The Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights – 2022 Year in Review

This New Year’s Eve, we have an anniversary to celebrate! Five years ago, the Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights at the University of Nebraska at Omaha officially opened its doors. The Goldstein Center for Human Rights and the new Goldstein Family Community Chair in Human Rights were established in January of 2017, the result of a decades-long partnership with UNO Religious Studies. This faculty-governed Center is housed in the UNO College of Arts & Sciences and is composed of over fifty affiliated UNO faculty from six different Colleges at UNO. Since its founding, it has established a Human Rights Minor and worked with a dozen UNO academic programs as well as local, national and international institutional partners. In this time we have also helped to organize and co-sponsor the Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights, as well as the new UNO Human Rights Week and Human Rights Forums organized by the Goldstein Family Community Chair, Dr. Laura Alexander. We have since our inception supported the multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed academic e-journal *International Dialogue*. To read more about our accomplishments over the last five years, see the attached document containing the previous Year in Review letters.

As for 2022, many things have clearly come together at the Goldstein Center for Human Rights. Most of this couldn’t have happened without the work of our Program and Design Manager, Angela Brown. As she can attest, the Center is up and running in ways that surpass what we did before the pandemic thereby producing more work for her! In conjunction with the labors of our three Standing Committees and the Executive Committee, in 2022 we supported a record number of seven major community engagement and five research projects. When combined with regular programming and new initiatives, the Goldstein Center is has shifted into high gear.

Here is a list of funded projects organized by our affiliated faculty:

*Community Engagement*

- Brady DeSanti, John Trudell Annual Lectureship with Audiopharmacy
- Michele Desmarais, DOHS (Document Our HiStory) Podcast
- Claire Du Laney, Exhibition: On the Inside
- Adrian Duran, ArteLatinX 2022: In it Together/Juntos en Esto
- Adrian Duran, Celeste De Luna
Cynthia Robinson, Juneteenth & Black Studies: Celebrating Emancipation Through Education

Martina Saltamacchia, Unguarded – No One Escapes from Love

Research and Creative Activity

Laura Alexander, The Impact of Immersive Arts Experience on Understanding Immigration Issues

Danielle Battisti, Untitled Book Project on the United States and the Intergovernmental Committee for International Migration, 1945-1980

Ramazan Kilinc, Explaining Minority Political Strategies Under Authoritarian Rule: A Comparison of Armenian and Jewish Minorities in Turkey

Theresa Kulig, Measuring Sex and Labor Trafficking in the General Population: A Self-Report Victimization Survey Using a National Sample

Brett Kyle, Military Rebellion in Latin America

Curriculum

Steve Langan, TRAC Non-Credit Mini Course: Healing Through Painting

One place that our work over the last year has stood out is in the area of Migration, Mobility, and Human Rights – one of the Goldstein Center’s core areas of concentration along with Religion and Human Rights, Health and Human Rights, and Technology and Human Rights. In the tradition of Shirley Goldstein, we have intentionally chosen to address the rights of people on the move in a world where there are exploding numbers of migrants and refugees. Three major Center programs in the last year have addressed this issue directly though in very different ways. First, over the summer of 2022, the Goldstein Center partnered with Kaneko and the Emerson Collective to bring Carne Y Arena (Virtually Present, Physically Invisible) to Omaha. This virtual reality exhibition created by Academy Award winning director Alejandro Iñárritu, vividly conveys the harsh experience of immigrants attempting to cross the US-Mexican border. Led by Goldstein Center Community Engagement Standing Committee Chair Martina Saltamacchia, we provided educational programming in support of the exhibition. This included extensive training for over two hundred local teachers from public and Roman Catholic schools in Omaha in conjunction with the UNO History department’s dual enrollment program and the
Boston based NGO Re-Imagining Migration. In addition to working with community partners like the Refugee Empowerment Center and Elevate Omaha’s Youth Summit, we joined together with the Goldstein Family Community Chair Laura Alexander and the Director of the Office for Latino and Latin American Studies (OLLAS) Cristián Doña-Reveco to hold a series of Conversatorios (Human Rights Forums & Charlas) on topics related to Carne Y Arena that were open to the public. We also hosted a talk by previous Goldstein Lecturer, Dr. Angelina Godoy, who is the Helen H. Jackson Endowed Chair in Human Rights and Director at the Center for Human Rights at the University of Washington.

In addition to the Conversatorios held at Kaneko, the Goldstein Center and Family Chair put together Human Rights Forums during the academic year at UNO – the majority of these covering the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine. Here we not only highlighted the humanitarian disaster brought about by the targeting of civilians and critical infrastructure, but the millions of Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes. These people have joined the ranks of the forcibly displaced worldwide, now numbering over one hundred million. These Human Rights Forums, held in person and online, engaged not only UNO students but members of the greater Omaha community. The Goldstein Center put together an additional special Human Rights Forum for business leaders in Nebraska (YPO), helping them to broadly understand the impact this new European war will have on the United States.

Most significantly, during this past year the Goldstein Center has continued to support at UNO for a second year the threatened artist Sharmila Seyyid. Working with the Fried Academy and other partners in the College of Arts and Sciences and International Programs, we have been able to provide an academic haven from persecution and threats against her life. During her time at UNO, Seyyid has been able to publish four new works and has had two others translated into English. Seyyid’s “Entangled Memories of Violence: Rise and Heal” was on display at the UNO Criss Library for the Fall 2022 semester. At Kaneko during the Carne Y Arena exhibition, Seyyid led workshops on bibliotherapy for human rights focused on the experiences of migrants and refugees.

The Goldstein Center’s ongoing relationship with the UNO Religious Studies department has also flourished in 2022. In addition to highlighting the work of the Goldstein Center at American Academy of Religion, we have also provided support for two conferences co-planned with the Tri-Faith Initiative of Omaha. The Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights, organized by the Religious Studies department, was given in March 2022 by the Rev. Dr. Gary Mason, a Methodist minister who played an integral role in negotiating the Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement.

As in our previous years four years, we have expanded our cross-campus base of affiliated faculty. Here are our newest colleagues at the Goldstein Center:

- Mahima Saxena (Psychology)
- Derrick Fox (Music)
Susana Geliga (Native American Studies)
Alisa Belflower (Music)
Sadaf Hashimi (Criminology/Criminal Justice)
Jeremy Johnson (Art/Art History)

Our students of course are part of our big Goldstein Center family. We especially happy to list the 2022 Human Rights Internship Scholarship recipients. Many thanks to Goldstein Family Community Chair Laura Alexander for organizing!

- Sophie Irakoze ($4000)
- Nyamar Odol ($4000)
- Katrina Kroeze ($4000)
- Alakiir Mapior ($1268)
- Celeste Salazar ($4000)

In closing, I am especially proud of the accomplishments of our Goldstein Center Executive Committee over the last five years – in addition to the two years of work several of these people did to found the Center before 2017! Here are the names of present and past members:

- Paul Williams (Assistant Director)
- Laura Alexander (Goldstein Family Community Chair)
- Brett Kyle (Research and Creative Activity Chair)
- Martina Saltamacchia (Community Engagement Chair)
- Rory Conces (Curriculum Chair)
- Alecia Anderson
- Lana Obradovic
- Brady DeSanti
- Michele Desmarais
- Ramazan Kilinc
- Jay Irwin
- Mark Celinscak

As 2023 begins, it is a great pleasure to review past Goldstein Center accomplishments but also to plot out our path forward together as a faculty governed academic unit. Our successes are a testament to donor generosity and to what our faculty, students, and partners have built together. Wishing each of you a magical New Year.

Curtis Hutt
Dr. Curtis Hutt
Associate Professor of Religious Studies
Executive Director, Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights
University of Nebraska at Omaha

GOLDSTEIN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
The Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights – 2021 Year in Review

The UNO Goldstein Center for Human Rights bears the burden, like other academic programs and human rights organizations, of not only exploring human rights in theory but of actually researching and making public human rights abuses. This leads us down some dark paths in our classrooms and publications. Human rights matter for real individuals and their families. In 2021, year two of Covid-19, pressing human rights issues have come close to home here in Omaha, Nebraska. The year began with a raging public health emergency and an attempted insurrection to overthrow the results of a democratic election in the United States. Like Covid-19, this crisis in American democracy has not yet abated. Human rights related work has come under great pressure from anti-democratic forces across the world. We are entirely aware that our present labors at the Goldstein Center are not carried out in an apolitical vacuum but instead under the umbrella of academic freedom secured by our forebears. Human rights and democracy go hand in hand.

Here at the Goldstein Center for Human Rights, we are a very diverse bunch with wide-ranging academic interests. This is evident in the make-up of our affiliated faculty that come from six Colleges at UNO. You can also see it in the course offerings of the Human Rights Studies Minor established in the College of Arts and Sciences. So many different academic disciplines provide expertise for studying human rights. Somewhat unusually for human rights centers across the USA, the Goldstein Center grew out of a Religious Studies program. On account of this, one of our unique specialities is the investigation of human rights and religion. Human rights studies intersect with not only the study of law and politics, but also the natural and health sciences – as is clearly evident in the face of present-day environmental and health catastrophes. An increasingly important area of focus, in conjunction with our partners in the College of Information Science and Technology, is digital human rights. The Goldstein Center, as will be discussed below, also supports human rights education through the arts. Before moving on, I want to give a big welcome to our newest affiliated faculty and support staff at the Goldstein Center for Human Rights.

Claire Du Laney (Criss Library)
Hannah June Kim (Political Science)
Janet Reilly (Political Science)
Amy Schindler (Criss Library)
Steven Torres (Foreign Languages and Literature)

Gary Saul (Office Associate)
Tristen Menichetti (Student Worker)
From the beginning of Covid-19 in 2020, the Goldstein Center rapidly expanded its online programming. Several of our in-person public events were moved to Zoom. Turning lemons into lemonade, this resulted in an increased audience from Nebraska but also across the country and the world. Focused on content generation related to human rights studies, we targeted the impact of the pandemic itself on human rights. Building on our seven-part series produced with UNO TV in 2020 titled “Human Rights in the Time of Covid-19,” we have targeted issues related to the rights of workers to a safe workplace, the effects of Covid-19 on prison populations and childhood education, religious exemptions and vaccines, as well as local and global health disparities contributing to the ongoing crisis. In conjunction with the Religious Studies department and the Goldstein Family Community Chair in Human Rights, Dr. Laura Alexander, the annual Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights was given during the 2021 Human Rights Week by the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s Dr. Nada Fadul on “The Right to Health, Equity, and the Pursuit of Justice.” Throughout the year, we co-sponsored events related to Covid-19 and Human Rights with UNO Religious Studies, Medical Humanities, the Office of Latino and Latin American Studies (OLLAS), and Women and Gender Studies.

In partnership with the Goldstein Family Community Chair and with the help of our affiliated faculty, throughout 2021 the Goldstein Center produced online Human Rights Forums on a variety of pressing topics. These forums can be accessed on our Goldstein Center website with other newly developed academic content:

**Human Rights and Anti-Racism: How is Anti-Racism Practiced in the Community (w/UNO Black Studies)**  
**Human Rights and Religious Nationalism in the Middle East and United States (w/UNO Islamic Studies)**  
**Covid-19 and Human Rights: Narratives of Latinos During the Pandemic (w/UNO OLLAS)**  
**Human Rights, Vaccinations, and Religious Exemptions (w/UNO Medical Humanities)**

One of the primary interests of affiliated faculty at the Goldstein Center is refugee and migrant studies. In addition to funding human rights research on this topic and co-sponsoring public events like Running for Refugees and Stories of Survival, in keeping with the work and legacy of Shirley Goldstein, we have aimed at making academic contributions that make a difference in people’s lives. This was our goal in funding the development of a newly released app to settle refugees and migrants in Omaha by the College of Information Science and Technology and Walter Scott Jr. Scholar Kamryn Pullen. Understanding the grave consequences faced by scholars and journalists around the world who investigate and publicize human rights abuses, we have joined the Scholars At Risk Network. In Fall 2021, together with the UNO Fried Academy, we took the big plunge and partnered with the distinguished Institute for International Education to bring the Artist Protection Fund Fellow Sharmila Seyyid to UNO. This persecuted author was forced to flee her home country of Sri Lanka and live in exile in India and then Turkey because of threats against her life. With the help of people like Lori Arias in UNO International Programs and Associate Dean Melanie Bloom, Sharmila was reunited with her
children in Omaha where she continues her remarkable literary production. Many thanks to the English department as well as Women and Gender Studies for providing her with an academic home in the College of Arts and Sciences. I want to especially highlight the work of Goldstein Center Project and Design Manager Angela Brown in settling Sharmila and her family in Omaha. This has been a giant complicated undertaking and we could not have done this – like so many other things – without Angela’s labors. The Goldstein Center looks forward to working with Sharmila over the next two years and with the Institute for International Education into the distant future.

The Goldstein Center for Human Rights is faculty governed. Each year, affiliated faculty serving on three separate Standing Committees focused on Curriculum, Research, and Community Engagement review applications for funding and then forward them to the Executive Committee for approval. This governing team is composed of the following UNO faculty: Paul Williams (Assistant Director), Rory Conces (Curriculum Chair), Brett Kyle (Research Chair), Martina Saltamacchia (Community Engagement Chair), Alecia Anderson, Brady DeSanti, Troy Romero, Ramazan Kiliç, Laura Alexander, and Mark Celinscak. In 2021, the Goldstein Center acted to financially support the following major projects:

Refugees, Migration, and Human Rights (Laura Alexander)
Crisis and Culture of Fear Among Latino Communities in the Midwest (Cristian Dona-Reveco)
ArteLatinX2022: In it Together/Juntos en Esto (Adrian Duran)
Case Study and Action Research to Advance P-12 Teachers’ Understanding of Human Rights (Connie Schaffer)
The Role of the Black Church in Addressing Health Disparities in Nebraska: A Focus on Covid-19 Vaccine Uptake (Roma Subramanian)

There were a few changes to the Executive Committee in 2021. First, Ramazan Kilinc stepped in replacing Lana Obradovic who is on sabbatical. Ramazan, a Professor of Political Science and the head of the Islamic Studies Program at UNO, has worked with the Goldstein Center since its inception. In 2019, the Center chose to fund his online forum Siyasa that provides expert analyses on critical issues in the Middle East and the Muslim world especially related to human rights. In the past year, we have also co-sponsored UNO Islamic Studies lectures by Evelyn Alsultany on “How Media Representations of Muslims Changed After Trump’s ‘Muslim Ban’” and Nazif Shahrani on “Islam and Politics in Afghanistan Before and After the Taliban.” Expect much more on human rights, religion, and the Middle East in the near future.

In the second change to the Executive Committee, Martina Saltamacchia became the Chair of the Community Engagement Standing Committee returning to a position she held temporarily in the past. Martina is presently spearheading a 2022 Goldstein Center partnership with Kaneko to bring to Omaha CARNE y ARENA (Virtually present, Physically invisible) – Academy Award®-winning director Alejandro G. Iñárritu’s conceptual virtual reality installation on the human condition of immigrants and refugees
crossing the southern border of the United States. With Kaneko, we are planning a number of educational satellite talks and events for the UNO and the greater Omaha community.

In closing, I have two announcements. The first is a reminder to check out the latest volume of *ID: International Dialogue*, edited by Executive Committee member Rory Conces and supported by the Goldstein Center. Published at the end of each year, this multidisciplinary peer-reviewed academic e-journal aimed at scholars, policy makers, and practitioners can be accessed on the Goldstein Center website. We also have winners in the Goldstein Center’s Human Rights Essay Contest that is organized by Laura Alexander. Congratulations to each!!

UNO Graduate Students
1. Mia Bourek
2. Sarah Brumfield
3. Laura Betz Burch

UNO Undergraduate Students
1. LeeAnna Lui
2. Travis Justin Munyer
3. Nyamar Odol

Omaha High School Students
1. Manali Mukherjee
2. Ben Schott

As we head into 2022, it is extremely comforting to have good colleagues and friends at your side. Many thanks to each of you who have helped us to make it through a long 2021. Wishing you and your loved ones health, justice, and peace in the New Year.

*Curtis Hutt*

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GCHR 2020 – A Year Not to Be Forgotten

If there was ever a year to be dispatched early and forgotten, 2020 may be the one. Almost unimaginable twelve months ago, the novel coronavirus pandemic has transformed our lives. This “Year in Review” that I write to you as Executive Director of the Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights, is soaked in human tragedy. Almost two million people are confirmed dead across the globe from Covid-19. In the United States we are approaching 350,000 deaths. As Wall Street soars, suffering disproportionately affects the most vulnerable amongst us – the elderly and the poor. Human Rights issues abound. Those out of sight, the incarcerated and detained, are infected en masse. Many suffer without any affordable or safe access to healthcare. Our heroes – doctors, nurses, teachers, and parents – continue to work through exhaustion on the frontlines. All of these labors of love notwithstanding, the wretched response to Covid-19 by the Federal as well as some State and local governments has been exacerbated by unprecedented political turmoil throughout the United States. We have seen our neighbors lose their jobs and join long lines at local food banks. They have lost their grandparents, parents, and in some cases children. We have heard voices in the streets, seeking out justice for George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. At the same time, white nationalists have brought weapons to Statehouses. Going into the New Year 2021, a President of the United States is refusing to acknowledge defeat in the November elections or to cooperate with the incoming President-Elect in an orderly transfer of power. Millions of employed, underemployed, and unemployed Americans citizens will be going into the New Year with ballooning debt, a lack of access to healthcare and sustenance, as well as the threat of evictions hanging over their heads. So much of what has occurred will never be forgotten. Investigation into the causes of the situations that we find ourselves in certainly shouldn't be forestalled and we must plan for future exigencies.

Please excuse me for beginning this 2020 review with some of the difficulties the Goldstein Center has faced during the last several months of this pandemic. Like our colleagues throughout the University of Nebraska at Omaha and academic institutions across the world, the pandemic forced us to adapt. Many classes were hastily transformed on the fly into distance learning offerings. Longtime research was postponed. "In person" events on the UNO campuses were cancelled. Now is time for a shout out to our affiliated faculty – numbering 48, including most recent additions John Price and Pedro Cantisano – who have struggled yet persevered through career and personal challenges brought about by Covid-19.

The Goldstein Center itself engineered a quick pivot to online programming. In addition to Zoom becoming our Executive and Sub-Committee boardrooms, with the help of people like Courtni Kopietz (the new Communications Specialist in the College of Arts and Science) and Gary Repair (UNO TV) we took our events online – not only reproducing work regularly done in person but creating new digital content related to human rights studies. Online participation from interviewees and viewers from across the world, in several prominent cases, outdid equivalent in person events from pre-Covid times. None of this move online could have been accomplished without the work of Angela Brown, the Goldstein Center Project and Design Manager, who is also a major original content contributor.
In this time of Covid-19, many things that we have done in the past now continue online and are accessed through our UNO Goldstein Center website and social media. The former has become a repository of and door to our collective work. For example, the Human Rights Forum sponsored by the Goldstein Center and organized by Laura Alexander (the Goldstein Family Community Chair in Human Rights) went from in person to online. Two of these Human Rights Forums were also Charlas, put together with the UNO Office for Latino and Latin American Studies. These included:

2.) Human Rights Forum: "The 19th Amendment"
3.) Human Rights Forum and Charla: "Pandemic and Human Rights in Latin America"  * held during Human Rights Week

With Paul Williams, the chair of UNO Religious Studies and Assistant Director of the Goldstein Center, Laura Alexander also took the lead organizing the 2020 Goldstein Lecture on Human Rights that once again coincided with Human Rights Week at UNO. The Goldstein Lecture featured Najeeba Syeed and her provocative talk titled: "Angelic Troublemakers and Immigration: How Faith Leaders Use Ritual as a Human Rights Tool." This online event, in addition to drawing a large crowd full of local Goldstein Lecture veterans, included viewers from across North America, Central America, Europe, and Asia. Human Rights Week, sponsored by the Goldstein Family Community Chair, featured three online Watch Parties with UNO students to view just released learning modules on human rights. These were developed by faculty experts on: 1.) Religion and Human Rights (Laura Alexander); 2.) Social Media and Human Rights (Magie Hall); 3. Careers in Human Rights (Brett Kyle). In addition to the aforementioned Human Rights Forum and Charla which closed out Human Rights Week, the festivities were kicked off with an important panel discussion on "Pandemic, Ecology, and Public Health" that was organized and hosted by UNO students from the student organization "United Nations Association." Once again, all of this programming is available for viewing after their original streaming on the UNO Goldstein Center for Human Rights website.

In addition to these scheduled in-person events that were moved online, the Goldstein Center ramped up the production of digital content related to human rights studies. We continue to sponsor the annual publication of the e-journal ID: International Dialogue that will soon be available on Digital Commons – the Institutional Repository of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. We also sponsor Siyasa, an online Forum with a focus on human rights in the Middle East. Angela Brown has also added, in addition to a Human Rights Research Guide produced with the Criss Library, a new Human Rights Resource List tab that allows one to search for information related to a variety of topics like Anti-Racism, Criminal Justice Reform, Digital Human Rights, and the Human Rights of Migrants. Most recently, the Goldstein Center in partnership with UNO TV has produced a seven episode series titled "Human Rights in the Time of Covid-19" that has just begun to air on the TKN Network and will be available in different versions through the UNO Goldstein Center website.
In this annual review of Goldstein Center accomplishments, we highlight the work of our three sub-committees evaluating proposed projects for funding in the areas of Curriculum, Research, and Community Engagement. Several of the projects supported are multi-year by design. It is wonderful when these major projects come to fruition – for example, in the recent development and present roll out of a Digital Human Rights App funded in 2019. In 2020, the following proposals were funded:

Research Sub-Committee (chair, Brett Kyle)
Laura Alexander, "Religion, Migration, and Human Rights in the USA and Australia"
Lisette Aliaga-Linares and Cristián Doña-Reveco, "The Community Effects of Immigration Enforcement in the Midwest"
Danielle Battisti, "Privileges of Illegality? Unauthorized Italian Immigration in the Twentieth Century"

Community Engagement Sub-Committee (chairs, Alecia Anderson and Martina Saltamacchia)
Laura Alexander, "Interreligious Advocacy for the Human and Civil Rights of Religious Minorities"
Ramazan Kılıç, "Bridging Academy to the Public: Spreading Academic Knowledge on Human Rights Issues in the Middle East and Beyond"

Curriculum Sub-Committee (chair, Rory Conces)
Connie Schaffer, "Human Rights in P-12 Education"

We are of course looking forward to a full return to campus in person – especially to our new Goldstein Center physical location at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in Arts and Sciences Hall 206. In addition to an office, there is a larger activity room where we are hoping to meet and work with each other and students. To have space but to be unable to fully use it is the dilemma now. In other major developments, the Goldstein Center has joined the Scholars at Risk Network and we are looking forward to being a host institution soon. The Goldstein Center is also rolling out a new internship program through which students performing unpaid internships in human rights-related areas can apply for scholarships to support their practical work in human rights and its connection to their academic work. We are also actively seeking out local, national, and international internship opportunities for our students.

In the near future, the Goldstein Center will continue to produce programming and content on human rights that is accessible online. We will continue to co-sponsor academic meetings like the European Studies Conference and to help UNO partners bring to our community, whether online or in person, dynamic individuals like Ashlei Spivey and Simran Jeet Singh. Most importantly, we will return to our students doing whatever it takes to make their learning experiences first in class. Speaking of them, the Goldstein Center co-sponsored and promoted a Human Rights Essay Contest organized by the Goldstein Family Chair in Human Rights, Laura Alexander. Winners of the 2020 contest were:

Graduate winner – Megan Kuhn
Undergraduate winner – Ryan Melcher
High School winners – Jackson Long, Massimiliano Saitta, Jackie Iraheta-Baires, Alexandra Schmidt
I am going to close by thanking each member of the very active Goldstein Center’s Executive Committee 2020 – Paul Williams (Asst. Director), Brett Kyle, Alecia Anderson, Martina Saltamacchia, Rory Conces, Lana Obradovic, Brady DeSanti, Troy Romero, Mark Celinscak, and Laura Alexander. I raise a glass to a 2021 that we can celebrate. Together.

Wishing you and your loved ones a safe, healthy, and productive New Year.

Curtis

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2019 – YEAR IN REVIEW

Letter from the Executive Director

New Year’s Eve 2019 marks the end of the second year of the new Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights at the University of Nebraska at Omaha – and what a year! Housed in the UNO College of Arts and Sciences as a result of a long partnership between the Religious Studies program and the family of Leonard and Shirley Goldstein, the Goldstein Center not only grew rapidly but successfully took upon projects and programs with local, regional, national, and international impact.

With the help of our new Project and Design Manager, Angela Brown, the Center Director and Assistant Director together with a very active Executive Committee catalyzed a core group of affiliated faculty members to engage issues related to human rights across the greater UNO campus. Partnerships with faculty, departments, and programs from four Colleges extended the Center’s reach across Dodge and Scott campuses. These include work with affiliated faculty from UNO Religious Studies, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, English, History, Foreign Languages, Women and Gender Studies, Black Studies, Native American Studies, the Office of Latino and Latin American Studies, Art History, Gerontology, and Information Systems and Quantitative Analysis. The Center during 2019, in addition to organizing with the Religious Studies program two Goldstein Lectures (Masha Gessen and the Honorable Richard Goldstone), co-sponsored with the History department the Missouri Valley History Conference and John Trudell Distinguished Lecture in Native American Studies (Walter Echo-Hawk) and Richard Dean Winchell Lecture (Vine Deloria, Jr.) as well as the European Studies Conference keynote (Courtney Hillebrecht). In conjunction with the Goldstein Family Community Chair in Human Rights, Laura Alexander, a recurring Human Rights Forum was established where Center affiliated faculty share their various types of expertise with students. As a result of these initiatives, student interest has grown rapidly as measured by thirty new Human Rights Studies minors and counting.

The banner accomplishment of the Goldstein Center during 2019 was the completion of a two year project dedicated to the creation of an exhibition and archive, in conjunction with the UNO Criss Library, publicizing Shirley Goldstein’s Immigration Rights Legacy (Curator: Jeannette Gabriel). In addition to exposing UNO students to Shirley Goldstein’s life work promoting freedom of movement and religion for Soviet Jews during the 1970s and 1980s, the exhibition provided a stage for academic talks and panels describing whistleblowing technologies “now and then,” highlighting the stories of immigrants to the USA, and remembering the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Over the course of the year, the Goldstein Center’s Executive Committee – on the recommendation of affiliated faculty-run Standing Committees focused on Curriculum, Research, and Community Engagement – funded several other undertakings. These included five different projects related to refugee and migration studies including an exhibition, film, and talk on the work of American Women rebuilding France, 1917-1924 held at Kaneko (Jody Neathery Castro), a
refugee simulation project (Lana Obradovic), an exploratory analysis of refugee resettlement and community services in Nebraska and refugee-related initiatives in the NU system (Laura Alexander and Cristián Doña-Reveco), a project to build an app to support access to services for refugees and immigrants to Nebraska (Deepak Khazanchi), and a research project focusing on refugee reactions to new Trump administration policies (Alecia Anderson). Partnering with the Goldstein Family Community Chair for Human Rights, the Goldstein Center also launched a highly successful initiative at the American Academy of Religion on religion and human rights. The Goldstein Center continued its support for the UNO academic journal of world affairs, *ID: International Dialogue* (Rory Conces). In keeping with our goal of reaching international audiences, we decided to support a new online UNO based publication titled *Siyasa* which focuses on human rights and the Middle East (Ramazan Kilinc).

Last but certainly not least, over the past year the Goldstein Center engaged in three high profile collaborations with the UNO Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy and its Executive Director Mark Celinscak. First, the Goldstein Center in March sponsored a workshop primarily for high school teachers across Nebraska in connection with the visit to UNO of Father Patrick Desbois and his Holocaust by Bullets program. In September, the Goldstein Center held a Symposium on Art and Human Rights during the visit of the artist Samuel Bak and a breathtaking exhibition of his art to campus. This academic meeting featured scholars from across the United States, Europe, and South Africa. In December, the Fried Academy and Goldstein Center hosted the biannual meeting of a newly founded National Consortium for Directors of Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Centers.

There are so many people that I need to thank who have made 2019 an exceptional second year for the Goldstein Center. We continue to receive energetic support from the Goldstein family, specifically Leonard and Shirley’s children – Don, Gail, and Kathy. The Dean of the UNO College of Arts and Science, David Boocker, has continually provided guidance and advocated on our behalf. We especially want to express our thanks to the Dean of the UNO Criss Library, David Richards, for agreeing to host the Shirley Goldstein Immigration Rights Legacy exhibition for three months. None of the above would be possible without the labor of our Goldstein Center Executive Committee: Paul Williams (Assistant Director), Rory Conces (Curriculum Committee Chair), Alecia Anderson and Brett Kyle (Research Committee co-Chairs), Jay Irwin and Martina Saltamacchia (Community Engagement co-Chairs), Lana Obradovic, Troy Romero, Michele Desmarais, Mark Celinscak, and Laura Alexander.

I wish each of you the best in the New Year! There is so much more to come.

Curtis

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2018 – YEAR IN REVIEW

Letter from the Director:

With corks popping, the end of 2018 will mark the first birthday of the new Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The Goldstein Center officially opened on January 1, 2018. This Center housed in the UNO College of Arts and Sciences, was several years in the making. Growing out of a longstanding relationship between the Goldstein family and the Religious Studies department at UNO led by Dr. Paul Williams, faculty from six different University Colleges came together to create a non-partisan, non-sectarian organization that promotes the understanding of human rights issues through community engagement, teaching, research, and creative activity.

Thanks to an extraordinarily active and hard-working Executive Committee whose members are drawn from diverse academic units at UNO (see list below), the new Goldstein Center was immediately able to link up with human rights studies already underway on campus and in the greater local, national, and international communities. Focused on harnessing the strengths of over three dozen affiliated faculty members, the Goldstein Center hit the ground running and has not slowed down. Amongst our first moves, some of which were enacted prior to our initial opening, we supported a new minor in Human Rights and aligned ourselves with the UNO based academic journal ID: International Dialogue. We also moved quickly to provide funding for human rights related keynotes at the UNO European Studies Conference (Dr. Mehnaz Afridi), the No Limits student research conference (Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall) sponsored by, and the John Trudell Lecture in Native American Studies (Adam Beach). In conjunction with the Goldstein Family Community Chair in Human Rights, the Executive Committee co-sponsored the first Human Rights Week at UNO. In 2019, we will coordinate a teacher workshop and symposium on art and human rights with the UNO Sam and Frances Fried Academy for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

In order to kindle and promote faculty-driven human rights initiatives, the Executive Committee established three Standing Committees composed of affiliated faculty members to focus specifically on areas related to Community Engagement, Curriculum, and Research. These Standing Committees established funding priorities and guidelines for eligibility. They then reviewed multiple applications. The following projects are being funded by the Goldstein Center for Human Rights in 2018 and 2019:

Community Engagement

Ramazan Kilinc, “Bridging Academy to the Public: Spreading the Knowledge on Human Rights Issues in the Middle East and Beyond”
Kelly MacArthur, “Nor Any Drop to Drink”
Laura Alexander, “Immigration, Racial and Religious Discrimination, and Human Rights”
Lana Obradovic, “Refugee Simulation Project”

Curriculum

Mark Celinscak, Teacher Workshop: “Holocaust By Bullets”
Alecia Anderson, Student Workshop: “Black and Pink”
Daniel Wuebben, Course Development: “Reading and Writing the American Prison”
Cristián Dona-Reveco, Course Development: “International Migration, Mobility, and Human Rights”

Research

Brett Kyle, “The Role of the Military in Human Rights”
Eugenio DiStefano, “Indexicality, Art, and Human Rights”
Cristián Dona-Reveco, “Violence and the Venezuelan Exodus”

To honor the Human Rights legacy of the Goldstein family, the new Center will be underwriting two defining projects directed by Jeannette Gabriel. First, in August 2019, the exhibition “Shirley Goldstein’s Immigrant Rights Legacy: Operation Exodus in Omaha” will open at the UNO Criss Library. At the same time, Jeannette Gabriel in conjunction with the Criss Library will be working to permanently establish the Goldstein Archives at UNO.

Last but certainly not least, in December 2019 the Goldstein Center and Fried Academy will be hosting the first bi-annual meeting of The National Consortium of Higher Education Centers of Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Studies. This new Consortium, founded at the United States Holocaust Museum in 2019 by the directors of parallel academic institutions in the United States, will work to cultivate exchange and collaboration between over two hundred sister Centers. The Goldstein Center is thrilled to bring these Center directors together in Omaha as this will provide us with a unique opportunity to connect up with and learn from our peers across the country.

None of the work described above would have been possible without the generosity of our donors from the Goldstein family, the Dean of the UNO College of Arts and Science, and the labor of our Goldstein Center Executive Committee. Many thanks to Don, Gail, and Kathy for their energetic support, Dean David Boocker, and the following members of the Executive Committee – Paul Williams, Lana Obradovic, Troy Romero, Michele Desmarais, Jay Irwin, Martina Saltamacchia, Alecia Anderson, Brett Kyle, Rory Conces, Mark Celinscak, and Laura Alexander.

May 2019 be as full of success as 2018. Cheers!
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