

## **Trip to National Archives expands students' historical research**

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After receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from four students who traveled to the National Archives in College Park, Md. last year, professors in UNCW's history department are trying to make the trip a regular component of their two year graduate program.

Last May's week-long trip was led by Associate Professor of History Mark Spaulding and funded with departmental money. While there, graduate students Keith Clark, Rob Morrison, Matt Jacobs and Matt Shannon were able to research documents pertaining to their theses.

Clark combed through U.S. State Department documents about the impact of the China lobby on U.S. foreign policy in the early Cold War years. Morrison consulted U.S. State Department and CIA documents to better understand U.S attempts to mobilize Islam in Saudi Arabia as a way of stopping the spread of communism in the Middle East. Jacobs found specific CIA memoranda relating to his research on Fidel Castro's 1959 visit to the United States, and Shannon found documents and old newspaper articles describing the connection between Iranian students abroad and U.S. policy. All four students will graduate this May and will go on to pursue doctoral degrees.

"My thesis would be a shell of what it is now if we hadn't taken a trip to the National Archives," Morrison said. "We're doing stuff that no one has done before because of the help and support of professors in our department."

This May, the trip will be funded by the Ralph W. Brauer Fellowship fund. But Spaulding said that finding consistent funding to make the trip an annual offering is crucial in recruiting top students to the program and helping current students apply for top doctoral programs.

"It will really make a difference in the type of master's thesis the students can produce," Spaulding said. "We're going to see that in this next set of theses that come out."