Dear graduate students,

I can’t believe I am working on the third issue of our newsletter for the fall. It seems only a few short weeks ago that I was officially anointed GAR. Fittingly for the season, this issue will begin with our students’ accomplishments, including results of the most recent M.A. comprehensive exams and forthcoming publications by your peers! We also feature highlights from the Southern Historical Association’s annual meeting in Dallas.

Even though you may be busy completing major assignments for your professors at this time, there are some important announcements for the spring term that you can’t afford to miss. So read on!

Wing Chung Ng

The following students have passed their M.A. comprehensive exams. What a milestone! Congrats!!!

Brittny Johnson / Professors Catherine Nolan-Ferrell and Jerry Gonzalez
Dana Mathes (High Pass) / Professors Catherine Clinton and Steven Boyd
William Scott / Professors Patrick Kelly and Elaine Turney
Amber Walker / Professors Rhonda Gonzales and LaGuana Gray

Student publications

William Scott, “Fort Ewell, Texas: A Forgotten Borderlands Post of the Nueces River, 1852-1854,” appearing in Touchstone (undergraduate research journal of the Walter Prescott Webb Historical Society, the college-level educational program of the Texas State Historical Association).

Abdul Kuba has a forthcoming article "Women Nationalists in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Ghana and Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Charwe Nehanda Nyakasikana and Yaa Asentewaa" in the Journal of International Women’s Studies.

In the future, if you have any news about publication of your work, please notify Dr. Ng.
Southern Historical Association meeting in Dallas!

It looks like these history students were hanging out and having a great time! From right to left: Michael McDonald, Abdul Kuba, Ahmed Sharma, Dylan O’hara, Brian Smith, Jessica Ceeko, and Kensi May…and there are quite a few others who managed to elude our official photographers!

I am pleased to note that some of those presenting at the conference and others in attendance are able to tap into funding provided by The Graduate School and the Department of History earmarked for such professional experience. If you want to know who got the money, pay attention to who had a big smile on their faces (tips: appearances can be deceiving!).

In case you have missed the occasion, we have the following eyewitness account furnished by Dr. Gregg Michel:

The UTSA History Department was exceptionally well represented at the 2017 Southern Historical Association annual meeting held earlier this month in Dallas. UTSA historians Patrick Kelly, Gabriela González, Catherine Nolan-Ferrell, Omar Valerio-Jiménez, and Catherine Clinton—the immediate past president of the Association—all played important roles in the program. Additionally, it was especially gratifying to see so many current and former graduate students in attendance, including several who gave papers—Michael McDonald, Ahmed Sharma, Abdul Kuba, Brandon Trevino, and Fiona Foster, now a PhD student at the University of Mississippi. These students had the chance to experience all that a professional conference has to offer. They participated in sessions in which leading scholars previewed new work and engaged with their peers in robust Q-and-A. They roamed the aisles of the book exhibit, learning about forthcoming titles of interest and, especially important for budget-conscious students, picking up important books at a hefty discount. And, perhaps most significantly, they had
the chance to network with other attendees in the lounges and lobbies, bars and restaurants. These informal gatherings of graduate students and working historians are some of the most valuable aspects of professional meetings. For our students, it was a chance to connect with potential future collaborators and an opportunity to chat with historians whose work they admire. This was a great experience for our students.

Since historians are naturally skeptical, especially on a piece written by one of their own, we include this confession by Ahmed Sharma, entitled by the author “Little Fish in a Big Pond”:

This was my third conference overall, but my first as a Graduate Student and my first at a venue so large as the Southern Historical Association conference. At first, it seemed intimidating, considering there were all these scholars, whom with every step shouted success, meanwhile I stood there trying to convince myself I was not out of place. I found one of our history professors there, Professor Patrick Kelly, who has become a mentor of mine, and I told him my predicament. Kelly reassured me that every scholar begins somewhere and was once in my shoes. His words put my fears to rest and I was able to confidently roam the conference and informally meet with other scholars.

To my surprise, I ran into some former professors of mine from Stephen F. Austin State University, where I first began my studies before I transferred to University of Houston. These were some of my favorite professors, who really influenced my current historical interests. During that time however, I was an ambitious student, with not much to show for it. Nonetheless, they were still eager to see me and were extremely proud to know I was currently in Graduate School and presenting a paper on such an interesting topic like the Nation of Islam’s transition to Sunni Islam in Houston, TX.

When the time came to present my paper, I was extremely prepared. I spent the better half of my evening the day before and the afternoon before my presentation to revise and edit my transcript. I had a total of twenty pages and condensed it to eight because I was eager to keep my audience interested without leaving any relevant information for my topic. In the panels I attended, I noticed that most presenters either lost their audience because they were just reading off their essays or were reading hastily out of fear of going over the time limit. However, I had an eager and attentive crowd of listeners and when I finished, I realized I was far from being a fish out of water. I was right where I belonged.

Way to go, Ahmed!

On future conferences, I encourage you to check out the following:

The 122nd meeting of the Texas State Historical Association, to be held in San Marcos, March 8-10. https://www.tshasecurepay.com/annual-meeting/ Especially if you are interested in Texas, borderlands, and the Southwest, it is an excellent opportunity to get to know the people in the field!
Then later in the same month, we have our own COLFA research conference at UTSA. History graduate students have always been well represented at this conference and have won numerous awards! Let’s do it again.

Here is another call for paper - this one from Texas Tech:

The History Graduate Student Organization at Texas Tech University invites you to join us for our Seventh Annual History Graduate Student Conference to be held on the campus of Texas Tech University on February 24, 2018. We invite proposals for individual graduate and undergraduate papers as well as panel presentations for three to five scholars on historical topics. For individual paper presentations, please send a 300-word abstract as well as a CV to hgsotexastech@gmail.com. For panel presentations, please send a 500-word panel proposal along with all applicable CVs. Panel chairs and commentators will be provided but suggestions are welcomed. We will be accepting proposals through December 3, 2017 and will respond to all proposals by the first week of January. Final papers are due on January 14, 2018.
Now for those eager to raise their game and explore the stratosphere of graduate teaching…

The Department is looking to fill a TA position in the spring semester. If you are currently NOT a Nau fellow, you are eligible to apply by meeting the following conditions:

1. Have taken HIS 5003 Theory and Methods
2. Have taken HIS 5093 Designing a History Class, or going to take it in Spring 2018
3. Minimum GPA of 3.5 in graduate history courses, or if you are currently in your first semester, obtain highly favorable recommendations from your professors

To apply, state your eligibility with reference to the above conditions in an email to Dr. Wing Chung Ng. Attach an essay (of about 500 words) that discusses your interest in and approach to teaching. Ask two of your history professors to furnish letters of reference. **Submit all required materials to Dr. Ng by Friday, December 1.** If you have any question about the position, contact Dr. Ng.

Last but not least, if you are still pondering about courses in the spring semester, I want to shed some light on three history classes:

5093 Designing a History Course/Hardgrove/M 6pm *downtown
   Depending on the syllabus project, this class can be used to fulfill either the U.S. and non-U.S. requirement of the M.A. As mentioned, the course is required for application to the Department’s Teaching Assistants Program.

5153 Civil War & Reconstruction/Clinton/R 6pm
   An opportunity to study under UTSA’s first Guggenheim fellow, a prolific scholar, and a highly sought-after authority on the Civil War, African American history, and the women and gender history, not to forget an outstanding mentor to students seeking admission to doctoral programs around the country and beyond!

6173 Latinas/os in the U.S./Valerio-Jimenez/T 1pm
   Professor Valerio-Jimenez will return to teaching after three long semesters of research leave (partially funded by an NEH award). For students interested in the history of the borderlands, Latinas/os history, Mexican American history, and the critical study of race, nationality and mobility, you will be in for a treat!