**New Degree Program, Masters of Arts in Atlantic History and Politics, MU**

**Executive Summary**

While the outlook for graduate study in the humanities and social sciences is not as grim as public sentiment suggests (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\_323.10.asp), it is likewise no secret that advanced study in these fields needs to be re-imagined to fit the new educational landscape. Specifically, we need more humanities and social science Master’s programs—like MPA and MSWs (which have shown growth while other disciplines have seen either contraction or stagnation)—that think creatively about how to prepare students both for the traditional M.A.-to Ph.D.-to tenure-track trajectory *and* for professional life and success outside the academy.

The proposed **M.A. in Atlantic History and Politics** was designed with this imperative to re-imagine graduate study for the present day squarely in mind. With a rigorous, interdisciplinary curriculum that spans History, Political Science, and Public Affairs, it will prepare students for doctoral work in any of these fields, as well as for further study in such fields as Law, Museum Studies, Policy Studies, and Secondary Education. Additionally, the skills that students will refine through the degree—communication, written argumentation, conceptual thinking and problem-solving—transfer to and prepare them for success in any number of public and private sector professional pursuits (see Section 3.A. for more information on this). Beyond this, the innovative approach that the M.A. will take to introducing experiential learning into the M.A. curriculum—both through for-credit internship opportunities and a yearlong required professional development course—will allow students to gain pre-degree experience in a wide variety of professional fields and, in this, become even more competitive candidates for post-degree employment.

Not only will the M.A. place Mizzou in a leading position when it comes to a nationwide need to re-think the design and objective of graduate programs. It will also advance a number of other university priorities: the one-year structure of the M.A. will lower both the cost of graduate study for students and their time to degree; we will aggressively recruit students from all UM system campuses for the M.A. and be creative in pursuing other cross-system collaborative opportunities; and the degree as a whole—and particularly its unique, four-week study abroad requirement at Oxford University—will attract new students from around the nation and globe to MU and help the university retain some of its brightest undergraduates for at least another year, though we anticipate many students will continue their graduate studies at Mizzou upon completing the M.A. Moreover, because the program can be launched and sustained using existing faculty resources and courses at the Kinder Institute and in other departments, it will immediately be revenue generating to the university and, through course development and research funds already accounted for in the Kinder Institute budget, will additionally help the university build on existing academic strengths in global history and comparative politics. **The Kinder Institute has committed to successfully administering the M.A. and covering any expenses associated with the program through either a new grant agreement or from within the regular annual budget.**

A final note on the last point above and on the question of “why this program now”: As outlined in Section 1, over the past two-plus years, we have seen a surge in interest on campus—among students, faculty, and visitors alike—in engaging with the M.A.’s intellectual premise: the belief that truly understanding the evolution and present state of American history and politics requires examining these subjects in a transnational context. During this same period of time, it has likewise become exceedingly apparent that it is more important than ever for future generations to have an awareness of the historical and contemporary links between the U.S. and the wider world. In regard to these two developments, the M.A. will stoke the existing intellectual energy on campus when it comes to studying transnational history and politics and will help Mizzou fulfill its mission of stewardship by producing graduates who are capable of productive, thoughtful engagement with the wider world politically, economically, culturally, and historically.