

History at Goshen College

STUDENT EDITOR: **Claire Franz '22** | FACULTY EDITOR: **Philipp Gollner**



New recruitment strategies spearheaded by students

BY **Claire Franz '22**

College admissions efforts are a tricky game.

Of course, the college itself should be described, but how many new details should prospective students learn about specific programs, departments and activities before all the information passes the threshold of beneficial and becomes too much?

The Goshen College History, Politics and Society Department tends to miss the cut.

"It is an unfortunate reality that Goshen's admissions department struggles to communicate the true strengths of the history department to prospective students," said Jace Longenecker, a '20 graduate with a major in history.

Sophia Martin, '20, a fellow history graduate, agrees.

"History often gets overlooked when students select their majors," Martin said.

Longenecker, Martin and Chelsea Foster, '20, another history graduate, spearheaded an effort to better reach out to prospective students over the 2019-2020 school year. Their goal was to fill the vacuum of information left by the Admissions Department.

"Instead of working with email lists,

Department in unprecedented times

BY **Claire Franz '22**

As the United States ground to a halt to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in March, Goshen College sent its students and staff home. No one—students, professors, or those employed on campus—knew quite how to carry on.

Professor Philipp Gollner highlighted the uncertainty of finishing the spring 2020 semester online.

"A lot of factors outside of our control figured into this situation. Beyond the change in learning environments, there is also the insecurity, from week to week: ... Will the technology work as we need it to?" Gollner said.

The unpredictability, according to Gollner, was also complicated by the fact that most professors and students were not well-versed in digital education.

"This is a kind of constant trial and triage, not the most excellent digital or in-person education we know is possible," Gollner said.

Beyond finishing spring 2020 classes, Professor John Roth also took on the challenge of responding to COVID-19 from his positions as director of the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism and the Mennonite Historical Library as well as Faith and Life Commission Secretary for the Mennonite World Conference.

"Between March and July, I was looking forward to five international trips related to my work with the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism or Mennonite World Conference, all of which were cancelled," Roth said.

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A Trend Towards Social Research

Five students completed baccalaureate theses in History and Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies this spring, projects which, in most cases, they had begun researching as Junior Seminar students a year earlier. As a result of the closure of Goshen College due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students presented their senior thesis defenses over Zoom in April. This year's students and thesis titles:

Chelsea Foster (Indianapolis, IN), "Displacement of Vulnerable Communities: Looking at Space, Social Hierarchies, and Resilience Through the History of Housing in Indianapolis."

Gianna Hochstetler (Leesburg, IN), "A Paradigm Shift: How Trauma-Informed Care is Changing Therapeutic Approaches for Children."

Jace Longenecker (South Bend, IN), "Reconstructing Masculinity: The Story of 'Mennonite Men' and the Building of the Paraguayan Trans-Chaco Highway from 1950 - 1965."

Elijah Lora (Goshen, IN), "The Tribe of Ishmael: Eugenics and Indiana's Quest to Purify the White Race."

Sophia Martin (Lancaster, PA), "Ingredients of Mennonite Identity: The Implications of the *World Community Cookbooks*."

The Class of 2020 also included three students with minors or interdisciplinary concentrations in history: Sarah Martin, Miguel Rodríguez, and Luke Schrock.

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"I was also working with colleagues in the Mennonite Historical Library, trying to ensure that our employees could continue to work from home as we implemented new protocols for access to the library."

Despite the chaos COVID-19 brought to the typical course of a spring semester, the months since March saw numerous creative approaches to teaching, learning and writing through the pandemic. Professors were able to spend more time on research projects and professional development.

For instance, Roth explained that the pandemic's role in bringing much of the country to a standstill was an unexpected gift.

"I did end up with unanticipated time to pursue other research and writing projects ... [and] to move forward several academic projects," Roth said.

Professor Jan Bender Shetler emphasised the resources she was able to explore during the pandemic in her role as director of international education at GC.

"I have had a quick study in learning about the new field - professional associations, conferences and literature. Many organizations

are doing virtual conferences and workshops over this time," Bender Shetler said.

Her department was also able to publish a newsletter this summer.

As GC has reconvened on-campus classes for the fall 2020 semester, professors are hopeful for a productive, albeit altered, school year. Professor Julia Schiavone Camacho particularly notes the joy of having students back.

"Students have seemed delighted to be on campus, and this has been lovely to see. We are lucky that we are small, as some larger schools have moved online completely," Schiavone Camacho said.

Gollner echoed Schiavone Camacho's sentiment: "In these weeks in particular, it feels good to be at a small college where we know and trust each other," he said.

As Goshen College continues to work through the global pandemic, the challenges remain large. Travel opportunities have been cancelled and typical class plans have not proceeded as usual. Regardless, the department continues to teach and learn across changing guidelines, new learning platforms, and even time zones. 🌿

Catching Up with Julia Schiavone Camacho

BY **Claire Franz '22**

What is a quote or a phrase that sums up your year?

Feeling enlightened and learning new things.

What has been your favourite new experience since moving to Goshen College (a class taught, something in town, etc.)?

I especially appreciate the opportunity to teach at a Christian school, after many years of teaching at secular schools. I also love Goshen's vibrant downtown and the interesting, diverse mix of people in this area, including Amish and Latinos.

What are you looking forward to for this next year in Goshen (doing something differently, adding something, etc.)?

I am looking forward to continuing to develop a rhythm as I learn more about the unique culture of GC. Also, I look forward to the opportunity to teach Senior Seminar again as well as offer a new course for me: Modern China.



or trying to reach out to students through social media, I figured the best approach for our project would be something a little more 'old fashioned,'" Longenecker said.

Longenecker, Martin and Foster reached out to high school students with packets of information from multiple history classes.

"We wrote letters and sent packages of book [covers and summaries] and syllabi to a large number of prospective students to give them a taste of what a GC history education looks like," Martin said.

Longenecker explains that the packets were handwritten to demonstrate a personal touch, one of the strengths of the department.

"We included ... glossy-printed book covers, on the back of which we wrote short reviews of our textbooks, explaining the context in which we read and discussed them in class. Finally, we included a handwritten letter, telling each prospective student some of the reasons we had found our time in the department to be especially rewarding," Longenecker said.

While the initiative was largely student-driven, professors helped to connect Longenecker, Martin and Foster with materials to include in the packets, students to send the packets to and even helped put them together.

"It took us three evenings, with food, to get them out the door," Professor Philipp Gollner, department chair, said.

While the goal of the packet initiative was to increase recruitment of prospective history students, Longenecker and Martin both agree that their effort was more than a numbers game. Martin focused on what history can offer prospective students.

"A major in history teaches students about the world and prepares them for a wide array of careers," Martin said.

Longenecker emphasised the strengths of the department.

"In designing these packets, I wanted to show the key strengths of our

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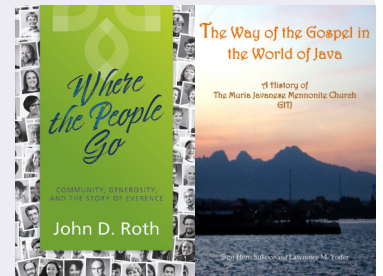
Faculty Spotlights



Professor **Jan Bender Shetler**, in her capacity as director of international education, successfully coordinated the return of all spring 2020 Study-Service Term students and leaders from Ecuador and Tanzania as host countries and the United States went into quarantine in March 2020. On March 20, 16 students and their leaders left Tanzania and began their long journey to the United States. At the same time, the Ecuador unit of 21 students and their leaders split into two groups and separately flew from Quito to the United States. With many moving parts, changing travel restrictions and rapidly evolving information about the COVID-19 pandemic, this accomplishment is all the more impressive.



Professor **John D. Roth** continued to stay busy during quarantine. In April, he wrote a book chapter of the history of Anabaptist-Mennonite ecumenical work and, in May, he translated several articles from German to English. In early July, he celebrated (via Zoom) the launch of a new book called *Where the People Go: Community, Generosity, and the Story of Everence*, a history of Mennonite mutual aid in North America. Published by MennoMedia, *Where the People Go* focuses especially on the organization, now called Everence, as it balances its spiritual commitments with an increasingly complex national environment. During the summer, John concentrated on editing a lengthy history of the Javanese Mennonite Church (GITJ) that is now about to go to press.



Professor **Philipp Gollner** was named one of the 2020-2022 Young Scholars in American Religion, a fellowship through the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, with funding from the Lilly Endowment and the NEH. Philipp also published an article entitled "Educating for Activism? Historians and Politics in the Contemporary United States" in the journal *Fides et Historia*. Philipp presented on the same topic during the annual January 2020 meeting of the American Historical Association in New York City.

department: excellent curricula, a network of peer-support, and the opportunity to connect in meaningful ways with professors in the department,” Longenecker said.

Overall, Longenecker, Martin and Foster want to share their love of history with others who might find similar delight in exploring stories of the past.

“I have found that sharing my feelings of honest excitement and joy for the subject has been the single most effective way to communicate the strengths of the program to new students,” Longenecker said.

While Longenecker, Martin and Foster all graduated in spring 2020, the packet initiative continues.

“We would like to see the momentum going and keep what we say about studying History here largely in the hands of students,” Gollner said.

Current history students will be placing their own mark on packets going out in fall 2020. 🌿

Scholarship Recipients



Olivia Krall



Andrew Ness

The 2020-2021 Willard and Verna Smith U.S. History Scholarship has been awarded to **Olivia Krall**, sophomore, of Carmel, IN.

The Oswin and David Gerber Scholarship in Mennonite Studies for 2020-2021 was awarded to **Andrew Ness**, sophomore, of Portland, OR.

The generosity of the Smith and Gerber families has been helpful to many Goshen College students. The History, Politics and Society Department welcomes donations to the Smith and Gerber scholarship endowments. To donate, contact finaid@goshen.edu.

Recent History Alumni Activities

Nathan Yoder '08 is living in Portland, Oregon and teaching middle school social studies. This is Yoder's 10th year. On the side, Yoder is also a music writer, promoting artists and publishing album reviews.

Lydette Assefa '09 began working as a Clinical Fellow in the Children and Family Justice Center in the Bluhm Legal Clinic at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law (in Chicago, IL) in April of this year. In her role, Assefa helps coordinate litigation and policy efforts to end the use of extreme sentencing of youth in Illinois. Assefa works particularly to abolish the use of juvenile life without the possibility of parole in Illinois through individual representation of people with extreme sentences, technical support to other attorneys who represent juveniles serving extremely long sentences, and partnerships with other advocates to push for policy reform in new state legislation. Before April, Assefa was a staff law clerk in the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals (in Chicago) for a year and half, where she wrote bench memoranda, orders, and opinions for federal appellate judges. In 2018, Assefa graduated from law school at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and passed the Illinois bar.

Kelly Miller '11 graduated from UCLA Law in 2019. After graduation, Kelly completed a Justice Catalyst Fellowship representing detained immigrants in removal proceedings in Southern California. Miller is now a law clerk for the Honorable Jacqueline H. Nguyen on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in Pasadena, CA.

Jackson Beck '13 finished all his studies (juris doctorate and master in historic preservation) and is now back in Goshen working as an attorney at Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer & Buckingham. Beck also recently joined the board of Ruthmere (a historic house/museum/venue in Elkhart).

Samita Thapa '13 is currently working as a researcher in Santiago, Chile for a global sustainability consulting company, Corporate Citizenship, where she helps strategize, measure, and report the sustainability performance of some of the biggest Latin American companies against global benchmarks. Thapa moved to Chile after completing her master's degree in international development at the Graduate Institute of Geneva, where she had the opportunity to be involved in putting together a report on digital identity at the World Economic Forum and assisted the International Organization for Migration to better understand how to localize the Sustainable Development Goals.

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