The Michigan College of Optometry (MCO) is the state of Michigan's first and only optometry school, established at Ferris State University (FSU) in 1975. The school is located in Big Rapids. MCO prides itself on its small class size, which creates opportunities for students to receive individualized attention from faculty, as well as build strong, collaborative relationships with fellow classmates. The school also boasts a state-of-the-art facility, which was completed in 2011. Within this facility you will find the University Eye Center, classrooms, pre-clinical practice spaces, and research labs. One of the unique instructional spaces within the building is the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Interactive Eye Learning Center; this space was designed as both a lecture and practice exam amphitheater. Here, students can practice eye exams on one another in a series of optometry chairs while being guided by an instructor. There are several student organizations that are a part of MCO, like SVOSH (Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity) and OSG (Optometry Student Government) to name a few. Students at MCO are also able to join any student organizations that are a part of Ferris State University. Also, as a part of FSU, all MCO students have access to the FSU Student Recreation Center, which includes an extensive fitness center, weight room, aerobics courses, swimming pool, rock climbing area, and more. Visit the program’s website (http://www.ferris.edu/mco/) to learn more!
Letter of Recommendation Tips

The upcoming application process is right around the corner, and it’s time to start thinking of what you need to do to prepare. Letters of recommendation are vital to your application, but they are also easy to procrastinate. With the right resources and proper planning, you will be able to make letters of recommendation one less thing you have to worry about during the overwhelming application process by getting them out of the way early!

When looking for someone to write a letter on your behalf, you want to trust that person to write a strong, personal letter, so make sure you are taking the time to get familiar with your professors and other professionals.

The next step is deciding how you will be collecting each letter. Since MSU does not have a committee, you must collect letters on your own. So make sure you are doing your research because some professional schools want you to use a credential file while others would rather the Centralized Application Ser-

vice. Whatever you decide, you need to make sure you make the submission as easy as possible for your writers. It is important to plan ahead, because you want to give your writers enough time to write a well thought out letter, so with their busy sched-

ules, you should give them at bare minimum of 3 weeks. Make sure you come prepared with all the materials necessary for them to write the best possible letter on your behalf. Generally, a packet contain-

ing your transcript, resume, co-curricular activity log, personal statement, entrance exam scores, and a list of ways you have interacted with the letter writer will suffice. Most importantly, send a hand written letter thanking your writers for their help and continue updating them on how the process is going for you.

For more information, check out the College of Nat-

ural Science’s guidelines here: https://natsci.msu.edu/students/preprofessional/guidelines-for-evaluation-letters/

Meet the Faculty: Todd Fenton

Dr. Todd Fenton is a professor our of the Anthropology department that teaches ANP 441, Osteology of Forensic Anthropology, which is a Human Biology elective course.

Where have you gone to school and what have you studied?

I received my BA from the University of Michigan, and I received my Ph.D. from the University of Arizona.

Could you tell us a lesser-known fact about yourself? In the summers my research is based in Tusca-

ny, Italy where I collaborate with an amazing team of Italian archaeologists from the Roman archaeological projects of Alberese and Roselle. Each summer I travel with several of my graduate students to analyze the human skeletons recovered from these excavations.

Why did you choose to work at MSU?

MSU has a long and proud history in the forensic sciences, including forensic anthropology.

What is your favorite flavor of MSU Dairy Store ice cream?

Sesquicentennial Swirl! (Continued on next page)
A lot of Human Biology students take your ANP 441 course, could you give us a brief description of the class?

In my course students learn about the detailed anatomical structure of human bones and teeth, and the intricacies of the forensic application of human skeletal variation, via both lectures and the hands-on setting of the human osteology laboratory.

What are your favorite things about the course?

I really like this course because I am able to integrate so much of my forensic anthropology case experience into my teaching. Not only that, I am able to bring many of my forensic colleagues from across the medicolegal death investigation into class to talk about their real-life experiences.

Meet Your Advisor: Katie Licht

Katie is an Integrative Biology advisor, previously the zoology department.

Q: Where have you gone to school and what did you study?

I graduated with Honors from Michigan State University in 2009. I have a Bachelor of Science in Zoology with a Concentration in Animal Behavior & Neurobiology and an additional degree in Psychology. I was a member of the Honors College, Academic Scholars, and I completed all my pre-veterinary requirements. My undergraduate Honor’s thesis with Dr. Juli Wade and Dr. Lace Svec was entitled: The behavioral effect of pair bonding on paired and unpaired female zebra finches. I was in Lyman Brigg’s first graduating class when they switched from a school to a college.

In 2011 I graduated from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale with a Master of Science in Behavior Analysis & Therapy. My Master’s thesis was studying the effects of video modeling and video feedback treatment packages in equine recreation activities. (Continued on next page)
Q: What is something about you that most of your students might not know?

Growing up, I competitively showed Californian and Champagne D’Argent rabbits through 4-H and FFA, the Michigan State Rabbit Breeder’s Association (MSRBA), and the American Rabbit Breeder’s Association (ARBA). I always seemed to be the “person to beat.” One year I actually won every rabbit class I entered at the Huron County Fair! My parent’s basement is still full of hundreds of my trophies that I won throughout the entire 13 years.

The best part of this entire experience wasn’t about winning or trophies, but the friendships, animals, teaching opportunities, and learning experiences (e.g., be humble, always practice good sportsmanship, etc.) along the way.

Q: What made you want to become an academic advisor?

I never actually planned on becoming an academic advisor. I have always bled green; by preschool I knew I wanted to be a Spartan. As I left MSU with my Bachelor’s degree, one of my goals was to eventually return to MSU and work in the former Department of Zoology. For the next three and a half years I worked in numerous research settings outside of Michigan, including the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense. I had been able to integrate my background in zoology into other scientific disciplines including behavior analysis, toxicology, pharmacology, and veterinary medicine.

When I decided to move back to Michigan, I naturally started with the MSU job postings - where I happened to notice the zoology advisor position. Upon self-reflection, I realized that mentoring and advising undergraduate students was the most rewarding aspect of my research experiences. Despite my successes, I knew firsthand how these challenging economic times and high employer expectations have made it more difficult for recent graduates to attain a position in the workforce or admission into a graduate or professional program; making the role of undergraduate advisors more crucial than ever. I wanted to help make a difference in the lives, education, and careers of these students.

Q: What kinds of things do you help student with?

In general, I help students with academic success, major exploration, degree requirements, course planning, and career preparation.

Q: Could you tell us more about the new integrative biology department?

We have developed a B.S. in Integrative Biology that is currently moving through the MSU curriculum committees. It should be available to students in Fall 2016. We will continue to offer our three current degrees: (1) B.S. in Zoology, (2) B.S. in Environmental Biology-Zoology, and (3) B.A

Q: MSU Ice cream, what flavor?

Good, old fashion chocolate ice cream from the MSU Dairy Store is my weakness.
Greetings, NatSci students! It’s hard to believe it is mid-February, already. But I wanted to be sure you were aware of a few dynamic events that are taking place in the next few weeks that are ideal for any of you who are looking to learn more about careers in the science and health industries.

One event to have on your radar is Science Blast! – scheduled for Wednesday, March 16 from 4pm – 7pm at Holmes Hall. This is a unique career exposure event that will feature 25+ companies and organizations who are looking to meet new students and talk about jobs and internships at their respective organization. This is a great program for any students interested in connecting with companies in the science and health industries.

Remember, if you’re interested in preparing for these events and have questions, or want to chat more about your internship search strategies, you can schedule an appointment with me by using the Academic Advisors calendar system. Hope to see many of you at our upcoming events!

Student Spotlight: Shelbie Shelder

What’s your major? Nutritional Science, with a minor in Epidemiology and Global Public Health

What has been your favorite class at MSU? My favorite class at MSU was Physiology 310 with Dr. Denison. I really enjoyed the real life clinical case studies.

How are you involved here at MSU and in the community? I am in the honors college and I am in the Charles Drew Science Scholars program here at MSU. In addition, I have been on the E-board of American Indian Science and (Continued on next page)
Student Spotlight Continued

Engineering Society for the past 3 years and I am also a member of Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and Phi Sigma Pi National Co-Ed Honors Fraternity. In the community, I volunteer as a tutor/mentor for Indigenous Youth Empowerment Program in Lansing and I volunteer as a patient care volunteer at McLaren.

Do you have any research experience?

Yes I do, I did research after my freshman year in the Department of Epidemiology on maternal and child health, following that experience I did research at Michigan Department of Health and Human Resources doing public health surveillance on maternal and child health as well. Most recently, I did health policy research at Harvard School of Public Health on a collaboration project with Harvard Medical School the summer following my junior year.

What is your most memorable experience at MSU?

My most memorable experience at MSU was cheering on our MSU football team on a Saturday and seeing Izzo come into the stands and cheer on the team with us. I ended up giving Izzo a high five and it was pretty awesome. GO GREEN!

What are your plans for after graduation?

My plans after graduation is applying to a dual degree program in medicine and public health (MD/MPH or DO/MPH). My dream is to work as a family medicine physician serving underserved populations.

What advice do you have for other pre-professional students?

My advice for other pre-professional students is to do what you love and find a passion that will set you apart. Do NOT treat preparing and applying to professional schools like checking off boxes that will gain you that acceptance. Also, do not compare yourself to other pre-professional students and remember that being different is a GOOD thing. You do not want to look like everyone else when you are applying to your program of interest.

Check Us Out on the Web!

**Facebook, Twitter and Blogs:**
- NatSci4U Blog
  https://natsci.msu.edu/students/blog/

- MSU PreHealth Facebook
  http://facebook.com/MSUPreHealth

- NatSci Facebook
  https://www.facebook.com/MSUCNS

- Twitter for MSU Preprofessional Students
  http://twitter.com/msu_preprof

- Twitter for NatSci Students
  http://twitter.com/msu_preprof

**Additional Resources:**
- Preprofessional Student Website
  https://natsci.msu.edu/students/preprofessional/

- Undergraduate Student Resources
  https://natsci.msu.edu/academics/undergraduate/degree-programs/

- Career Exploration
  https://natsci.msu.edu/students/career/

- Study Abroad
  https://natsci.msu.edu/academics/undergraduate/study-abroad/