Letter from the Dean

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to share with you this issue of the Laney Graduate School Newsletter. As I write, the 2013–2014 academic year is underway, and several exciting events have already taken place here in the Laney Graduate School. We have welcomed our newest community members in the New Student Orientation, held in-gathering events for all students, and held our annual International Student Reception. The fall term kicked off with the Program for Scholarly Integrity core course, and we have already had two events of our Pathways Beyond the Professoriate series.

Last year’s inaugural newsletter gave us an opportunity to highlight a Laney alum who continues to be involved with students and programming at Emory. We do that again with this newsletter, and we are also highlighting a project and degree program, to give you a sense of our academic diversity and the importance and breadth of our work.

For some time now, in our nation and world, the presses and forces of globalization and increasing interconnectedness remain primary for defined and emerging regions, cultures, and economies. The thrust of globalization presents challenges and complexities that require critical skills: analytical vigor, sensitive listening, thoughtful articulation, adaptable perspectives, and innovative problem solving. From global health to conflict resolution, sustainable development to human rights advocacy—a commitment to robust inquiry and understanding of global complexities, as well as the ability to distill advanced research and scholarship into language with broad reach, is imperative to advancing debate, policy, and solutions. At the Laney Graduate School, we know that our students are the next generation of leaders, and as the graduate school of Emory University, we are preparing our students with interdisciplinary training that expands their intellectual perspectives and professional skills development so that they meet the challenges ahead.

In this issue, I am pleased to acquaint you with our newest doctoral program, Islamic Civilizations Studies. This program is a reflection of our commitment to transformative scholarship and internationalization among our students and the graduate faculty. I am also excited to tell you about an innovative and, quite frankly, fun-filled competition that challenges our students to dynamically and
Program Feature: Islamic Civilizations Studies

Islamic calligraphy of the Iban people of Sarawak, Malaysia. It is the opening verse of Surat al-Kahf (Qur’an 18).

In its vision statement, Emory commits to being a university that is “internationally recognized as an inquiry-driven, ethically engaged, and diverse community, whose members work collaboratively for positive transformation in the world through courageous leadership in teaching, research, scholarship, health care, and social action.” In alignment with this vision, the Laney Graduate School takes great pride in meeting the complex challenges facing society and advancing the public global good. The Islamic Civilizations Studies (ICIVS) program, which welcomed its first students in fall 2012, is a reflection of this commitment to internationalization and inquiry-driven, transformative scholarship.

Why ICIVS? Why Emory?

In recent years, Emory University has established itself as a major center of Middle Eastern and South Asian studies. Emory is one of the few universities in North America that offers an undergraduate degree in Middle Eastern and South Asian studies in a single department. However, apart from Emory’s Graduate Division of Religion, there was a gap to be filled where faculty and students could explore the intellectual importance of the Islamic world that extends beyond religion alone.

The Islamic world is a highly diverse civilization that has long played a major role in world affairs. This region, which historically extends from Morocco to Indonesia, is central to contemporary world politics, but its importance also extends beyond the headlines and the evening news. In recent years, the Islamic world has become an integral part of global civilization. Muslims now make up well-established minorities in North America and Europe. Today in the twenty-first century, Islamic civilization is truly global. To get at this scholarship, it was necessary to offer an advanced degree program that highlighted the connections between the Middle East, South Asia, and beyond.

With the addition of a doctoral program in Islamic Civilizations Studies, Emory plays a unique role among top-20 universities by combining Islamic studies with a comparative and interregional approach to area studies. Although a handful of other universities, such as the University of California, Los Angeles, offer Islamic studies programs that include an area studies focus, few approach the subject in a multidisciplinary way or can combine Islamic studies with interregional studies as can Emory.

“The ICIVS program was created because Emory had one of the largest underutilized pools of faculty expertise and other resources in this field in the country,” says Vincent Cornell, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Middle East and Islamic Studies and chair of the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies. “Currently ICIVS has 23 faculty members across several departments and schools, including the Departments of MESAS, Religion, Anthropology, History, Art History, Political Science, and Sociology, and the School of Law. Our library resources in the field of Islamic Civilizations studies exceed those of many peer institutions of long-established reputation, such as Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and New York University. We could not let these great resources go to waste.”

The Program

ICIVS is a unique PhD program that offers a unified thematic approach to investigating the global impact of Islamic civilizations. Focusing on the trans-regional and transnational connections that have been part of Islamic civilizations from the beginning, the program promotes a multi-perspectival examination of Islamic civilizations by drawing on the multiple disciplines of Emory’s faculty. While a focus on the religion of Islam is not excluded from the program, it is primarily designed for students who wish to study Islamic civilizations beyond the disciplinary confines of religion. By using an integrated multidisciplinary approach to understanding and analyzing the Islamic world, graduates of the ICIVS program will be well prepared to assess and make sense of the momentous changes that have and are taking place in this region in a wide range of professional capacities.

Along with language training that prepares them for textual or field research, students receive training in research methods, historiography, Islamic civilizations studies as a field of study, and the pedagogy of Islam and Islamic civilizations. Study supported by ICIVS include the programs of Islamic Civilizations in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean Basins, Muslim and Jewish Iberia and North Africa, Islam in Classical and Modern Arabic Literatures, Politics and Society in the Muslim World, Non-Muslim Minorities in Muslim Societies, Diaspora Communities from the Muslim World, Muslim Minorities in Non-Muslim Societies, Gender and Society in the Muslim World, and more.

The diversity in programs of study offered by ICIVS is rooted in the diversity of its faculty.

The Faculty

The ICIVS faculty work well across varying fields and areas of expertise because of their unique interdisciplinary backgrounds. For example, Professor of History Gyanendra Pandey is an internationally honored critical historian whose expertise bridges the Hindu and Muslim traditions and draws on history, literature, and the social sciences. Professor of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies Vincent Cornell was originally trained in social

ISLAMIC CIVILIZATIONS (cont. on p. 4)

Graffiti art from contemporary Egypt. The Arabic says, “No to harassment.”
anthropology, became an expert in the history of the Islamic West and has taught in departments of Religion and History, along with heading a Middle Eastern studies area center. Professor of Anthropology Michael Peletz was hired at Emory to teach anthropological theory but his expertise extends to Islamic studies and legal anthropology. Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies Devin Stewart's expertise extends from language, to law, history, and folklore. Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Linguistics, and Jewish Studies Benjamin Hary is one of the world's foremost sociologists specializing in Semitic languages. Like others among their colleagues, Professor of Religion Joyce Flueckiger and Associate Professor of South Asian and Islamic Studies Scott Kugle are known for pioneering new concepts in their fields: Flueckiger as a theoretician of vernacular religion and Kugle as a pioneer in the fields of religion and sexuality, queer Islamic studies, and the embodiment of Sufi doctrine.

The synergistic ways that the ICIVS faculty work together complements the interests and diversity of the ICIVS student body.

The Students
Students who are interested in global and trans-regional approaches to Islam and Islamic civilization make up a large proportion of applicants to the ICIVS program. Islam has recently asserted a trans-regional and global profile, which is manifest both in the trans-regional approaches to Islam and the embodiment of Sufi doctrine. Flueckiger as a theoretician of vernacular religion and Kugle as a pioneer in the fields of religion and sexuality, queer Islamic studies, and the embodiment of Sufi doctrine.

The Students
Students who are interested in global and trans-regional approaches to Islam and Islamic civilization make up a large proportion of applicants to the ICIVS program. Islam has recently asserted a trans-regional and global profile, which is manifest both in the trans-regional approaches to Islam and the embodiment of Sufi doctrine. Flueckiger as a theoretician of vernacular religion and Kugle as a pioneer in the fields of religion and sexuality, queer Islamic studies, and the embodiment of Sufi doctrine.

The Students
Students who are interested in global and trans-regional approaches to Islam and Islamic civilization make up a large proportion of applicants to the ICIVS program. Islam has recently asserted a trans-regional and global profile, which is manifest both in the trans-regional approaches to Islam and the embodiment of Sufi doctrine. Flueckiger as a theoretician of vernacular religion and Kugle as a pioneer in the fields of religion and sexuality, queer Islamic studies, and the embodiment of Sufi doctrine.
Where Are They Now?

Every LGS student's journey to and through graduate school is unique. Some arrive soon after their undergraduate studies. Some return mid-career to further their professional training or to acquire new skills. And some take an entirely different approach. No matter the path that leads them here, each LGS student brings something new to the Laney Graduate School, shaped by perspective, experience, and personal history, the combination of which molds their interests and ambitions and adds another layer to the storied history of scholarship at LGS.

In this issue’s Where Are They Now?, we are pleased to feature Pellom McDaniels (07G, Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts) whose journey to Emory is truly inspiring.

A UNIQUE BACKGROUND

McDaniels was a star athlete at Silver Creek High in San Jose, California, lettering in track and field, wrestling, and football. His athletic talent was enough to convince Oregon State University to recruit him for their football program. While a dedicated athlete, McDaniels was also a dedicated student nurturing an intellectual interest in the fine and applied arts by creating programs designed to encourage expressive development and creative thinking. While a medical condition would eventually halt his NFL career, his early interest in the arts and the work he implemented for Kansas City youth would herald what was to come. “I supported my decision to leave Proctor & Gamble based on the three factors,” reflects McDaniels, “First of all, I was a college graduate. I had proven I was intelligent enough to negotiate the university system as a student-athlete, and in the process developed leadership skills that I could use in the real world. Second, I had gained invaluable work experience through my time at Proctor & Gamble, which I continue to draw from even today. Lastly, I was young and I recognized that this was the time to do something crazy like pursue my dreams. Why not?”

A CHANCE MEETING

In addition to his athletic career, McDaniels is also an inventor and business man. Even as his NFL career wound down, he had already established a business to market and sell a dental product he had invented and patented, Dr. Brizzly Professional Dental Lubricant. But the lure of scholarly inquiry beckoned, and while supremely talented athletically and possessing a distinct business acumen, he couldn’t quiet intellectual questions with broader social and cultural implications, particularly as they related to race and sports. “As irony would have it, I was able to sell my patent for Dr. Brizzly to Proctor & Gamble many years ago. My decision to apply to graduate school was informed by my experiences in college and professional football, as well as working with youth interested in playing at Division I institutions,” further noting, “Recognizing that some of the most athletically talented and smart individuals I have ever been associated with felt powerless within the context of pursuing their dreams for athletic glory, helped shape my intellectual questions related to agency, identity, and power relations relative to African American boys and men involved in sports.”

In 2000, after visiting Emory to participate in the introduction and release of Microsoft’s Encarta African Encyclopedia, McDaniels became acquainted with Emory Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts (ILA) faculty, the late Goodrich C. White Professor of American Studies Rudolph Byrd, an esteemed and prolific scholar of African American culture, and Dana White, Emeritus Professor of American Studies and senior faculty curator in the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL). Byrd and White encouraged Pellom to apply to the doctoral program of the ILA, and once accepted, McDaniels’ career—and life—would take another turn. He reflects, “It was an honor to be able to work with Rudolph Byrd as one of my advisers and mentors, and I am grateful for having had the chance to know him. He was a very unique individual whose impact on the world of African American arts and letters, African American masculinity, and gender studies is yet to be fully understood. He was indeed, ‘an eloquent specimen of manhood.’”

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In 2007, McDaniels earned a PhD in American Studies. His dissertation, “The Angle of Ascent: Race, Class, Sport and Representations of African American Masculinity,” explores through case studies the impact of African American athletes on America from the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. He returned to Kansas City as an assistant professor of History and American Studies at the University of Missouri where he remained until 2012, when he decided to return Emory.

Appointed associate curator of African American Collections at Emory’s Woodruff Library Special Collections in 2010, after two years McDaniels accepted a full-time appointment as faculty curator of African American Collections in the Woodruff Library’s Manuscript, Archives and Rare Books Library (MARBL) and assistant professor of African American Studies.

The six principal collecting areas in this African American Collections include: Civil Rights and Post-Civil Rights Movements, Black Print Culture, Blacks and the Left, African American Literatures and the Arts, Expatriate Literary and Cultural Figures, and finally, African Americans and Sports, a new focus that promises to bring collective attention to this exciting and underrepresented area. Considering his work at MARBL, McDaniels notes, “What I find most exciting about working in MARBL is the opportunity to help shape a world of experiences for our undergraduate and graduate students, as well as our faculty supporters who utilize our holdings for teaching and their own research. Programmatically speaking, we have a lot to offer our university community and the surrounding Atlanta community as it relates to the world of ideas and the many forces responsible for shaping our understanding of that world.”

McDaniels’ work at MARBL is innovative, and his ability to bridge the curatorial work at MARBL with teaching instruction is bringing a new level of scholarly interaction in the classroom. He also sees opportunity to promote scholarly access and public scholarship through the digitizing of the Robert Langmuir African American Photographic Collection. The collection features more than 12,000 photographs depicting African American life from the early 19th century to the mid-20th. His work in the collections and experience in the classroom offers him a unique platform to

Pellom McDaniels 07G
where are they now? (cont. from p. 6)

nurture student research skills, explore areas of public scholarship and advance digital scholarship efforts. "Working with students to develop a greater understanding of how to conduct research and the process of analysis of evidence is rewarding in a number of ways. By providing opportunities to learn how to design and build exhibitions, and participate in the public programming created to support their particular research interests, students are better able to develop and exercise marketable skill sets that can be used in any career."

more to come

in fall 2013, marbl kicked off its race and sports in american culture series (rasacs), jointly organized by mcdaniels and emeritus professor of american studies and marbl senior faculty curator dana white. the purpose of the series is to advance conversation around race and sports in american culture, provide space to explore new scholarship related to this area, and encourage research in this area to coincide with the development of the african american in sports collection. the series, which the laney graduate school is also proud to support along with other partners, will fit-}

Hard Road to Glory (1986), the late tennis champion and writer Arthur Ashe Jr. argues, ‘Black historians never deemed sports serious enough for their scarce time; and these same historians had underestimated the sociohistorical impact of the black athlete in black American life.’ Historians in general and African American scholars in particular have since recognized the value in studying the life and contributions of black sports heroes such as Jack Johnson, Jackie Robinson, Althea Gibson, Wilma Rudolph, and Muhammad Ali, to understand the impact of their performances on the whole of American history. RASACS provides the space to have an ongoing conversation about the importance of sports in the 21st century.”

this year, Pellom will also assume a place on the Laney Development Council, a new body of volunteer leaders committed to promoting the vision and mission of the Laney Graduate School. as an advocate for graduate education, mcdaniels says, “i see this as an opportunity to help shape the future of the LGS and the kinds of potential collaboration possibilities across the university to enhance the experience our students can have.”

Mcdaniels has an upcoming book, The Prince of Jockeys: The Life and Career of Isaac Burns Murphy, which will be published next month by the University Press of Kentucky. ■

let er from the dean (cont. from p. 1)

effectively present the essence of their research and projects in three minutes or less, three minute thesis, or 3MT, at Emory. And finally, it is my pleasure to introduce you to Pellom Mc Daniels, an alumnus of LGS, former NFL player, and now, professor and curator at Emory. His journey and his commitment to graduate education are truly inspiring.

Take a moment to look through and linger over this second issue of the LGS Newsletter. We are proud of the work we are doing here at the Laney Graduate School and likewise, incredibly proud and grateful for your support. Please visit our website to learn more about our work and ways that you can stay connected and get involved! ■

Lisa A. Tedesco
vice provost for academic affairs—graduate studies
Dean, James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies
Professor, Rollins School of Public Health

events and opportunities

get involved! volunteer for this year’s alumni mentor program

The Alumni Mentor Program is entering its fourth year. As students develop their career interests, finalize their dissertations, and begin navigating the job market, alumni can provide important guidance on activities such as preparing CVs, managing work/life balance, negotiating salaries, and much more.

Since its launch in 2010, the program has successfully matched more than 130 mentors and protégés. This program operates entirely on a volunteer basis and is a rewarding, mutually beneficial opportunity for both alumni and students. To learn more and register by October 15, visit our website. ■

Support Laney

the Laney Graduate School is continuing to grow and evolve to meet student needs. The support of our alumni is critical to developing new programs and opportunities that support the next generation of scholars. A gift in support of the Laney Graduate School is truly an investment in the future. To learn about our funding priorities and ways to give, please visit us here. ■

Laney Graduate school events

fall is an exciting time of year for us in the Laney Graduate School as we get to know our new students and welcome back those who came before them. here are just a few events on the calendar for this fall.

• October 5—Back to Class in Washington, D.C., featuring LGS Senior Associate Dean Cathryn Johnson

• October 6—screening of Perry brickman’s documentary From Silence to Recognition (Birmingham, AL)

• October 10—screening of Perry brickman’s documentary From Silence to Recognition (Tulsa, OK)

• October 15—Deadline for Alumni to Register as Mentors for the Alumni Mentor Program

• October 24—Pathways Beyond the Professoriate

• October 24-25—ILA 60th Anniversary Celebration

• October 26—Alumni event, London, UK

• November 3—screening of Perry brickman’s documentary From Silence to Recognition (Boston, MA)

• November 6—Pathways Beyond the Professoriate featuring Nicholas Zachariades

• November 6—3rd Annual Competitive Fellowship Reception

• November 24—Emory Reception at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in Baltimore

• February 11—inaugural Laney Symposium

visit www.gs.emory.edu for information about upcoming events and opportunities. Also visit www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/EMR/ geventcal/showListView.jsp to stay informed of events and ways you can be involved. ■