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First Great Ape Trust Visiting Scholar named under agreement with Simpson College *Scientist who has researched social relationships in rhesus monkeys eager to include Great Ape Trust bonobos in scientific inquiry*

Des Moines, Iowa – May 22, 2008 – The first Great Ape Trust Visiting Scholar has been selected under an agreement reached last year between Great Ape Trust of Iowa and Simpson College to enhance research and scholarship opportunities available to students with an interest in primatology and related areas.

During her two-year appointment, Tamara Weinstein will teach courses in primatology and psychology at Simpson, and supervise student research at Great Ape Trust while also conducting her own scientific inquiry. Weinstein, a primatologist, is currently teaching courses at the University of California-Davis and American River College in Sacramento.

Weinstein is completing coursework for her Ph.D. at UC-Davis, where she has studied how temperament affects the development of social relationships in juvenile rhesus monkeys with a focus on their affiliative relationships – or friendly interactions – and plans to expand her inquiry to the bonobos at Great Ape Trust. “The bonobos, who of course are masters at affiliating, are especially ideal for the pursuit of that particular research interest,” she said.

NEWS RELEASE

As a graduate student, Weinstein has also examined the biological basis of temperament and affiliative behavior in rhesus monkeys by measuring how individual variation relates to levels of the hormones oxytocin, often known as the “love hormone,” and vasopressin, a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland.

“Another thing that particularly interested me about Great Ape Trust, aside from the fantastic and unique opportunity to work closely with the bonobos, is the ease of collecting urine samples from the animals for the purpose of measuring oxytocin, vasopressin and other hormones like cortisol,” she said. “Given the rarity of bonobos, both in the wild and in captivity, getting physiological data on the animals would certainly be an extraordinary chance to examine the biological mechanisms underlying their behavior.”

Dr. Carl Halgren, a professor of psychology at Simpson and the college’s liaison for the partnership with Great Ape Trust, noted how closely Weinstein’s research interests mesh with The Trust’s focus on great ape cognition and behavior. “Tamara is a dedicated and competent teacher, and she is committed to involving Simpson students in ongoing activities at The Trust,” Halgren said.

Weinstein said the arrangement between Simpson and The Trust allows her to pursue twin priorities – teaching and scientific research – rather than focus on one or the other. “This is a wonderful situation for me,” she said. “The small, intimate community of both organizations suits my personality, and I’m very excited to be involved in the development of courses at Simpson and to initiate a research program at Great Ape Trust.

“There are very few colleges in the United States, and probably the world, that benefit from having a top-notch primate research facility close by, and I was definitely concerned that when I left UC-Davis that I’d have to end up traveling quite a distance to be able to do my research.” Weinstein continued. “So I feel fortunate to have found the opening for the Visiting Scholar position, and even more fortunate to have received the job.”

GREAT APE TRUST BACKGROUND

NEWS RELEASE

Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines dedicated to understanding the origins and future of culture, language, tools and intelligence. When completed, Great Ape Trust will be the largest great ape facility in North America and one of the first worldwide to include all four types of great ape – bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans – for noninvasive interdisciplinary studies of their cognitive and communicative capabilities.

Great Ape Trust is dedicated to providing sanctuary and an honorable life for great apes, studying the intelligence of great apes, advancing conservation of great apes and providing unique educational experiences about great apes. Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). To learn more about Great Ape Trust of Iowa, go to www.GreatApeTrust.org.

SIMPSON COLLEGE BACKGROUND

Simpson College is a private, nationally recognized, four-year liberal arts college located on a beautiful 85-acre campus in Indianola, Iowa, with easy access to Des Moines. Founded in 1860 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, Simpson seeks to help students of all ages develop critical intellectual skills and nurture values which foster personal worth and individuality for the purpose of living lives of leadership within a creative, diverse and just community. Simpson offers 52 programs of study and operates on the 4-4-1 academic calendar with May Term offering students an opportunity to study abroad. Recent trips have included Great Britain, Borneo, Venice, Costa Rica and Mongolia.

Simpson College now has a total enrollment of 2,300 in the traditional program and the Division of Adult Learning. The college is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and is a member of NCAA Division III.

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Insights Through Collaborations with Apes