Professors Present on Anthropology as a Career

On Tuesday February 19th, Anthropology Professors Judson Finley and Bonnie Glass-Coffin met with the USUSA Anthropology Club to discuss careers in archaeology and medical anthropology.

Archaeology
Dr. Judson Finley, Undergraduate Program Director, spoke about how Archaeologists can be the most successful, and specifically, how USU can help you land a job right out of your bachelor's program. Archaeology is the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains. Finley explains that USU's archaeology program is set up to train students to be professionals in archaeology and cultural resource management. "We train and connect students to work for federal agencies and private consulting firms," Finley said. "We work with students to guarantee them a job after they graduate." For Finley, and most faculty, the best way to do this is through field school experience as an undergraduate. "The most important thing about getting a career in archaeology is the 6 credit hour archaeology field school offered every summer at USU. This will give you basic training to become an entry level field technician." The field school at USU is in the process of becoming more tech-savvy, which leads to training in traditional survey, but also paperless surveys with ipads. Finley's main advice for those pursuing archaeology? Take a 3 year gap and just go from site to site and get field experience. Even if you do not see yourself as an archaeologist, attend the archaeology field school. "This is an opportunity to have experiences you will not have in a classroom or lab," Finley said. "Ride the gravy train. Get a good truck, keep everything you need in the truck, go from high paying job to high paying job, and just ride it. This is the best way to learn your trade and your discipline." Archaeologists often see themselves working in National Parks, Federal Agencies, Conservalional Agencies, Museums, and more.

Medical Anthropology
Medical Anthropology is the study of health and healing from an anthropological perspective. Dr. Bonnie Glass-Coffin took the time to speak about her experience and how Anthropologists can make a difference in the medical field. Glass-Coffin is working as a hospital Chaplin, and understands the relationship between sickness and experience. "As Medical Anthropologists, we work to find meaning in their experience of a sickness. I talk with people and try to understand their perception and help them understand their situation in a way that fits with their perspective," Glass-Coffin said. Medical Anthropologists can come in many ways. Some jobs that might be relevant would be Health Education Professional, Genetic Counselor, Social Worker, Medical Interpreter, and more. Though the job may not list "Anthropologist" in their description, understanding your skills and how it can apply to different jobs is important. She also stressed the importance of students doing a self-assessment and taking internship opportunities when one comes your way. "Many people get discouraged when they find an internship that is great, but doesn't pay," Glass-Coffin said. "Would you rather do the internship of your dreams that will advance your career or flip burgers? Now is the time to invest in yourself and your education. Because you are worth it."

Glass-Coffin's advice to students: don't be afraid to network, meet with career services, take opportunities as they come, take a gap year before grad school, and take time to self-assess and understand your research interests.

Dr. Glass-Coffin has shared her slides from her presentation. It includes links to opportunities, field schools, and resources to help anthropologists find the best path for them.

Thank you to all who were able to attend the Professor Presentations. The next club meeting will be Anthropology Jeopardy Night on March 19th. We will also be voting on a new club presidency that night - so don't miss out!