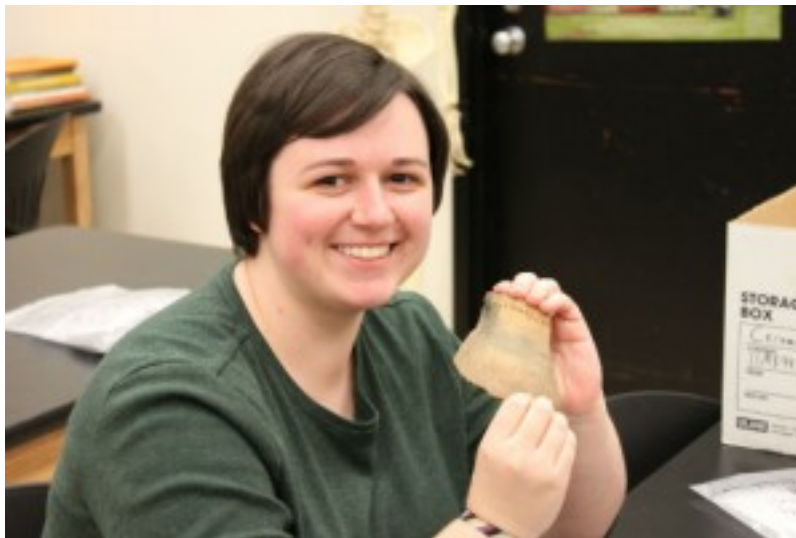


# Anthropology alumni wins annual Illinois Archaeological Survey's student paper competition

<http://thisweekincas.com/2014/10/20/anthropology-alumni-wins-annual-illinois-archaeological-surveys-student-paper-competition/>

Manuel Poch | Oct 20, 2014 | 0 comments

Alumna Kaitlin Roberts received the **Jeannette E. Stephens Student Paper Award 2014** for her research paper "The Gehring Site: A Ceramic Analysis." Roberts wrote the paper as part of her senior project in which she analyzed ceramic artifacts from the **SIUE Archaeology Field School** under the direction of her mentor, anthropology professor Julie Holt.



Alumna Kaitlin Roberts holding a ceramic artifact from the Archaeology Field School

During 2013 field school, ceramic artifacts determined to be from the Middle Woodland period (ca. 150 BC to 300 AD) were uncovered. The objectives of Roberts's research were to use the ceramic artifacts in these pits to narrow down a time of occupation, attempt to discern whether or not ritual activity took place at this time and to see if there was evidence supporting the theory that people moved to the area from farther north, along the Illinois River.

The findings argue that the pits were most likely created during the Holding Phase of the Middle Woodland Period, a time ranging from 50 to 150 AD, according to Roberts.

"The ceramic assemblage that I analyzed included pottery very similar to that found in the Illinois River Valley, suggesting that people migrated to this area

from the north,” Roberts said. “I found some simple pottery lacking decoration, suggesting the pots were made and used for secular activities, but there was also a great deal of highly decorated pottery, suggesting that it was made and used for ritual activity, such as feasts or religious ceremony.”

Holt said winning the Illinois Archaeological Survey’s undergraduate paper award will open doors in archaeology for Roberts and will help her advance her career in cultural resource management.

“It is also an honor to the anthropology department when our students win these awards,” Holt said. “The reason SIUE anthropology students usually win these competitions is because they have completed the year-long senior research project, gaining hands-on experience in anthropological data collection and analysis, an opportunity our peer institutions rarely offer to their undergraduate students.”

Roberts said working with the artifacts from the field school was a natural choice since they are collected by SIUE students and housed by the anthropology department.

“My mentor and I agreed that performing an artifact analysis would provide me with skills and knowledge I would need for a career in archaeology,” Roberts said. “I find prehistoric pottery fascinating and the different styles and designs the people used could tell a story.”