

# Alexandria L. Sambrano

Ph.D. Student, Department of Evolutionary Anthropology, Duke University

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## EDUCATION

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2025-2030	Ph.D. in Evolutionary Anthropology Duke University, Durham, NC
2023-2025	B.A. in Biological Anthropology, GPA: 3.91 University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
2021-2023 (Transferred)	B.A. in Anthropology, Minors in Geology and Biology, GPA: 3.99 West Chester University of Pennsylvania, West Chester, PA

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Paleoanthropology, evolutionary developmental paleoanthropology (EDPA), functional morphology, evolutionary anatomy, locomotion, paleoecology, primate adaptation

## AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

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2025	Graduate Fellowship Research Program, Honorable Mention, National Science Foundation
2025	Dean's Graduate Fellowship, Duke University
2025	William S. Pollitzer Student Travel Award, American Association of Biological Anthropologists
2025	Graduate Council Fellowship, Stony Brook University
2025	Dr. W. Burghardt Turner Fellowship, Stony Brook University
2025	Field Funds, Penn Museum
2025	Ruth Marcus Kanter College Alumni Society Undergraduate Research Grant, Center for Undergraduate Research, University of Pennsylvania
2024	College Alumni Society and President's Research Grant, Center for Undergraduate Research, University of Pennsylvania
2024	Penn Museum Fellow, Penn Museum
2024	IDEAS Scholar, American Association of Biological Anthropologists

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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### Undergraduate Thesis

2024-2025	"Locomotor ontogenetic scaling of the knee in <i>Hylobates lar</i> (white-handed gibbon): A model for the origins of fossil hominin bipedality."
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Investigated the effect of arborealism on the morphology of the gibbon knee across ontogeny with respect to biomechanical signals in the joint's articular surfaces and femoral and tibial diaphyses.

Advisors: Dr. Myra Laird

## Positions

2024-present **Collections Assistant**, Biological Anthropology Section, Penn Museum  
Catalogued the Penn Museum's extensive primate collection, including but not limited to providing taxonomic identifications, assessments of dental age, and notes of pathologies for all specimens.  
Supervisors: Alex Denning & Dr. Rachel Watkins

2024 **Biology REU Intern**, Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History.  
Analyzed the relationship between dental wear and development in brachydont and hypsodont African suids.  
Mentors: Dr. Deming Yang & Dr. Ashley Hammond.

2024-present **Research Assistant**, Philadelphia Zoo & Jones Lab at the University of Pennsylvania.  
Aided Dr. Caroline Jones (Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania) and Michael Stern (Curator of Primates, Philadelphia Zoo) in an institutional collaborative effort to develop a fully functional research program for the Zoo's primates.  
Principal Investigator: Dr. Caroline Jones

2024-present **Research Assistant**, Jones Lab, University of Pennsylvania.  
Explored tool use in the captive *Gorilla gorilla* group of Zoo Atlanta and developed hominid personality tests to be dispersed among Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoos.  
Principal Investigator: Dr. Caroline Jones.

2023 **Student Researcher**, Laird Lab, Penn Dental Medicine.  
Conducted independent research on the covariance of skull shape and jaw leverage calculated using landmark data and PSCA measurements.  
Conducted independent research on the relationship between craniofacial shape as it relates to diet and basicranial flexion in an ontogenetic series of two dietarily distinct capuchin genera (*Cebus* and *Sapajus*) (CT and surface scans).  
Advisor: Dr. Myra Laird.

2023-present **Research Assistant**, Laird Lab, Penn Dental Medicine.  
Assisted with various research projects including description of a new anatomical feature and comparison of food properties in the diets of captive and wild primates using a Lucas Scientific FLS-1 portable mechanical tester.  
Principal Investigator: Dr. Myra Laird.

2023 **Research Assistant**, Gishwati Primate Project.

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	Investigated the effects of climate change on a Rwandan <i>Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii</i> population by examining the relationship between hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) system activity in hair-derived cortisol (CORT) samples and field-collected phenological data. Principal Investigators: Dr. Rebecca Chancellor & Dr. Aaron Rundus.
2023	<b>Student Researcher</b> , West Chester Primate Lab, West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Conducted focal scans of the Philadelphia Zoo's <i>Hylobates lar</i> family to elucidate the relationship between captivity and social group-structure in hylobatids. Mentors: Dr. Rebecca Chancellor & Dr. Aaron Rundus.
2023	<b>Student Researcher</b> , Chesapeake & Delaware Canal Project Assisted in the paleoenvironmental reconstruction of the Mount Laurel Formation of Reedy Point Delaware by identifying taxonomic information of collected fossil specimens. Advisor: Dr. Richard Busch
2019	<b>Student Archaeologist</b> , Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. Excavated a Chaco Canyon outlier Great House recovering over 300 individual artifacts, ecofacts, and biofacts including the discovery of the first known canid burial of the Haynie Puebloan site. Supervisor: Tyson Hughes.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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2023-present	<b>NAGPRA Work Study Student</b> , Penn Museum
2023-2024	<b>Treasurer</b> , National Association for Student Anthropologists, American Association of Anthropology
2022	<b>Lab Assistant</b> , West Chester University of Pennsylvania

## PRESENTATIONS & ARTICLES

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### Presentations

2024	<b>Sambrano, A. L.</b> , Canington, S. L., Laird, M. F. Covariation between skull shape and jaw leverage in six dietarily distinct primate genera. <i>Center for Undergraduate Research (CURF) at the University of Pennsylvania Fall Research Exposition</i> .
2024	<b>Sambrano, A. L.</b> , Hammond, A. S., & Yang, D. Not so special after all: Mesial drift observed across varying levels of dental specialization in African pigs. <i>American Museum of Natural History REU Symposium</i> .
2024	<b>Sambrano, A. L.</b> , Holmes, M. A., Terhune, C. E., Chalk-Wilayto, J., Yoakum, C., Taylor, P., Polvadore, T. A., Fogaca, M. D., Laird, M. F. The development of basicranial flexion in <i>Cebus</i> and <i>Sapajus</i> . <i>American Association of Biological Anthropologists 2024 Annual Meeting</i> .

2023 **Sambrano, A. L.** & Laird, M. F. Factors of basicranial flexion in *Cebus* and *Sapajus*. *University of Pennsylvania Department of Anthropology Research Exposition*.

2023 Chancellor, R., **Sambrano, A. L.**, Calligaro, A., Eichelberger, J., Peters, A., & Reiss, S. Social interactions among a captive gibbon (*Hylobates lar*) family at the Philadelphia Zoo. *West Chester University of Pennsylvania College of Sciences & Mathematics Research Symposium*.

### Published Abstracts

2025 **Sambrano, A. L.**, Hammond, A. S., Yang, D. Mesial drift observed across varying levels of dental specialization in African pigs. *Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology 2025 Annual Meeting*.

### Undergraduate Thesis

2024 (ongoing) **Sambrano, A. L.** Locomotor ontogenetic scaling of the knee in *Hylobates lar* (white-handed gibbon): A model for the origins of hominin bipedality.  
Advisors: Dr. Myra Laird

### Manuscripts

2024 **Sambrano, A. L.** Biological relatedness in the *Kumulipo*: A model for the compatibility of Indigenous knowledge systems and science.  
Advisor: Dr. Tina Pierce-Fragoso

2024 **Sambrano, A. L.** Guesstimating our origins: The generative quality of three-dimensional hominin reconstructions.  
Advisor: Dr. Theodore Schurr

2024 **Sambrano, A. L.** Integrating intersex biologies into forensic anthropology.  
Advisor: Dr. Theodore Schurr

## TEACHING

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2022 **Teaching Assistant**, “Introduction to Biological Anthropology” (ANT 101),  
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

## PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT

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2025-present American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)

2024-present Human Biology Association

2023-present Natives at Penn, University of Pennsylvania

2023-present The Paleontological Society

2023-present Sigma Gamma Epsilon, the National Honor Society for the Earth Sciences

2023	University Hearing Board Officer, West Chester University
2023	Assistant Chair, 2023 Annual Conference, American Association of Biological Anthropologists
2022-2023	Undergraduate Representative of Anthropology, West Chester University
2022-2023	President, Anthropology Club, West Chester University
2022-2023	President, Lambda Alpha, National Anthropology Honor Society
2022-present	Paleoanthropological Society
2022-present	American Association of Biological Anthropologists
2021-present	American Anthropological Association

## SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

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R & RStudio, 3DSlicer, FIJI, ImageJ, BoneJ, geometric morphometrics (GM), ZooMonitor, Noldus Observer, Adobe Toolkit, Microsoft Office, EMu Collection Management System, NAGPRA, museum collections, CITI Physical Science Responsible Conduct of Research certification, CITI Biological / Biomedical Responsible Conduct of Research certification, CITI Social / Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research certification, Object Handling certification, archaeological field methods, paleontological field methods, science communication