

## **Turning the Page, 2015-2016:** **The Ursinus History Department: (Recent) Past, Present, and Future**

Dear History Students and Alumni,

As the beginning of the new academic year approaches, we thought it would be appropriate to bring our students and alumni up to date on recent events and future happenings in the department, so as to keep everyone informed of the significant changes that have occurred in the past few months. Many of these events and changes have been very promising, while others unfortunately have been profoundly sad and worrisome.

2015 began on a strong tide of good news and success. Our colleague Susanna Throop was awarded tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in February. In late March Professor Patricia Lott of William & Mary University presented a very compelling talk entitled “The Crime of Emancipation? – Rethinking Gradual Abolition in the U.S. North” at our 6<sup>th</sup> annual Morris Armstrong History Lecture. During March and April, a total of 23 members of the classes of 2017 and 2018 declared and registered as History majors—the largest annual increase in our numbers in recent memory—bringing much diversity of interests and backgrounds, as well as a tremendous infusion of new enthusiasm and talent into our already overachieving group of majors. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> we had our second very successful History Careers Night Dinner in Wismer, thanks to visiting alumni Erik Derr ('11), Emily Manns ('12), Chris Michael ('11), and Dan Ortiz ('06). Later that month we received the report of external reviewers (History faculty from Allegheny College, Randolph-Macon College, and the University of Pennsylvania) who had visited our department in late February. The reviewers lauded Ursinus, our department and our students, calling us a “little gem” among liberal arts college History programs; a report that, needless to say, left us feeling both gratified and pleased. Equally gratifying and successful was the Pennsylvania SE Regional Phi Alpha Theta Conference, which was organized by Professors Throop and Onaci, with the assistance of students in our PAT Chapter and held on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. (The 240th anniversary of what famous—and semi-mythical—event in American History?) UC students Caitlin Dawson, Lindsay Doyle, Katie Faust, Chris Goss, Ryan Murphy, Kyle Peterson, Tim Winters, Laura Witwer, and Joe Wojciechowski presented papers at the conference, with 121 other students from twenty-one other colleges and universities in the region.

At our annual “indoor picnic” on CoSA (Celebration of Student Achievement) Day, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, we inducted eight new members into our Phi Alpha Theta chapter and presented the annual History prizes to members of the Class of 2015 Lindsay Doyle, Christopher Goss, Ryan Murphy, Tony Sierzega, and Tim Winters. Chris Goss, in addition to winning the Elizabeth B. White Prize for his History & International Relations Honors Paper, also was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and won a Fulbright Fellowship to teach English in Kayseri, Turkey, in 2015-2016. Finally, on May 15<sup>th</sup>, we bade farewell to the fifteen History majors and minors of the Class of 2015 at commencement: majors Justin Bogle, Kevin Boye, Lindsay Doyle, Mike Elbersen, Ryan Franco, Chris Goss, Brady Keener, Max Molishever, Ryan Murphy, Tony Sierzega, “Biff” Wilson, Joe Wojciechowski; and minors Scott Clayman, Maran Collett, and Laura Witwer. (History minor Caroline Sandberg had graduated in December, 2014.)

If the winter and spring of 2015 brought joy and pride, summer brought stunning loss and ineffable sadness, as our longtime colleague, friend and mentor Dallett Hemphill finally succumbed to the cancer she had been fighting for years. We said good-bye at a memorial tribute in Bomberger Hall on July 10<sup>th</sup>, attended by several hundred mourners, including many current and former students. We were also concerned by the serious illnesses and hospitalization of our colleague Richard King ([rking@ursinus.edu](mailto:rking@ursinus.edu)) and retired Professor Derk Visser ([dvisser@ursinus.edu](mailto:dvisser@ursinus.edu)), both of whom are fortunately now out of the hospital and would welcome your e-mails and messages of support during their recovery.

Professor Hemphill's passing and Professor King's medical leave for the fall semester have occasioned several significant staffing changes within the department. Hugh Clark has decided to postpone his impending retirement for a year, to May 2017; and Adjunct Lecturer Michael Mackintosh (UC '96) has volunteered to assume additional teaching and advising duties. Also, we have been fortunate to retain the services of two highly-qualified new Adjunct Lecturers. Ms. Catherine Murray (UC '00), who, like Mr. Mackintosh, is completing her PhD at Temple University, will be teaching one section of the American history survey course (HIST-113) and HIST-328 (Women in America); while Dr. John Ghazvinian, an Oxford University D. Phil, will be teaching the survey of Middle East History (HIST-253) during Dr. King's leave of absence. In addition, we have been authorized to launch a national search for a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Early American History. The opening has just been announced in the professional media and we have already begun to receive applications from candidates.

So the upcoming academic year will be even busier than ever. Current students, please mark the following dates on your electronic calendars. Our third annual—and therefore now “traditional”—History Ice Cream Social will be held outdoors (!!!) on Olin Plaza on Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, kicking off the History Department calendar along with our usual series of History Workshops on Wednesday evenings in September. The following Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, the History and Politics Departments will be co-sponsoring the annual “Constitution Day” program. Our History ILE Dinner is scheduled for Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, and will feature brief presentations by History majors who completed internships, independent research projects, and study abroad in 2014-15. On Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Professor Edward Onaci will discuss his research at our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual (almost a tradition!) History Faculty Lecture dinner program. Please look for specific announcements of these programs and their times and venues in “Good Morning Ursinus” daily updates and elsewhere.

In late January and February, 2016, we expect to invite finalist candidates for the Early American History position to campus for two-day visits that will include teaching a class, meeting with students, and a research presentation (to which students will also be invited). We'll have our Armstrong Lecture on March 17<sup>th</sup>—the guest speaker will be Professor Elizabeth Macaulay Lewis of City University of New York—and our third History Careers Night Dinner in early April, featuring three or four returning History alumni reporting on their various career paths. So stay tuned, it's going to be an exciting year and we'll be asking for your support, input, and participation throughout.

History Department Faculty