

Faculty-Student Collaboration in the Liberal Arts : Lessons Learned from the Great Lakes Colleges Association-Library of Congress Program

Washington, DC
July 2019

What is the GLCA-Library of Congress Program?

'In a partnership with the U.S. Library of Congress, the Great Lakes Colleges Association invites proposals from faculty of its member colleges – and from the extended network of institutions participating in the Global Liberal Arts Alliance – to participate in a faculty/student collaborative research program drawing on the resources of the world's most comprehensive research library.

The program offers a unique opportunity for undergraduate students and faculty mentors to receive direct support for scholarly research in a humanities or social science discipline from designated Library of Congress research librarians – a level of research support generally accorded to established scholars and advanced-level graduate students.

The seminar takes place for ten days in early or mid-July. The program pays the travel, lodging, and food costs of the faculty leader during the ten days at the Library of Congress. The GLCA also helps to offset the costs students incur through a modest research stipend and provision of housing in Washington, D.C.'

<https://www.glca.org/faculty/library-of-congress-research-initiative/>

Research Questions in Washington

Short-range questions using materials in the Library of Congress

- How did the early Arab-American immigrant generations, for the most from the Levantine provinces of the then Ottoman Empire (Syria, Lebanon and Palestine), integrate into US society in the period from around 1890 to 1914?
- What connections did they retain to their homeland as they settled in the United States, given the rapidly changing political situation in the Levant and the emergence of Arab nationalism as a political force?

How did the early Arab-American generations integrate into US society?

- **Newspaper evidence**, including articles in Arabic about business opportunities, schooling, housing, welfare issues, religious education, marriage, birth and death registration, life in the United States
- **Advertisements** in Arabic about business opportunities, shipping and transport, legal notices for naturalization, births, deaths, and marriage
- Bain Collection
- Print Collections
- Manuscript Collections
- Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC

Faris and Yamna Naff Arab American Collection

The collection is the result of research conducted by Alixa Naff relating to the study of the early Arab immigrant experience in the United States from about 1880-World War II. The study began with oral history interviews in 1962 and became a major project in 1980 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

<https://sova.si.edu/record/NMAH.AC.0078>

Changing Perceptions

Primary research, the messiness of the archives, can unpack secondary versions, suggesting new understandings and ways forward.

R. C. Ostle in *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (1992), 109

'There are two sides to the lasting significance of the poetry of the *mahjar*, especially that produced by the writers of the *al-Rabita al-Qalamiya* (Pen Association). First, the fact that these poets were removed from immediate contact with their own societies meant that they were less inhibited by the dominant canons of literary taste... Second was the fact that their achievements did not pass unnoticed inside the Arab world, particularly since theirs was a pocket of immigrant culture that could not establish fruitful connections with the surrounding English-American scene.'

Faculty-student research collaboration from a librarian perspective

Field Notes

- Monday – meeting with Susan and David clarifies the topic
- Tuesday – microfiche :exciting - confusion - it does not make sense – students don't see connection
- Tuesday – after meeting David – see the connections that David is making - assured
- Wednesday morning – Muhammed / subject expert meeting – more knowledge – real expert discussion – important as valued – clarifying and new research ideas – assured – question of focus
- Wednesday afternoon – Suzanne / librarian – more documents / readings / research discussion
- Thursday new discoveries – manuscripts, images = interesting = motivation
- Level of confidence goes up but still unsure about how to bring all together = challenge
- Thursday – meeting with David – idea to focus and to narrow down = one aspect to explore, detail, analyze
- Research is not a linear process

KNOWLEDGE FACILITATORS

Circle of shared inquiry - way of knowing
(Palmer 2007)

It is not a top-down relationship but a shared inquiry
Librarians are not subject experts but knowledge facilitators
Connected or constructive knowers?

Information Search Process (ISP) by C. Kuhlthau (2007)

Figure 1: Information Search Process¹

	Initiation	Selection	Exploration	Formulation	Collection	Presentation	Assessment
Feelings (Affective)	Uncertainty	Optimism	Confusion Frustration Doubt	Clarity	Sense of direction / Confidence	Satisfaction or Disappointment	Sense of accomplishment
Thoughts (Cognitive)	Vague			Focused		Increased interest	Increased self-awareness
Actions (Physical)	Seeking	Relevant Exploring	Information	Seeking	Pertinent Documenting	Information	

Objectivist way of knowing? Community of Truth?

