Report of activities, summer 2007

My project examined students’ roles as election assistants to the liberal political parties in the last two elections of the German Empire. In my initial research, I found that students passed out flyers, attended political rallies, and helped find and bring voters to the polls. Additional investigation last summer confirmed these findings. I was able to locate newspapers and student publications through interlibrary loan and in a number of US libraries. In particular, the University of Chicago held student publications important for my research. I was most interested in the newspaper editions during and after elections, and colleagues in Germany were willing to photograph material and send it to me by email so that I could study it in the US. In June I traveled to California for a conference and took the opportunity to work in UCLA’s library, where they have a large collection of material related to the history of education and German history. My research at UCLA and through interlibrary loan helped me to learn more about the historiographical debates about the middle classes and German political culture in the Wilhelmine period.

I also used the research funds towards the purchase of a new computer with a 20 inch screen. A computer screen of this size easily allowed me to study photographs of the documents necessary for my research. In the future, I believe digital technology will also allow me to make my short research trips and return to South Bend with materials I can analyze at home. For this project, the article based on my research is now in draft form. I plan to revise it over the spring and summer and then submit it to European History Quarterly at the beginning of Fall 2008.