Dear fellow students,

I join Dr. Kirsten Gardner, Chair of the History Department, in welcoming you to the fall semester of 2017. As the new Graduate Advisor of Record, I look forward to meeting up with each of you, and learning about your goals and dreams as a graduate student in our program.

Our department has an excellent team of staff members - from left to right in the picture: Judy Quirox, Karrie Klein, and Roschelle Kelly. Roschelle is responsible for graduate student affairs, and so you will get to know her very well.

This issue of the newsletter provides you with some useful information, including the new student orientation, comprehensive exams, and academic conferences as well as funding opportunities. The pieces written by our students are especially worth reading. Two wrote about their internships this summer and one on attending a conference this past spring. You will find their experiences inspiring.

Hope to see all of you in the coming days and weeks.
Best wishes for a most fruitful semester!

Dr. Wing Chung Ng
New Student Orientation
Wednesday, August 30, 6-8pm
MH 4.02.40

If you are admitted in the spring, summer or fall semester of 2017, this evening of orientation is designed for you. We have lined up speakers from The Graduate School, the Library, the Special Collections, the TRC and the Writing Center for the first hour, followed by an overview of the MA program by your GAR. Besides, there will be food and door prizes.

*The orientation is mandatory for our new students. Make sure you contact the GAR if you can’t make it.

Comprehensive Exams for the fall semester

For students who have signed up to take the comprehensive exams this semester the date is set for Friday, October 6, 8:45am – 1pm, at the Library’s Computer Classroom (JPL 3.02.32). If you are not sure whether you have signed up or not, check with Roschelle! Work closely with your professors as you get ready…Happy Studying!!!

NEW INITIATIVES…NEW INITIATIVES…

For students planning to take the comps next spring and thereafter, we have designed a list of fields as suggestion that reflects more closely your program of study. A new two-step exam process is also in the work, which allows students to declare “Historical Research and Writing” as a field and complete this part of the exam through an oral presentation. We plan to pilot this instrument by enrolling up to 5 students from Dr. Gray’s Proseminar. So stay-tuned for more information in the coming weeks!

DEADLINE

Students planning to graduate in this December need to apply for graduation on ASAP by September 15, 2017!!! Otherwise, you will not graduate even after you complete the degree requirements.

***The following section features three students – Abdul Kuba, Victoria Olivo, and Dana Mathes – who wrote about their recent learning experiences. The pieces are slightly abridged to fit into the format, and I thank them for sharing their insights with us. Enjoy.
Abdul Kuba

It was a great opportunity for me to do the ten-week internship with the Education Department at the San Antonio Museum of Art. The internship was concentrated on research on art works, sculptures and various artifacts in the museum, organization of public and educational programs, lectures and presentation of Museum exhibits. At the beginning of the internship I set up several learning goals regarding the improvement of knowledge and skills on museum works, referencing and incorporating museum works in historical research, studying art works and museum artifacts research methodologies and the skills of presenting museum exhibits. Being my first time working at a museum, I made an effort to understanding the background and the whole idea behind the establishment of the San Antonio Museum of Art through personal research and discussion with staff of the Museum. The Staff members at the Museum were open and ready to share their knowledge and experience with me.

My ten weeks of internship coincided with the opening of the Museum’s special exhibition titled “Heaven and Hell: Salvation and Retribution in Pure Land Buddhism”. This exhibition looks at the conception of heaven and hell from the Pure Land Buddhist point of view. Pure Land Buddhism was an institutional tradition arose only in the first centuries of the Common Era in China. This sect of Buddhism sees salvation as limitless and open to anyone, whether monastic or lay, who dedicated their prayers to rebirth in Amitabha’s paradise. In the subsequent weeks, I attended lectures by renowned professors and the Curator, Emily Sano, who threw more insight on the world of Buddhism. I also toured with different docents around all the exhibits housed by the Museum. Soon thereafter, I began sharing this new knowledge with the public through workshops, Summer Camp for students, Tres Museos and various public programs. I was also assigned to conduct research on various art works, which were taught at the Yoga class every Tuesday. These researches broaden my knowledge and rekindle my interest in the use of multidisciplinary approach in historical research.

On the whole, this internship was a useful experience. I gained new knowledge, skills and met many new people, and I got insight into professional practice. I also learned the different facets of working within an institution.
Over the summer I had the opportunity to intern at UTSA’s McNair Scholars Program. The program is designed to assist first-generation, low-income, under-represented students of color with applying for doctorate programs. As an undergraduate, I was fortunate enough to be accepted into the McNair program. Being able to give back to my community while also earning course credit was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had at UTSA. I was able to implement historical theory and practice that I had learned from my history classes such as “Designing a History Course” with Dr. Gardner and “Theories and Methods” with Dr. Michel. I gained hands-on experience with students at our weekly research cluster meetings and I was even exposed to the administrative side of academia. The internship has solidified my passion in working with first-generation college students as my career into academia. I would recommend my peers to search for an internship that truly aligns with their career goals. The History Department has been supportive and helpful in tailoring my courses to my goals. With the help of Dr. Gardner, I was able to reframe what I thought of as a history internship. The purpose of the internship is to ultimately apply the abstract ideas we learn in class into practice. Don’t be afraid to think outside of the box and talk to your advisor about potential internships you are interested in.

Victoria Olivo

The idea of presenting a paper at an academic history conference had never entered my mind when I submitted my application to our graduate program. But I must report that I did indeed have such an experience during our recent Spring Break and it was both enjoyable and instructive.

With the encouragement of Dr. Clinton and Dr. Gardner, I submitted an abstract of my research paper, “The Federal Monitor Ships: A Key to Union Victory” to the Graduate History Conference at Louisiana State University. The abstract was accepted in January

Dana Mathes
and I committed to make a 20-minute presentation and submit a ten-page paper. Not knowing quite what to expect, I set off for Louisiana. Hosted by the LSU History Graduate Student Association, there were 44 papers presented in 18 panels. Schools from all over the country were represented including Harvard, most of the SEC schools, three Big Ten institutions, Colorado, Tulane, Bowling Green, and several of the Texas universities. Each panel was moderated by one of the LSU history professors. After the papers presentations, the professor commented on the works and suggested ways to help strengthen the cases made in the papers. Then other students attending the session asked questions of the presenters or made additional comments. The suggestions were useful and encouraging.

In addition to the student presentations, the conference included a presentation by Dr. Walter Johnson of Harvard. There was also an informative faculty panel discussion regarding the processes for publishing articles and books. Another important feature of the conference were the conversations with other graduate students. Learning about their research work exposed me to a broad range of topics and techniques.

For those of you who have not attended or presented at an academic history conference, I would recommend the experience. I think the comments related to my work and the perspectives gained from the conversations and other papers made the preparation worthwhile. Finally, I’d like to thank the UTSA History Department for their encouragement and financial support to attend the conference.

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Funding for research and conference travel

Dana is right. The Department provides financial support for graduate students to present papers at conferences and to undertake research travel (to use libraries and archives, and to conduct fieldwork). The application process is simple. Contact Dr. Ng (210 458 5703, or wingchung.ng@utsa.edu) for information.

Here is an upcoming conference, check it out!

CALL FOR PAPERS
2018 TEJANO & HISPANIC G & H CONFERENCE

As host for the 2018 Tejano & Hispanic Genealogical and Historical Conference, Los Bexareños Genealogical and Historical Society invites proposals for papers to be presented at the Conference in San Antonio. The 2018 Conference theme is “Weaving the Tapestry of Our History: One Genealogical Thread At a Time”.

August 2017
We encourage submission of a one-paragraph synopsis of the paper to be presented. The presentation should be on personal genealogy, a family history of a Mexican or Texan historical event, or a history of the region that encompasses south Texas and northern-eastern Mexico.

All submissions must be titled and typed double space in 14 point New Times Roman font. All submissions must include the presenter’s name, name of presentation, email address and a short vitae of the presenter.

Each session will be one hour in length. Individual presenters will have 45 minutes for their presentation with 10 minutes for questions. Two or three speakers on similar topics can be combined into one sessions resulting in less time for each presenter.

All submissions to this “Call for Papers” are due no later than January 12, 2018 to Los Bexarenos Conference, P.O. Box 830625 San Antonio, TX 78283-0625.

Questions may be directed to lawhwy@yahoo.com

*We will incorporate more information on conferences and internships in future issues of the newsletter.*