

Record year for ASU faculty Fulbrights

15 receive bridge-building award for 2026–27, for work on projects ranging from EV batteries powering homes in Finland to strengthening food supply chain resilience in Qatar

By Penny Walker, ASU News
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Arizona State University has had a record year for faculty Fulbright awards, with 15 receiving awards for 2026–27 from the [U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board](#) — the most ASU has ever received in a competition year.

Fulbright U.S. Scholars teach or conduct research in affiliation with institutes abroad, often continuing research collaborations started abroad and laying the groundwork for forging future partnerships between institutions. Over 800 individuals take part annually in the program aimed at fostering mutual understanding across borders.

[Karen Engler-Weber](#), who has helped land more than 100 scholar awards as part of her work directing the ASU Fulbright Office, says all the projects have had heavy engagement with host institutions and the surrounding communities, building long-term relationships with ASU.

“What’s unique about the Fulbright program, compared to other grants and fellowships, is that Fulbright is really focused on relationships,” Engler-Weber said. “The Fulbright motto is ‘Connecting people, connecting nations.’ Every time ASU sends a Fulbright Scholar abroad, through their teaching and their research, they are expanding the reach of ASU’s charter across the globe. They build relationships between ASU and host institutions and host countries in very concrete ways, which results in long-term collaborations, long-term impact and the creation of new opportunities that grow beyond the period of the grant.

“We often see faculty members building connections, so that our ASU students may have opportunities to do research with institutions abroad, while ASU often becomes the host for visiting scholars and Fulbright students from countries that hosted our faculty.

“It’s a life-changing experience for everyone — our faculty and the host community — and that’s the essence of Fulbright.”

This year’s record-setting ASU cohort includes a Fulbright Global Scholar Program awardee, human systems engineer D. Vaughn Becker of the Ira A. Fulton

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Schools of Engineering. The prestigious Fulbright Global Scholar Award allows academics and professionals to engage in multi-country, multi-regional projects.

More by-the-numbers: The Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation has the most faculty in the latest cohort with four, followed by three apiece from the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering and The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Of the destinations, India has the most with three, followed by Brazil with two.

The ASU awardees (with the destination named in the award in parentheses) are:

Lindsey Beagley (Korea), Mirabella at ASU

Audrey Beardsley (Brazil), Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation

D. Vaughn Becker (Fulbright Global Scholar Program), The Polytechnic School

Jordan Causadias (Panama), Mary Lou Fulton College

Sherry Fox (Kosovo), School of Interdisciplinary Forensics

David Hodge (the Philippines), School of Social Work

Stephanie Hollings Nasr (Algeria), Mary Lou Fulton College

Arunachala Nadar Mada Kannan (Finland), The Polytechnic School

Punya Mishra (India), Mary Lou Fulton College

Suraj Muley (India), John Shufeldt School of Medicine and Medical Engineering

Mahour Parast (Qatar), School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment

Claudia Sadowski-Smith (Austria), Department of English

Steven Semken (Brazil), School of Earth and Space Exploration

Arunima Singh (India), Department of Physics

Additional Fulbright Scholar awards include **Andrew Porwancher**, who won the award for an Australian project while at ASU but is now teaching at the University of Texas at Austin.

The Fulbright Program, created in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II, is led by the U.S. Department of State, and it operates in over 160 countries worldwide. Fulbright alumni have received 62 Nobel Prizes, 82 MacArthur Foundation Fellowships, 98 Pulitzer Prizes, and are

among 44 current or former heads of state or government.

“This record-setting year for ASU Fulbright Scholars is a tremendous recognition of the academic excellence of our faculty and the impact of their scholarship,” said Nancy Gonzales, ASU executive vice president and university provost.

“Our charter calls on us to advance research and discovery of public value, and these scholars are putting that commitment into action around the world. Through their research, teaching and collaboration with communities and institutions across the globe, they are creating new knowledge, strengthening relationships and demonstrating the extraordinary impact our faculty can have well beyond our university.”

Learn more below about what these faculty members will be working on during their Fulbright experience.

How to apply for faculty Fulbright awards

The next competition cycle will open in February, for the 2028–29 academic year. Those who are interested in applying or who have questions about the Fulbright Program should reach out to Karen Engler-Weber at Karen.Engler@asu.edu.

Fulbright Global Scholar Program — multiple locations

Studying cooperation across cultures to build safer AI

[D. Vaughn Becker](#), an associate professor in [The Polytechnic School](#), part of the [Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering](#), has received a Fulbright Global Scholar Award for his project on modeling motivated cooperation across cultures to advance human and AI alignment. The award will take him to the University of Cologne in Germany; the Indian Institute of Technology, or IIT, in Kanpur, India; and Vrije Universiteit the Netherlands.

AI systems learn from human decisions, but those decisions are often shaped by motives people may not even recognize. Becker studies cognitive science, decision-making and human-AI alignment. Through his Fulbright, he will investigate how motivations such as self-protection, belonging and social status influence cooperation and how AI systems could learn to exploit those patterns if they are not better understood.

The three international partnerships each contribute a different piece of the project. Researchers at the University of Cologne will help refine the project's computational models of decision-making. At IIT Kanpur, Becker will work with researchers and students to test the models across a different cultural setting. At Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, collaborators will help integrate the international findings into agent-based models and recommendations for designing AI systems that better support human cooperation.

"The larger goal is to develop a more realistic science of human-AI alignment," Becker says. "By combining cross-cultural experiments with transparent computational models, we hope to help

design AI systems that strengthen cooperation without exploiting the people who use them."

Becker hopes the Fulbright will establish a lasting international research network focused on cooperation and human-AI alignment while creating new opportunities for student exchanges, collaborative research and open scientific resources. He also plans to bring the project's methods and findings back to ASU through courses in cognitive science and human-systems engineering.

Africa and the Middle East

Language teaching and global citizenship in Algeria

[Stephanie Hollings Nasr](#), a faculty associate in the [Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation](#), will collaborate with professors at Badji Mokhtar University in Annaba, Algeria, the region's largest public multidisciplinary university.

Her project, "Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Applied Linguistics," will focus on teaching English as a foreign language, applied linguistics and exploring new avenues for integrating global citizenship education within language teaching and applied linguistics.

Hollings Nasr is an academic associate in MLFC's Division for Advancing Education Policy, Practice and Leadership, teaching students in the Master of Education degree in global education program. Her course offerings have included Global Thinking in Education and Applied Inquiry in Global Education. She received her doctoral degree in comparative education, educational leadership and policy from Beijing Normal University. She also holds a master's degree in international studies from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology from ASU.

Hollings Nasr's numerous experiences, both professional and academic, inform her research interests in global citizenship, global education, environmental/sustainability education, higher education, international schools and international students.

Mapping Qatar's food supply chain to withstand disruption

[Mahour Parast](#), a research associate professor in the [School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment](#), part of the Fulton Schools, has received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award to research and teach at Qatar University in Doha.

Qatar depends heavily on food from outside its borders. Its food system has been disrupted twice in recent years, first by the 2017 blockade, when neighboring countries cut off trade and travel, and then by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parast studies supply chain management and data-driven decision-making. For his Fulbright project, he will map how food moves into and through Qatar, identify where the network is most vulnerable, and trace its ties to the global food system. The goal is to develop practical strategies to make the country's food supply more secure.

At Qatar University, he will bring the research into operations and courses through case studies, workshops and student mentoring. He also plans to work with industry partners in the region.

The project builds on Parast's existing collaborations with Qatar University faculty, including earlier research on supply chain risk and resilience funded by Qatar Foundation.

"I hope this experience will advance my research on supply chain resilience by providing deeper insight into how local, global and cultural factors shape resilience in practice," said Parast, who added that he expects the Qatar-based cases to give his ASU students a more global perspective.

Asia

Adapting the Mirabella model in South Korea

[Lindsey Beagley](#), executive director of longevity innovation for [Mirabella at ASU](#), has been named a Fulbright U.S. Scholar to lead a professional project in South Korea focused on lifelong learning and aging.

Beginning in January, Beagley will work with Namseoul University and six partner institutions to develop university-based retirement communities modeled after Mirabella at ASU. The project builds on her six years of experience at ASU Enterprise Partners connecting older adults with campus life through educational programming, research and intergenerational engagement.

As universities respond to shifting demographics and declining birth rates, Beagley will help partners adapt the university-based retirement community model to South Korea's higher education policies and community needs.

"Aging is a global issue. It's not unique to Arizona or the United States," she said.

Beagley's project explores how university-based retirement communities can strengthen lifelong learning and social connection in aging societies. The Fulbright exchange will help Beagley explore how emerging technologies and artificial intelligence can support healthy aging and lifelong learning.

"If we can serve a 75-year-old non-credential-seeking learner, we can serve anyone," Beagley said.

Advancing spirituality in social work in the Philippines

[David R. Hodge](#), Distinguished Professor in the [School of Social Work](#), part of the [Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions](#), has for decades explored the role that spirituality and religion can play in direct social work practice. But he has also raised concerns about the lack of education for social work students to develop these approaches through culturally responsive practice.

In December, Hodge will travel to the Philippines for his Fulbright project, “Addressing Spirituality in Clinical Work with Filipinos: Building Institutional Capacity.” It extends his past work developing tools for clinical work with diverse populations.

“Many instruments were designed and developed for use in Western settings. The purpose of my project is to create culturally validated spiritual assessment tools that are grounded in Filipino values,” he said.

Hodge will also provide strategic guidance and academic support for the Philippines’ first doctoral program in social work at his host institution, the University of Philippines Diliman. The new degree is a priority because of a shortage of Filipino social workers, Hodge said.

He previously received a Fulbright Scholar award to teach in Uganda in 2019–20, but his trip was cut short due to COVID-19.

“In my experience, a Fulbright is one of the most enriching experiences one can have as an academic,” he said.

Exploring generative AI in Indian education

[Punya Mishra](#), a professor in Mary Lou Fulton College, was awarded the Fulbright-Nehru International Education Administrators Award, one of six prestigious Fulbrights that allow administrators in higher education and international education to build their institutional capacity to enhance study abroad and expand opportunities for international collaborations through faculty and student exchange, collaborative research projects and pursuit of innovative curricular design.

Mishra is internationally recognized for his work in educational technology, the role of creativity and aesthetics in learning, and the application of design-based approaches to education innovation. He will be hosted by Azim Premji University in Bengaluru, India, for a project focused on India’s education system.

The world’s largest with more than 300 million students, India’s school system is second only to the U.S. in the number of people using AI tools such as ChatGPT, yet very little of this use has been studied. Through writing and podcasting, Mishra will document how AI is being implemented and will analyze his results in academic articles, practitioner briefs and a book.

He is interested in how AI widens access to learning, how it shuts people out and what communities invent when adoption of expensive tools is prohibited by limited resources.

“AI is entering education faster than any technology in history. The question that matters most isn’t whether it works, but for whom and on whose terms — where it widens access to learning, and where it shuts people out,” Mishra said. “India is where those questions are being answered in real time, and the answers matter for American classrooms as much as Indian ones.”

Strengthening India’s training in neuromuscular disorders

Dr. [Suraj Muley](#) will travel to India for a four-month appointment in 2027 at Seth G.S. Medical College and KEM Hospital. He will work with medical students, neurology residents, faculty and

practicing neurologists at medical centers in India and neighboring countries to strengthen training and infrastructure in neuromuscular disorders, with an emphasis on inflammatory neuropathies and myasthenia gravis.

A professor at the [John Shufeldt School of Medicine and Medical Engineering](#) and director of neurology at the Bob Bové Neuroscience Institute at HonorHealth, Muley brings three decades of experience in academic neurology, clinical teaching and clinical trial leadership to the Fulbright program.

A major focus of his project is developing sustainable collaborative research programs between Indian and U.S. institutions. India's large and diverse patient population offers unique opportunities to improve understanding of disease presentation, treatment response and long-term outcomes.

"This is an opportunity to give back on a global level and to use all of my experience in this specialized area in a new, more impactful way that can potentially enhance the care of patients globally," Muley said. "Once these relationships are established, there are a lot of opportunities available to us, from developing an exchange program for residents to creating mini fellowships for practicing neurologists."

Quantum materials research and STEM outreach in India

[Arunima Singh](#), an associate professor in the [Department of Physics](#), part of [The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#), was awarded the Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Award at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai, India, where she'll work on the [machine-learning-enabled design of quantum material-semiconductor heterostructures](#).

"My group's expertise in data science and computational modeling complements their expertise in growing and experimentally characterizing quantum materials," Singh said.

At ASU, Singh primarily researches computational material physics where she uses quantum-mechanical simulations, machine learning and data science to understand and design materials.

Beyond conducting research and delivering seminars, she also plans to visit schools and colleges for STEM outreach, particularly in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, to share her own journey from growing up in a small village in India to becoming a physics professor in the United States.

"Scientifically, it will allow me to expand my research from semiconductors into quantum materials and help strengthen this research direction at ASU," Singh said. "Personally, it is especially meaningful to return to the country where I grew up, contribute to its scientific and educational communities and help build lasting connections between researchers and students in India and the United States."

Central and South America

Evaluating Brazil's educational design

[Audrey Beardsley](#), a professor in Mary Lou Fulton College, will partner with Professor Kaizô Beltrão at Fundação Getulio Vargas in Brazil to conduct an evaluation of that country's nationally implemented higher education value-added model, or VAM, according to standards established by the American Educational Research Association and others.

Brazil's VAM, the largest of its kind in the world, is used nationwide to estimate how much that nation's higher education institutions contribute to student learning over time, as measured using nationwide test scores.

Beardsley's goal with her project, titled "Innovative Measures — A Standards-Based Evaluation of Brazil's Higher Education Value-Added Model," is to support Brazil's efforts to strengthen educational quality and accountability while also generating globally relevant insights about the design, use and ethics of VAMs in higher education.

"I am honored to be part of the Fulbright program, especially at a time when many U.S. global relationships are strained," Beardsley said. "This project allows me to contribute my expertise in educational measurement while learning from Brazil's pioneering approach to evaluating higher education, with the hope that our shared work advances research, policy and practice locally and globally."

Supporting educators with professional development in Panama

[Jordan Causadias](#), a clinical assistant professor in Mary Lou Fulton College, will be working in Panama on a project titled "MTSS Teacher Training to Address Learning Loss and Improve Rural Secondary Reading and Math Outcomes."

Panama is confronting a severe learning loss in literacy and mathematics caused by school closures and national protests. Partnering with Ciudad del Saber, or City of Knowledge, and El Centro de Investigación Educativa, Causadias will pilot an adapted, multitiered system of support, or MTSS, model for secondary schools through a hybrid professional development program.

Educators will gain practical, evidence-based strategies for reading (paired reading, fluency) and math (high-leverage interventions) delivered through in-person workshops and virtual modules. Her project will culminate in an open-access Spanish MTSS tool kit and a sustainable educator network to support long-term implementation.

An award-winning school psychologist, Causadias has worked in public schools in Minneapolis, Chicago, Phoenix, upstate New York, Madrid, Panama City and Quito, Ecuador. Her work spans school psychology, educator preparation, systems-level consultation and international collaboration focused on creating more inclusive and sustainable educational environments. She advocates for practical, evidence-based approaches that strengthen school-family partnerships, educator wellness and equitable access to learning opportunities.

A continued collaboration with Brazilian geologists

[Steven Semken](#), President's Professor of geology and education in the [School of Earth and Space Exploration](#) in The College, will be a visiting professor in the Institute of Geosciences at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) in Brazil. At USP, Semken will teach place-based geoscience

educational methods while collaborating with and learning from his Brazilian colleagues. The project will include fieldwork at caves, mines and other significant sites.

Semken's collaboration with Brazilian geologists at USP began in 2016 when they met at the International Geological Congress in Cape Town, South Africa. Over the past decade, the collaborators have exchanged visits, including Semken's trip to Brazil in 2024, which also included Ángel Garcia, a former doctoral student of Semken's — now an associate professor at James Madison University. Semken is also co-advising a doctoral student at USP.

Through the collaboration, Semken has built connections between geological and culturally significant sites in Arizona and São Paulo State in Brazil, particularly caves and mining areas. Semken's Fulbright award will expand this long-standing collaboration and reflect his nearly 40 years of experience in geoscience education, including field-based and virtual teaching.

"This collaboration with Brazilian geologists has been consistently fruitful in scholarship and teaching. I am delighted to be able to return to USP. I am grateful to the Fulbright Program for its support and the ASU Fulbright Office for its guidance," he said.

Europe

Sharing expertise in forensic anthropology in Kosovo

[Sherry Fox](#), an assistant teaching professor in the [School of Interdisciplinary Forensics](#) in the [New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences](#), will spend the 2026–27 academic year at the University of Prishtina in Kosovo, where she will introduce biological anthropology while expanding opportunities for research and student mentorship.

Fox's work in biological anthropology includes her expertise in forensic anthropology, paleopathology and bioarchaeology, with research involving human skeletal remains and the ways they can provide insight into identity, health and past populations. Her experience in the region also includes work related to people who went missing during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

As a Fulbright Scholar, Fox will collaborate with colleagues in the University of Prishtina's Department of Anthropology to organize a lecture series featuring international scholars and practitioners, including experts from ASU, Kosovo and European institutions. She also plans to undertake a local bioarcheological research project while mentoring students.

Together, the teaching, research and international exchange will help expand biological anthropology at the University of Prishtina while creating opportunities for students to engage directly with the field.

"Through this Fulbright award, I look forward to building lasting academic partnerships and advancing collaborative research and education between Kosovo and the United States," Fox said.

Testing how EV batteries can power homes and the grid in Finland

[Arunachala Nadar Mada Kannan](#), a professor and graduate program chair of clean energy systems in The Polytechnic School, part of the Fulton Schools, has received the [Fulbright-LUT-EMRC Scholar Award](#). He will work with researchers at LUT University and its [Electric Mobility Research Center](#), or EMRC, in Lappeenranta, Finland.

Kannan's research focuses on batteries, fuel cells and electric vehicles. In Finland, he will use LUT University's smart energy laboratory to build and test a small-scale vehicle-to-grid demonstration system. Vehicle-to-grid technology lets an electric car's battery send stored power back to a home or the electrical grid, turning a parked car into a source of backup power.

He will also help develop graduate course modules in energy systems and give guest lectures and seminars at LUT University and EMRC.

LUT University has taken on a wide range of clean energy projects. It also offers graduate engineering programs in power-to-X, a set of technologies that convert renewable electricity into fuels and other forms of energy. Kannan said that experience makes the university a strong place to build his own knowledge and skills.

"I hope this project demonstrates the potential of vehicle-to-grid technology," Kannan said. "I strongly expect to gain more hands-on experience so I can extend similar research at ASU on my return."

He hopes the Fulbright will strengthen ASU's existing research collaboration and student exchange with LUT University. He also hopes it will lead to a dual master's degree between ASU's clean energy systems program and LUT University's power-to-X energy engineering program.

Researching global migration literature in Austria

[Claudia Sadowski-Smith](#), a professor in The College's [Department of English](#), has received a Fulbright American Studies Lecturing Award at the University of Vienna, where she will teach courses and conduct research on East European migration literature in Austria, Germany and the United States.

Her project explores how writers with roots in Poland, Romania, the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union tell stories of displacement, adaptation and belonging, bringing these voices into the larger field of global migration literature.

Despite major waves of East European migration — from the Cold War and the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union to the displacement of millions of Ukrainians since Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion — these literary responses are often studied within separate national or regional traditions. Bringing them into conversation with one another and with other migration literatures reveals both experiences shared across migrant populations and the distinctive histories that have shaped East European displacement.

"Vienna offers a timely setting for this work," said Sadowski-Smith, who is also a faculty affiliate of [ASU Jewish Studies](#), the [Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict](#) and [Melikian Center for Russian, Eurasian and East European Studies](#). "Austria and neighboring Germany have long been major destinations for East European migrants, including Ukrainians displaced since 2022. Research in Vienna will help connect literary representations with contemporary migration

experiences and bring these perspectives into broader conversations about displacement.”

Kim Baptista, Anna Cearley-Rivas, Ayrel Clark-Proffitt, Tiffany Gonzalez, Amanda Goodman, Kristen LaRue-Sandler, Mariana Lozovanu, Megan Neely, Iveta Silova, Lanelle Strawder and Hannah Weisman contributed to this story.

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Lindsey Beagley, executive director of longevity innovation for Mirabella at ASU, talks with the chair of the arts committee, Linda Brisbane (left) and Francine Schauer, a six-year resident, near the art gallery at Mirabella at ASU on Sept. 9. Schauer and Beagley were comparing the language challenges of learning ancient Hebrew and Korean. For her Fulbright experience, Beagley will spend six months in South Korea helping partners create multigenerational learning environments, including university-based retirement communities similar to Mirabella. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News

Text image(s)



D. Vaughn Becker



Stephanie Hollings Nasr



Mahour Parast



Lindsey Beagley



David R. Hodge





Suraj Muley



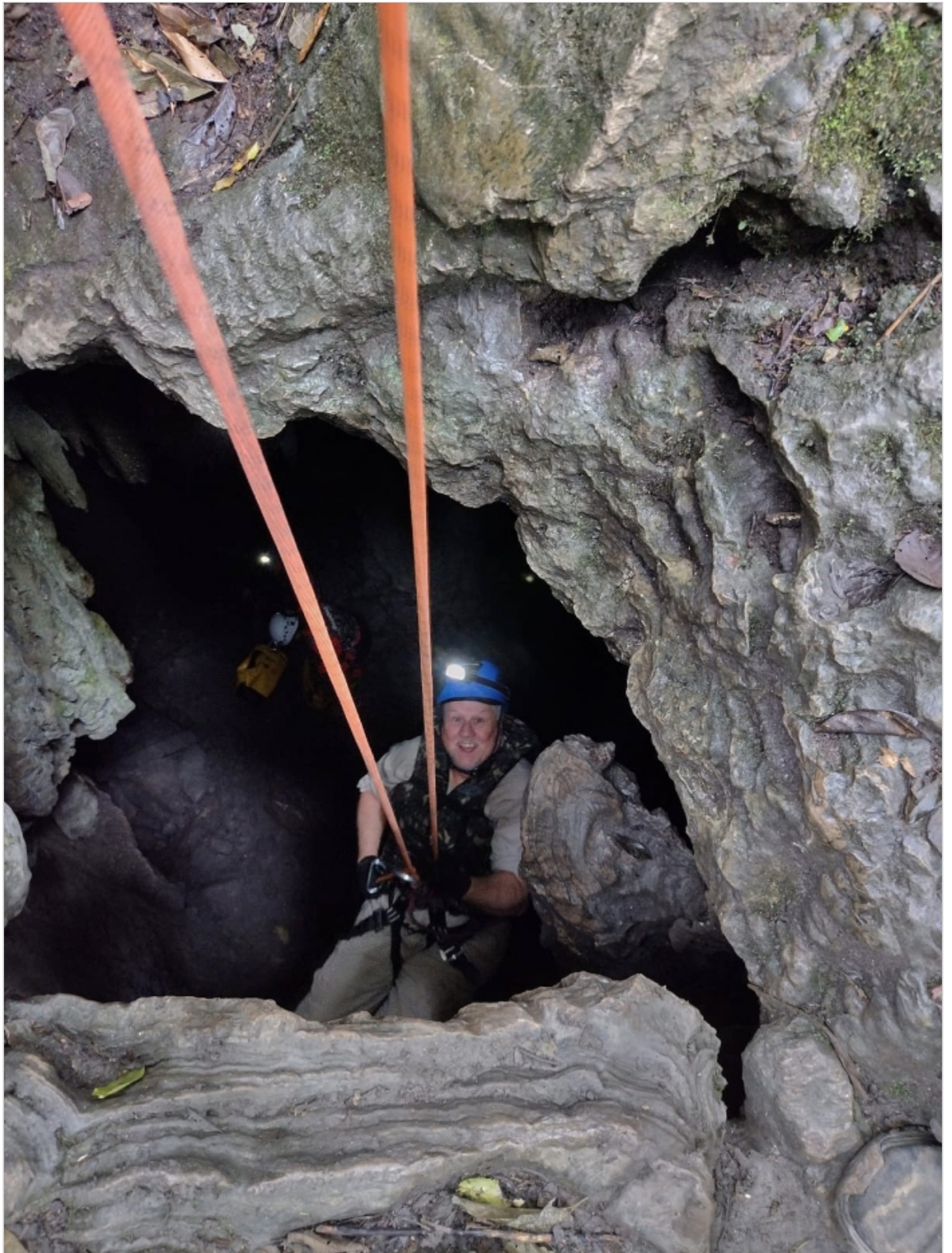
Arunima Singh



Audrey Beardsley



Jordan Causadias



Professor Steve Semken rappels into a cave called Caverna Lago Suspenso in 2024. This and other caves in the Ribeira Valley of São Paulo State, Brazil, is where Semken will be doing collaborative work in place-based field geoscience education. Courtesy photo



Sherry Fox in Ancient Thebes, Greece, about 14 years ago. Courtesy photo



Arunachala Nadar Mada Kannan in his lab. Photo by Jessica Hochreiter/ASU



Claudia Sadowski-Smith