Greetings.

It has been another busy, productive semester at the VCU Department of History. In fall 2017 we welcomed Michael Dickinson to the department. He received his Ph.D. at the University of Delaware and is preparing a book on the formation of urban slave communities in the British Atlantic across the 17th and 18th centuries. His work is both innovative and connects well with existing strengths in the department on early North America and the Atlantic World.

In fact, as I write Brooke Newman is in London with a prestigious Georgian Papers Programme Fellowship for research in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle for her next book about slavery, emancipation, and the British monarchy.

Please congratulate Brooke Newman and Brian Daugherity on promotion to associate professor with tenure and Ryan Smith and Gregory Smithers on promotion to full professor.

Above all, the History faculty and staff were proud to celebrate with our August and December graduates at the History Department Diploma Ceremony, with snow falling, at the Singleton Center on December 9, 2017. You are forever part of us!

Best wishes for 2018
In Summer 2017, Prof. John Herman welcomed thirty-five students from Fudan University in Shanghai and Beijing Foreign Studies University as part of the annual American Studies Program he founded in 2005 to connect students from VCU’s two international partners in China with the university and the greater Richmond community. ASP is a five-week program that includes daily lectures from VCU faculty ranging from topics in American history, criminal justice and homeland security to civil rights, brand management, and environmental science. The students also enjoy adventures in American shopping and food, and excursions to Richmond attractions and out-of-town destinations like Colonial Williamsburg and camping in Shenandoah National Park. A program highlight is the daily interactions between VCU students, hired specifically as chaperones, and the Chinese visitors. This interaction provides important cultural exchange, and allows the Chinese students immersion in a 24/7 English language environment. “The interns made my summer,” says Shuguang Kong. “For both the Chinese students and the American students,” says Prof. Herman, “it broadens their scope, it broadens how they view the world, it broadens how they view different places in the world.”

**VCU Masters Thesis Award in Humanities and Fine Arts:**

**Marlea Donaho,**
"Belle Isle, Point Lookout, the Press and the Government: The Press and Reality of Civil War Prison Camps."
Directed by Professor Katherine Shively-Meier

**Thelma S. Biddle Scholarship:**

**Joshua McLaughlin**

**CONGRATULATIONS:**
**DECEMBER 2017**
**MASTER OF ARTS GRADUATES**

Antonio Williams
William Strollo
WELCOME NEW FACULTY

We are pleased to welcome new faculty member Michael Dickinson. Michael earned his Ph.D. in American History from the University of Delaware. He also serves as the program coordinator for the Mellon Scholars Program at the Library Company of Philadelphia. Michael's research interests include early African American history, comparative slavery, and Black Atlantic history. The working title for his current book project is Almost Dead: Captivity and Social Rebirth in the Urban British Atlantic, 1680-1807, which examines how enslaved blacks formed and maintained families and communities in early Atlantic port cities. "I am deeply enthusiastic to be part of such a friendly and intellectually engaging department!" says Michael. "Thank you to everyone in the History Department... for making the transition to VCU as smooth as possible.

WELCOME NEW ADVISOR

We are pleased to welcome Jared Johnson, the new undergraduate History Department advisor, and the department’s first full-time administrator dedicated solely to advising our majors. Originally from Nebraska, Johnson received his M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He also began working there as an advisor in the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Services, and realized his passion for helping students navigate college life. He sees his role as not only someone who helps students fulfill the proper credits to graduate in a timely fashion, but as a sounding board for discussing various class options, school/life/work balance, and short-and long-term career goals. “I have greatly enjoyed meeting with such a diverse student population,” Johnson says. “All of our students are so idiosyncratic and bring a wealth of different experiences and interests to our advising meetings.” We are thrilled to have such a strong advocate for students in the department ranks. Welcome, Mr. Johnson!
Seren is a sophomore History major from Clarke County, Virginia in the Shenandoah River Valley. A long-time history lover, she began to consider it as a potential college major while working on an IB History project in high school. “I was fascinated,” she says, “by the way we have to approach [a topic] from all different angles just to start to understand the context and the effects.”

During her first semester, Seren joined the student organization HistoryNow!, which connected her with other majors and presented opportunities in professional leadership skills and student excursions. She is currently the marketing chair, for which she composes a weekly newsletter. “All of the trips for HistoryNow! have been wonderful, my favorite is clearing the East End Cemetery (even though I get poison ivy every time),” she says.

“The more classes I take at VCU, the more certain I am that I chose the right major,” says Seren. She enjoys the professors, the tight-knit community in the department, as well as the Richmond community. Seren has already achieved many academic accolades, including the Virginia Merit Scholarship and VCU’s Academic Achievement award, which she has received every semester. She hopes to study abroad in Mexico during summer 2018 and to double minor in Anthropology and Spanish. Her future plans include graduate school, and a career in Library Science or Archiving. Still, Seren notes that studying History is “a way to study every topic,” so her career options include “pretty much anything and everything.” Thank you for your contributions to the department, Seren, and wishing you continued success!

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
Seren Leonard

HISTORY NUMBERS
FALL 2017

24 full-time faculty
265 undergraduate majors
20 active graduate students
53 undergraduate and graduate internships
9 annual student scholarships
5 annual student awards
The History Department sponsors several speaker series each year, including guests of the Southern Film Festival, the Society of the Cincinnati, the Alexandrian Society, and the Science, Technology, and Society (STS) Program.

Featured this issue is the Southern Film Festival, an annual festival founded in 2010 to explore how the distinctiveness of the South has been portrayed on screen. The festival brings together films and those involved in their making with constructive commentary.

Over 600 people attended this year’s four-day event “Screening Southern Justice.” Films included Gender Revolution, Do Not Resist, My Cousin Vinny, Loving, and An Outrage, and twelve panelists ranging from police officers and lawyers to actors, filmmakers, and historians were on hand to discuss their work. The Gloucester, Virginia activist Gavin Grimm, who is featured in Gender Revolution, spoke to a packed house about his legal efforts to secure equal rights for transgender individuals. His case, which concerns equal access to bathrooms in public schools, is currently before the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. Grimm gave a heartfelt testimonial about his transition, the film making process, and his pet pig Esmeralda.

Thank you to the everyone who helped make the Southern Film Festival a success!
**FACULTY NEWS AND NOTES**

**Brian Daugherity** recently received a Library of Congress "Teaching with Primary Sources" grant to work with Virginia school teachers on school desegregation; he will serve a co-principal investigator with Dr. Yonghee Suh of Old Dominion University.

**Brooke Newman** was awarded the Georgian Papers Programme Fellowship, which will allow her to conduct research at the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle in the U.K. in December 2017.

**Karen Rader** has been named co-editor-in-chief (along with Marsha Richmond of Wayne State University) of *Journal of the History of Biology*. *JHB* is published by Springer Nature and for fifty years it has been the flagship journal in the history of the life sciences.

**Emilie Raymond** appeared on C-SPAN's American History Television lecturing on “*Soylent Green* and the Environmental Movement” as part of her “History and Film, the 1970s” class.

**Priscilla Shilaro** received a VCU Humanities Research Center travel grant to attend the African Studies Association in Chicago in November, where she presented the paper “Continuity and Change: Land Litigation Cases in Ikolomani Native (African) Tribunal, Western Kenya, 1930-1955.”

**GOT NEWS?**

Send your news to the Editors:
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NEW HISTORY GROUP

Did you know that over 3,000 VCU students have graduated with a degree in History? Over 1500 of those alumni live in the Richmond area! Nicholas Buffin (class of 2018) is forming a VCU History Department alumni organization to foster community and pride amongst graduates, hold social and academic events, and provide support to the department. If you would like to get involved with this organization, please contact Nicholas at buffinnp@mymail.vcu.edu. He would love your help!

GIVING NEWS

MILDRED SCHILLING AND F. ROBERT SCHILLING, JR.

The Schilling Fund was generously created with gifts from the estates of Ms. Mildred Schilling and her son, Mr. F. Robert Schilling, Jr., a VCU Department of History graduate. In honor of Mr. Schilling’s life-long passion for books and Southern history, the Schilling Fund provides financial support to VCU History Department faculty and graduate students pursuing research in the history of the South.

Congratulations to the inaugural grant recipients of the Schilling Fund for 2017-18!

- M.A. candidate Claire Barnewolt
- Prof. Brian Daugherity
- Prof. Carolyn Eastman
- Prof. Gregory Smithers

SUPPORT VCU HISTORY WITH A GIFT

To make a gift to the department, visit support.vcu.edu/give/humanitiesandsciences and select 'History'.

For additional information on how you can support other initiatives in the department, contact Bethanie Constant, Senior Director of Development at (804) 828-4543 or constantb@vcu.edu.