

Pennsylvania State University's 4th Annual

LIFE SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

Douglas R. Cavener is internationally recognized for his research in molecular biology, genetics, and evolutionary biology. His recent work has focused on the etiology of human diseases including diabetes and neurodegenerative disorders.

He came to Penn State in 2000 and has served as the department head of Biology over the past 15 years. In 2012, he was also appointed adjunct professor of Life Sciences at the Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology in Tanzania. Cavener was appointed the dean of the Eberly College of Science on July 18, 2015.

He began his academic career in 1982 as an assistant professor of Molecular Biology at Vanderbilt University and advanced to associate professor and then professor. At Vanderbilt, he was a leader in graduate education and programs in molecular biology and biomedical sciences. Over his tenure at Vanderbilt and Penn State, Cavener has trained 24 Ph.D. students and continues to mentor graduate and undergraduate students in his research lab located in the Huck Life Science Building.

He earned his B.A. in Biology in 1973 from Pasadena College; M.S. in Genetics in 1977 from Brown University, and Ph.D. in Molecular and Population Genetics in 1980 from the University of Georgia. He pursued postdoctoral studies at Cornell University for two years prior to his first academic appointment. Based on his earlier research Cavener won the prestigious Theodosius Dobzhansky Prize from the International Society for the Study of Evolution. He was recently elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Douglas R. Cavener



May 10, 2019
Business Building
University Park
3:00-4:00PM

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Nina G. Jablonski is Evan Pugh University Professor of Anthropology at The Pennsylvania State University. A biological anthropologist and paleobiologist, she studies the evolution of adaptations to the environment in Old World primates including humans.

Her research program is focused in two major areas. Her paleoanthropological research concerns the evolutionary history of Old World monkeys, and currently includes an active field project in China. Her research on the evolution of human adaptations to the environment centers on the evolution of human skin and skin pigmentation, and includes an active field project examining the relationship between skin pigmentation and vitamin D production.

Jablonski is currently collaborating on the development of new approaches to science education in the United States. These approaches have the dual aims of improving the understanding of evolution and human diversity, and stimulating interest among students in pursuing STEM courses and careers. With the support of NESCent (the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center) and active collaboration of Henry Louis Gates, Jr., she is leading a group of 30 scholars in the development of “genetics and genealogy” curricula for K-12 and undergraduate university students.

Jablonski also leads a major new scholarly initiative aimed at studying the effects of race in South African society. With the support of the STIAS (the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study), she is the convener of the “Effects of Race” (EOR) program, which will bring together a select group of senior and junior scholars yearly to formulate new approaches to the study of race and the mitigation of racial discrimination

Nina Jablonski



**May 10, 2019
Business Building
University Park
9:05-10:05AM**