

BUILDING THE ANTHROPOLOGY MUSEUM DIGITAL FOOTPRINT AT FLORIDA STATE



UNIVERSITY

JAKYAH HAYES, MAX STURGEON, AND DR. AMY KOWAL



INTRODUCTION:

Anthropological museums play a vital role in preserving and showcasing human culture, history, and society; yet, the digital age has emphasized the need for accessible, online platforms to complement traditional exhibits. The International Council of Museums (ICOM) aligns with this perspective, as their 2023 theme, Sustainability and Wellbeing, underscores the professional relationship between communities and museums, advocating for the use of digital tools to enhance inclusivity (Güneröz, 2023). At Florida State University, much of the anthropology museum's extensive history remained untapped or inaccessible to those outside the immediate academic community. Addressing this gap, the Anthropology Museum Website project emerged as an innovative approach to digitize the department's history and showcase its museum academic offerings and exhibits. Central to this initiative is Dr. Amy Kowal, whose pivotal role in fostering student engagement with museum studies is depicted on the first page of the website. Presented through CreateFSU the site aims to achieve several objectives:

- Enhance accessibility to anthropology resources for a broader audience
- Preserve the department's cultural and academic relevance through digitization
- Provide a platform for Dr. Kowal's graduate students to contribute to the website's content
- Serve as an interdisciplinary learning experience, combining anthropology and website development

METHODOLOGY:

Research & Planning

- Background research on existing anthropology digital platforms
- Identify best practices for digital accessibility
- Outline project goals

Meeting with CreateFSU

- Troubleshoot technical issues with Create FSU Technicians

Team Coordination

- Delegate background research duties
- Identify team members' skills
- Delegate site task based on skills and preference

Development & Testing

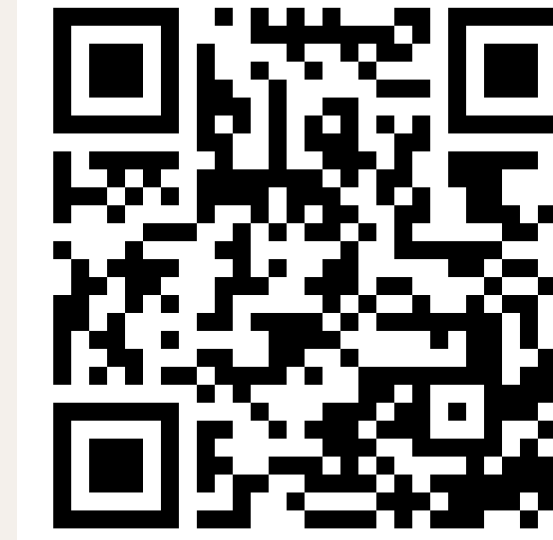
- Develop and refine digital templates to ensure uniformity
- Conduct test and
- Incorporate feedback

Website Creation & Finalization

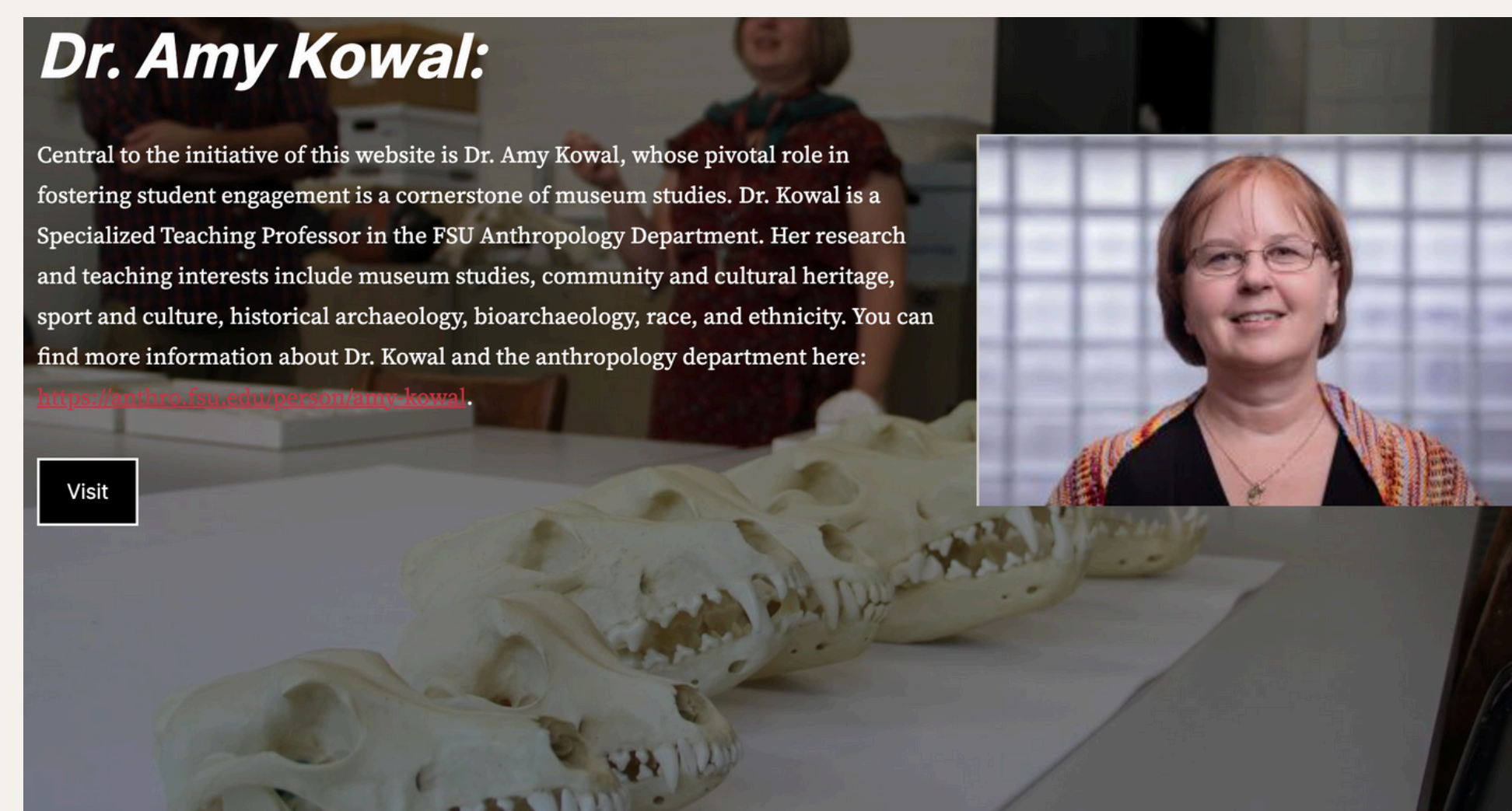
- Integrate templates and content into the website
- Perform final usability testing to verify seamless user experience
- Launch the website, ensuring easy access for all users
- Document and save the process, outcomes, and templates for future reference and potential expansion

RESULTS:

Full webpage highlighting the cornerstones of museum anthropology at FSU.

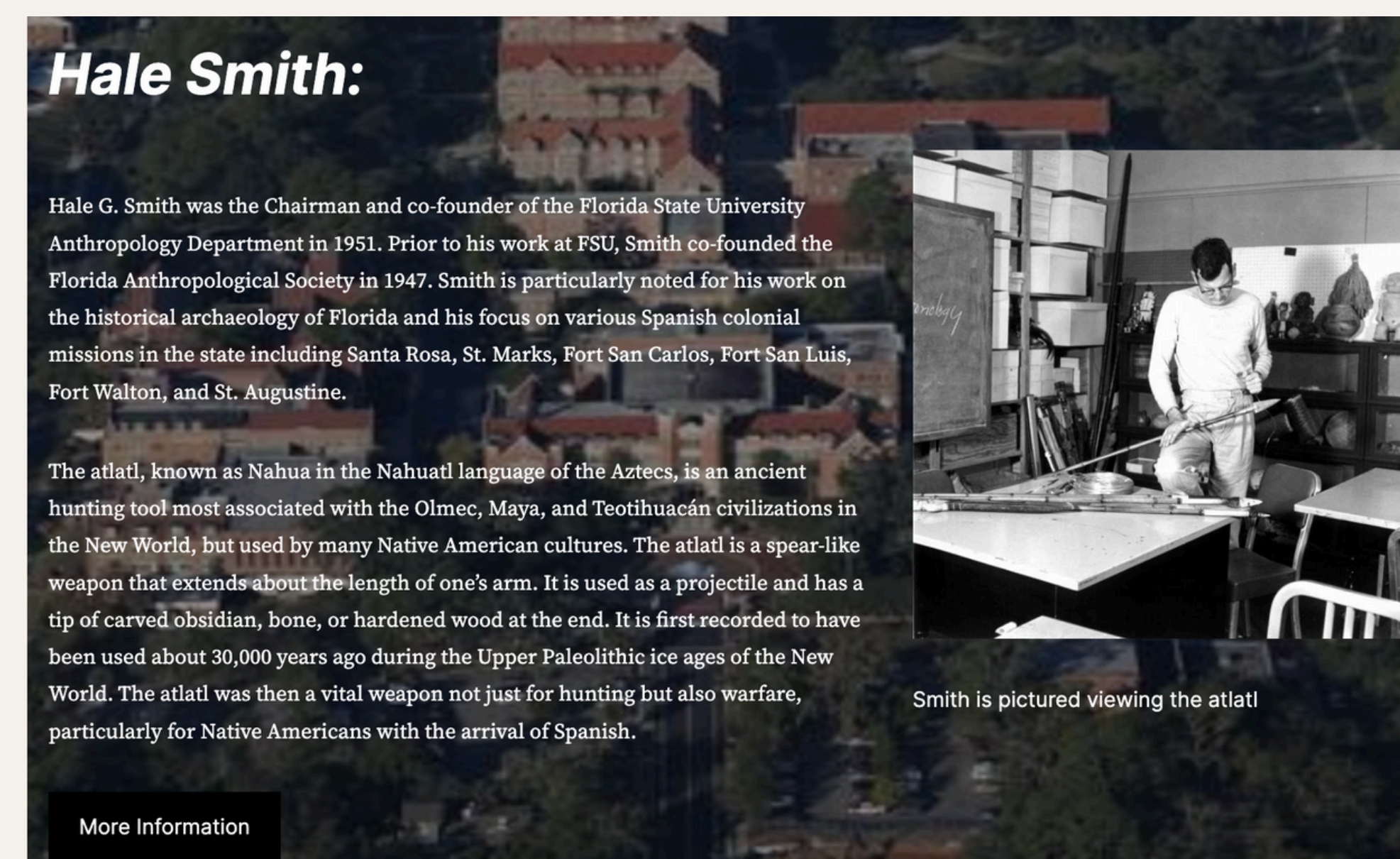


Page 1- Dr.Kowal and Museum Studies



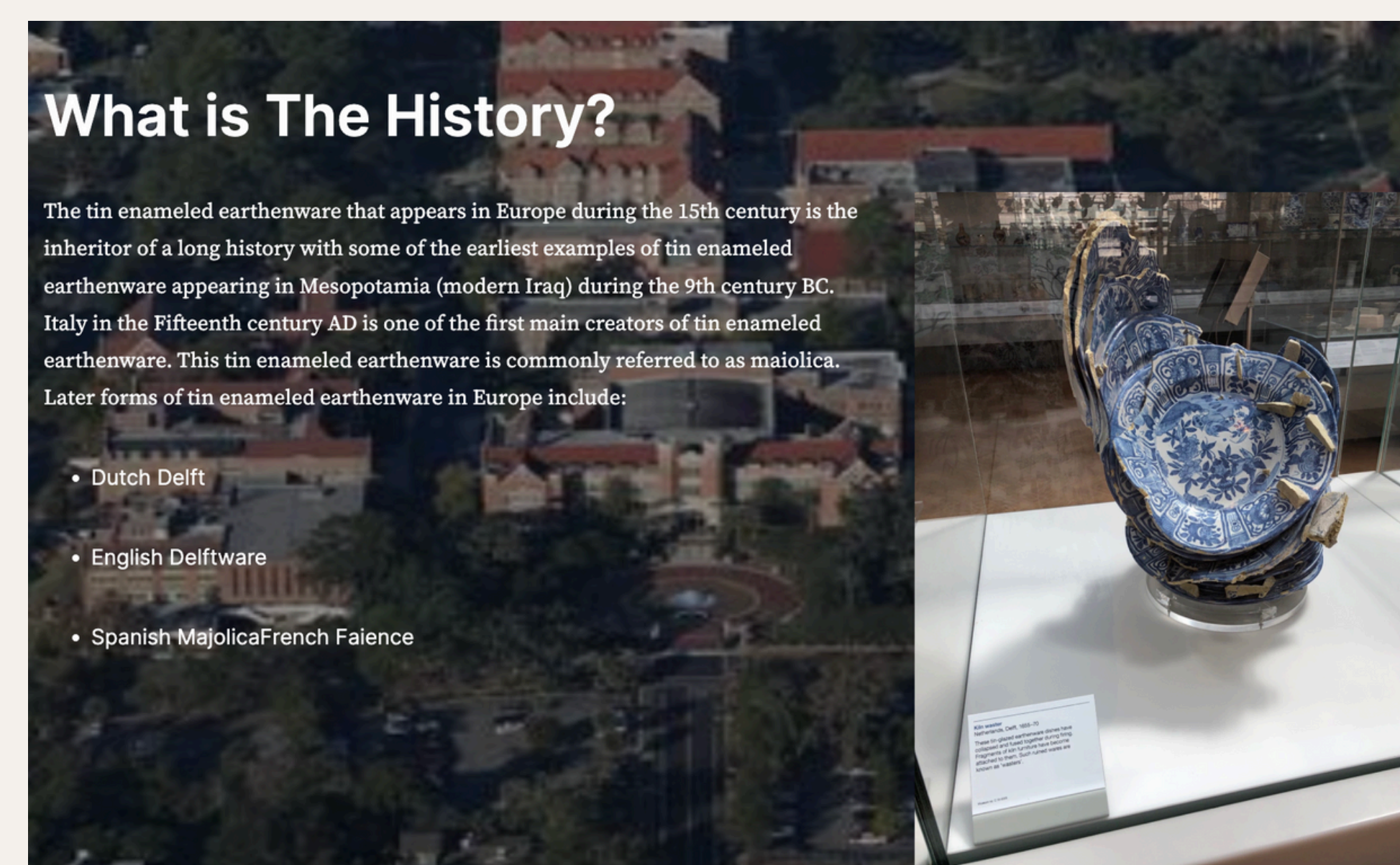
Students are able to learn more about Dr.Kowal and her role in museum anthropology, her UROP research, and available museum studies courses.

Page 2- Department History



Where all past information about the department is available. information such as past locations and student testimonials can be found.

Page 3 - Ceramics Exhibit



This exhibit was created by past museum anthropology student and is one of the exhibits that will be showcased on the website.

KEY FINDINGS:

- User-friendly accessibility including templates and colors ensures the website is easy to view on all devices and understand for audiences of all ages
- Clean design principles create strong visual appeal and effectively capture viewers' attention
- The website emphasizes student engagement in heritage preservation and the potential of museum anthropology at Florida State University
- Leveraging technology enhances the digital footprint of museum anthropology, fostering inclusivity within the department and among students



2022 Open House



Anthropology Department Logo



Delftware Vessel, Colonial Williamsburg, 2007

CHALLENGES:

- **Learning to create custom webpages using WordPress** presented a steep learning curve for the project team
- **Transferring old exhibits posed a challenge**, as the original vision could be lost when the graduate student creator was not involved in webpage development
- **Maintaining a focus on museum anthropology**, rather than general anthropology department information, was crucial to achieving the site's concise objectives
- **Selecting appropriate templates and functions for accessibility and cohesive design** was challenging due to the varying materials and sections, requiring extensive trial and error

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Stay confident and flexible when creating a website with no prior experience; use tutorials and resources to develop skills
- Become familiar with the Anthropology museum program and expand artifact digitization for broader accessibility
- Maintain consistency across all pages by using the same or very similar templates, ensuring uniformity in layout, colors, and fonts. This cohesive design makes navigation intuitive for visitors

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND RESOURCES:



FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

- Continue updating the website with current department events to stay relevant and engaging
- Allow graduate students to publish exhibits on website using consistent page templates
- Incorporate multimedia elements, such as videos or virtual tours, to provide an immersive experience and showcase exhibits more dynamically
- Introduce interactive tools like forums, polls, or timelines to enhance audience engagement



San Luis, Polychrome, Mexico 1650-1750