In This Issue

DEAN’S WELCOME

NOTES FROM THE FIELD:
RORY DENISON IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

ALUMNA PROFILE:
ANNE E. PARSONS, PUBLIC HISTORIAN

COLLEGE NEWS:
STAFF UPDATES, RECENT AWARDS, AND THE IMAGE OF RESEARCH
DEAN’S WELCOME

UIC currently ranks third among U.S. universities in the Times Higher Education’s top 100 universities in the world that were founded less than 50 years ago. Overall, UIC is in 13th place on the “100 Under 50” list, up six spots from its 2013 ranking. Only eight U.S. universities made the list.

Over the last few years, the Graduate College has enhanced its student outreach efforts and programs related to graduate student career and professional development, and we will continue to expand on these endeavors in the future. Assistant Director of Graduate Student Outreach and Career Development, Theresa Christenson-Caballero, generates and organizes several workshops each semester to help students negotiate graduate school and prepare for post-graduate careers, beginning with the annual New Graduate Student Orientation each August. This year about 450 incoming graduate students attended the general orientation to graduate studies at UIC. For the first time, the Graduate College also orchestrated a campus-wide New Teaching Assistant Orientation, which was attended by 233 graduate teaching assistants. Marie Khan, our External Fellowships Coordinator, spearheaded this initiative with support from Araceli Aguirre, Graduate School Specialist.

Underscoring the importance we place on providing support and training for graduate students, the Graduate College has begun to offer a 500-level course to prepare graduate students for teaching at institutions of higher education. Taught by Dr. John Goumbe-Lilley from the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition, “Foundations in College Teaching” blends scholarly work with experiential learning to teach students how to develop a syllabus, lessons plans, and learning outcomes; create classroom assessments; rethink teaching strategies and technology use to increase student engagement; and consider evidence-based best practices in their teaching.

Feedback from the first cohorts of graduate students in GC 593 has been extremely positive, and the Graduate College is committed to providing such opportunities to support graduate students in their teaching as well as to improve the learning experiences of UIC undergraduates. In Spring 2015, we will offer GC 594: “Practicum in College Teaching” for graduate students to gain teaching experience and grow professionally.

This annual newsletter gives us a chance to share with our alumni and friends some of the recent achievements by UIC graduate students and faculty. We wish you all the best in the new year, and hope to hear from you soon.

Karen J. Colley
Dean and Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics

GRADUATE COLLEGE STAFF UPDATES

THERESA CHRISTENSON-CABALLERO
Assistant Director of Graduate Student Outreach and Career Development

The UIC Graduate College has a full schedule of graduate student events for the 2014-15 academic year, including the establishment of a weekly writing space, academic workshops (academic job search, presentation skills, parenthood and academia), career and professional development workshops (Linked In Labs, careers beyond academia, personal branding), and a Safe Zone Dinner Dialogue.

Many of these workshops are possible due to collaborations with other units on campus that share an appreciation and interest in graduate student success, including the Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change, the Student Money Management Center, Institute on Race & Public Policy (IRPP), the Wellness Center, the Office of Career Services, the Commuter Student Resource Center, and the UIC Library.

Recent highlights are “How to Make a Writing Plan: A Writeout!” workshop with IRPP, programs on CV and résumé writing, a roundtable on career planning for PhD and Master’s students, and multiple workshops focusing on mental, physical, and financial health and wellness. Social events have included monthly coffee hours, ice cream socials, and trips to Chicago cultural institutions.

MARIE KHAN
External Fellowships Coordinator

In the 2013-14 academic year, proactive UIC students garnered over $2,000,000 in fellowships and awards. We have been proud to recognize six funded National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship winners, a Mellon/Advanced Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion fellow, a Doris Duke fellow, and a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant recipient, in addition to numerous international Fulbright students on our campus. AY 2014-15 has ushered in a new set of fellowship winners, including two Boren fellows going to Brazil and Haiti, and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide awardee who will do research in Australia.

In addition to working one-on-one with UIC graduate students to pursue funding opportunities, Marie arranges tuition and fee waivers each semester for winners of substantial awards and periodically hosts information sessions on funding prospects, circulates award solicitations, and attends regional and national professional association meetings to better inform and support UIC’s student population.

CONGRATULATIONS, STEVE KRAGON!

Graduate College Executive Assistant Dean, Steve Kragan, received the 2014 Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence Award (CAPE). The CAPE Award honors the contributions of individual staff members and encourages the professional growth and achievement of Academic Professionals at UIC. Steve has worked in the Graduate College for over 30 years.
The Graduate College continuously seeks ways to leverage private donations into significant opportunities for graduate students to develop research, writing, and collaborative skills. Recognizing some of the research funding challenges for arts and humanities students and the difficulties of establishing interdisciplinary collaborations, the Graduate College used gift funds from the Continental Bank (now part of Bank of America) to inaugurate a new Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Arts and Humanities (ICAH) Award.

As its name suggests, the ICAH pairs a graduate student in the arts/humanities with an untenured faculty “collaborator” to carry out a joint project that might result in an exhibit, presentation, film, or publication that contributes to the student’s professional and scholarly development. The student and faculty mentor share a $5000 award to implement their proposed project. The award committee selected three collaborations for the inaugural award. Donations will be needed to extend the award program after its funds are exhausted in 2016. To find out how you can help the Graduate College with efforts to offer opportunities such as the ICAH award, please email giveGC@uic.edu or call 312-413-2389.

This year’s winning teams were:

**Rebecca Bivens** (PhD student in Art History) and S. Elise Archias (Assistant Professor of Art History) for their collaboration entitled “Beyond the Autonomy/Relationality Binary,” which draws from art history, English, women’s and gender studies, race and ethnicity studies, and critical theory, and will lead to a seminar at the Modernist Studies Association Conference, a symposium at Gallery 400, and (fingers crossed) an anthology centered on the “autonomy/relationality binary.” Bivens is mentored by Blake Stimson (Art History).

**David Mulder** (MArch student) and Matthew Wizinsky (Assistant Professor, School of Design, Graphic Design) for a project entitled “Pop Swipe Cinema: Proposal for Mobile Interactive Touch-Screen Cinema.” Their collaboration blends “media, product design, architecture, and urbanism to create a prototype of a low-cost, large-scale fabric touchscreen” that can turn into a public pop-up interactive media space. Mulder is mentored by Stephanie Niebuhr (Architecture).

**Courtney Prokopas** (MFA student in Moving Image) and Lori Felker (Visiting Assistant Professor of Art) for “Venus from Flames: Prescribed Burns and their Role in Preserving Venus Flytraps.” This documentary film approaches ecology, public policy, conservation, botany, biological engineering, psychology, and sociology through the lens of filmmaking; more specifically, the duo focuses on a 60-square-mile patch of pocosin between stretching across the Carolinas, which is the only place on Earth where the Venus flytrap exists in nature. Prokopas is mentored by Felker.
KILNS AND CHIEFS: RESEARCH ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN TRADE NETWORKS

By RORY DENISON, PHD CANDIDATE, ANTHROPOLOGY

Tenth to sixteenth century maritime trade between imperial China, Southeast Asia, and Pacific polities was a defining force in creating an early global economy. A thousand years ago, merchants helped shape the flow of ideas and products between far-flung continents in ways that have continued into the present day. My research examines how patterns of long distance trade between pre-colonial merchants and local Southeast Asian polities were negotiated by focusing on the production, dispersal, and use of the porcelain at kiln sites in southern China and at settlements within the Philippines. The Philippines served as a hub in this system as equatorial products, such as cloves and spices, were traded northward towards China, other Asian kingdoms, and, indirectly, to Medieval Europe while porcelain, silk, and tea were in turn distributed south into the Philippines.

This project builds on the previous twenty years of work conducted by Dr. Laura Junker, my advisor and committee chair at UIC, whose work has examined the role of raiding, trading, and feasting in pre-colonial Filipino life. Additionally, I benefit from the Department of Anthropology's connection with the Field Museum.

For the past three years, my research has been split between surveying kiln sites in Fujian, China, conducting museum studies and excavations in the Philippines, and performing chemical analysis on porcelain sherds at the Field Museum. Conditions for survey in Fujian can vary considerably – one day starting with thick fog in the morning and then a cold rain for the rest of the day, while the next day it may reach 110°F with no cloud cover. Much of the survey is conducted through thick vegetation, but it can just as readily involve being knee-deep in a rice field, walking through a blisteringly hot watermelon field, or having a lunch with a local official to arrange permits. On the other hand, chemical analysis in the lab is an exercise in patience and precision in order to get accurate data. The porcelain sherds are very small, the largest about 1 cm square and some only a few millimeters in size. The technique used is called Laser Ablation Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectroscopy, which involves preparing a small amount of material to be examined in a spectroscope in order to determine its exact chemical composition. This process allows researchers to group ceramics together by the kiln site of manufacture even when the sherds are otherwise too small to see stylistic variation.

In particular, my research has focused on looking at regional variation of porcelain use by examining a few key regions in the Philippines (Tanjay, Cebu, and Manila) to compare archaeological sites within these regions to each other as well as make cross-regional comparisons. This scalar approach allows for an examination of changes in maritime trade, the types of products that were desired by chiefs across regions, and how these goods were distributed as politicized gifts to their allies. The chemical analysis allows me to trace the trade routes of porcelain to specific ancient villages and cemeteries where porcelain functioned in these early Filipino societies as a symbol of various kinds of social connections – as gifts, in feasts, and for display.

Funding from the UIC Graduate College’s Provost Research Award, the UIC Chancellor’s Fellowship, a Henry Luce Foundation grant to UIC, and a subvention through the Collaborative Research Project Fund at the Field Museum have been used to support my graduate research and have allowed me to conduct my archaeological field work in both China and the Philippines.

Taking measurements and samples at Dong Kou Kiln in Fujian, China.

Rory Denison collecting clay samples in Fujian, China.
Anne E. Parsons, PhD, studies contemporary U.S. history, public history, and the history of gender and sexuality. Having worked on a number of historical exhibitions, she explains her work as “making history that speaks to multiple publics and blurs the lines between academic, public, and community history.” Parsons is committed to crafting histories that help people understand the world around them.

In many ways, Parsons is a poster child for the Graduate College. She entered the History Department’s doctoral program at UIC with a University Fellowship and went on to secure Provost and Chancellor’s Awards, as well as travel awards for a number of conference presentations. Awarded her PhD in 2013, she has taken her interdisciplinary approach to the tenure track as well as to the public imagination, perhaps even one day to Hollywood?

Although the Graduate College provided crucial support to Parsons throughout her doctoral program, UIC cannot claim full credit for crafting this public historian. Before coming to Chicago, the Delaware native earned a BA in Classics at Smith College, an MA in History at New York University, worked as a researcher for four major projects at the American History Workshop, and as education director at the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum, both in New York.

UIC proved, however, to be a transformative experience for Parsons. While doing her PhD, she had the opportunity to merge academic and public history by working for three years on the curatorial team for Out in Chicago, an award-winning exhibition at the Chicago History Museum, co-curated by Jennifer Brier, Associate Professor of History and Gender & Women’s Studies. As Parsons explains, the experience brought her a “deeper understanding of how to connect worlds, academic and [non-academic] communities.”

At UIC, Parsons learned the value of conceptualizing and executing projects of long duration, of maintaining a regular writing regimen, and of managing stress. She also appreciated the support she received from her department, from supportive faculty in the Work, Race, and Gender in the Urban World (WRG UW) concentration, and from her advisor Leon Fink who takes a genuine interest in and encourages graduate students’ research and writing.

Parsons also greatly benefited from the support of the Graduate College, whose fellowships made it possible for her to travel extensively for research and to write or co-write three published articles in addition to her dissertation, which focused on a study of the politics of confinement and how the closing of mental hospitals has affected the rise of imprisonment in contemporary America. Parsons is quick to add that these experiences also provided a strong grounding and résumé boost for a faculty position in history and museum studies.

After teaching for a year at UIC, Dr. Parsons is now Assistant Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she teaches graduate courses in public history, museum studies, and digital history, and will soon serve as interim director of museum studies. Her scholarly endeavors include creating new undergraduate courses; revising her dissertation for a general audience monograph, tentatively titled Return of the Asylum: De-institutionalization and the Rise of Prisons; and directing a student-curated exhibition, Pieces of the Past: the Art of Gwendolyn Magee, which has received funding from the North Carolina Humanities Council.

On a lighter note, our phone interview concluded just in time for Dr. Parsons to take a call from a Hollywood production team regarding a psychological thriller project needing a historian’s perspective. “UIC = tenure track + Tinsel Town”? A winning formula.

North Wing of Main Building, Looking Northwest - Pennsylvania Hospital for Mental & Nervous Disease, Forty-fourth & Market Streets, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, PA, 1958. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.) This hospital is one of the places that Anne Parsons considered in her dissertation about the relationship between rising incarceration rates in the US today and lack of adequate mental health facilities.
RECENT AWARDS

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

The Graduate Mentoring Award ceremony and reception was held Wednesday, April 23, 2014. The following awardees were honored.

Graduate Mentoring Awards

The Graduate Mentoring Awards are designed to encourage and award excellence and innovation in all aspects of graduate mentoring. Awards are given annually. Winners of the 2014 Graduate Mentoring Awards are:

- Alexander Aruin, Professor, Physical Therapy
- Kay Gonzalez-Vilbazo, Associate Professor, Hispanic Linguistics
- Dan Schonfeld, Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Sultan Tepe, Assistant Professor, Political Science

Outstanding Thesis Award

The Graduate College annual Outstanding Thesis Award is given to the most outstanding doctoral dissertation or master’s thesis in each of the four Graduate Program divisions.

2013 Awardees and Advisors

- Jingwei Li, Chemistry, Tandem Metathesis-Based Natural Product Synthesis and Synthesis of Cyclopropenes and Their Rearrangements. Advisor: Daesung Lee. Dr. Li is now a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University.
- Kritika Pershad, Biological Sciences, Directed Evolution of the Forkhead-associated Domain to Generate Anti-Phospho-specific Reagents. Advisor: Brian Kay. Dr. Pershad is teaching microbiology at Triton College in Illinois.
- Rachel Venema, Social Work, Police Officer Decision Making in Reported Sexual Assaults. Advisor: Amy Watson. Dr. Venema is currently an assistant professor at Calvin College in Michigan.
- Tiziana Vistarini, Philosophy, Emergent Spacetime in String Theory. Advisor: Nicholas Huggett. Dr. Vistarini is a postdoctoral associate at Rutgers University in the Philosophy of Cosmology Project.

UIC Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring Award for Graduate Students

Co-sponsored by the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, the Honors College, and the Graduate College, this award recognizes the invaluable time, effort, expertise, and concern that UIC graduate students dedicate to mentoring undergraduate students in classroom, research, and other academic settings.

2014 Awardees

- Vinoadharen Nair, Psychology
- Persis Driver, Educational Psychology
- Bernard Issa, Spanish
- Sandra Troxell-Smith, Biology
- Aimee Wodda, Criminology, Law, and Justice

2014 Honorable Mentions

- Dionisio Amodeo, Psychology
- Emily Ruehs, Sociology
- Arin Weidner, Kinesiology

THE IMAGE OF RESEARCH

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

The Image of Research annual exhibit competition, which began in 2008, is organized by the Graduate College and the University Library to showcase the breadth and diversity of research at UIC. Over the last several years, we have received an increasing number of entries that were stills from moving image projects in a variety of disciplines. For the first time this year, we added a moving images category with one winner and three finalists. A multidisciplinary jury of faculty and staff selected the winning entries from 90 submissions, 18 of which were moving images.

Winners for the 2013-2014 competition were:

First Place:
Hilary Dugan, Earth and Environmental Sciences
Second Place:
Xiaoyu Hu, Biopharmaceutical Sciences
Third Place:
José-Cristian Martínez, Biological Sciences

Honorable Mentions:
Christopher Davis, Anthropology; Benjamin Linder, Anthropology; Arthur Nishimoto, Computer Science

Moving Images Winner:
Christopher Knowton, Bioengineering

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CONTRIBUTORS
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Rory Denison
Marie Khan
Benn Williams

DESIGNER & EDITOR
Kristina Dziedzic Wright

http://grad.uic.edu/giving