RCC 2020 Award for the Disciplines

Response 1

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Performance Portfolio:

1. Student Achievement

a. Description: The requirement to perform and present research, and faculty mentoring of students engaged in research projects and presentations, are priorities in the curricula of most undergraduate courses offered in the Department of History, especially in our upper-division courses. The exceptionally strong representation of History at the annual EURECA conference is the best evidence that students taking courses in the Department of History have been fulfilling this research requirement enthusiastically, with persevering guidance from the History faculty. For several years before 2013, the Department held several undergraduate research conferences on its own; then, beginning in 2013, the Department's conference was folded into EURECA, with EURECA's agreement that undergraduate submissions in History would be screened by History faculty and that a separate "History Strand/History Day" within EURECA would be organized by the Department. For the period 2013-2018, every EURECA conference has featured one entire day of research-based presentations by undergraduates in History courses. Cumulatively, History has had more students making research-based presentations in EURECA than any other Department at AUC since 2013. But it should be emphasized that this is not just a matter of quantity. In addition to screening applications (and not all are accepted), the Department insists that every student making a presentation in EURECA's History Strand be coached by a faculty member with regard to both the substantive content of their talk and effective presentation techniques; the result has been a corpus of consistently high-quality presentations by Department students, as can be attested

by the large and diverse audiences attending the History Strand. EURECA's History Strand has also featured a variety of creative performances/historical simulations done by History students. The course most prominent in this regard has been Dr. Hanan Kholoussy's extremely popular "The Marriage Crisis and the Middle East" (HIST 4215), as evidenced by consistently high enrollments. An essential element in Dr. Kholoussy's curriculum for this Capstone course is the requirement that students research the social history of Egypt in the interwar period (1920s and 1930s) and, using materials derived from Dr. Kholoussy's own research in Egypt's national archives, collaborate in the re-enactment of scenes from actual cases that appeared in the Egyptian courts during this historical period (see Dr. Kholoussy's syllabus and supporting materials). These re-enactments have also been put on for audiences attending EURECA's History Day, and have proven to be both socially enjoyable and intellectually provocative. Another important evidence of faculty commitment to research was Dr. Reimer's successful application to the Great Lake College Association/Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLCA/GLAA) to take three outstanding students in HIST 3208 ("Zionism and Modern Judaism") for ten days' research on the history of American Jewry at the Library of Congress in 2014. This summer program, jointly administered by the GLCA/GLAA and the Library of Congress, and also supported by grants from AUC's fund for undergraduate research, gave these students a taste of research in the world's premier institution of research. These students subsequently made presentations of their research in HIST 3208; and one student, Heba Bahnassy, wrote her M.A. thesis in GAPP on a subject closely related to the work she did with Dr. Reimer's team in 2014. The documents appended demonstrate the Department's commitment to training students in research methods and techniques of presentation/dissemination, both written and oral, as well as creative activities such as historical re-enactments and simulations. Included here are relevant syllabi of Department faculty (with research requirements/creative activities highlighted), as well as student testimonials to the impact their experience as undergraduates in the History Department had on their intellectual development. Note: due to unusual circumstances in AY 2018-2019, the History Strand did not appear in EURECA 2019, although there were still a number of excellent presentations in History/Comparative Religion. However, we are working to revive our usual day-long representation in EURECA 2020.

      b. Supporting Documents: (check folder)

2. **Strategic Plan**

a. Description: The strategic plan for the use of a $15,000 award to advance student research in history proceeds on two tracks. (1) First, the Department wishes to develop its capacity in digital humanities, especially digital mapping. (2) Second, the Department seeks to stimulate student research by refining historical simulations already being used, and promoting the creation of new simulations in a variety of courses. These proposed initiatives are elaborated below. It is important to note that the Department has already experimented with the creation of digital content, as demonstrated by the existence of several databases compiled through student research in our popular team-taught course, HIST 4290 "Isqat al-Nizam" (offered 2011-2015 by Dr. Pascale Ghazaleh, Dr. Hanan Kholoussy, and Dr. Michael Reimer). The most notable outcome of faculty-directed student research from this course is a "wiki," a biographical dictionary of personalities appearing during and after the 2011 revolution in Egypt. The link to this material is given here: https://web.archive.org/web/20140208182904/http://wiki.aucegypt.edu/isqatalnizam/index.php/Main_Page I. Digital Mapping Projects An important aspect of digital humanities has to do with mapping, which requires the mastery of GIS software. As one company describes it: "A geographic information system (GIS) is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present spatial or geographic data. The acronym GIS is sometimes used for geographic information science (GIScience) to refer to the academic discipline that studies geographic information systems." Fortunately, there is excellent open-source GIS software available; the Department is in discussion with CLT's Maha Shawki concerning the appropriate software to use. As for the pedagogical value of digital mapping, one online source puts it this way: "As a digital mapping tool, geographic information systems can be used across disciplines with students of varying technical expertise and comfort levels. The teaching possibilities created by interactive student projects bring life to events and people through space and time." (Christopher J. Young and Joseph Ferrandino, "The Old is New Again: Digital Mapping as an Avenue for Student

Learning," EducauseReview, 8 October 2018: see
https://er.educause.edu/articles/2018/10/the-old-is-new-again-digital-mapping-as-an-avenue-for-student-learning). If the Department receives the award for undergraduate research, several faculty have plans for the ways in which they would use mapping software in order to promote and enhance student research and learning. (1) Dr. Elisabeth Kennedy, who teaches Comparative Religion within the History Department, plans to undertake a student-led research project in her projected Capstone course, HIST 4188, "Egypt in the Abrahamic Faiths." The project integrated into this course will involve students in producing digitized maps of religious pilgrimage in Egypt across history and across the three Abrahamic faiths. (2) Dr. Olivier Schouteden, who teaches European history, plans to undertake a student-led research project in his HIST 4488, "Modern European Colonialism." The project integrated into this course will involve students in producing digitized maps of European colonial impositions in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, and significant movements of anti-colonial resistance in these same areas, over a period of about two centuries (1750s-1970s). (3) Dr. Mark Deets, who teaches African history, will organize students to produced digitized maps in his HIST 2096, "Precolonial Africa." The focus of these maps will be the Arab/Trans-Saharan/Indian Ocean slave-trade circuits. An additional benefit from this activity, besides the learning of students in HIST 2096, is that the same maps can be used to enhance learning in another of Dr. Deets' courses, HIST 2104, "World History." (4) Dr. Michael Reimer, who teaches a course on the history of Zionism, plans to undertake a student-led research project in his HSIT 3208, "Zionism and Modern Judaism." The mapping project integrated into this course will take as its object the travels of Dr. Theodor Herzl, 1894-1904. A digitized map of his itineraries will aid in understanding his stature as Zionism's founding father, and the "normalization" of the Zionist project within European politics in the early 20th century. An important second part of Dr. Reimer's proposal involves purchasing access to the archives of the Jewish Chronicle (London), which began publishing in 1841 and is the oldest continuously published Jewish periodical in the world. The addition of access to this periodical will enhance enormously the research possibilities of students in his HIST 3208, "Zionism and Modern Judaism"; it is tied to the mapping

project because the Jewish Chronicle is an important source for tracing Herzl's activities and the early history of the Zionist movement. In order to carry out these projects, the History Department will require the fulltime services of a technician with capabilities in the use of mapping software, to train faculty and students in the use of the software, but also in the development, editing, and maintenance of the maps produced. The cost of such a specialist, preferably someone with a computer science degree and specialized training in digital mapping, as well as some familiarity with techniques of historical study, is estimated to be LE 120,000 (about $7,500). The budget also includes funds for a faculty/student training event, access to the archives of Jewish Chronicle, and costs for the printing and scanning necessary for the advertising of these revised courses and events highlighting the maps produced for the wider AUC community. II. Historical Simulations As in the case of digital humanities, the Department already has some experience with the use of historical simulations. The most important example of this, as noted under Student Achievement, has been Dr. Hanan Kholoussy's extremely popular "The Marriage Crisis and the Middle East" (HIST 4215); an integral element in Dr. Kholoussy's curriculum for this Capstone course is the requirement that students collaborate in the re-enactment of scenes from actual cases that appeared in the Egyptian courts during this historical period (see Dr. Kholoussy syllabus and supporting materials, given under Student Achievement). These simulations/re-enactments take place within Dr. Kholoussy's classroom, but have also been put on for audiences attending EURECA's History Day. Another example of a pedagogically effective simulation developed more recently was Dr. Michael Reimer's "America in the Middle East" (HIST 4588), another Capstone course, where student did research on the history of U.S.-Iranian relations and collaborated in simulating decision-making in the Carter White House during the revolution in Iran, 1978-79 (see materials given under Student Achievement). The Department wishes to build on its existing capacity in historical simulations to refine existing simulations and create new simulations. In order to do this, the Department proposes to mount a one-day workshop, using the expertise and resources supplied by the "Reacting to the Past" (RTTP) program developed at Bard College. The base fee for the workshop is $3000; additional costs are outlined in the budget (including the

costs of travel and lodging for the visit of an RTTP faculty trainer from Bard). The fee structure for RTTP is attached here.

b. Supporting Documents: (Check Folder)

3. **<u>Faculty Leadership</u>**

a. Description: The faculty of the History Department are active researchers, attending research conferences in their subfields and producing important new published scholarship. They thereby model the challenges and methods of research for their students. They are also committed to teaching and mentoring students directly in research. One notable evidence of our faculty's commitment to excellent teaching is the fact that, though we are a small Department within AUC, two of our nine faculty have received the AUC Excellence in Teaching Award—Dr. Hanan Kholoussy (2012) and Dr. Michael Reimer (2015). As an evidence of the close link in the Department between teaching and research, it is worth noting that the two most recent books published by History faculty are also by Dr. Kholoussy and Dr. Reimer (see attached document for bibliographic details of the two books). As noted under "Student Achievement," our faculty have taken a major role in preparing students for participation in the annual EURECA conference. Each year, we guide and coach students through the process of applying to present their research at EURECA, all the way through the preparation and presentation itself. This is a collaborative effort made by our entire faculty. Other specific examples of faculty leadership in the encouragement of student development and research: Dr. Elisabeth Kennedy, our professor of Comparative Religion, has taught a Capstone course for five semesters in which all students undertake a substantial research project. She mentors students closely through the research and writing process. Her syllabus HIST 4188 (attached here) shows her commitments in this regard. Also, in the coming year, she plans to add two new Capstone courses to my teaching offerings. Undergraduate research is the primary skill I will emphasize in the learning outcomes for these new courses. Dr. Deets is acting as the faculty advisor for STAR (Student Action for Refugees), an organization of AUC graduate and undergraduate students providing free English lessons to refugees in the Cairo area. This, in combination with his experience with the

Migration Studies Department, has provided opportunities to think about and discuss pressing migration issues in the region. Dr. Reimer was active in encouraging effective pedagogy, faculty training, and the promotion of student research. He has incorporated a research assignment in HIST 3208 in which students must use, exclusively, primary sources, in the writing of their research papers. He has contributed by leading or co-leading several CLT events/workshops, including: *"Pedagogy and the Revolution," 6 March 2011.* *"Toward instituting a research-active curriculum across the disciplines," 24 March 2010 (co-led with Amani Elshimi).* In addition, Dr. Reimer's recent book (The First Zionist Congress: An Annotated Translation of the Proceedings, SUNY Press, 2019) was based in part on contributions made by students who had taken his course on Zionism and who drafted translations of some texts (Heba Khalil, now a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at University of Illinois) and compiled biographical data for the glossary (Nareman Amin, now a Ph.D. candidate in Religion at Princeton University). Finally, as noted above under Student Achievement, Dr. Reimer's was able, with the sponsorship of the Great Lake College Association/Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLCA/GLAA) to take three students in HIST 3208 ("Zionism and Modern Judaism") for ten days' research on the history of American Jewry at the Library of Congress in Summer 2014. Again, as noted above, one student, Heba Bahnassy, went on to complete her M.A. thesis in GAPP on a subject closely related to the work she did with Dr. Reimer's team in 2014.

b. Supporting Documents: (Check Folder)

4. **Administration**

a. Description: The current Chair of the History Department, Dr. Pascale Ghazaleh, comments: The Department of History is moving towards a more thematic, multidisciplinary approach in its course offerings. Our classes are consistently full, indicating efficient use of existing resources, and we were commended for this by Dr. Ahmed Tolba in a recent meeting. We are working to remain responsive to the needs of the wider community by helping students prepare for careers oriented toward the assessment and solution of political, social, and legal problems, as well as positions that require the imaginative use of large and diversified bodies of information, which

is a special strength of the History program. Through an increased emphasis on the participation of students in the complexities and ambiguities of original research, the Department seeks to train its students in methods of investigation that will serve them in whatever field of study or professional venture they pursue in the future. It also seeks to instill in them standards of intellectual integrity that will allow them to produce and recognize authentic and careful scholarship, in contrast to the many oversimplified and fallacious theories of history that are currently in circulation. As the attached benchmarks indicate (under Teaching), the Department includes in its evaluation of faculty performance involvement in and promotion of student research and creativity.

b. Supporting Documents: (Check Folder)

5. <u>Research Learning Outcomes Assessment</u>

a Description: In accord with the objectives of the Core Curriculum, under which most History courses are subsumed, we seek to promote the following learning outcomes: (a) critical thinking: analysis and synthesis of complex information; deconstructing different narrative approaches; reconstructing events through different accounts (b) written communication: emphasis on effective and persuasive writing; use of best practice in research and citation (c) oral communication: presentations in class and wider academic community (d) critical reading: locating and constructing arguments, understanding historical evidence, evaluating sources (e) information literacy: assessing merit and usefulness of different sources, understanding bias, contextualizing information (f) teamwork: in-class projects requiring collaboration and group work (g) ethics and civic engagement: service to local community through CBL courses and public lectures; ethics of research; integrity and transparency (h) interdisciplinary and multicultural perspectives: emphasis on history as a discipline related to other liberal arts and requiring a position of critical empathy In all advanced courses offered by the Department, students should gain an ability to: analyze and compare "texts" (including artifacts of various kinds) by disciplined use of critical methods specific to historical inquiry; participate respectfully and constructively in academic discussion of "texts," events, movements, institutions, and personalities,

with classmates from diverse backgrounds; identify and access primary source documents as well as secondary publications exploring the period or theme they are seeking to investigate; assess the significance of the historical phenomenon they are studying in terms of its political, economic, social, cultural, cognitive, and/or religious significance. As noted above (Student Testimonials under Student Achievement), the Department remains in touch with some of its notable alumni, who vouch for the positive impact the Department has had on their careers as researchers.

b. Supporting Documents: N/A

6. **Community Engagement**

a. Description: The Department has only occasionally been offered under the rubric of Community-Based Learning (CBL). One course that has been taught under this rubric is HIST 330/3206, "Urban Landscapes in the Modern Middle East," which has usually been taught by Dr. Pascale Ghazaleh (see attached syllabus). However, the Department has engaged the wider university community in a variety of ways. One important initiative was a symposium on the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, in 2017, led by Drs. Mouannes Hojairi, David Speicher, and Michael Reimer, which was very well-attended and which stimulated much discussion. More recently, Dr. Mark Deets offered a public lecture on the 400th anniversary of the landing of the first African slaves in what became the United States, with a survey of African-American history (lecture and discussion took place on 30 October 2019). Again, the audience, of perhaps 75-80 persons, was deeply engaged, and there was lively and prolonged discussion after the lecture's conclusion. However, if the Department receives this award, it will be a stimulus to community-based learning. Thus, Dr. Kennedy's proposed courses involving digital mapping will require students to engage in community-based research concerning religious experience and pilgrimage in Egypt. Likewise, Dr. Schouteden's proposed mapping of European colonialism and resistance will take on a community dimension in the discussion and mapping of French and British colonialism in Egypt. Dr. Ghazaleh's course on the history of urban landscapes will also empower students to engage in the mapping of Cairo's historic neighborhoods.

b. Supporting Documents: (Check Folder)

7. **Interdisciplinary Connections**

a. Description: History is inherently interdisciplinary, since every humanistic or social-science discipline must make use of historical materials in some fashion. Conversely, history borrows insights from other disciplines in order to formulate new questions and develop new methods of investigation into the past. As one brilliant advocate of interdisciplinary history wrote: "History's chances of getting ahead and of doing good are dependent on its refraining from setting itself off as* a separate discipline and undertaking to defend itself from the encroachments of seemingly hostile sciences which now and then appear within its territory…. The bounds of all departments of human research and speculation are inherently provisional, indefinite, and fluctuating; moreover, the lines of demarcation are hopelessly interlaced .... Each so-called science or discipline is ever and always dependent on other sciences and disciplines. It draws its life from them, and to them it owes, consciously or unconsciously, a great part of its chances of progress." [James Harvey Robinson, as quoted by T.C.R. Horn and Harry Ritter, "Interdisciplinary History: A Historiographical Review," The History Teacher (1986), 19:3, 433.] Within AUC, the History Department has established significant connections with other departments and programs. One evidence of this fact are the guest-lectures done by various members of the faculty. To take just one example, Dr. Michael Reimer has done the following lectures in courses offered by other departments, by invitation: Introduction to Political Science, POLS 1001/2003: lectures 2015-2018, on the legacy of Ibn Khaldun and the integration of history into political science, 4 Oct 2015; 6 Nov 2016; 3 April 2017; 12 Nov 2017; 5 March 2018. Invited by Dr. James Sunday. "Celebrating Ideas," SEMR 1023: lectures on Martin Luther King, Jr., historical context of his speech, "I have a dream," 23 March 2014; 2 Nov 2014; 22 March 2015; 11 Oct 2015; 23 Oct 2016; 12 Feb 2017; 24 Sept 2017, 11 Feb 2018. Invited by Richard Hoath. "Celebrating Ideas," SEMR 1023: lectures on Machiavelli's The Prince, 11 April 2010, 3 Oct 2010, 25 Sept 2011. Invited by Richard Hoath. Intensive English Program, lecture on the Iranian and Egyptian Revolutions, 6

May 2011. Invited by Jonah Moos. Another example of interdisciplinary activity are the efforts of Dr. Mark Deets, our Africanist, who invited and hosted the Africanist political scientist, Dr. Will Reno of Northwestern University, who gave a series of lectures in Fall 2-19 with HUSS Lab funding. His talks were especially of interest to POLS students, and one of his talks was given in the POLS conference room. Finally, one may add the important example of Dr. Matthew Parnell, who recently team-taught a course on children and youth with an anthropology colleague, Dr. Ramy Aly: HIST 2097, "Coming of Age: Anthro-Histories of Young People," which was offered in Fall 2018 (see attached syllabus).

b. Supporting Documents: Check Folder

8. Proposed Budget (Check Folder)