News from the Director

By Alan McPherson

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Fall 2025 Lecture Series

This semester saw a first-rate lineup of practitioners and scholars from the United States, Canada, and Europe on a host of topics both present and past. Please click on the hyperlinks to see the talks on the CENFAD website.

Ambassador Lavin presents his book to the CENFAD community

Our first event featured **Frank Lavin**, a former Reagan White House official who had worked on several diplomatic issues. On September 3, in the context of his new memoir, *Inside the Reagan White House*, he discussed the present choice between

isolationism v. internationalism that faced U.S. policymakers, describing it as being "a little late" or "a little early" on the global scene. He preferred being "a little early." He also recalled Reagan's best and worst moments as a foreign policymaker.

Dr. Asa McKercher delivers his presentation on U.S.-Canada relations

On September 30, **Asa McKercher**, the Steven K. Hudson Research Chair in Canada-US Relations and Associate Professor in Public Policy and Governance at St. Francis Xavier University, came down from Canada to give his country's perspective on the last year of disastrous U.S.-Canada relations. Canadians have gone "elbows up," as they say in the hockey world, when faced with a uniquely aggressive second Trump administration.

Two weeks later, on October 13, Nichols College's **Michael Neagle** presented his latest book, *Chasing Bandits: America's Long War on Terror*, linking the imperialist rhetoric used against "bandits" from Augusto Sandino to Osama bin Laden.

Dr. Michael Neagle during the Q&A session

Historian **Renata Keller** of the University of Nevada-Reno then talked about *her* new work, *The Fate of the Americas: The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Hemispheric Cold War*. She laid out the many ways that Latin Americans were influential in shaping the purportedly bi-lateral moment of unique peril. The Missile Crisis also re-shaped the politics of the hemisphere. Read more about her work later in this publication.

Then, on November 5, it was Northeastern University's **Gretchen Heefner**'s turn to present her newest book, *Sand, Snow, and Stardust: How US Military Engineers*

Conquered Extreme Environments. Her CENFAD interview can be found here.

Finally, on December 3, **Jochen Hellbeck** of Rutgers University presented his book, *World Enemy No.1: Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and the Fate of the Jews*, which traces the Holocaust to Germany's hostility to the Soviets.

Members of the CENFAD community listen to Dr. Renata Keller

Attendees at Dr. Jochen Hellbeck's CENFAD lecture

Fall 2025 Prizes

The following graduate students won CENFAD research awards:

- **Berk Cebeci** won a $2,000 Marvin Wachman Fellowship for research in Turkey and Washington, D.C.
- **Joseph Johnson** won a $3,200 John Votaw Endowed Research Award for research in Boston, Ann Arbor, and Austin.
- **Alexandra Southgate** won a Jeffrey Bower Endowed Research Fellowship of $2,100 for research in London and Birmingham, UK.

These numbers and research destinations demonstrate the CENFAD community's continuing dedication to archival research, including in international archives, and promises a bumper crop of high-level dissertations in the years to come.

In addition, the following students received CENFAD funds to present their work at academic conferences:

- **Carrilee Bryan**, at the National Council for Social Studies annual conference in Washington.
- **Ariel Natalo-Lifton**, at the American Historical Association in Chicago.
- **Jake Wolff**, at the Pennsylvania Historical Association meeting in York.

Congratulations to all!

Emerging Scholar Award

Thanks–again–to the generosity of **Todd Davis** CENFAD funds a yearly Emerging Scholar Graduate Award, a scholarship for applicants to the Temple University MA Program in History. The purposes of the award are to recruit and support MA-level students interested in diplomatic and military history and to do so especially among underrepresented candidates, including women.

Each year, one awardee receives $12,000 in tuition remission over a two-year period (covering about one 3-credit course per semester at in-state rates).

The competition is now open for the 2026-2027 academic year, and the deadline to apply to the Temple MA Program in History is February 15, 2026. There is no application procedure. All students admitted to the MA program will automatically be considered.

This year's Emerging Scholar is **"Cas" Casanova**, featured in this issue of *Strategic Visions*.

Peace in the Age of Forever Wars

Finally, on April 3-4, 2026, CENFAD will take the lead in sponsoring a symposium on "Peace in the Age of Forever Wars" at Temple's Center City campus. Philosophy professor Lee-Ann Chae and the History Department's own Petra Goedde are the organizers of the two-day event, which is part of the "Challenging War" initiative. The deadline for submitting abstracts has passed, but everyone is invited to attend.