

Faculty Spotlight

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Dr. Jordan Karsten, Associate Professor, Anthropology

Could you tell us about your research interests?

I'm a tenured professor of Anthropology at UWO. My research interests focus on the human skeleton, primarily in the fields of bioarchaeology and forensic anthropology. On the bioarchaeological side of things, my research has focused on studying human skeletons to get a better understanding of the past. This has taken the form of documenting evidence of violent trauma to reconstruct the frequency of warfare in prehistory, studying dental pathology to reconstruct ancient diet, and sequencing DNA from archaeological skeletons to study European population history. In forensic anthropology, I've examined methods to estimate sex and ancestry from skeletal remains. My interests in all of these areas is ongoing, and I'm actively collecting data to test forensic anthropological methods.

What research projects are you currently working on? What would you like your next project to be?

Right now, I'm working on examining how mandibular metrics and morphological traits can be used to estimate sex and ancestry in modern and archaeological skeletons. The results have implications for archaeological compliance projects and forensic anthropological casework. I'm also working on testing the performance of a popular method for estimating the postmortem interval using data from real cases. I'd like to continue to study both these issues in the future.

What challenges have you faced in your career to date? What have you learned from those experiences?

One of the biggest challenges is time management. To complete research projects requires successfully balancing the demands of teaching and administrative work with the time needed for data collection and analysis. Without carving out that time, it is really easy for research to end up taking a back seat.

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Can you share your experiences applying for and receiving extramural funding?

My work with the specialists at UWO in applying for grants has been amazing. Without their help, I'd never have gotten my grant applications submitted. Their flexibility and expertise have been critical. Right now, I'm part of a project partially funded by an extramural grant, and the process of negotiating the post-award process has also been made very smooth thanks to UWO's grant specialists.

What advice would you give other UW Oshkosh faculty applying for grants?

The best advice I can give is to reach out to the folks at OSP even if you are just thinking about applying to support for a project. They can help you find the appropriate funding sources and come up with a plan to put together a competitive application. Just taking that first step is really critical.