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NEWSLETTER

MGSHSS 2016-17

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Dear Colleagues,

As the spring semester and the Academic Year draws to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the entire School, to wish our graduating batch all the very best as they move to a new phase in their lives. At the same time we are already preparing to induct a new batch of students to the School who will, incidentally, enter a newly refurbished Academic Block – the first full renovation of the auditoriums for over a decade.

2016-17 has been a productive year for the Gurmani School and I'd like to briefly apprise you of the main achievements in the Spring 2017 semester. There are also ambitious plans for next year as we build on our strengths and initiate exciting new projects. This will begin with the arrival of our new Dean, Professor Kamran Asdar Ali, who will take over in August 2017.

Before moving to the Spring 2017 highlights, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the School – staff, faculty and students for contributing to our collective success.

Ali Khan

Acting Dean



Teaching

The Gurmani School has always placed a strong emphasis on teaching and takes this crucial aspect of the university very seriously. Over the last year teaching at MGHSS has been strengthened through the appointment of a Director of Teaching and by a system of peer reviews where faculty sit in on each other's courses and share their experiences. For the next academic year, there are plans to expand this initiative to include a series of teaching workshops.

This semester the School offered over 140 classes covering approximately 6000 students from across the university. Courses included innovative new courses such as Silk Roads and Trade Winds, co taught by Professor Ayesha Jalal and Dr. Hasan Karrar.

In addition, the new minors in religious studies and Urdu have been approved by the Faculty Council and will be implemented at the start of the academic year.

Faculty Recruitment

The Gurmani School continues to attract quality faculty. Irfan Moeen Khan (Harvard) joined the department of Humanities and Social Sciences in the area of religious studies. Ahmed Bilal Awan was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Gurmani Centre. Adeel Tariq (Binghamton) and Farid Ahmed (University of Cambridge) have been appointed as Assistant Professors in the Economics department from Fall 2017. During the next academic year the department of Humanities and Social Sciences will also see three Teaching Fellows return having completed their PhDs from SOAS, Boston University and Sciences Po. These returnees and new hires will add considerable depth to the School.

The School has also prepared the tenure cases of two faculty members after a rigorous, year long process.

Research

There has been notable research published at the School over the last six months. Dr. Tania Saeed's book on Islamophobia and Secularization was published in the United Kingdom. Kaveri Qureshi, Maryam Wasif, Ali Qasmi, Syed Zahid Ali and Syed Muhammad Hussain have all published in the premier journals in their field. A special section on 'sociology in Pakistan' was published in the prestigious journal 'Global Dialogue' with contributions from Ayaz Qureshi, Nida Kirmani, Kaveri Qureshi, Tania Saeed and Amen Jaffer :<http://isa-global-dialogue.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/v7i2-english.pdf>

In addition, a number of new research projects are in the pipeline, which includes collaboration with the SSE on digitizing partition stories and archiving Pakistan's cricket history, research on Christian minorities in Lahore and an analysis of the quality of education and the university ranking framework in Pakistan.

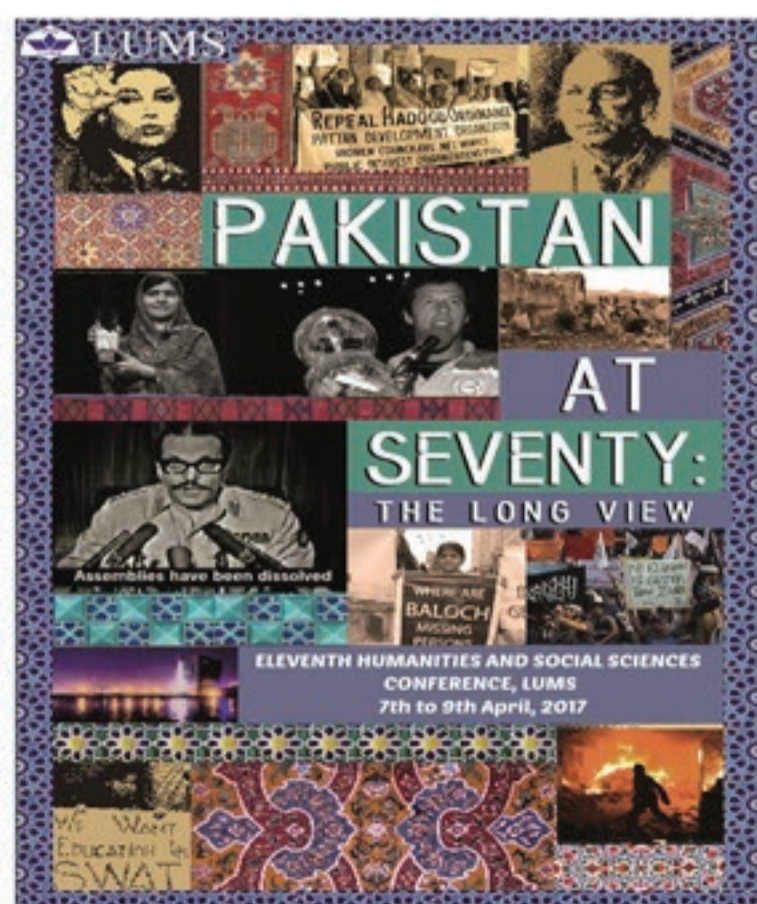


Conferences and Workshops

Research requires an enabling environment where academic debate and discourse can flourish. This semester was extremely vibrant in terms of talks, conferences and workshops at the School. The centres at MGHSS – The Mahbub ul Haq Centre for Research, the Gurmani Centre and the Saida Waheed Initiative all contribute to the dynamism of the environment.

The 11th Annual Humanities and Social Science conference was held between 7-9 April 2017. The conference saw 3 days of invigorating academic discussion and debate on a diverse range of issues that face Pakistan in its 70th year. Professor Ayesha Jalal and Professor Francis Robinson gave the key notes – and the sessions were well attended by faculty and student and included speakers from the Law School and the School of Education as well as of course the Gurmani School. The participants hailed from universities abroad as well as a diverse range of universities and institutions within Pakistan. The annual conference was followed by the Gurmani Centre's international conference on South Asian Literary Traditions on the topic of South Asian Sufism.

In terms of guest speakers, it has been a particularly strong semester with talks by distinguished faculty including John Esposito (Georgetown), Bruce Lawrence (Duke) and John Harris (LSE). The School also continued with its brown bag and faculty seminar series.



The School has also produced two promotional videos for its majors in anthropology and history. More are planned for the other majors next year.

Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature (GCLL)

The Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature has had a very productive semester starting with its international conference on South Asian Literary Traditions. Apart from the conference there have been a series of events, talks, workshops and seminars. These have included talks on Baba Farid, Syed Abdullah and Ismat Chughtai. Ongoing events such as weekly discussions on Ghalib and Iqbal, and Punjabi Sufi poets continued through the semester. Other highlights included a Mehfil-e-Dastangoi, in which the group performed work by the two great Urdu humourists, Patras Bokhari and Mushtaq Ahmed Yusufi. There was also a memorable Qawwali by Farid Ayaz and Party.

In terms of research, for the first time, a grants committee selected three research proposals from a pool that were submitted for funding. The proposals selected will involve research on Urdu's Long Nineteenth Century: The Legacies of Fort William College on Language and Literature, Collecting Rare Punjabi Books and Manuscripts and the digitalizing of Punjab's Non-Textual, Literary and Performative Traditions. In current research, 7 papers were published by the center's faculty. The first Punjabi play to be staged in LUMS last semester (Loha Kutt) has been translated into Urdu with notes and a comprehensive introduction to its writer and sent for publication.

Professor Amy Bard from Harvard University joined the Centre as the first Gurmani Fellow and will be staying on in the new academic year. Dr. Tabinda Khan will join as the first post doctoral fellow at the Gurmani Centre.



Saida Waheed Gender Initiative

The Gender Initiative continued hosting its monthly seminars, film screenings and book talks. The Gender Initiative also dispersed grants to Dr. Ghazal Zulfiqar, SDSB for her work on the gendered hierarchies of domestic work and Dr. Amen Jaffer, MGSBSS for his research on community networks in Mozang, Lahore. Their research will be presented at LUMS in Fall 2017. In addition, three senior projects across different schools were mentored and funded by SWGI, and also presented at the annual student colloquium in April. This was followed by SWGI's second student colloquium on gender studies. The colloquium also consisted of talks by Dr. Fouzia Saeed (Executive Director, LokVirsa), Nighat Dad (Executive Director Digital Rights Foundation) and Nida Mushtaq (Fearless Collective).

Student Achievements

Students in the School continue to excel in terms of their graduate placement as well as their employment.

Several graduates have won prestigious international scholarships and will be proceeding for further studies to some of the best universities including Oxford, Warwick, NYU, Edinburgh, SOAS and Chicago. Others will be taking up jobs that include research think tanks, development agencies, consultancies, multinationals and teaching at schools and colleges. It is also notable that of the 20 LUMS graduates that qualified from the CSS exam, 13 were from the Gurmani School.

Two students have also been chosen based on their outstanding senior thesis for the fellowship to the Centre of South Asian Studies at the University of Cambridge where they will continue to work on their projects.

Student Advising Unit

For students to make the very best of their time at LUMS it is essential that alongside excellent teaching, students are properly advised on their choice of courses.

The Student Advising Unit (SAU), which was launched less than a year ago, seeks to support students through their journey at LUMS with programs and guidance incorporating faculty, students and administrators to give holistic supports, both academic and non-academic.

In the Fall semester the SAU ensured that all first year students met with peer advisers and faculty advisers from the School. This semester the same process was repeated and SAU held its second round of mandatory advising sessions. A total of 308 students out of 324 met their faculty advisers over a two week period. The student sessions covered guidance for major change, course allocations and improving reading and writing skills. In addition to that, students met their advisors regularly for guidance. From the next academic year we hope to expand the initiative to include sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

