



**COLLEGE OF
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**

Department of History

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20 May 2017

Dear Friends of the UI Department of History:

Now that I've hit "approve" on the final set of grades for the spring semester, I'd like to take a few minutes to send an update on Departmental happenings – and to thank you once again for your support.

We've been thrilled to welcome Matthew Noellert to our faculty ranks this year. Prof. Noellert is a digital historian with a specialty in modern Chinese history, particularly land reform under Communism. Dr. Beth Yale, a historian of science in early modern Europe, joined our faculty as a Lecturer. We're also excited to have hired Lina-Maria Murillo in a joint appointment with Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies. Prof. Murillo, a specialist in Latina/o, Borderlands, and Women's history, will join our department in fall 2018 after a postdoctoral year.

Our undergraduate program has thrived this year, with fifteen rising seniors working on honors theses and many more taking internships at locations such as the Hoover and Lincoln Presidential Libraries, the National Czech and Slovak Museum in Cedar Rapids, the Bribiesco law firm, the office of Congressional Representative Dave Loebsack, and – of course, since this was an election year – presidential campaigns. We introduced a new General Education course on World History as well as new offerings on such topics as the Israel-Palestine Conflict and the Mexican Revolution. Our "Life After Schaeffer Hall" series, highlighting careers for history grads, included alumnus Mark Milosch, Deputy Chief of Staff with the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. We were very pleased when our undergraduate history journal, *Iowa Historical Review*, topped 13,000 electronic downloads!

In the last three years we've celebrated twenty-eight new Ph.D.s and thirteen new M.A.s. In addition to such academic placements as tenure-track positions at the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of Louisville, recent grads have snagged post-docs with institutions such as the South African Centre for Africa Studies and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Others have gone into non-academic careers, for example with historical consultancy firms and museums. Our graduate program's activity in public history has helped graduate students to prepare simultaneously for academic and non-academic careers – and to engage deeply with a larger public regardless of career path.

The public history project "German Iowa and the Global Midwest" came to fruition this year with an exhibit in Old Capitol Museum, a traveling exhibit that's touring the state throughout 2017, a digital exhibit and archive, two recreations of historical concerts from German Iowa, a commissioned play about a German-Iowan family, and a great deal of additional programming statewide. "Iowa Native Spaces," a collaboration between our graduate public history initiative, History Corps, and the Meskwaki and Iowa tribal nations, presented its first findings this spring and will soon unveil its website.

In addition to their scholarly work and their activity in the classroom, our faculty continue to make an impact on campus and in the larger public. Here are just a few examples:

- **Mariola Espinosa** will take over this fall as the director of the Global Health Studies Program. Established by history professor emeritus **Paul Greenough**, GHSP introduced a major this year – and already has nearly 80 students signed up, as well as 85 minors and 10 certificate students.
- **Jennifer Sessions'** expertise on French colonial history made her a sought-after expert in the run-up to the French Presidential elections this spring. In blog posts and in an interview with the *New York Times*, she explained the impact of France's colonial legacy on present-day French politics. The Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development awarded Jen its 2017 prize for Distinguished Achievement in Arts & Humanities Research.
- **Ty Priest**, originator of the innovative "Big Ideas" course on the History and Science of Oil (co-taught with a Geologist), won this year's Collegiate Teaching Award – following in the footsteps of other recent History winners

including **Landon Storrs** and **Rosemary Moore**. He was a frequent media commentator on fracking and other environmental issues during the campaign season.

- **Colin Gordon** drew on his expertise on race in St. Louis to author a 75-page expert opinion regarding the discriminatory effects of the Ferguson-Florissant School District's "at large" election system, and to testify on behalf of the plaintiffs in federal court. The suit, brought by the NAACP, was successful.

Our students continue to excel. Here are some tidbits from this academic year:

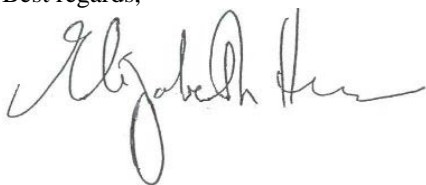
- **William Simpson** (B.A. in progress) completed a virtual exhibit on the Scattergood Refugee Hostel in West Branch, Iowa, which hosted refugees from Nazi Germany. The exhibit, and William's essay about his first experiences in the archives, were featured on the public history blog of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- **Emiliano Martinez** (B.A. in progress) co-founded and serves as Vice President of the UI DREAM: Iowa Chapter, which addresses the concerns of individuals who fall under the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act. During the recent presidential campaign, he worked as a field organizer for Hillary Clinton's campaign.
- **Paige Mitchell** (B.A. in progress), co-president of the UI Astronomy Club, organized the Iowa City March for Science.
- **Cormac Broeg's** (B.A. 2017) honor's thesis, "Killing Butler's Bloodhounds: Iowa Soldiers and an Act of Political Violence in Reconstruction South Carolina," will be published in a forthcoming issue of the *Annals of Iowa*. He was the winner of the Stow Persons Award for Outstanding Honors Thesis.
- **Noaquia Callahan** (Ph.D. in progress) founded the Diversity International Scholarship Academy to enhance study abroad among underrepresented students. She is currently in Berlin completing her dissertation research with the aid of a Fulbright Fellowship. Callahan was awarded the Hancher-Finkbine Medallion, one of the university's highest honors.
- **Eric Zimmer** (Ph.D. 2016) won the Rachel Carson Prize of the American Society for Environmental History for his dissertation, "Red Earth Nation: Environment and Sovereignty in Modern Meskwaki History." He works as Senior Historian at Vantage Point Historical Services.
- **Heather Wacha** (Ph.D. 2016) created and co-starred in the popular YouTube series, "If Books Could Talk," which explored medieval manuscripts at University of Iowa's Special Collections. She's now a Postdoctoral Fellow in Data Curation for Medieval Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where she's working on a new digital tool that provides an interface for collecting, annotating, and linking manuscripts and images.

And of course, our graduates continue to shine over the course of their careers. **Katherine Valde** (B.A. 2014) was a Research and Program Associate at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU. Her 2016 report on campaign finance reform was featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *NPR*, and the *Associated Press*. **Timothy Pounds** (B.A. 1986) is Country Office Director for Egypt at the US Department of State. **Kate Donovan** (M.A. 2005) is the Associate Librarian for Public Service at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. And **Christy Clark-Pujara** (Ph.D. 2009) was recently tenured and promoted to Associate Professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Donor activity has been enormously helpful to us this year. We were thrilled to be able to offer no fewer than three new graduate scholarships as well as a pilot stipend for unpaid undergraduate internships. Our first recipients are on their way to internships at the Hoover Presidential Library and the Johnson County Historical Society. With alumni frequently relating memories of their favorite classes and professors, we're also striving to improve professional development for our current faculty – we want the next generation of students to be equally well served. The Department and College have partnered to create a three-year pilot program for faculty development, and we hope to raise funds to extend the program. Our first recipient, **Michaela Hoenicke Moore**, who teaches a very popular course on "U.S. in World Affairs," is already at work developing a new course on "The American Dream in International Perspective."

We're always very glad to hear from our graduates, so please do send updates on your activities. You can send us a note or an email, or click the "Alumni" tab on our departmental webpage and submit your news there. In the meantime, if you'd like to catch up on departmental activity, please browse our website, <http://clas.uiowa.edu/history/>. Thanks again for your support.

Best regards,



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