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GREENSBORO

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TO: Dr. Bob Hansen
Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

FROM: Dr. Susanne Rinner, Associate Professor of German Studies, Associate
Department Head, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures
Dr. Brooke Kreitinger, Visiting Assistant Professor of German,
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

RE: Concluding Report for the “Europe and other Fortresses in a Borderless
World” Ashby Dialogue

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the “Europe and other Fortresses in a Borderless World” Ashby Dialogue convened faculty and students from across campus to investigate global migration and global migration crises from interdisciplinary perspectives at a series of monthly meetings, guest speakers, and film screenings. The series was coordinated by Dr. Susanne Rinner, Associate Professor of German Studies, and Dr. Brooke Kreitinger, Visiting Assistant Professor of German, both in Languages, Literatures & Cultures. Other UNCG faculty co-conveners and participants included Dr. Corey Johnson, Associate Professor of Geography, Dr. Cybelle McFadden, Associate Professor of French, Professor Sheryl Oring, Assistant Professor of Art, and Dr. Claudia Cabello Hutt, Assistant Professor of Spanish.

At the September 8th meeting, co-organizers introduced the topic and presented position statements. Attending faculty and students discussed individual interests related to the larger topic and identified foci and readings for upcoming meetings and potential projects. Readings and other materials were collected and shared among all participants via Dropbox.

The October meeting entailed an open discussion on among other topics: the terminology used in public discourse to refer to immigrants, migrants, refugees, etc.; policies and laws relating to the “organization” (passports, surveillance, biometrics, work permits, etc.) of national populations; theoretical notions of borders (including the work of Peter Sloterdijk and Christopher Rumford); ethical obligations to economic migrants and refugees.

At the November meeting, Dr. Cybelle McFadden facilitated a discussion of the film *La Pirogue*, which tells the story of 30 stowaways on a wooden fishing pirogue who undertake the dangerous journey from Senegal to Spain in the hope of finding better lives. Dr. McFadden

also provided a scholarly article “The Myth of Invasion: the inconvenient realities of African migration to Europe” by Hein de Haas to complement our engagement with the film.

In February, guest speaker Dr. Reece Jones, Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, discussed a selection from his recently completed book *The Violence of Borders: How States Keep People Out*, which addresses how some of the most significant challenges of our times, such as climate change, global wealth inequality, and the growth of slums, are all connected to issues of borders. Dr. Corey Johnson, Associate Professor of Geography at UNCG, facilitated the discussion. The following day Dr. Jones explored the topic of borders and violence further at a public lecture co-sponsored by the Geography Department.

On March 24th, the Ashby Dialogue series co-sponsored a colloquium on Latin America called “Imagining Modernity from the Margins” which was organized by Dr. Claudia Cabello Hutt, Assistant Professor of Spanish at UNCG. Invited speakers Dr. Karen Spira, Guilford College, Dr. María Laura Bocaz, University of Mary Washington, Dr. Juan José Adriasola, Universidad Alberto Hurtado in Chile, and Dr. Cristóbal Cardemil-Krause, West Chester University focused on rural, queer and decentered discourses in Latin American film and literature in the face of modernity and postmodernity.

At the group’s last event on March 30th, artist and professor Pedro Lasch gave a talk titled “DMZ-ID: The Art of Micro-Borders.” Professor Lasch, originally from Mexico divides his time between North Carolina, where he teaches art, art theory, and visual studies at Duke University since 2002, and New York (NY), where he leads on-going projects with immigrant communities and art collectives. Professor’s Lasch’s presentation for the Ashby Dialogue focused on his work on borders, migration, and nationalism.

The “Europe and other Fortresses in a Borderless World” Ashby Dialogue events had a wide-reaching impact on the campus. Attendance at meetings and events ranged from 15-20 students and faculty at the initial meetings in the fall to larger audiences of 50+ at the lectures and round table discussions with invited speakers. Participants included undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty from departments across campus. The series provided productive opportunities to investigate and question notions of borders and immigration from diverse perspectives thanks to the various disciplinary backgrounds of the participants and invited speakers and the diverse media such as film and art with which their scholarly and or artistic work engages.

The co-conveners would like to thank the Dean’s Office for its support of this Ashby Dialogue series.

Sincerely,



Susanne Rinner



Brooke Kreitinger

c: Amy Williamsen, Department Head, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures