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A message from the Department Chair:

In the spirit of “better late than never,” welcome to our fall newsletter! Faculty and students in the history department have been busy over the past six months. For example, during the department’s honor’s ceremony last spring we inducted 16 students in Phi Alpha Theta, our discipline’s national honor society. In 2016 the history department awarded two students, Jennifer Santorelli and Mary Buckley, the Geraldine Forbes Research Grant. This fund, named in honor of our esteemed colleague and emeritus professor, enabled these students to both conduct archival research as well as deliver a paper at an academic conference. This fall the department hosted a student reception that included a trivia contest moderated by Murat Yasar. Indeed our students have been engaging in so much interesting work both on and off campus we have decided to dedicate this edition of our newsletter to catching up with several of our past graduates. As you will see, their achievements after having left SUNY Oswego give us every reason to be proud. As always, if you should wish to learn more about the people and programs in our department please do not hesitate to contact me at frank.byrne@oswego.edu. Sincerely, Frank Byrne,

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FALL 2016 HISTORY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER
FEATURING: WHERE OUR ALUMNI ARE NOW

Shannon David, BA May 2007

My history degree from SUNY Oswego is important to me both personally and professionally. On a personal level, my interest in public institutions grew as we studied history in ways that shaped how I understand the present. It was a formative time for me as I developed an awareness about social justice that continues to shape my worldview. On a professional level, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that by studying history it has made me a better researcher, analyst and problem solver. It opened up opportunities for the study of and a career in public administration where I continued to develop the critical thinking, research and interpersonal skills I learned in the history program. Overall, studying history was a fantastic springboard for the place where I currently find my career as a public administration professional.

Studying history at Oswego shaped my attitude towards politics, community and life. I developed an interest in American

labor history and how working people struggled and organized to advance their cause. In addition to other topics we explored, this experience inspired me to get involved in the political process directly. I can still visualize the moment where I came out of class in Mahar Hall and noticed the posting on the bulletin board looking for volunteers. It activated a civic awareness and appreciation for social justice that I did not have before, and it changed my life. In complementary fashion, this experience and the work I did in the history program brought greater appreciation for the political movements and public institutions that have shaped the present. After graduation, I contemplated an advanced degree and settled on the study of public administration at Binghamton University because I felt it was a way for me to act on what I had learned and experienced as a student at Oswego.

The skills I brought to Binghamton were an important head start for the research and analysis I would do as a student of public administration. Developing a position and defending it with primary and secondary evidence as historians do, was an important process that related directly to the approach to decision making taught in the public administration program. Evidence, whether qualitative or quantitative, is the basis of good decision making, using it to shape one's perspective instead of just shooting from the hip. Appreciating context and perspective is also valuable to good problem solving, a skill I developed through the study of primary and secondary source documents and trying to put myself in the mind of someone who was living in unfamiliar times. Studying history also strengthened my interpersonal skills through the opportunities to write and present in class. Being able to convey one's thoughts in spoken and written form is critical to success in any professional environment. The skills I developed in the history program made me a stronger student of public administration, and subsequently, a better problem solver in the organizations I have worked for.



Khuram Hussain, BA 1998

It was my sophomore year at SUNY Oswego, and there I was - an undeclared major without a clear sense of what I aimed to do after college. Taking the advice of my dear friend Chad Robertson '96 I went to Mahar Hall in hopes of talking out my sophomore blues. There I met with Professor Geraldine Forbes and my world shifted a little bit. She took the time to learn my background, passions and interests and helped me craft an academic path that was true to me. Soon after, I declared a double-major in history and political science and encountered professors like David Conrad and Steve Rosow, who started me on an intellectual journey that has captivated my adult life.



SUNY Oswego faculty and peers provided me with an opportunity to develop my sense of agency as a thinking person in the world. They both supported me and challenged me to carve out my own learning through internships, independent studies and a senior thesis. I still root my current work as a professor, scholar and community organizer in those experiences. As an educator I draw inspiration from Professor Forbes' student-centered approach. My community organizing is shaped by my experience as the president of the Muslim Student Association and my research interest in social history and social justice was a path of inquiry that was nurtured in the history department. Two decades ago, as a first generation college student walking into Mahar Hall, I could not have guessed at the path ahead. I am grateful to be among generations of grads who found space and support to figure themselves out and pursue meaningful work in the world.

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Carrie Knight, MA December 2005

I am currently a PhD student at the University of Rochester studying American and environmental history. After earning a Master's degree in history from SUNY Oswego in 2005, I spent the next eight years working in museum curation and administration for small to medium-sized institutions in New York and Colorado. I returned to New York in 2014 to pursue local research interests and to begin doctoral studies.

I came to the history department at SUNY-Oswego in the fall of 2004 where I made the early acquaintance of Dr. Geraldine Forbes and Dr. Judith Wellman, now both emerita professors within the history department. These women had a profound impact on my time at SUNY-Oswego and long afterward. They became professional mentors who have followed and supported my professional path since those first days at Oswego. In fact, it is through work conducted alongside Dr. Wellman that I secured my first position at the Cayuga Museum in Auburn, New York post-graduation. And when it came time, years later, for letters of recommendation to be written for doctoral program applications, these women were right there to help.

SUNY-Oswego allowed me the opportunity to build intimate working relationships with professors who both fostered academic investigation and personal reflection.



Ryan Peters, BA May 2016

After graduating in May 2016, Ryan traveled with Dr. Yaşar, Political Science's Dr. Dragomir and several other students to Braşov, Romania to present a paper at the "Trail of Blood: Movement of Peoples in Europe" international conference. This trip was co-sponsored by SUNY Oswego and the University of Transilvania which allowed students to present academic papers while experiencing Romanian culture through university students.

After returning, Ryan headed to DC for three months to intern in the Office of White House and Congressional Affairs at the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NEH is a grant-making federal agency that supports research, education initiatives, public programs and preservation for the study of humanities. Working on events like National History Day to engaging with congressional staffers on constituent grantee applications, the NEH's academic environment allowed Ryan to interact with many different scholars of various backgrounds. Collaborating with other interns from different institutions and programs across the nation, Ryan enjoyed participating in both historical and political discourse. Away from his internship, Ryan took time to attend lectures, walk the National Mall at night and put his "two cents" in about the recent political climate.

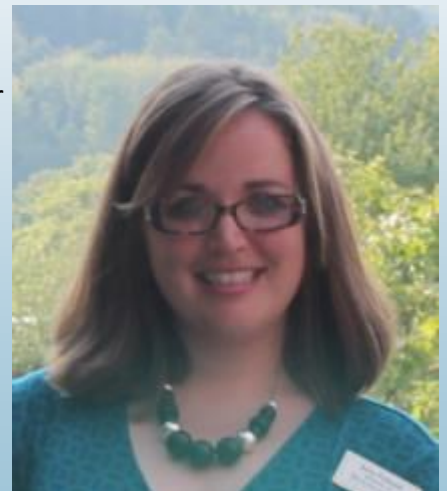
"Without the vested interest and encouragement by History department faculty in my courses and individualized research and writing projects, I'm not sure I would have the confidence to participate in as much as I have," Peters said. "It is a very exciting thing to be able to hold a conversation with a Harvard History PhD graduate."

Ryan has since returned to his roots in Syracuse, NY, and is actively looking for a career that takes advantage of his Oswego education and many experiences.



Amy Pollock, BA May 2004

Amy Pollock Drake currently is the Interim Associate Director in Residential Life at Binghamton University. She has been at Binghamton University since 2012. She has spent a decade working in student affairs, most of that time in residential life at two universities, but her interest in student life started during her time at Oswego. She graduated from SUNY Oswego in 2004 with a bachelor's degree, double majoring in History and Public Relations. While a history major Amy developed meaningful relationships with the caring faculty members who encouraged her to think critically about classroom topics and helped her develop greater skill in writing. Even now, her history major provides a foundation in her professional life in order effectively engage college students in discussions of current events and issues of social justice.



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