

# EASTERN HISTORY ALUMNI COLLABORATION NEWSLETTER

Issue One, February 2020

## Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first issue of the Eastern History Alumni Collaboration's bi-annual newsletter! Our goal is to provide an inside look at exciting developments and accomplishments achieved by current students, faculty and alumni. Alongside these, we are happy to share upcoming events hosted by the collaboration, as well as opportunities to support and connect with each other. After all, what is history for if not for a collection of shared experiences?

From studying the influence of global networks, to the social and political constructs that shape our surroundings, and the evolving philosophies that piece together our world, historians are uniquely positioned to not only attempt to answer the question of, "How did we get here?" but the ever-daunting "Where do we go from here?" In reflecting upon these questions, we hope our readers find the grounding, compelling intrigue that first sparked their interest in history. More than that, though, we hope these questions propel you to see the value in your knowledge, skills and

inquisitiveness. For there is nothing that can function in this world without the ripple of social, cultural, political and economic effects. It is with this very essence that historians view the world in a way that provides context and understanding to the present day.

This comprehensive understanding and application of history is what brings the collaboration together today. Our goal is to help graduates and current students apply their insights to interdisciplinary career trajectories, thereby broadening professional possibilities and supporting new pathways for growth and development. Together, we can provide a collective resource to support students and alumni—securing a stronghold for the future of history.

For questions about how you can contribute, please contact Christine Geer, MPH, history alumni collaboration president (2019) (ECSUHistoryAlumniBoard@gmail.com). Your information can be updated in Eastern's directory through the following link: <http://34.selectsurvey.net/easternct/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=I2LM4p6K>

## Events

We are proud and enthusiastic to offer multiple opportunities for networking between students, faculty and alumni. Each semester, we will host a networking event, alumni panel discussion, and team social (destinations/activities open for suggestion). If you are interested in taking part, please email our team at [ECSUHistoryAlumniBoard@gmail.com](mailto:ECSUHistoryAlumniBoard@gmail.com). Dates and details for this year's events will be released later this spring.

With support from the History Department, Office of Alumni Affairs and the ECSU Foundation, the collaboration's very first alumni panel discussion took place last November. This was a fantastic opportunity for students to learn how graduates have applied their History degree in their careers, and what they have learned since graduation. Panelists joined us from multiple career fields, including education, public policy and public health/healthCARE systems, which led to dynamic, thought provoking conversations regarding the lived-experience of applying a history degree across sectors.

Panelists discussed whether they felt

History alumni shared their career experiences with students at a professional development networking event in November. Front Row: Christine Geer '15 and Shawn Batchelder '17. Back Row: Morgan Considine '16, Ian Carey '15, John Allen '14, panel moderator and Eastern Senior Jacob Avery '20, and Ara Daglian '18.



employers weigh skills or content knowledge more heavily when looking for prospective job candidates, and what type of strategies proved most effective in leveraging their degrees to new employers. Additionally, panelists were asked about job satisfaction and work-life balance, including the difficult (but rewarding) process of finding jobs that align with interests, long-term goals and lifestyles. As many panelists had experience in the education field, there was significant time spent discussing education systems, community engagement and pedagogy. Data and technology were also a hot topic,

as panelists recounted the varied ways in which their work in the social sciences and beyond have benefitted from the use of technology, and vice versa. In sum, the field of history is rapidly evolving, and so is the work force. The panel discussion proved to be an effective way to broaden connections between alumni, and an opportunity to speak candidly about experiences and lessons learned along the way.

## Biographies and Profiles

In each newsletter, we will feature a selection of biographies and profiles from current students and alumni in order to highlight recent accomplishments and ongoing projects. In this issue, biographies from our 2019 team members have been included, as well as two students and two faculty members. As our team grows and changes, our next issue will highlight those elected for the 2020 term. If you would like to be considered for future issues, or to join our team, please email us at

For more information, contact [ECSUHistoryAlumniBoard@gmail.com](mailto:ECSUHistoryAlumniBoard@gmail.com).

You can also update your directory information at <http://34.selectsurvey.net/easternct/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=I2LM4p6K>



**CHRISTINE GEER '15, MPH  
HISTORY ALUMNI  
COLLABORATION PRESIDENT**

Christine graduated from Eastern in 2015 with a B.A. in History and Social Sciences, a minor in Public Health, and gained her certification in secondary education from the State of Connecticut. Shortly after graduation, Christine attended the Boston University School of Public Health and earned her Master of Public Health degree in 2017.

Christine's professional experience has spanned the fields of education, community health, clinical research and health care systems. Her time working in public schools and community programs helped to craft her comprehensive view of population health from a community-focused lens. In graduate school, Christine co-authored a publication in Obesity, and also worked as a research assistant on a project to reduce sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among youth. Following graduate school, Christine spent more than two years as a clinical research specialist at Boston Children's Hospital, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital, working on infectious disease and laboratory diagnostic research. She has since joined a new team at Children's Hospital and now works in quality improvement, with a focus on care integration. Her time at Eastern and degree in History and Social Sciences gave her the context needed to understand the social and political complexities of health care and outcomes, as well as the research skills necessary to investigate difficult questions from dynamic angles.

## 2019 Alumni Collaboration Members

There once was a group of history students who loved history enough to come together and build something after "leaving" Eastern. Maybe it was their awesome History Club experience, or their continued quest for knowledge. Dare we say it — maybe they even missed Chicago Style citations. Whatever the reasons may be, they came back together and started the History Alumni Collaboration to connect fellow history-lovers. Here are their stories.

### **SHAWN BATCHELDER '17 VICE PRESIDENT**

Shawn Batchelder graduated from Eastern in 2017 with a B.A. in History. Shawn served as the Eastern History Club President between 2014 and 2016 and was awarded the Service to the History Department Award. After working for two years in publishing for higher education, Shawn is now a teacher candidate in Central Connecticut State University's Graduate M.A.T. Program.

Shawn's experience with Eastern's History Department rewarded him with a unique set of skills he has used in all of his professional settings. Nonetheless, Shawn's true love has always been the historical content which he explores in depth in his podcast, "The Past for Plebs."

### **IAN CAREY '15 TREASURER**

Ian graduated from Eastern in 2015, with a B.A. in History and Social Science. He was interested in joining the team because of his desire to stay connected with his alma mater, as well as to help establish professional networks among fellow alumni, former professors and current students.

The most significant thing he gained from his time at Eastern was the ability to think about many topics critically and to explore them from different points of view.

Ian has had a diverse and exciting career path since graduation. Currently, he works for the Groton Public School District as a paraprofessional and is also pursuing a Library Science and Technology certificate at Three Rivers Community College and hopes to work in a professional library setting one day. His favorite area of history is American and British railroad and industrial development in the 19th and 20th centuries.



### **MORGAN CONSIDINE '16, MPP ALUMNI COLLABORATION REPRESENTATIVE**

Morgan graduated from Eastern in 2016 with a double major in History and Political Science and then from the University of Connecticut in 2018 with a Master of Public Policy degree. Morgan is a data analyst with the School and State Finance Project, which is a non profit that focuses on building knowledge and identifying solutions to Connecticut's school funding challenges. Prior to joining the School and State Finance Project, Morgan completed

a variety of internships focused on public policy and data, including stints at the Connecticut Department of Children and Families and State Department of Education. His time at Eastern taught him essential writing, critical thinking and research skills that proved tremendously useful in graduate school and as a working professional.

### **ARA DAGLIAN '18 COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

Ara Daglian graduated from Eastern in May 2018 with a B.A. in History and now works for the U.S. Census Bureau. He is currently applying to Ph.D. programs in the history of the Ottoman Empire, planning to study the relationship between the Ottoman state apparatus and the Empire's ethnic and religious minorities in the 19th century. Ara hopes to teach at the college level one day, where he can genuinely explore his passion. He joined the team to stay connected with the department and give back to the school. Eastern ignited his love for history and set him down his current academic path.

### **CHRISTOS STRAVORAVDIS '14 ALUMNI COLLABORATION REPRESENTATIVE**

Christos Stravoravdis graduated from Eastern in 2014 with a secondary education teaching certification and a degree in History and Social Sciences. Since his time at Eastern, he has been working in the field of education as an ESL tutor, paraprofessional, substitute teacher and residential childcare worker. He also worked in local politics, running for the Board of Assessment and Appeals. Much of his volunteer work is oriented around the field of education and mental health care. He has also worked with groups that focus on poverty around Connecticut, as well as raising money for

cancer research. Currently, he works as a paraprofessional and is attending graduate school at the University of Rhode Island.

### **CLAIRE TENSA '17 EVENT PLANNER**

Claire graduated in 2017 with a degree in History and Social Sciences and a certificate

in American Studies. An accomplishment that she is proud of since graduating from Eastern is working for the National Park Service in two different roles. She was the Youth Ambassador intern at Weir Farm National Historic Site, where she focused on community outreach for the park and played a role in planning the first-ever Art in

The Park Festival in 2017. Claire now works at Minute Man National Historical Park as a Community Volunteer Ambassador. In this role, Claire recruits and works with volunteers at the park. Claire's primary interest is American history, and she was able to learn about different eras through her time at Eastern.

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## **Current Students**

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*Welcome, students! We are proud to showcase the efforts, dedication, and accomplishments of current students. The students featured in this issue have been selected to share their senior seminar project progress and goals for life after Eastern. Please join us in celebrating their academic endeavors.*



### **JACOB AVERY '20 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE IN THE HISTORY ALUMNI COLLABORATION**

Jacob is a senior at Eastern Connecticut State University, scheduled to graduate in May of 2020 with a bachelor's degree in History and Social Sciences and certification in secondary education from the State of Connecticut. Jacob is currently serving in the Connecticut Army National Guard.

Jacob just completed his senior seminar doing research on Connecticut Civil War veterans and their lives after the war. This project requires a deep analysis of Connecticut records housed at Eastern, as well as research of modern family databases. He

is forming skills that are reflective of real research outside the classroom. Some of the skills he has found most valuable in his coursework thus far are time management, source evaluation and creative thinking. Jacob's goal is to become a successful high school teacher who is an expert in the field of history. His pursuit requires he maintain a competitive resume and acquire job experience. He leaves this piece of advice for incoming students to the field of history, "Be organized and creative. Make sure you meet deadlines and perform well in class, but don't be afraid to propose something new when you have the chance to. Be willing to participate beyond just getting a grade and take pride in what you accomplish."

### **EMILY GROUT '20**

Emily just completed her thesis and final research project for her senior seminar. This project entails in-depth research regarding religion and American foreign policy. By using both secondary and primary sources, including government documents, sermons, speeches and foreign policy agreements, she has devised a thesis regarding the influence that Jewish Americans had on American foreign policy from 1900-18. This research project has immensely encouraged her research methodology skills, and she plans to implement them in graduate-level research next year as she continues to a master's degree.

With the prospect of publishing graduate research, Emily hopes to continue publication and research into her desired occupational field. She considers these research methodology skills the most valuable lessons she has achieved through her history coursework. Through historical courses, internships, and research papers, she built her research methodology skills to a level she feels would be thorough enough for publication at a future date. After her undergraduate degree at Eastern, Emily plans on getting a Master of Teaching degree with a focus in secondary education and social sciences.

Emily states that, "The one piece of advice

I would give to incoming history majors, or anyone interested in pursuing a career in history, would be to use your professors as allies in your education. The professors in the History Department are amazing scholars and resources to help you not only achieve your own goals but to help you find opportunities in the field of history. The History Department professors have helped me maintain academic excellence, find internships, and prepare for my future career. They are excellent resources of information and help! I encourage anyone interested to take history classes, pick up a history minor, or major! History is vital for every aspect of life, whether we choose to realize it or not."

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## **Faculty Bios**

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*In this Faculty section, we have highlighted two European historians to share insights from their recently published works. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to them for helping to make this newsletter possible, and for their continued support of the collaboration.*

### **DR. JAMEL OSTWALD, PH.D. PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND DEPARTMENT CHAIR**

"In addition to working on a book monograph on English perceptions of the proper way to fight a war (battle vs. siege) circa 1700, I'm also working on analyzing

military operations during Louis XIV's wars from 1688-1714, to ascertain why warfare in the Old Regime was so much less decisive than during the age of Napoleon. This requires tracing military campaigns across modern-day Belgium, geospatially analyzing the army camps, movements and fighting

relative to the region's transportation networks, its defensive fortifications and garrisons, its terrain, and its logistical infrastructure. I am using the Python programming language and the computer mapping software QGIS (Geographical Information System) for much of this work.

My most recent Publication - as co-editor along with Anke Fischer-Kattner in *The World of the Siege: Representations of Early Modern Positional Warfare*; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2019. This book includes my chapter "More Honored in the Breach? Representations of Honor in Louisquatorzian Sieges." I created the book index using a custom-written Python program that identified all the proper nouns throughout the book, and the pages each appeared on.

The potential of computer-mediated historical research has changed radically even since I finished *The World of the Siege*. Future historians will have no choice but to embrace computer tools, since most historical documents from the 1990s onward are and will be born digital. Fortunately, we now have online libraries and archives with hundreds of thousands of documents available for free, we can track them with bibliographic software, analyze them with relational databases and statistical programs, and even write computer programs that can automatically analyze datasets and text documents. College graduates, too, need to know how to take full advantage of such tools in our new digital world. The History Department currently offers an introduction to digital history course, and will be adding more such courses as we expand the number of our digital history projects. In fall 2020, we will begin teaching Digital Windham, a series of courses to digitize and publicize the history of Willimantic. We are enlisting current students, alumni, local museums and the community at large in these digital history projects. Volunteers welcome!"

**DR. SCOTT MOORE**  
**PH.D.**  
**PROFESSOR OF HISTORY**

"My upcoming book, "Teaching the Empire: Education and State Loyalty in Late-Habsburg Austria," looks at patriotic education in Austria-Hungary in the decades before the First World War. It basically tries to figure out how Austrian schools taught children to think of themselves as Austrians and to be patriotic adults. At this point in time, every country engaged in some form of patriotic development, but what makes Austria unique was the fact that it was a multi-national and multi-ethnic state. Because of this, "Austrian-ness" couldn't be tied to national identity or language. As a result, even though they were engaged in the same type of civic education as the rest of Europe, it had to approach patriotic development in a way that was open to all of the state's ethnicities. I like to think that this project is impressive on its own, but it has also helped me add depth and nuance to many of my classes. Historical memory, or how societies remember their past, is an essential topic in most of my classes. Because of the work I've done for my book, I'm able to include excerpts from textbooks, discuss museum exhibits, or show pictures of monuments and explain how they reflect specific visions of history.

As I think about how the field of history will change over time, I wouldn't be surprised to see more interest in trans-national, multi-national or non-national topics. These topics have always been part of historical research. Still, I think there is an increasing desire to

see how various societies grappled with similar issues in addition to the more country-focused research we typically see. Contemplating how the field will change over time is an excellent exercise for not only historians but also history students. It helps students approach their study of history in a more meaningful way. It also encourages students



to read as much as they can and engage with the field as much as possible. This would be the best advice I could give students, read, and read critically. Ask questions about the books you read, even if it is to yourself, think about the way historians "talk" to each other, and keep track of what issues haven't been discussed as much as they should. Doing this will help you realize where there is room for future research and growth."

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## Eastern to Observe 50th Anniversary of Kent State Shooting

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On May 4, 1970, riots broke out on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio. The National Guard, there to impose law and order on the restless students protesting Nixon's expansion of the Vietnam War, shot and killed four students. Back at Eastern, the student body was also uneasy and as Commencement loomed, the administration threatened to cancel it to avoid protests (they had already cancelled the last week of classes). Tony Andrade was student body president at the time, and he worked tirelessly to communicate between administration and the study body to avoid the cancellation of Commencement. Please join us as we welcome Mr. Andrade back to Eastern 50 years later. He will address the University community on May 4, 2020, at 3 p.m. in the Library's Johnson Room about his experience as student body president during a time of extreme campus unrest.



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## Endnotes

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*Thank you to our readers for your continued love of history. We hope this newsletter will serve as a catalyst for strategic networking and innovative ideas. May we all find our own ways to make a place for history and social sciences in the conversations of today and the industries of tomorrow.*