaxaca, Oct, 16-19. In addition to presenting, they learned ethnographic information about several unidentified pieces from our IMS textile collection.

In the Spring of 2014 IMS hosted three speakers. In February, Jeanne Simonelly (Wake Forest University) gave a lecture entitled “Zapatistas: Twenty Years of Building Community.” In April, IMS hosted both Doug Kennett (Penn State University) who spoke about “Development and Disintegration of Maya Political Systems in Response to Climate Change” and Leigh Binford (College of Staten Island), who gave a lecture entitled “Human Rights and Transnational Justice in El Mozote Massacre.”

In Fall 2014, the IMS hosted two speakers. In September, Bernardo Ramirez Rios (Skidmore College) presented his research on “Basketball and Community: Sporting Migrants in Oaxaca, Mexico and Los Angeles, California.” In November, IMS and the Center for Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean Studies hosted Christian DiCanio (Haskins Laboratories and University at Buffalo) as he presented his research on “The Sounds of Triqui: Quantitative Approached to Language Description and its Ramifications for Historical Change.”

In February 2015, the IMS is co-sponsoring a lecture with the Office of International Education, the Department of Latin American & Caribbean Studies, and the Department of Anthropology at the University at Albany. Luz Rivera will give a talk entitled “Maíz y el País: Political Violence in Mexico and Corn’s Lessons for Justice.”
After returning home from a 2014 Winter and Spring extended field season in Oaxaca and Yucatan, Mexico, Collin began defining an all too near dissertation project. His experiences in the field this last year were filled with familiar long days in the sun, evenings in the lab, and nights contemplating future projects as a graduate student and professional archaeologist in Mesoamerica. In a project led by UAlbany’s Dr. Veronica Perez and her husband, Antonio Martinez Tuñon, he was given a good deal of insight into some of the realities of dissertation work: namely, its requirement of his all-encompassing commitment. With this knowledge in mind, Collin spent much of the remainder of the Spring 2014 field season south of Merida, in Mexico’s Yucatan peninsula. It was here in sweltering heat and beautiful communities that he started to establish a strong foundation for his dissertation research.

Immediately upon arrival in early June 2014 back in the US, Collin began work for Southern New Hampshire University’s burgeoning online division. He hadn’t quite transitioned from the field to “regular” life, as archaeologists well know there is usually a much-needed mental transition when arriving home after a season in the sun. Although the transition from fieldwork to teaching was a bit jarring, it was also a fantastic learning experience. The entirety of Collin’s 2014 summer was spent teaching two accelerated courses in Cultural Anthropology, as well as assisting in the first and second phases of course development for the university’s new Anthropology undergraduate program.

Collin’s Fall semester of 2014 back at UAlbany has already been a total blur of excitement, planning, and research. After having been generously awarded a Teaching Assistantship with the university, Collin gained an entirely new perspective on what it means to sit center-stage and interact with a large auditorium of undergraduates waiting to soak in some of his assumed graduate-level knowledge. Thus far his experience has been equally exciting and frightening, but altogether a critical step in becoming an academic and mentor. Collin very much appreciates the patience of his advisor in his sometimes overly cautious lecture preparations as he learns to find balance between commanding a student audience and being a sincere listener.

For Collin, the near future holds a few more field experiences and conferences in its grasp. During the end of December 2014, he will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to review primary source material from the Library of Congress’ Kislak Collection of early colonial North, Central, and South American documents. This exciting opportunity will lay a bit of the ethnohistorical groundwork for his underlying dissertation questions. Shortly after the winter holidays, Collin will use his 2014 DeCormier grant to fly back down to the Yucatan on a brief trip in order to collect preliminary information on a potential site for his dissertation. His trip will conclude with a week’s worth of survey data of a selected sample of Early Colonial Yucatan villages to present ongoing research for the Society of Applied Anthropology this March 2015.

Collin is happy to announce that he will also be presenting a paper at the Society of American Archaeology in April 2015. Lastly, he looks forward to spending another substantial part of his 2015 summer in the Yucatan working in the field with his advisor Dr. Marilyn Masson.
**2014 Recipient: Rebecca Mendelsohn**

Rebecca Mendelsohn is a doctoral candidate at UAlbany and this year’s graduate assistant for the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies. This fall she returned from 13 months of field and laboratory work in Mexico on a Fulbright-García Robles grant. From January to March Rebecca directed excavations for her NSF-funded Izapa Household Archaeology Project at the early Mesoamerican city of Izapa (850 BC-AD 1250), located in Chiapas. During the project, Rebecca worked with local community members on their initiative to spread awareness about Izapa’s importance in Mesoamerican history. This resulted in a lot of media attention from Mexican news sources, including television appearances on TV Azteca and Televisa. The Izapa Household Archaeology Project also attracted media attention in the US and was highlighted, along with the work of IMS faculty associates Robert Rosenswig and Marilyn Mason, in the May 16, 2014 issue of Science magazine. Rebecca’s 13 months in the field ended with a trip to Guatemala to investigate the similarities between ceramics from Izapa and neighboring early urban centers and to present preliminary results of her fieldwork at Izapa at the annual Guatemalan archaeology symposium.

Rebecca’s fieldwork with the Izapa Household Archaeology Project yielded some surprising results. Intended to target Middle to Late Formative (850-150 BC) households occupied during Izapa’s urbanization, Rebecca’s excavations instead located Terminal Formative through Late Classic occupation (150 BC-AD 900) at the southern extent of the site. This came as a surprise, as most of Izapa’s Classic period occupation has been documented at the northern end of the site, and demonstrates just how little we still know about this important early urban center. In order to help date deposits from these poorly understood time periods of Izapa’s history, Rebecca received an IMS Christopher Decormier memorial scholarship and a Karen R. Hitchcock New Frontiers award from the UAlbany’s Initiatives for Women to submit carbon samples collected during the Izapa Household Archaeology Project. Her dissertation will highlight Izapa’s transition from the Formative period to the Classic period, which coincides with a period of “collapse,” or population decline and changing material patterns across many parts of Mesoamerica.

**First Encounter Award**

**2014 Recipient: Isabelle Poitras**

Isabelle’s dissertation research focuses on Tseltal, a Mayan language spoken in Chiapas, Mexico. By documenting linguistic practices in their sociocultural contexts of use, her goal is to collect words that carry cultural information, along with idioms and metaphorical constructions, to expand the lexical repertoire already documented. She intends to document a more conservative dialect of Tseltal, having in mind that such a dialect may have retained culturally salient lexical items that could have been lost in other varieties. Such elements can be used productively in historical reconstructions and can contribute to a better understanding of the Ancient Classic Mayan inscriptions, written in a language related historically to Tzeltal.

Thanks to the First Encounter Award she will be able to conduct preliminary fieldwork in the spring to assess which dialectal variant she should document by comparing a similar short story collected in the communities of Chilón, Bachajón and Petalcingo to further evaluate their level of retention of archaisms. The fieldwork will also allow her to
solidify her practical knowledge of the language and, more importantly, to establish ties with the Tseltal speaking communities to see how her work can be useful to them and be more adapted to their actual needs in terms of language maintenance.

Xnich k’anal tak’in (Tseltal)
Yawil yawal st’s’unu’b te kawal
Ch’u’ uch’oj’a’i’l yu’ un xek’ilal,
Te ba-a xmaal te ta te’ tik’il te ba ya xkux yo’tan
Te’tik’il wakax
La’ me ta jtojol namej k’inal kajwal.

Talon ta jk’inal, joy jmajtanat
Te jtolja’ sok te ya’ lel sit te’ ak’ kuchójix, joy
Jmajtanat,
Uch’a bayel ya’ yel sit te’ ak’ joy jmajtanat
Ja’ sk’op jmamalal te ya x-ik’ awan.
-Búffalo Conde

Flor de oro
Fuente de huertos de mi amado,
Noria de aguas sagradas para mi honor,
Que corren del campo donde descansa el búfa-
lo:
Venga mi amado Legendario.

“Ya viene a mi campo, oh amada, compañera
mía,
Mi agua y mi jugo he bebido, esposa mía:
Tomad abundante jugo, amada mía.”

Es la voz de mi esposo que llama.
-Búffalo Conde

George Aaron Broadwell

This summer, the Albany Triqui Working Group was also pleased to sponsor a local high-school student, Julian Rauter, who met regularly to help add new words to the dictionary, make recordings, and edit and revise the dictionary. The web dictionary passed a milestone this fall with its 41st update, and now has about 2500 entries. Our web statistics show that we get about 200 visits per month (about 46% from the US, 36% from Mexico, and the remainder from other countries).

A second web dictionary, for San Dionisio Ocotepec Zapotec (sandionisiozapotec.webonary.org), was also launched this summer, and currently has about 22000 entries. This dictionary is in an earlier development phase than the Copala Triqui dictionary, but is currently in active development, with additions, corrections, and quarterly updates.

Broadwell was an invited speaker at two conferences this summer -- the Lexical-Functional Grammar 2014 conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan and the 2104 Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar in Buffalo. At both conferences he described the Albany language documentation programs, and gave a more focused analysis of topics in the grammar of the Triqui and Zapotec languages.

Broadwell is offering Copala Triqui as the language for our Field Methods in Linguistics course in the Fall 2014 semester, so a new group of UAlbany students are learning the grammar of this fascinating language, and some of these students will continue to join the Albany Triqui Working Group next semester.

Poem from: La otra cara de la literatura http://otracaradelaliteratura.blogspot.mx/2013/12/referencias.html
Louise Burkhart

After a busy summer, *Painted Words: Nahua Catholicism, Politics, and Memory in the Atzaqualco Pictorial Catechism*, Louise Burkhart’s collaborative project with Elizabeth Hill Boone and David Tavarez, is complete and under review for the Dumbarton Oaks Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology Series, published by Harvard University Press. The Atzaqualco catechism, from mid-seventeenth-century Tenochtitlan, is one of the earliest surviving colonial pictographic catechisms. On top of a sophisticated glyphic representation of Roman Catholic catechismal texts, later artists and scribes layered historical and dynastic material on Atzaqualca and other Mexica notables and, especially, somewhat falsified claims as to the political legitimacy of Mo-teuczoma Xocoyotzin’s son Don Pedro de Moteuczoma Tlacahuapan. In May Burkhart published a journal article related to the catechism research, “The ‘Little Doctrine’ and Indigenous Catechesis in New Spain,” in *Hispanic American Historical Review*. Her piece on magic and witchcraft in the colonial encounter between Spain and Mexico will appear in May 2015 in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West*.

This fall Burkhart presented the Presidential Address for the American Society for Ethnohistory conference in Indianapolis: “Christian Salvation as Ethno-Ethnohistory: Two Views from New Spain, 1714.” This will be revised as an article for the journal *Ethnohistory*. She also spoke in an invited symposium at Harvard Divinity School honoring Elizabeth Hill Boone, as Boone received the H. B. Nicholson Award for Excellence in Mesoamerican Studies, granted by the Moses Mesoamerican Archive and the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

John Justeson

During the past year, John Justeson’s main research has been advancing his work on indigenous Mesoamerican models for predicting the dates of eclipses; the initial results will appear in May 2015 in *Cosmology, Calendars, and Horizon-Based Astronomy in Ancient Mesoamerica*, edited by Anne Dowd and Susan Milbraith. In September, he presented some of this work at a symposium in honor of Peter Mathews, one of the founders of the modern anthropological approach to the study of Mayan hieroglyphic writing, at the 8th annual meeting of the Maya at the Playa Conference in Flagler County, Florida. He is applying the results to better understand the structure and history of the eclipse table in the Dresden Codex. In the spring, he devoted himself to further editing on several of the dictionaries that are emerging from the Project for the Documentation of the Languages of Mesoamerica. During the summer, he advanced the analysis and write-up of his work with Terrence Kaufman on the inscriptions of Xochicalco (work largely abandoned since 1998).
Robert Carmack

This year Robert Carmack, along with coauthors James Mondloch, and Teresa Carranza, is finalizing a new translation and annotated version of the Popol Wuj. Carmack gave a talk on his notes to the Popol Wuj at a Conference in Guatemala organized by one of the universities there. Carmack has also been invited to give a Formal Lecture in South Korea (in December), also relating to his work with the Popol Wuj. Carmack is delighted to receive this honor and is also excited to see two of our former doctoral students who reside there: Bradley Tatar and Jinsook Choi. Carmack is also busy editing books on two Indian communities, Santa Cruz Quiche (Guatemala) and Masaya (Guatemala). He can be reached at: romcarmack@gmail.com.

Walter Little

The past year marks for Walter Little a period of transition into new research areas in Mesoamerica, including the development of new skills. He is developing two quite diverse projects that will take him out of Guatemala and into Mexico. For the last year, he has been working more closely with the Triqui transnational immigrant community in Albany and beginning exploratory research with Triqui street vendors in Oaxaca City. The Albany side of his research and community engagement with the Triqui community is in process. One project has been studying the meanings of traditional textiles for Triqui men and women in collaboration with Ashley Bishop and Mounia El Kotni. Another project, in collaboration with Aaron Broadwell, is the development of pedagogical materials to learn and teach the Triqui language. Dr. Little's research will take more concrete shape, as he becomes more knowledgeable of Triqui community members' interests and a more competent Triqui speaker.

Dr. Little's other new project, "The Gender and Power Relations in Transnational Mayan Handicrafts Market Network," studies the ways in which transnational Guatemalan Maya vendors have marketed handmade textiles in Mexican urban heritage sites. He has done reconnaissance ethnography in Merida and Oaxaca City, interviewing the retailers who sell handmade Guatemalan textiles. He will travel to San Cristóbal de las Casas in January to survey retail outlets of Guatemalan handicrafts and, then, in March return to Oaxaca City to do more research on this topic and deepen his connections with the Triqui community there, before spending part of the summer in Guatemala working with Maya transnational handicraft vendors themselves.

Over the last year, Dr. Little has participated in various international forums related to anthropology and Latin American studies. One such activity was to serve on a French anthropology doctoral student's dissertation committee in Toulouse, France, which was the main impetus for him to learn to read in French. He has since continued his French skills and was able to interview French tourists in Guatemala last summer. In October, Mounia El Kotni, Ashley Bishop, and he presented their research, mentioned above, at a TEXTIM I, a conference on Mesoamerican textiles in Oaxaca City. They also presented a poster on the Diane Palmer Collection, which they and some other students have been archiving and cataloguing. Last, his volume, co-edited with B. Lynne Milgram and Karen Tran-berg Hansen, Street Economies in the Urban Global South (SAR Press, 2013), was named the winner of the 2014 Society for the Anthropology of Work Book Prize.
Marilyn Masson received an NSF grant for a new phase of research entitled “The Agrarian Foundations of Urban Life at Mayapán,” to begin in the summer of 2015. The primary research objective is to document the degree of diversity in farming, craft production, and service industries that characterized the work lives of rural residential groups through time. Related factors to be evaluated include the degree of wealth, stability, and longevity of the hinterland commoner house groups, as well as their level of dependency on local and regional exchange for the essentials of daily life. An extensive program of household archaeology will provide the data needed to answer these research questions. Rural life in two contrastive political geographic settings will be compared. Initially, Late and Terminal Classic era house lots were located in an extremely marginal “backwater” position, far from political centers or cities of significant size. Later, Postclassic “rural” dwellings were within four kilometers of a major political capital, the site of Mayapán, the large urban center of the Maya world of its time, with a population of 15-20,000 people. This study will document the resulting transformations to regional political economy. The 2015 research follows up a collaborative, NSF-supported survey (Timothy Hare, PI, Marilyn Masson and Bradley Russell, Co-PI’s) that used LiDAR technology to document extensive, and seemingly boundaryless, rural occupation through time in the Mayapán vicinity. This image shows examples of some rural settlement features. The 2015 project is a collaborative undertaking with INAH archaeologist Carlos Peraza Lope, Timothy Hare (Morehead State Univ.), and Bradley Russell (College of St. Rose).

Book Publication
Kukulcan’s Realm: Urban Life of Ancient Mayapan, by Marilyn Masson and Carlos Peraza Lope (with contributions by Timothy S. Hare), was published in November of 2014 by the University Press of Colorado. With 560 pages of text, 160 illustrations, and 76 tables, this work offers an up-to-date synthesis of the last great capital city of the Maya world from 1200 to 1450 C.E. Chapters examine the politics, urban planning and administration, social organization and settlement, economic foundations, religious practice, and collapse processes of this urban center. This volume offers a more complex view of the organizational institutions of Postclassic Maya society and outlines a holistic political economy model in which bottom-up and top-down economic activities were closely articulated with one another.

Colonial Maya Research
In January of 2015, M. Masson, along with UAlbany PHD student C. Gillenwater and UAlbany undergrad Katarina Spero will perform a pilot study to find and locate Colonial era Maya sites in the Contact Period Maní Province of Yucatan, Mexico. C. Gillenwater will be performing his own reconnaissance work to evaluate potential sites for his dissertation, funded by an IMS DeCormier award. Masson and Spero, under the auspices of a CSDA seed grant, will be working collaboratively with INAH-Yucatan archaeologist Carlos Peraza to work on collections from Peraza’s INAH salvage archaeological investigations that have already sampled Colonial era sites. Masson and Spero will also visit and assess two Colonial localities in close proximity to Masson and Peraza’s research site of Mayapán, known as Hoal and Yacmán. The location of the latter site, Yacmán, has not been known to archaeologists since the early 20th century and it is of great potential significance due its status as an abandoned Contact Period Maya-Spanish town that was in a peripheral location. Most Contact era sites have been occupied since Spanish arrival, and archaeological remains have been destroyed by 500 years of subsequent building. Almost no archaeological research has focused on secondary towns in the Postclassic or Colonial regional hierarchies.
particularly in the area around Mayapán. Archaeological research is needed to fact check slanted and patchy European sources. Archaeological evidence provides an essential bottom up perspective from smaller settlements in the countryside for which there is little or no historical detail.

BASEBALL EQUIPMENT FOR THE MAYA PUEBLO OF TELCHAQUILLO
Donations of used baseball clothing, gear, shoes, or equipment are needed for the ad-hoc baseball league of the small pueblo of Telchaquillo, Yucatan, Mexico. This small town is underdeveloped compared to some of the fancier tourist towns of Yucatan, and for this reason, it lacks any organized sports or resources. Yet community leaders have managed to organize a baseball league for adults and children alike. M. Masson is travelling to Telchaquillo on January 6, and is able to transport donated equipment to the village at this time. Please contact me to arrange a pickup (mmasson@albany.edu).

Verónica Pérez Rodríguez

Verónica Pérez-Rodríguez and the Cerro Jazmin Archaeological Project (CJAP) team are undertaking their third field season of excavation in spring and summer of 2015. Their plan is to complete excavations...for now. This season will be specially focused on investigating areas of suspected agricultural production and green areas within the urban layout as well as finalizing the excavations in residential areas. The project is also moving forward with various analyses and partnerships with colleagues at the University of Leicester and the Universidad Autonoma de San Luis Potosi. This joint work will include data analysis and future collaborations will address questions regarding the nature and environmental impact of Prehispanic urbanism in this highland city of the Mixteca Alta.

John Schwaller


He continues his research looking at the celebration of the Aztec month of Panquetzaliztli, as depicted in Sahagun and Duran. The book-length project suggests that the celebrations of the month were modified from traditional pan-Nahua rituals to new ones imposed by the Aztecs to celebrate their rise to power and to forge alliances between military leaders and merchants. Schwaller and Louise Burkhart are offering to meet with students in a Nahuatl reading group. Students, and others, who are interested in learning Nahuatl and working with colonial era documents are encouraged to contact one or the other.

Dr. Robert Rosenswig has spent most of the year disseminating results of his Izapa Regional Settlement Project (IRSP). The 2010-2013, NSF-funded project consisted of a lidar (light detection and ranging) campaign and pedestrian settlement survey and documented a system of nested monumental centers that make up the Izapa polity. Papers were presented at the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) meeting in Austin in April and at the Chacmool conference in Calgary in November. Also in November, Dr. Rosenswig was invited to present results from the Izapa project at the University of Arizona. In the New Year, another lecture will be presented at Yale University and then he has co-organized a session with art historian Julia Guernsey (from UT, Austin), at the 2015 SAA meetings in San Francisco. However, the existence of the site faded from the collective consciousness of archaeologists working in the Soconusco. Las Viudas extends over at least 1 km from north to south with dozens of monumental mounds (some 20 m high) that form a series of plaza groups. Most of the site is in pasture and Middle and Late Formative period (800 BC – AD 200) ceramic sherds have been collected by Rosenswig from all across the site. Las Viudas was thus a contemporary of Izapa and rivals its better-known neighbor in size. When the first stage of the IRSP was formulated, the significance of Las Viudas was not considered, but it is impossible to accurately interpret the local political organization without accounting for this site. One possibility is that Las Viudas was a secondary center and Izapa the capital city in the polity. An alternate, and tantalizing, possibility is that Las Viudas was the center of a nearby, rival polity.

The new NSF-funded project will begin evaluating these alternate possibilities. All Formative period monumental centers will be documented by lidar during March of 2015 and visited this summer to determine their regional distribution in relation to Izapa and Las Viudas. But settlement patterns alone are not enough to establish the political hierarchy of sites. Therefore, this fall Rosenswig has submitted a series of new grants to provide an independent test of the political position of Las Viudas by documenting whether it has stone stelae and altars like the 100s known from Izapa. Stay tuned to find out what the settlement patterns tell us and if we get funded to document new stelae.

Robert Rosenswig was awarded a new National Science Foundation grant to continue lidar and settlement survey in the Soconusco region of Mexico.
Jeff Bryant began his doctoral studies at UAlbany during the fall semester with the intent to study archaeology in the Mixteca Alta. His masters level research was focused on studying the Classic Maya in Belize using soils and X-Ray Fluorescence Spectrometry (XRF). However, this summer took him to the opposite side of the planet. As a winner of the Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholarship from the California State University Chancellor’s Office, he was funded to work as an intern for Dr. Ian Hodder, at Çatalhöyük in Turkey during the summer of 2014. In addition to excavating for Dr. Hodder, he assisted Maya archaeologist Dr. Keith Prufer on XRF analysis of domestic spaces, and was trained in macrobotanical methods.

During the fall semester Jeff co-presented with Rebecca Mendelsohn and Caroline Antonelli in an AGSO sponsored workshop on current chemical and biological sampling methods in archaeology. Jeff is interested in combining paleobotany with his soils and XRF background to investigate periods of environmental stability and change in the Mixteca Alta. Jeff would particularly like to investigate the period of Spanish contact, and the environmental effect of the transformation of the economy to a center of Sheep production.

In the spring Jeff is planning his inaugural archaeological fieldwork in Oaxaca, under the advisement of Dr. Veronica Pérez Rodriguez, at the Mixteca site of Cerro Jazmín. While there, he will export sediment samples ahead of flying to the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom. Once in the UK he will work with Dr. Juan Berrio on a paleobotanical analysis of the samples from Cerro Jazmín, with the intent of collaborating on a publication.
After successfully defending her dissertation proposal early Fall 2014, Mounia El Kotni is currently conducting fieldwork in Chiapas, Mexico, with traditional midwives from the Organization of Indigenous Doctors of Chiapas (OMIECH). Her doctoral dissertation, “Porque Tienen Mucho Derecho: Parteras, Biomedical Training, and the Vernacularization of Human Rights in Chiapas,” analyzes how government trainings in obstetrics impact traditional midwives’ (parteras) practices, and how parteras from OMIECH resist such trainings on the grounds of human rights. As a volunteer at OMIECH’s Women and Midwives Section, Mounia helps organizing health workshops in indigenous communities of Chiapas, as well as looking for funding for the Section’s activities.

Since the beginning of her fieldwork, Mounia has made contact with various traditional midwives, non-governmental organizations, and doctors in women’s hospitals in the town of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. In San Cristóbal, Mounia is also participating in a medical anthropology seminar on midwifery at the research center PRO-IMMSE-UNAM. In continuity with her previous work at UAlbany’s Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, Mounia, along with Dr. Walter Little and Ashley Bishop, participated in the Primer Encuentro de Textiles Mesoamericanos in Oaxaca in October 2014, to present on the IMS’ Triqui textile collection (see page 2).

Mounia (left) and Micaela Icó Bautista (center) in one of OMIECH’s workshops on reproductive health (Simojovel, Chiapas).

Crystal Sheedy

Crystal is now in her third year of the PhD program. Her research focuses on identifying the changes and continuities within work patterns and cultural linguistics practices of Mayas from the Yucatán Peninsula. This past year, Crystal was awarded the Karen R. Hitchcock New Frontiers Grant through the Initiatives for Women from the University at Albany, which helped fund her trip to Xocén this past summer. Building upon her findings from the previous summer’s fieldwork (2013), she was able to reconnect with her participants from her MA thesis work and began to deepen the relationships with her participants that she met in summer 2013. She also was able to expand her knowledge about government-sponsored development initiatives that are currently happening in the village. Although brief, her time in Xocén this past summer was very fulfilling, and she is looking forward to conducting her ethnographic fieldwork for her dissertation in the upcoming year. 

Mounia El Kotni

Crystal Sheedy
James Shuford

For the past two years, James has been conducting ethnographic fieldwork for his dissertation, which is examining the challenges Mexican migrants face living and working as farmworkers in the Hudson Valley without legal immigration authorization. His research focused primarily on how migrant farmworkers worked with local clinic outreach workers to overcome barriers in achieving access to healthcare services. With the help of the DeCormier grant, as well as a dissertation grant from the Health Initiative of the Americas, James spent many hours driving with outreach workers as they made their rounds back and forth between farms, clinics, labor camps, and hospitals, all the while talking and listening to farmworkers and outreach workers telling their stories, the problems they face, and the ways that they find to navigate the complex landscape of living without papers and the equally complex landscape of the US healthcare system. In addition to working with and observing clinic staff, James also spent a season working part-time on an onion and lettuce farm in Orange county, NY. Working daily with the crew planting, weeding, picking, sorting, and packing gave James an inside perspective to the difficult nature of farmwork. Finally, James assisted on several research projects with the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health, an occupational health organization, trying to find creative solutions to increasing the health and safety of farmworkers in the region.

Emi Tomaszewski

This past year Emi Tomaszewski conducted fieldwork at the Mixtec site of Cerro Jazmin, Oaxaca. She will be writing her MA thesis on lithics used in textile production at a Postclassic house on Cerro Jazmin. Her primary interests are Aztec archaeology and the Nahuatl language. For her doctoral dissertation, she hopes to conduct fieldwork at an Aztec site.

Brynna Tussey

In the last academic year, Brynna completed her Master's Thesis, "Museum Representation: Ethnostatic Representations of Culture", which focuses on the ways and models of displaying indigenous art objects. The primary object was to determine what methods are utilized to categorize an object as art, artifact, and to some degree commodity. The framework Brynna laid out in her thesis is helping to guide her dissertation research, in which she is hoping to expand upon museum display politics. Brynna is currently teaching "Introduction to Cultural Anthropology at Skidmore College", and will be teaching "Non-Western Art Objects and Artifacts in the Museum" at SUNY Albany this upcoming Spring.
The summer of 2014 marked the first year of the Chiquilistagua Archaeological Field School directed by Justin Lowry (PhD 2013) and Jason Paling (MA 2007, PhD candidate) and included undergraduate students from George Mason University. The goals of the Chiquilistagua Archaeological Project are to explore and investigate settlements in the so-called “intermediate zone,” a diverse ecological and cultural area that stretches from the southern Maya periphery in Honduras and El Salvador to the northern edges of the Great Nicoya region. Their investigations in Nicaragua are concentrated primarily in central Nicaragua from the southwestern edge of Lake Managua to the Pacific Ocean. The intent of the project is to test the validity of models proposing an association of this area with the economic and political periphery of the southern Mesoamerican people and cultures. Archaeological investigations of a recently discovered pre–Columbian settlement in Chiquilistagua, Nicaragua will help to contribute to our understanding of the variety of cultural diversity found throughout Central America. Our long term research goal is to document household activities among sites located near and around the present day town of Chiquilistagua; a settlement located approximately six kilometers southwest of the present day capital of Managua. The town and site are located on the border between the Nicaragua Depression and the Pacific Volcanic Cordillera.

During the course of the 2014 Archaeological Field program Lowry, Paling and crew to conducted excavations, carried out laboratory analysis and conservation techniques common to most archaeological research projects. In addition to the normal project investigations the students had the opportunity to travel to Diria, the Catarina overlook, Masaya, El Crucero, Acahualinca, Grenada, Managua, Gruta de Xavier, as well as Managua’s new waterfront pavilion, Puerto Salvador Allende, and the ruins of Samosa’s presidential palace. Students also took time to see museum exhibits at Acahualinca, Centro Cultural Convento San Francisco, Mi Museo, and at the National Museum and the National Palace. They also toured a local organic coffee plantation and observed the preparation and production of a small-scale finca. They were able to attend a baseball game and note the similar and different rituals associated with the sport, then take a ride on a zip line across one of the volcanic lakes in downtown Managua.

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IMS Student Alumni

Justin Lowry and Jason Paling

Paling (third from left) and Lowry (third from right) and the George Mason University Chiquilistagua Archaeological Field School
IMS is grateful for the numerous small donations that we have regularly received from current and former IMS faculty and students, and from friends of Mesoamerican studies generally, to support IMS-sponsored research and publication activities. The national economic downturn has affected our general resources for this work. It has particularly affected endowments. For IMS, it is the DeCormier endowment that is most seriously affected. For more than 30 years, this fund has supported dissertation field work by graduate students in Mesoamerican studies—sometimes enough to complete dissertation work, often a basis for pilot studies that have led to successful applications for larger external grants.

For many years, IMS has generally been able to support dissertation field work by two graduate students every year. For the immediate future, the likelihood is that this fund will provide significantly reduced levels of support for dissertation research. For those who are able, your contributions can help to renew this important part of the infrastructure for Mesoamericanist research.

Donations to the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, the DeCormier Endowment, or to the Mesoamerica Endowment can be sent by check to the Institute for Mesoamerican Studies at the address on the left. All donations go to support student research.

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The Institute for Mesoamerican Studies (IMS) is a nonprofit scholarly research center dedicated to the study and dissemination of knowledge about the ancient and modern peoples and cultures of Mesoamerica (Mexico and northern Central America).

Since 1975, IMS helps coordinate the work of the Mesoamerican faculty at the University at Albany – SUNY. We have the largest number of full-time Mesoamericanists of any institution north of Mexico, and our members are among the most active and prominent scholars in the field of Mesoamerican anthropology. The primary activities of IMS are research and publication.