

January 24, 2008

To the members of the Academic Programs Committee,

Thank you for considering our proposal for changes in the Department of Biological Anthropology and Anatomy at Duke. As you will see in the attached documents we have proposed a substantial intellectual revitalization of our program. In association with our new vision we also propose a growth plan and a change in the name of the unit to the *Department of Evolutionary Anthropology*.

I would like to use this letter to briefly summarize the history behind this change. Between 1988 and 2004, the Department of Biological Anthropology (BAA) was jointly administered by Arts and Sciences (A&S) and the School of Medicine (SOM). BAA established a strong national reputation in the field of biological anthropology. Our faculty shared the same intellectual goals, collaborated regularly, and served in a unified graduate program. However, half of our faculty provided teaching and service for SOM while the other half provided teaching and service for A&S. In 2004 the department was unified as a single unit administered by A&S.

This change brought about an intense period of critical evaluation of our department and its role in the university. The results from this period of discussion were very positive. During this period we worked with a task force jointly charged by Dean McLendon and Provost Lange to evaluate BAA and developed a plan for changes in our program. The resulting vision statement is attached. It describes a forward-looking plan for the further intellectual development of biological anthropology at Duke. Our new vision takes advantage of existing strengths, new theoretical developments, and new intellectual centers at Duke.

To reflect our new vision we propose a new name—*Evolutionary Anthropology*—for our program. We believe that this name clearly reflects the goals of this department and embraces the new strategy we have defined. This vision and name change has been endorsed by the task force evaluating our program as well as the Dean of Natural Sciences, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Provost.

The Department of Evolutionary Anthropology will bring a renewed focus to human evolutionary studies at Duke. The new department will retain the research strengths of the old Department of Biological Anthropology and Anatomy in the areas of functional morphology, behavior and reproductive ecology, and evolution, while developing new strengths in the areas of evolutionary genomics, human behavioral ecology, and paleontology. This refocused and fortified department will promote innovative collaborative research among its members and between its faculty and those of allied disciplines.

I look forward to meeting with you and answering your questions. Please let me know if you need any additional information before the meeting on January 30th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Schmitt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daniel Schmitt, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair