



**COLLEGE OF  
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**

**Department of History**

280 Schaeffer Hall  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1409  
319-335-2299 Fax 319-335-2293

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Dear Friends of Iowa Department of History,

Having just taken up the reigns of Departmental Chair last August, I'm happy that I've finally found a moment to send a quick update on Departmental activity – and to say “thank you” for your support.

In the last two years, our department has been greatly enhanced by the addition of Mariola Espinosa, a specialist in global public health, empire, and the Caribbean; and Stephen Warren, who focuses on Native American and public history. Keisha Blain will join our faculty next fall: her work examines African American history and the modern African diaspora. We are currently searching for a specialist in digital history, and we look forward to expanding our activity in this growing field. Of course, we've also said some farewells. In recent years, we've marked the retirement of Shel Stromquist, Linda Kerber, and David Arkush, all of whom made a major mark in the profession – and probably on many of your lives.

We've had a real boom in public history in the last few years. Just last spring, an undergraduate class led by Ty Priest did a project on the “History of History at Iowa” – some of you probably filled out surveys for that project. It culminated in a multi-media display in Schaeffer Hall, a set of Memory Books which are on their way to participants, and the revival of the History Club. Plans are in the works to create a permanent online display of the exhibit. Graduate Students run the History Corps, an online digital and oral history project that aims to bring history and the humanities to the citizens of Iowa and the Midwest. History Corps' website includes the digital component of a project on the historic 2008 flood completed in Jacki Rand's graduate class on public history. The class also created an exhibit that was displayed in Iowa City in the spring of 2013 (and which now decorates my office).

In addition to their scholarly work and their activity in the classroom, our faculty continue to make an impact in the public sphere. In just the last few months, major media outlets like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *National Public Radio* have tapped the expertise of Colin Gordon on racial segregation in St. Louis, Glenn Penny on Germans' fascination with Native Americans, Landon Storrs on neo-McCarthyism, and myself on family policy in Germany. Ty Priest served on the President's National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling; Katherine Tachau serves on the National Council on the Humanities; and Meriam Belli provides advice on legal cases concerning the Middle East. And History faculty continue to lead the way in interdisciplinary activity on campus. Leslie Schwalm, for example, just finished a term as Chair of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies, and Omar Valerio-Jimenez is directing the brand new minor in Latina/o Studies.

What's most exciting, however, is the success of our students. Thanks to our donors, we have a robust slate of departmental grants to fund undergraduate and graduate research – activity which has led to excellent undergraduate and graduate theses, top grad school placements for our BA's, and jobs that make a difference. Knowing of the success of our graduates, we weren't surprised by a recent study by the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, which found that History majors go on to earn better salaries than majors in any other humanities field.

Here are just a few recent recipients of donor-funded departmental awards:

- Katherine Valde, BA 2014, wrote an honors thesis on the Argentinian Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. She's now a Research and Program Associate at the Democracy Program at NYU Law School's Brennan Center for Justice.
- Stephanie Mueller, BA 2013, wrote an honors thesis on the "crisis in the humanities" in American higher education. She is now studying in Mongolia as a Fulbright scholar.
- Andrew Elges, BA 2012, wrote an honors thesis on anti-Nazi resistance. He's now using his German-language skills as a translator for John Deere.
- Abigail Behr, BA 2011, wrote an honors thesis on humanitarian intervention in post-Cold War American foreign policy. She's now completing her law degree at the University of Chicago.
- Sylvea Hollis, PhD in progress, plans a career in public history after completing her dissertation on the economic, cultural, and social meanings of risk and human value in the Jim Crow South. As a Goldman Sachs Junior Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, she collaborated with museum professionals to develop an exhibit on "American Enterprise."
- Yuka Hiruma Kishida, PhD 2013, completed a dissertation on Pan-Asianist Ideology in Japanese-Occupied Manchuria. She is now Assistant Professor of History at Bridgewater College in Virginia.

In the next few months, we plan to unveil the new History Department blog. We'll send a note to let you know when it's up and running, and we hope to include news of alumni and donors – so please send updates on your activities! In the meantime, if you'd like to catch up on departmental activity, please take a little time to browse our website, <http://clas.uiowa.edu/history/>. And thanks again for your support.

Best regards,

Elizabeth Heineman  
Professor and Collegiate Scholar  
Chair, Department of History  
[elizabeth-heineman@uiowa.edu](mailto:elizabeth-heineman@uiowa.edu)