



Fall 2023



Lesly Temesvari  
Interim Chair

### Note from the Chair

As we welcome the crisp fall weather, it's the perfect time to share some incredible stories and achievements from the Department of Biological Sciences. In this edition of our newsletter, we're thrilled to bring you a diverse range of updates that showcase the remarkable accomplishments and ongoing scholarship within our institution.

#### *Birds and Dinosaurs: A Fascinating Evolution with Human Health Insights*

Embark on a journey through time as Susan Chapman delves into the captivating study of how birds evolved from dinosaurs. Beyond the awe-inspiring nature of this research, the implications for human health are profound. Discover the connections between our feathered friends and potential breakthroughs that could impact our well-being.

#### *Student Spotlight: Rising to New Heights*

We are immensely proud to announce that one of our outstanding students, Ashley McCollum, has ascended to the role of Student Body President. Witness the journey of leadership and dedication that has brought this individual to the forefront of our academic community. Her passion and commitment serve as an inspiration to us all.

#### *Research Highlights: Publications and Grants*

Dive into the wealth of knowledge produced by our esteemed faculty with a compilation of noteworthy research publications. Explore the groundbreaking discoveries that contribute to our institution's reputation for excellence. Additionally, we're excited to share updates on recent grants awarded to support ongoing and upcoming research initiatives.

This Fall newsletter is a testament to the vibrant spirit and collective achievements of our community. We invite you to explore, celebrate and share in the success of our students, faculty and the University as a whole. As we continue to push the boundaries of knowledge, we look forward to the positive impact these endeavors will have on our community and beyond.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to excellence.

Warm regards,

Lesly Temesvari  
Alumni Distinguished Professor & Interim Chair



## Study on how birds evolved from dinosaurs could have human health implications

An unexpected discovery by scientists researching how modern-day birds evolved from their dinosaur ancestors could potentially impact how humans, especially children, are treated with corticosteroids and other anti-inflammatory medications.

Susan Chapman, an associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, and collaborators compared the tails of chickens — considered by scientists to be modern avian dinosaurs — with that of Archaeopteryx, a small winged and feathered dinosaur with a long tail that lived at the end of the Jurassic period.

**[Read more about Chapman's research.](#)**



## **Ashley McCollum wants to make a difference as student body president and beyond**

Whether it's being Clemson University's first African American female student body president or working as an audiologist after she completes her schooling, Ashley McCollum wants to make change for the better.

McCollum, a senior biological sciences major, has been a part of Clemson's student government since her first year on campus when she was a member of Freshman Council.

**[Learn more about Ashley McCollum.](#)**





*Top left to right: Michael Childress, Antonio Baeza, Kara Powder.  
Bottom left to right: Barbara Campbell, Rick Blob.*

## Faculty research

**Michael Childress** details how scientists, coral reef restoration groups (including Kylie Smith, M.S. '15, Ph.D. '19) and government agencies have launched a heroic effort to save the corals.

**Antonio Baeza** studies sharks in hopes of helping to reverse their population decline.

**Kara Powder** is both a first and second-phase research project leader in the biomedical research center called South Carolina Translational Research Improving Musculoskeletal Health (SC-TRIMH).

**Barbara Campbell** is part of an international team that is trying an innovative tack to solve an age-old maritime challenge, and researchers said the solution involves working with nature instead of fighting it.

**Rick Blob's** research reveals what waterfall climbing fish tell us about adaptation, survival and suction cups.



## Alumni

Spotlight on biological sciences graduate, **Dr. Arpita Gupta DePalma**.

## Faculty and staff

Congratulations to our newly promoted faculty: **Tamara McNutt-Scott, principal lecturer, Kristi Whitehead, principal lecturer, and Nathan Redding, senior lecturer.**

**Barbara Speziale** partners with Duke Energy to teach teachers about wildlife and land management.

**Sam Sparace** added to Clemson University's Emeritus College as it celebrates its 20th anniversary.

**Mike Moore**, building manager with 42 years of service — 24 with BioSci — retired earlier this year.

**Fred J. Stutzenberger, Jr.**, professor emeritus of biological sciences, passed away in October.

## Students

**Claire Farrell '23**, health science with minors in psychology and life sciences, conducted independent research with professor John Cummings as an undergraduate. Her project was to create an anatomy color by number app called Anaphy — now available to Anatomy and Physiology students at Clemson and other universities in the App Store.

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