

# AIPS



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PAKISTAN STUDIES

2025 NEWSLETTER



# President's Report

This newsletter report marks my final one as I enter the last year of my second elected term as AIPS President. In this report, I review AIPS's significant achievements and changes since I assumed the presidency in 2020. It concludes with reflections on AIPS today and its future.



**Dr. Matthew A. Cook,**  
AIPS President

Over the past five years, AIPS has evolved into a more diverse institution. In addition to its traditional core membership of R1 universities, the institute now includes more R2 and non-Carnegie-ranked institutions among its members. This membership encompasses several Minority-Serving Institutions and Community Colleges. Faculty from these institutions play essential roles in AIPS, particularly in leadership positions and as chairs or members of significant committees. This increased diversity enhances AIPS and its mission to promote the study of Pakistan.

AIPS now collaborates with a more diverse group of higher education institutions in Pakistan. Often, these institutions are located outside major metropolitan areas or focus on women's education. Among many examples are the University of Sindh, Shah Abdul Latif University, Karakoram International University, University of Chitral, Women University of Swabi, and Women University of Multan. Frequently not connected by the M-2 Lahore-Islamabad Motorway, these institutions highlight Pakistan's

diversity. Like AIPS's expanding U.S. membership, the institute's increasingly diverse partnerships across Pakistan further advance its scholarly mission.

In addition to collaborating with its Pakistani partners on programming, AIPS supported initiatives by other Overseas Research Centers (ORCs) and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). The institute played a crucial role in facilitating the Pakistan-based aspects of a project by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) to document the Grand Trunk Road comprehensively. AIPS's involvement enabled Lahore University of Management Sciences faculty to participate in the AIIS project.

Another example of AIPS collaborating with other ORCs involved partnering with CAORC to ensure safe passage for Afghan ORC staff and scholars, along with their families, to other countries after the fall of Kabul in 2021. This collaboration established a fully legal and aboveboard "underground railroad" out of Afghanistan, through Pakistan, and onward to third countries, where other ORCs assisted in resettling individuals and their families. Essential to the success of this initiative was the Mellon Foundation, which supported it with a grant. This support, combined with the efforts of AIPS, other ORCs, and CAORC, helped numerous scholars find new homes, enabling them to further their research without fear of harm to themselves or their families. The institute's efforts received praise from member and non-member institutions that were academically involved in Afghanistan (e.g., Arizona State University) and special recognition from other organizations (e.g., the Institute for International Education in New York). This initiative helped save lives and ensured that valuable academic work could continue, demonstrating the crucial role AIPS plays in supporting scholars in challenging situations.

In the past, AIPS primarily promoted the study of Pakistan by funding research and supporting events such as workshops and conferences. AIPS was not significantly involved in the research publication process. This situation changed with AIPS's support for the launch of *Critical Pakistan Studies* by Cambridge University Press. This new journal publishes interpretive social science and humanities research to address broader interdisciplinary issues and topics related to Pakistan and its people. The journal goes beyond the nation-state, security, Islam, and extremism to analyze and discuss the diverse and multilayered contexts that define Pakistan and Pakistanis, both past and present, within South Asia and the wider world. I thank Kamran Asdar Ali (University of Texas, Austin) for agreeing early in the journal's development to join me as a founding co-editor. I am also grateful to Michel Boivin (CNRS and EHESS, Paris) and Amina Yaqin (University of Exeter), who joined Kamran and me as co-editors. In addition to *Critical Pakistan Studies*, AIPS's executive committee approved a

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# AIPS Islamabad Center Highlights

**1. Dr. Natasha Raheja (Cornell University)** led capacity-building workshops for filmmakers, digital storytellers, and media professionals in Pakistan from October 24-November 1, 2024.



**2. Dr. Brian Cannon (University of Pennsylvania)**, in collaboration with the University of Sindh-Jamshoro, organized a two-day international workshop titled "Beyond The Border: Ecology, Economy and Community In The Thar" from February 6-7, 2025. The workshop organizers are pictured below. From left to right: Dr. Irfan Ahmed Shaikh (Dept. of History, Univ. of Sindh), Brian T. Cannon (Critical Writing Program, Univ. of Pennsylvania), Dr. Abdul Razaque Channa (Dept. of Anthropology and Archaeology, Univ. of Sindh), and Dr. Shuja Ahmed Mahesar (Pakistan Study Centre, Univ. of Sindh)



**3. Dr. Uzma Rizvi (Pratt Institute)** conducted a workshop on "Heritage and Archaeology." Participants were selected from various Pakistani institutions and attended this workshop from January 15-16, 2025.



**4. AIPS facilitated the visit of Dr. Gwendolyn Kirk (Indiana University Bloomington), Dr. Ellen Ambrosone (Princeton University) and Dr. James (Jef) Pierce (University of Pennsylvania)** to Pakistan in January and February 2025. They visited the National Library and the libraries of Lok Virsa (Heritage) Museum, Pakistan National Council of Arts, and the International Islamic University.



**5. Dr. Robert Nichols (Stockton University)** visited Quaid-i-Azam University, the University of Peshawar, and Allama Iqbal Open University in March 2025.



## AIPS Islamabad Center Highlights

**6. Dr. Paul Edleman (Sauk Valley Community College [SVCC]),** Prof. Farah Habib (Bristol Community College [BCC]), and Dr. Zubda Zia (Kinnaird College for Women) hosted 12 professors and students from SVCC and BCC at Kinnaird as part of the America Pakistan Exchange Program (APEX). The cohort attended Kinnaird's "3rd International Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation."



**7. Dr. Michael Hirsch (Huston-Tillotson University)** collaborated with Fatima Jinnah Women University Rawalpindi for the "International Conference on AI Integration in Transformation on Higher Education, Research, and Entrepreneurship" in December 2024.

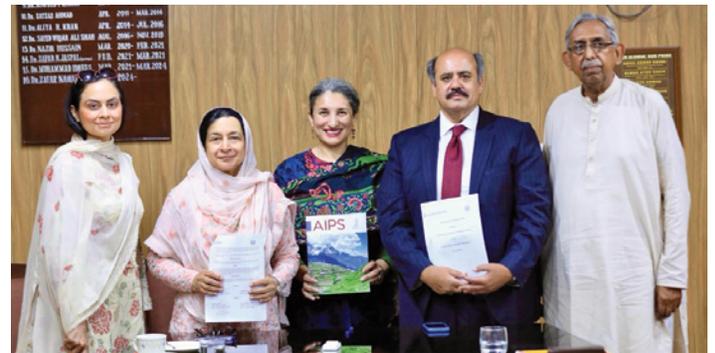


**8. On December 16, 2024, Dr. Matthew Cook** signed an MOU to renew AIPS's agreement with Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur-Sindh (SALU). Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan and Dr. Yousuf Khushk (Vice Chancellor, SALU) were also in attendance.



**9. Dr. Matthew Cook** electronically signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hazara University, Manshera - KPK on March 17, 2025. Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan (Director, AIPS-Pakistan), Dr. Mohsan Nawaz (Vice Chancellor, Hazara University) and Dr. Shakirullah (Chairman, Department of Archaeology) were also signatories.

**10. Dr. Matthew Cook renewed an MOU** virtually with Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad on June 24, 2025. Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan and Dr. Zafar N. Jaspal (Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, QAU) were physically present at the signing ceremony.

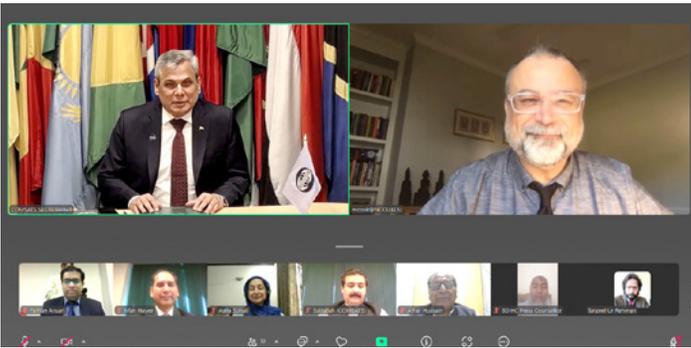


**11. On July 4, 2025, Dr. Matthew Cook** electronically signed a new MOU with the Pakistan Studies Centre at the University of the Punjab in Lahore. Dr. Muhammad Ali (Vice Chancellor, Punjab University), Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan, and Dr. Amjad Abbas Khan also signed electronically.

**12. Iqra University in Karachi and AIPS** renewed an MOU in an online signing ceremony on July 8, 2025. Dr. Matthew Cook and Dr. Nassar Ikram (Vice Chancellor, Iqra University) signed electronically. Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan and Mr. Assem Rizvi (Registrar, Iqra University) were witnesses.



**13. On July 8, 2025**, the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) and AIPS virtually renewed an MOU aimed at fostering academic cooperation and institutional capacity building in S&T and emerging technologies. The MOU was signed by the Executive Director COMSATS, Ambassador Dr. M. Nafees Zakaria, and President AIPS, Dr. Matthew A. Cook, in a ceremony witnessed by some of the representatives of Diplomatic Missions of COMSATS Members States in Islamabad as well as officers of COMSATS and AIPS.



**14. Dr. Matthew Cook virtually renewed** an MOU on July 9, 2025 with the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Studies (PIPS). Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan visited PIPS Campus in person to sign the MOU. Asim Khan Goraya, (Executive Director, PIPS) also signed off on the agreement.



**15. AIPS also electronically renewed MOUs** with the following universities in Pakistan:

- Institute of Management Sciences (IMS) – March 17, 2025
- Superior University (SU) – March 17, 2025
- Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water & Marine Sciences (LUAWMS) – May 5, 2025
- Gomal University – May 21, 2025
- Forman Christian College University (FCCU) – June 27, 2025
- Women University Multan (WUM) – July 2, 2025

## New AIPS-Pakistan Director: Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan



**Please join us in welcoming Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan as the new AIPS-Pakistan Director! She began her appointment at the AIPS Islamabad office in December of 2024.**

Dr. Aalia Sohail Khan's wealth of experience and passion for her work make her a valuable addition to the AIPS team.

She is the former Vice Chancellor of Rawalpindi Women University, where she successfully led the institution's transformation from a college to a full-fledged university. She earned her Ph.D. in 2013 from the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, specializing in English literature. She brings over 33 years of experience in teaching and research, along with a decade of administrative leadership.

Her research interests include hermeneutics, metaphor, and meaning-making in Punjabi Sufi poetry, Translation Studies, Post-Colonial Literature, and Iqbal Studies.

Dr. Khan notes that she is eager to contribute her expertise and passion to the advancement of AIPS's goals.

Welcome to AIPS, Aalia!

# AIPS Conferences and Workshops



## America Pakistan Educational Exchange (APEX)

Dates: October 19-31, 2024 and February 11-23, 2025

Locations: Sauk Valley Community College (Dixon, IL), Bristol Community College (Fall River, MA), and Kinnaird College for Women (Lahore, Pakistan)

The America Pakistan Education Exchange Program, in its second year, conducted a two-part cultural exchange with Kinnaird College for Women. In October, six students and three Kinnaird faculty visited Bristol Community College in Fall River, Massachusetts and Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, Illinois. The visit included cultural site visits to New York and Chicago. Led by AIPS Trustees, Dr. Paul Edleman (Sauk Valley CC) and Prof. Farah Habib (Bristol CC) with APEX co-director Prof. Zubda Zia (Kinnaird College), this exchange facilitated person-to-person educational linkages between the US and Pakistan through a reciprocal faculty and student exchange program, aiming to improve access to Pakistan Studies for community college members, facilitate cross-cultural understanding, and examine gender inequalities. This year's program theme was "Students and Social Change," with a particular focus on women.

In February, six faculty and six students from Bristol Community College and Sauk Valley traveled to Kinnaird. The cohort attended Kinnaird's 3rd International Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation. Each US faculty participant presented a keynote or workshop on their subject area (international relations, economics, history, mental health, criminal justice and English literature). This is the first time the cultural exchange included students from the US. The US students took part in Kinnaird's student activities including a faculty-student debate, a business innovation competition, and a cultural dance. Kinnaird, along with the Pakistan Prime Minister's Youth Programme, hosted a historical tour of the Walled City. Professors Edleman and Habib also conducted a storytelling workshop with 35 government college professors, which culminated in a visit to Gujarat to conduct a storytelling project with three village schools. The project is part of a collaborative to document rural life in Pakistan.



## Exploring Urban Transitions in Lahore:

### The Case of the Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project

Date: September 20, 2023

Location: Beaconhouse National University (Lahore, Pakistan)

This AIPS-sponsored workshop at the Beaconhouse National University in Lahore was created to examine the ambitious yet contentious Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project. This project, billed as the first and the largest riverfront being developed on the bank of the Ravi River, is spread over 110,000 acres, and it aims to simultaneously reinvigorate the Ravi River, stimulate economic development, and offer residential opportunities to 10 million people. However, this project has evoked environmental concerns, prompted accusations of triggering unplanned displacements, and has also become the target of litigation. The proposed conference adopted a multidisciplinary approach which drew on technical and anthropological lenses to assess the design, sustainability, and socio-cultural elements of relevance to the Ravi Riverfront Urban Development Project.

Faculty members from AIPS member institutions involved in organizing the proposed Ravi Riverfront conference were Dr. Saleem Ali (University of Delaware) and Syed Mohammad Ali (American University and Johns Hopkins University). Pakistani faculty members were architects affiliated with the Razia Hassan School of Architecture at BNU, including Omer Hassan, and Omer Farooq, the Dean, and the Head of Department of the School of Architecture respectively. Ghammaz Sandhu, an Assistant Professor at BNU and urbanist focusing on development, climate change and governance will also help organize the conference and document its proceedings.

The Ravi Riverfront conference at BNU brought together representatives from the Ravi Riverfront Development Authority, as well as an array of local urban planners, environmental and other civil society representatives, for a half-day conference examining different (economic, environmental, and socio-cultural) aspects of the Ravi Riverfront Project.



### Heritage and Technology

Date: January 15-16, 2025

Location: Forman Christian College (Lahore, Pakistan)

This 2-day workshop, led by Dr. Uzma Rizvi (Pratt Institute) in collaboration with Shah Abdul Latif University, Hazara University, and Forman Christian College, provided museum professionals and faculty teaching in museum/tourism/heritage departments to scholarship about technology and heritage, as well as providing some hands-on experience to conduct 3D photography of artifacts. In the contemporary world, museum and heritage professionals interact with multiple intergenerational audiences. Increasingly, new technology and social media must be incorporated for successful and engaged museum and heritage practice. Learning how to engage technology like 3D scanning artifacts and making 360 videos to archaeological sites, allows museum professionals to work on increasing public engagement and interest. Simple and reproducible methods were provided so that each participant developed a skill set that allows them to implement technology within their own professional spaces.

Topics covered included how to conceptually understand the distinctions between what is put up on a website that is for a museum and comparing that to a government agency and a non-governmental group. What is displayed and how the website engages the viewer is dependent upon the aims and mission of the group. The participants discussed the relationships between websites and social media and the role it plays in engaging various stakeholders. Participants were also invited to talk through the role of artificial intelligence and how archaeology and heritage professionals could contend with the increased capacity for machine intelligence to produce forgeries and false documentation. Workshops such as these also provide important spaces for networking and creating senses of community within academic and professional disciplines.



### Beyond the Border: Ecology, Economy, and Community in the Thar

Date: February 6-7, 2025

Location: University of Sindh (Jamshoro, Pakistan)

This two-day workshop, hosted by the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Sindh, invited participants across disciplines to analytically re-frame the Thar Desert beyond its Pakistani and Indian guises, with an aim to reveal the shared natural, economic, and social ecologies of the subcontinent's Great Desert. The workshop was developed to provide a forum to discuss the methodological challenges of researching in and on the desert region. For historians especially, how do uneven recordkeeping practices across the desert inform the selection of and access to primary source material? For ethnographers and other social scientists, how do considerations of orality, linguistic variation, caste and tribe, and settlement patterns affect scholars' ability to adequately structure field research? This workshop brought together scholars of the region who might otherwise generally be isolated by geography and/or discipline, to showcase and inspire new, collaborative directions in studies of the Thar through mentorship, cross-cultural collaborations, keynote speeches, panel discussions, and paper presentations.

Organizers Drs. Brian Cannon, Irfan Ahmed Shaikh, Shuja Ahmed Mahesar, and Abdul Razaque Channa intentionally sought to solicit a disciplinarily diverse range of participants to inform our workshop discussions. They enjoyed learning and collectively benefited from one another's topical and methodological perspectives in conducting research in and on the desert region, synthesizing experiences from studies and fieldwork in anthropology, sociology, history, and business and entrepreneurship, among others.

## AIPS Conferences and Workshops



### International Conference on AI Integration in Transforming Higher Education, Research, and Entrepreneurship

Date: December 16-18, 2024

Location: Fatimah Jinnah Women University (Rawalpindi, Pakistan)

Dr. Michael Hirsch (Huston-Tillotson University) was the Conference Co-Chair at the International Conference on AI Integration in Transforming Higher Education, Research and Entrepreneurship at Fatimah Jinnah Women University in Rawalpindi December 16-18. The conference was funded by AIPS and the Oil & Gas Development Company Limited. At the conference, he presented a keynote presentation entitled “Engaging Artificial Intelligence: A Tempered Embrace.” While in Pakistan, he also did a 20-minute interview on Omar Butt’s live evening PTV news program. They spoke of the relationship between the line between economic disparities and the rise of authoritarianism.

## Introduction to Urdu Language & Culture Course

Since Spring 2023, AIPS has hosted four iterations of an online course, Introduction to Urdu Language and Culture. Enrollment was open to all interested in exploring the Urdu language and culture, and faculty members at two-year colleges and minority-serving institutions (MSIs) were eligible to receive total funding to participate in the course thanks to support from the Department of Education’s Title VI Overseas Research Centers funding for AIPS. A total of 67 people have participated in the classes, and 28 of those participants are affiliated with a two-year college or MSI.

In this 10-week asynchronous course, participants gained a solid foundation in Urdu and learned about the rich cultural traditions of Pakistan and other Urdu-speaking regions. The 10-week online course was ideal for those who wanted to get an overview of the basics of the Urdu writing system, learn conversational Urdu useful for daily activities (e.g., shopping, ordering in restaurants), and explore cultural themes via dramas, movies, songs, and poetry. Participants could earn up to 2.0 CEU credits for completing the course. The course was designed by Dr. Jameel Ahmad, who has been teaching beginning to advanced-level Urdu for over a decade at the University of Washington, Seattle.

Participants had the opportunity to:

- Learn the basics of the Urdu writing system (Calligraphic Arabic-Persian script)
- Gain a basic foundation in the Urdu language, vocabulary, and conversation skills.
- Explore cultural topics. Urdu language learning was connected and deeply woven with the rich cultural traditions of Pakistan and South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) in this course. Most of the course time was devoted to culture and included Bollywood movies/songs, Pakistani TV dramas, Urdu poetry, and Pakistani cuisines.

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# AIPS Opportunities

Please contact AIPS for more information on applying for these opportunities.

## Fellowships

AIPS is excited to offer Senior and Junior Research Fellowships! Funding for fellowships for US citizens is provided by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State through a grant from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). When available, funding for fellowships for non-US citizens is provided by AIPS unrestricted funds. All applications will undergo a competitive review. The review committee may prioritize applicants who have not received an AIPS fellowship in the past two years. Please see the AIPS website for more information.

## Short-Term Research Grants

AIPS offers research travel grants to Pakistan each year for up to 3 months. This grant is open to AIPS members, regardless of citizenship. We strongly encourage graduate students to apply. AIPS-funded travel is restricted to Islamabad and/or Lahore; Karachi may be possible for research purposes, but applicants should check with the AIPS office prior to submitting an application.

## Institutional Membership Waiver

For the first three years of membership, AIPS waives the Institutional Membership fee (\$250) for two-year colleges and Minority-Serving Institutions. Representatives of these institutions serve on the Board of Trustees, have full voting rights, and are eligible for numerous funding opportunities available through AIPS. A permanent faculty member who is involved in Pakistan Studies should submit a proposal for affiliation. As soon as AIPS receives this application, the Executive Committee members will discuss and vote.

## AIPS Book Prize

AIPS is soliciting books (single-authored monographs, no edited volumes) published during the last three years or nearly published books (galleys must be available) for the annual AIPS Book Prize.

The award recipient will receive a monetary reward from AIPS (\$1,000). In addition, AIPS will recommend the manuscript for publication in Pakistan with an appropriate press. Publishing in Pakistan is strongly encouraged but not a condition of the award.

Applicants in all disciplines are encouraged to apply. The deadline to apply is January 10, 2026.

## Workshop or Co-Sponsorship of Conference in Pakistan

AIPS has funds to support a workshop or co-sponsorship of a conference in Pakistan. The budget can fund travel for US-based scholars or can be used to assist a university in organizing a conference/workshop. This workshop must be collaborative with a local academic institution in Pakistan.

In order to be eligible for these awards the applicant must be affiliated with an AIPS Institutional Member. Budget varies between \$6,000-\$10,000, depending on budget needs.

\*Please note that the award will be with your institution, not you as an individual.\*

This award is funded through an ECA grant from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

## Workshop or Co-Sponsorship of Conference on Pakistan in the US

AIPS sets aside seed money each year for organizing a Pakistan-related conference or workshop in the US. Any AIPS Institutional Member can submit a proposal for up to \$4,000. These funds may be used to support airfare and other direct conference expenses.

\*Please note that the award will be with your institution, not you as an individual.\*

This award is funded through an ECA grant from the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.

## AIPS GRANTEE TESTIMONIAL

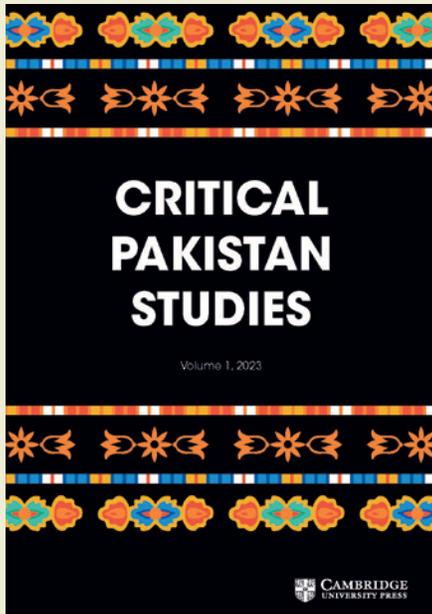


**"My time in Pakistan was deeply enriching,** both personally and academically. I am sincerely grateful to AIPS for supporting the final stages of my dissertation research. Their support allowed me to conclude my extended ethnographic fieldwork and meaningfully engage with my research community. This opportunity has been vital in shaping the direction and depth of my scholarly work."

— *Shandana Waheed, AIPS Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Grantee*

# Critical Pakistan Studies

## Open-Access Journal from AIPS and CUP



AIPS continues to support *Critical Pakistan Studies*, an open-access journal published with the support of Cambridge University Press. *Critical Pakistan Studies* (CPS) publishes primary source interpretive research that tackles broader interdisciplinary issues in addition to Pakistan and Pakistanis. The journal's interdisciplinary approach pushes beyond the nation-state, security, Islam, extremism, and other topics that narrowly define the study of Pakistan. It analyzes, discusses, and seeks to understand the varied and multi-layered contexts that constitute Pakistan and its people (both past and present and in South Asia and the wider world).

Articles of CPS are publicly available on the Cambridge website: [Cambridge.org/cps](http://Cambridge.org/cps)

The journal is affiliated with the Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de L'Asie du Sud--Center for South Asian Studies and the University of Exeter South Asia Centre. The journal's website provides more information on the journal and author submission guidelines.



## Individual Grantees 2025

### AIPS Conference Travel Grants 2024-2025

AIPS awards travel grants to help facilitate its members' participation in international and domestic conferences. Grants for U.S. citizens are funded through either the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State or the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). Non-US citizens are funded by AIPS's unrestricted funds. Abstracts and final reports for these projects are on the AIPS website.

#### Greg Smith

International Travel Grant  
 Institution: Northwest College  
 Conference Name: European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art  
 Conference Dates: September 16-20, 2024  
 Title of Paper(s): "A Preliminary Report from the 2023-2024 Field Season at Mohenjo Daro"

#### Danish Khan

Domestic Travel Grant  
 Institution: Franklin and Marshall College  
 Conference Name: 52nd Annual Conference on South Asia  
 Conference Dates: October 30-November 2, 2024  
 Title of Paper(s): "Political Economy of Agrarian-Urban Interlinkages in Punjab"

#### Meher Ali

Domestic Travel Grant  
 Institution: Princeton University  
 Conference Name: 52nd Annual Conference on South Asia  
 Conference Dates: October 30-November 2, 2024  
 Title of Paper(s): "The City and the University, or 'the Whole and the Part': Ecochard, Doxiadis, and University Planning in Pakistan, 1953-68"

#### Shelly Murphy and Stacie Charbonneau Hess

Domestic Travel Grant  
 Institution: Bristol Community College  
 Conference Name: 52nd Annual Conference on South Asia  
 Conference Dates: October 30-November 2, 2024  
 Title of Paper(s): "Best Practices for Integrating Cultural Exchanges in the Curriculum: Challenges for General Education Faculty"

# AIPS

## Umbrella Grant

**A**IPS was awarded a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad for the pursuit of its commitment to promoting scholarly exchange between the U.S. and Pakistan. Between 2023-2025, AIPS implemented four programs:

1. An American Studies curriculum exchange & conference.
2. A digital citizenship boot camp.
3. A science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) training series.
4. A U.S.-Pakistan higher education workshop series.

### 1. American Studies

This exchange program was designed to enhance knowledge of the U.S. in Pakistan, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison hosted an American Studies Institute from July-August 2024. Nine faculty members from five universities in Pakistan traveled to the US to attend lectures and participate in discussions centered on topics related to American Studies (literature, politics, law, economics, education, foreign policy, and much more). The exchange was led by UW professors Dr. Grant Nelsestuen and Dr. Dan Kapust.

Since the summer institute concluded, two participants, Dr. Syed Faisal Hyder Shah and Dr. Humera Hakro, met with colleagues to discuss introducing American Studies at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. Attendees approved to move forward with offering an American Studies course as a major and an optional/minor course, and an American Studies Corner will be established within the Department of History. Dr. Hakro will be leading the committee overseeing its activities.



Dr. Syed Faisal Hyder Shah and Dr. Humera Hakro speaking with colleagues about the American Studies Course.

Additionally, former AIPS President Dr. Farhat Haq traveled across Pakistan to host public lectures on topics relating to American Studies at universities in Pakistan. She also engaged in one-on-one or small-group faculty mentoring at partner universities. She facilitated lectures at eight universities – Women University Multan, Women University Swabi, Karakoram International University, the Foundation for Advancement of Science and Technology (FAST), Shah Abdul Latif University, the University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, the University of Chitral, and the University of Sindh, Jamshoro.



Dr. Farhat Haq (front row, in red) with attendees at her SALU lecture.

### 2. Digital Citizenship

AIPS worked with the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) to host six 10-day boot camps across Pakistan. These boot camps were designed to enhance responsible digital citizenship in Pakistan, including building knowledge and skills about the importance of digital citizenship and digital communication. All boot camps were purpose-built to enhance the digital literacy of undergraduate students in universities across the country and each day imparted skills ranging from international internet governance frameworks to cyber harassment, digital safety, legal knowledge, device safety and best practices, basics of AI, Large Language Models (LLMs), algorithmic bias, disinformation, source verification and fact-checking, digital detox, e-monetization and social science research.

Dr. W. Russell Robinson (Associate Professor for the Department of Communications and Media Studies at Winston Salem University) traveled to Pakistan in December 2024 to collaborate with DRF on program design.



**“Creating a global digital citizenry is key to nation-building, capacity building, and establishing healthy international relationships.” — Dr. W. Russell Robinson**

Location: University of Karachi

April 22-May 3, 2024 • Attendees: 63 students

Location: Karakoram International University

June 1-12, 2024 Attendees: 61 students

Location: Forman Christian College, Lahore

August 27-September 6, 2024 Attendees: 49 students

Location: Women University Multan

October 21-31, 2024 Attendees: 58 students

Location: Women University Azad Jammu and Kashmir

November 18-28, 2024 Attendees: 58 students

Location: University of Sindh, Jamshoro

February 18-27, 2025 Attendees: 57 students

## AIPS Umbrella Grant



STEM Sisters at the University of Delaware

### 3. STEM Sisters

In partnership with the University of Delaware (AIPS Institutional Member), this program was geared toward undergraduate women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields at universities throughout Pakistan. AIPS and the University of Delaware (UD) hosted the first STEM Sisters cohort in the summer of 2024. These 27 students visited UDel and Washington, DC for a three-week summer institute focused on climate change and sustainability. Participants attended many lectures, discussions, and excursions to explore these themes. Faculty members from UD, including Drs. Dana Veron, Matt Kinservik, Terrianne Lavin, and Saleem Ali, facilitated this exchange.

### 4. Higher Education Leadership

This program was a two-week workshop hosted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the development of higher education leadership skills. In July-August 2024, UW hosted 12 women faculty members with an aim of fostering leadership skills, professional growth, equity, and diversity in Pakistan's higher education workplace. The women represented six universities in Pakistan, and a variety of disciplines (psychology, mathematics, physics, education, computer sciences, economics, and more). While in Madison, they participated in sessions to build on their leadership skills and implement new ideas at their home universities. Nikki Davis (Chief of Staff, UW International Division) and Laura Hammond (Director, UW Language Program Office) facilitated this program.



Higher Education Leadership at UW-Madison

# AIPS Member Publications and Resources

**Andrew Amstutz**, Assistant Professor of History, Queens College, CUNY

Amstutz, Andrew. "The Lead Letters of Nasta'liq: Experiments with Movable Type and Debates over Modernity in Hyderabad." *Amodern 12: Counter-type*. (2025).

**Mehtabidah Ali**, Graduate Student in Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, University of Houston

Ali, Mehtabidah. August 2024 " "Assessing climate-driven impacts on Karakoram glacier surge: A geospatial analysis highlighting Shishper Glacial Lake outburst flood events" (2019-2022) as prime example." *Heliyon 10*, no 4 (August 2024).

**Francesca Chubb-Confer**, Visiting Professor, Oberlin College (was at Whitman College at the time of publication)

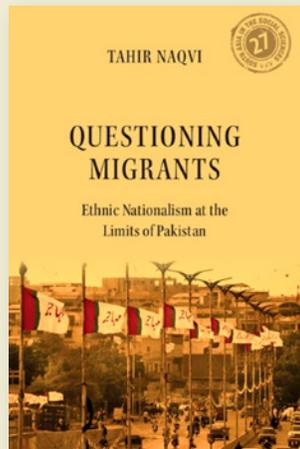
Chubb-Confer, Francesca. "Iqbal's Falcons and Nightingales: Metaphor, Modernity, and the Poetics of Islam in South Asia." *International Journal of Islam in Asia 4*, no. 1-2 (April 2024): 98-124.

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**Uzma Quraishi**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Sam Houston State University

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**Shayan Rajani**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Michigan State University  
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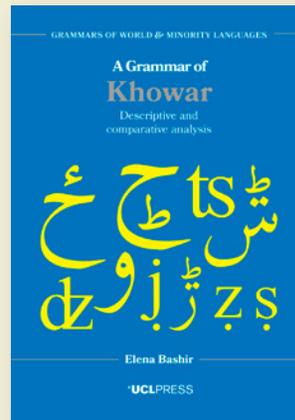
**SherAli Tareen**, Professor of Religious Studies, Franklin and Marshall College  
Tareen, SherAli. "The Theological Foundations of Muslim Modernism and Traditionalism in South Asia." *Modern Asian Studies 58*, no. 2 (October 2024): 357-385.

**Fatima Tassadiq**, Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Sheffield

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**Elena Bashir**, Senior Lecturer Emerita, The University of Chicago

Bashir, Elena. *A Grammar of Khowar: Descriptive and Comparative Analysis*. London: University College London Press, 2025.



**Syed Tariq Anwar**, Professor, West Texas A&M University

Anwar, Syed Tariq. "Entrepreneurial Ecosystems, Evolutionary Growth and Global Expansion." *Journal of International Entrepreneurship* (April 2025).

**Esha Niyogi De**, Senior Continuing Lecturer, Writing Programs, UCLA

De, Esha Niyogi. "Female Collaboration at Regional Junctions: Traveling Pakistani Cinema and Unmoored Militarism in the 1980s." *Asian Ethnology 83*, no. 1 (2024): 153-171.

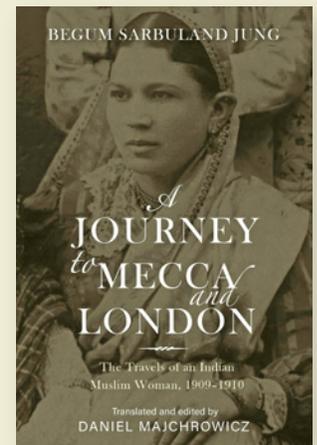
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**Purnima Dhavan**, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Washington, Seattle; **Heidi Pauwels**, Professor, Asian Languages & Literature, University of Washington

Dhavan, Purnima and Heidi Pauwels. *Vali Dakhani and the Early Rekhtah Networks: Sharing Poetry's Pleasures*. London: Bloomsbury, 2025.

**Daniel Majchrowicz**, Associate Professor, Northwestern University

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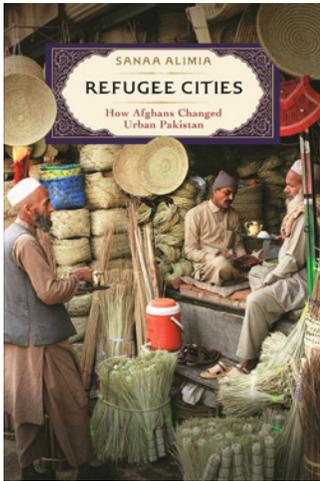


**Joshua T. White**, Professor, Practice of International Affairs, Johns Hopkins SAIS

White, Joshua T. *Vigilante Islamists: Religious Parties and Anti-State Violence in Pakistan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2025.

# AIPS 2025 BOOK PRIZE

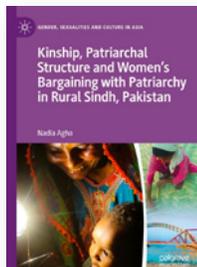
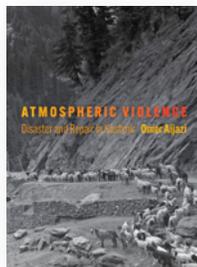
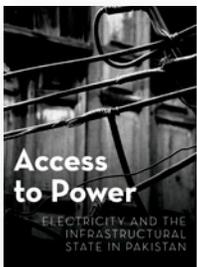
Congratulations to Dr. Sanaa Alimia (Associate Professor, Aga Khan University) for receiving the 2025 AIPS Book Prize! Her book, *Refugee Cities: How Afghans Changed Urban Pakistan*, published by Folio Books (2024) and the University of Pennsylvania Press (2022), was the committee's unanimous choice for this award given its enormous contribution to Pakistan Studies.



As noted by the AIPS Book Prize Committee, this book “explores the life of Afghan refugees in Pakistan with a specific focus upon their contributions to the development of Karachi and Peshawar. The work, both a history and eight-year ethnographic study, outlines how waves of Afghan refugees fled to Pakistan to escape violence. As they settled into the peripheries of urban centers, they created their own communities and with their labor

contributed greatly to the overall development of Pakistan's cities. The extent of their contributions and the precarity of their existence within Pakistan is explored in detail.”

They went on to remark that “Alimia's scholarship is excellent. The book is well-written and easy to read. It draws upon hundreds of interviews and extensive archival research.”



## Honorable Mentions (equally ranked):

**Ijlal Naqvi**, Associate Professor of Sociology; Associate Dean (Curriculum and Teaching), Singapore Management University; *Access to Power: Electricity and the Infrastructural State in Pakistan* (Oxford University Press, 2022)

**Omer Aijazi**, Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in Critical Disaster Studies, Humanitarian Conflict Response Institute, University of Manchester; *Atmospheric Violence: Disaster and Repair in Kashmir* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2024)

**Nadia Agha**, Nadia is now Professor in the Department of Sociology and Gender Studies, Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur, Pakistan; *Kinship, Patriarchal Structure and Women's Bargaining with Patriarchy in Rural Sindh, Pakistan* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021)

## 2025 BOOK PRIZE INTERVIEW

This year, AIPS Vice President, Dr. Daniel Majchrowicz, interviewed Dr. Sanaa Alimia about her book, *Refugee Cities: How Afghans Changed Urban Pakistan*.



### How did you become interested in re-searching the modern history of Afghan refugees in Pakistan?

Frustration and, probably, anger first drove my interest in the topic. As a someone (at the time) from underprivileged roots in a privileged profession, and as a political being with internationalist intuitions, I was dissatisfied with how stories were told about marginalised groups or those who are “preferably unheard”—the poor, the occupied, the colonised, the racialised, women, less able bodied, and others.

A part Kashmiri, part Pakistani, part Yemeni-Indo-East African Muslim via south London in the UK, I initially wanted to work on Kashmir, but I knew it would be impossible to navigate the world of visas and militarised Indian surveillance. So, I looked within Pakistan, to another group of persons who were clearly violated by racialised military violence: Afghans.

The stories on the peoples and geographies of Afghanistan and their displaced diaspora, are told through Orientalist and Islamophobic tropes. Of white-saviour schoolboy/schoolgirl fantasies: hyper-masculinized worlds of counterinsurgency, geopolitics, “Afghan women needing to be saved”, or the helpless refugee as “perfect victim”. Tropes that are produced by Euro-American power, but also willingly reproduced by the Pakistani state, its elites, and many of its people.

Drawing on anti-colonial and post-colonial thought, from Edward Said to Frantz Fanon, scholars such as Anila Daulatzai or Saadia Toor show these tropes are discursive tools that manufacture consent to justify imperialism, war, and neoliberal development and humanitarianism. Indebted to this critical tradition, I was motivated to centre people's voices and experiences of war beyond the headlines.

When I started my research, I also hoped my work would open spaces for conversations and action beyond the university. That my work would be a tool for students, organisers, migrant rights advocates. Scholarship that can render visible the conditions of material inequalities so as to dismantle them is an ethic we should, I feel, centre. In this regard, I was inspired by Shahram Khosravi's easy to read but impactful ‘Illegal’ Traveller, which has been formally and informally translated in multiple languages and used a tool for political education by migrant rights activists.

### What were some of the most challenging aspects of researching and writing this book?

Writing is hard—at least it is for me. The labour of writing: the editing, re-writing, the cutting, requires time and space, which I must say I found (and find) hard under the pressures of patriarchal and

capitalist labour markets and when you have caring duties. Still, this can be eased if by good mentors, reviewers, and editors and I remain grateful to folks like Laleh Khalili, Matthew Nelson, Saadia Toor, Anila Daulatzai, and Saeed Hussain, who were overwhelmingly generous with their time for both versions of the book.

As a non-Afghan/Afghanistani, I also felt responsible to ask if the people I write about see themselves in my work? Is there honesty in it? It is a standard the new neoliberal university model doesn't encourage as we are pressured to "publish or perish". Still, we must resist this pressure as best we can.

### **What advice do you have for young scholars writing on Pakistan today?**

Firstly, think beyond 1947, the Punjab, and Karachi. Partition and independence are undoubtedly pivotal moments, but I remain staggered at how knowledge production about Pakistan fixates on this period. I'm exaggerating here for effect; there is excellent work being produced by a new generation of scholars and on, say, Gilgit-Baltistan, KP, Balochistan, caste-relations, and more. Still, ethno-federal inequalities in the country, mean the Punjab and Urdu-speaking upper class and caste elites still dominate jobs in the Anglophone university (in and outside of Pakistan), which results in a skewed scholarly focus that centres 1947 or disproportionately prioritizes Punjab and Karachi.

Secondly, make connections with each other within and outside of the country. My own work was nurtured and interrogated by peers, mentors, and students at the University of Peshawar. It was also enriched by thinking beyond Pakistan and South Asia/India and seeking insights and connections with the imperial, colonial, postcolonial, refugee, and urban informal experiences in, say, Kabul, Cairo, Mogadishu, and beyond.

Thirdly, the academy (Western/Liberal/capitalist/casteist/classed/patriarchal) might not guide us as we need. Don't be afraid to create your own toolsets, methods, and ways of thinking and feeling.

Finally, ask should you be researching and working on the topic you are? What can you—and should you—refuse to work on? Some topics might appear "radical" and "cool", but sometimes it is not our place to work on a topic; instead, our role maybe to create space for others to work on it.

### **What are you planning to work on next?**

I am working on a comparative analysis of migration and documentary surveillance regimes in Africa and Asia, which has emerged from living in Kenya since 2022. However, given the violence of deportations for Afghans in Pakistan—and elsewhere—has worsened in the past ten years and that I am now considered a "refugee expert", I will continue to work on the Afghan question in Pakistan.

## President's Report

*continued from page 2*

memorandum of understanding to reprint and distribute books by institute members in Pakistan. The first title in this new initiative, *Vernacular Culture in Colonial Punjab* by Farina Mir, is now available in Pakistan. Additional titles are planned for later this year and next year.

AIPS has secured substantial external funding to diversify its mission over the past five years. This funding exceeds \$6.7 million and has been crucial for conducting research and supporting workshops and conferences. It has also been essential for establishing *Critical Pakistan Studies*, AIPS's new reprint series, and developing new programming with higher education institutions across Pakistan. Furthermore, it has enabled the institute to better fulfill its scholarly exchange mission by supporting scholars' travel from the United States to Pakistan and allowing numerous Pakistani academics and students to visit the United States. The "indirect" from this funding (combined with prudent financial management) will be vital for sustaining AIPS during financially uncertain times, both now and in the future.

AIPS is more diverse today than when I became president in 2020. The institute's membership, partnerships, programming, and other initiatives reflect this diversity. Upon reflection, promoting greater diversity has been a common thread in most of my actions as AIPS president. Intonated by my experiences as a professor at a non-R1 or R2 and historically African American university, these actions, like those of past presidents, contribute to the AIPS story. In this ongoing narrative spanning over 50 years, a new president will soon begin writing their chapter, just as I have since 2020. Whoever the new author may be, I look forward to the continued story of AIPS and its efforts to advance the study of Pakistan. In conclusion, I quote Douglas Adams from *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, "So long and thanks for all the fish."

Matthew A. Cook, Ph.D.  
Professor of South Asian & Postcolonial Studies  
North Carolina Central University

# AIPS Member Highlights



## **Meesum Alam, Indiana University**

The Pakistan Common Voice Project was funded by the Mozilla Foundation's Common Voice Program. This initiative, led by Meesum

Alam, focused on collecting text-aligned speech data from 23 Pakistani languages. With the dedicated efforts of a team of 45 language consultants, they successfully gathered over 330 hours of valuable data. This project not only contributes to the preservation and digital representation of these languages but also supports the development of more inclusive and diverse language technologies.

## **Paul Edleman, Sauk Valley Community College**

Dr. Paul Edleman received a Citizens Diplomacy Action Fund (CDAF) grant to fund a storytelling project in rural Punjab. Dr. Edleman and Prof. Farah Habib (Bristol Community College) worked with a group of faculty and students from Kinnaird to teach village children how to tell stories through photographs and narrative techniques. The project culminated in a traveling photo exhibit at Bristol and Sauk Valley.

## **Farah Habib, Bristol Community College**

Prof. Farah Habib participated in the American Pakistan Foundation retreat held in New York City on May 29-May 30, 2025. The retreat featured a Rising Star Panel featuring a select group of women who were named Rising Stars for 2024-25.



This year's theme, "Women Empowering Women," recognizes the inspiring achievements and extraordinary leadership demonstrated by women in the Pakistani

diaspora whose work is focused on uplifting others and brings strength to the community. The award recognized her work as co-director of the America Pakistan Education Exchange (APEX), which is a cultural exchange program that brings faculty and students together from three different institutions: Bristol Community College in Massachusetts, Sauk Valley Community College in Illinois, and Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore.



## **Usman Hamid, Northwestern University**

In Summer 2024, Dr. Usman Hamid joined Northwestern University as an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies.

He was previously an Assistant Professor of Asian Studies at Hamilton College.

## **Elizabeth Lhost, University of California, Los Angeles**

Dr. Elizabeth Lhost received the 2023 Karwaan Book Prize for her book *Everyday Islamic Law and the Making of Modern South Asia* (University of North Carolina Press, 2022).

## **Nelofar Khamisani, Kansas State University**

Nelofar Khamisani presented a poster titled "Higher Education Landscape in Sindh, Pakistan: Current Trends, Issues, and Policies" at NAFSA 2024 in New Orleans, LA. She also successfully defended her dissertation, a biographical study called "An Aspect of Patriarchal Learning Environment Through the Lens of Care: A Study in Rural Pakistan."

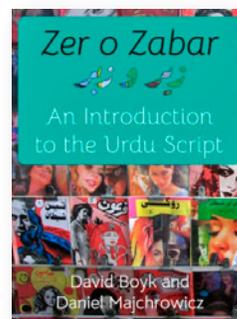
## **Ken LeBlond, University of Massachusetts Amherst**

In November 2024, a team of six staff from the Civic Initiative (a business group of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Donahue Institute) visited Islamabad. The group, which included AIPS Member Ken LeBlond, held a three-day follow-up conference for alumni from recent cohorts of the

Study of the U.S. Institutes Comparative Public Policymaking program that has been held annually by the Civic Initiative since 2010. The SUSI program is funded by the US Department of State Education and Cultural Affairs Office.



The team also met with the Institute of Rural Management, the National Commission for Human Development, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and the National University of Modern Languages with valuable assistance from AIPS member Dr. Rizwan Shinwari. The meetings focused on economic and human development and opportunities for future professional exchange programs. Lastly, a mega-mixer had almost 90 Civic Initiative program alumni spanning over 15 years of Pakistan-focused programs on public policy, higher education, entrepreneurship and digital journalism.



## **Daniel Majchrowicz and David Boyk, Northwestern University**

Daniel Majchrowicz and David Boyk published an e-book on learning the Urdu script. *Zer o Zabar*

is an introduction to reading and writing in Urdu. It is designed primarily for those who have some familiarity with either Hindi or Urdu, equivalent to a first-year level or above. It is intended as a comprehensive guide to the Urdu script that can be used either in a classroom or on your own. The book introduces the letters and symbols a few at a time, building your familiarity with the script until you are able to read the language comfortably. It can be accessed at <http://zerozabar.com/>



**Aazadi Fateh Muhammad**, Ohio University

In March 2025, Doctoral Candidate Aazadi Fateh Muhammad presented her paper, “Redefining Envi-

ronmental Narratives through Indigenous Storytelling,” at the AEJMC Midwinter Conference under the Minorities & Communication Division in Norman, Oklahoma. Additionally, in June 2025, she presented two more papers at the International Communication Association Conference in Denver, Colorado: “Framing Justice and Resistance: A Thematic Analysis of Media Coverage on the Sindh Rawadari March and Police Brutality in Sindh, Pakistan” and “Exploring Patriarchy and Women’s Decision-Making in Marital Relationships: A Narrative Inquiry through Podcasting.” These conferences provided exciting opportunities to engage in discussion on media representation, gender, and resistance narratives in Pakistan.

**Robert Nichols**, Stockton University

In March 2025, Professor of History Emeritus Robert Nichols (Stockton University) was invited by Professor Altaf Qadir to talk about recent South Asian History publications to the History Department of the University of Peshawar. He discussed examples of contemporary methods, theory, and subjects applied in recent world, Asian, and regional histories that might be useful for Peshawar historians conceptualizing research projects within comparative, interregional, and Asian perspectives. On the same visit, University of Peshawar Professor Shahida Aman and Dr. Abida Bano invited him to present research and meet with students and faculty of the Political Science Department in a seminar on regional, national, and global migration. Many in the audience had firsthand experience with family and neighbors studying and working abroad as multiple trans-national networks connect Pakistan to the world.

In Islamabad, Professor Samina Yasmeen of the Pakistan Studies Department invited Dr. Nichols to speak on research, argumentation, and audience to the graduate students and faculty of School of Social Sciences and Humanities of Allama Iqbal Open University. Also in Islamabad, the History Department of Quaid-i-Azam University hosted Professor Nichols for a talk on scholarship connecting the history of Pakistan to wider Asian and global historical dynamics. Informal discussion followed, including about current individual research projects.

AIPS-Pakistan Director, Aalia Sohail Khan, Assistant Director Atufa Qazi, and staff members, especially Shabbir Ahmed, supported the visit of Dr. Nichols March in multiple ways that were fully appreciated.

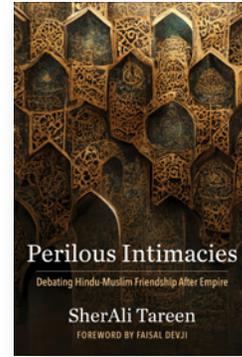
**Sadaf Sajjad**, Austin Community College

A new honors course titled “Psychology and AI: Where AI Dances with Psychology” has been proposed by Dr. Sadaf Sajjad at Austin Community College. This groundbreaking course in psychological studies provides a foundational understanding of human behavior and mental processes, integrating the study of psychology and its influence on AI. Set to be taught for the first time starting in Spring 2025, this innovative course has been reviewed and accepted by the Honors Committee at Austin Community College.



**Rizwan Ali Shinwari**, Bradford University, UK / Riphah University, Pakistan  
Rizwan Ali Shinwari has joined a post-doctoral position in a joint project by the University

of Bradford, UK and Riphah University, Pakistan. The two-year long project will focus on the protection of children in the Pakistani community and will particularly focus on the rising trend in child sexual abuse cases. The project aims to conduct evidence-based research to reach at the core of the social issue.



**SherAli Tareen**, Franklin and Marshall College

Dr. Tareen’s book *Perilous Intimacies: Debating Hindu-Muslim Friendship after Empire* was selected as a finalist for the 2024

American Academy of Religion Book Award. Dr. Tareen also appeared on the Eon Podcast in Lahore in January 2025 to discuss secularism and secular power in Pakistan.

**AIPS GRANTEE TESTIMONIAL**



**“The short-term research grant from AIPS supported an archival trip to Pakistan which allowed me to examine several archives in both Lahore and Islamabad. During this time, I gained access to several materials relevant to my research on unlawful assemblies in colonial India and Pakistan, and made contacts with a handful of librarians, researchers, and academics across the country.”**

— Daniel Waqar, AIPS Short-Term Research Grantee

# AIPS 2024-25

## Institutional Member News

### Princeton University

Princeton University Library has acquired a large collection of Pakistani film ephemera that includes cinema posters and film booklets. Researchers can now access the open-access digital collection of film posters, which will be added to over the coming year to

include approximately 3,000 posters in total. In addition, a growing collection of film booklets can be discovered through the library catalog. Languages in the collection include Urdu, Panjabi, Bengali, Hindi, Pashto, and Saraiki. For more information, please contact Ellen Ambrosone (South Asian Studies Librarian): ea9@princeton.edu.



### University of California, Berkeley

The 2024 S. S. Pirzada Dissertation Prize in Pakistan Studies was awarded to Dr. Muhammad Nabeel Jafri (PhD, University of Toronto,

2024) for his dissertation, titled *Orating Knowledge: Urdu Shi'i Khatibat in Contemporary Karachi*. Dr. Jafri is the tenth recipient of the prize. He will deliver a talk based on his research at the Institute for South Asia Studies in Fall 2025. Additionally, two scholars received Honorable Mentions for their dissertations: Hadia Akhtar Khan (PhD, University of Toronto, 2024) for her dissertation, *For the Family, By the Family: Migration and 'Betterment' in Rural Pakistan*, and Faiza Rahman (PhD, Emory University, 2024) for her dissertation, *Islamic Period: Menstruation and Muslims in Pakistan*. The recipient of the 2023 prize, Dr. Sidra Kamran, delivered a talk based on her work at ISAS in Fall

2024. The S.S. Pirzada Dissertation Prize in Pakistan Studies recognizes the best dissertations in Pakistan Studies written in the humanities, social sciences, law, and public health in North America or Europe in the previous year.

Events organized by the Berkeley Pakistan Initiative in 2024-25 included: a conversation with Raf Saperra, the British-Punjabi singer and lyricist, a talk by economist Sultan Mahmood on the 1970 Bhola Cyclone and the birth of Bangladesh, a screening of *The Glassworker*, the groundbreaking 2024 Pakistani animated film, and a launch-event for Zareen's *Pakistani Kitchen: Recipes from a Well-Fed Childhood*, a memoir-and-cookbook by entrepreneurs Zareen Khan and Umair Khan. Spring 2025 was capped by a collaboration between the South Asia Art Initiative and the Lahore Biennale that brought Lahore-based, internationally acclaimed artist, Imran Qureshi, to UC Berkeley for a week-long residency comprising a public talk and practice-based workshop. Dr. Munis D. Faruqi taught an undergraduate class—"Introduction to Pakistan"—in Spring 2025.

The Institute for South Asia Studies also continued its longstanding support for Urdu Studies. The Mir Research Fellowship in Urdu Studies awarded 3 research grants to graduate students in the University of California system last year and will do so again in 2025. UC Berkeley's longstanding Urdu Lecturer, Dr. G. Max Bruce joined the University of Chicago as an Assistant Professor in Fall 2024. They expect to welcome a new Urdu Lecturer to the campus in Fall 2025.

### University of Oregon

The University of Oregon recently added a new Pakistani American tenure-track assistant professor to the Department of Global Studies, Dr. Sajjad Ali Malik. Dr. Malik completed his PhD in Socio-legal Studies from York University (2022) and was an assistant professor in the undergraduate Law, Politics, and Society program at Drake University.



His current research explores the introduction of Dig Data and AI in South Asian agriculture and food systems, or 'digital agriculture', in the context of development, climate change, and

the evolving nature of global capitalism. His work historicizes this contemporary phenomenon by showing how British colonialism and the contested legacies of the Green Revolution shape the politics of knowledge upon which digital agriculture is cultivated. He aims to show how the contentious relationship between South Asian states and their agrarian populations is forged through the interplay of science/technology and Foucauldian technologies of power, with implications for understanding state formation and agricultural change in South Asia. You can find Ali's latest publications in *The Third World Approaches to International Law Review* and *The Elgar Companion to Intellectual Property and the Sustainable Development Goals*.

### University of Michigan

The 15th annual conference on Pakistan at the Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, was held on Friday, January 31, 2025. Titled "Seeing Pakistan", it focused on Pakistani culture as it interacts with the processes of seeing and being seen. How do countries, peoples, and cultures come to be seen in a global framework? How might the shared qualities of sight and vision unite experiences as disparate as the art museum, the social media site, and the movie theater?

The conference was preceded by a screening of the 2023 film *Wakhri* at the Michigan Theater the night prior. The film dramatizes the extraordinary life and tragic death of Qandeel Baloch (1990-2016), who is often described as Pakistan's first social media ce-



lebrity. On the day of the conference proper, a keynote address was given by *Wakhri*'s director, Iram Parveen Bilal. A Pakistani writer, director, and producer based in Los Angeles, Bilal spoke about the process

of making the film, what it means to be a Pakistani-American filmmaker today, and how her own use of the cinematic medium reflects upon Qandeel Baloch's use of the visually-oriented world of social media. The talk aimed to discern the parts of *Wakhri* the film, and of Baloch the historical figure, that are particularly Pakistani, as well as the parts that one might more correctly see as indicative of a shared global predicament as moving image media and social media respond to one another.

The conference continued with a second keynote address by Saleema Waraich, an associate professor of Art History at Skidmore College. Waraich explored these issues through notions of invisibility and visibility, as elicited by the oppressive and unrelenting smog that blanketed Lahore for two weeks, briefly earning Lahore the title of the most polluted city in the world. One of the many hazardous conditions created by the smog was severely limited visibility, and, in this talk, Waraich connected these precarious environmental conditions to a long-standing enthusiasm for "development" that relies on an inability to critically engage with and resist discourses of "progress" and "growth" that pollute both people's minds and the environment. Waraich's presentation further queried how practices related to visibility that are associated with "development" manifest in recent restoration efforts involving Lahore's Mughal heritage.

The talk interrogated the image of Lahore's Mughal heritage for the tourist industry as promoted by the Walled City Authority of Lahore (WCAL) and the ways



in which these sites are being used by local populations to represent themselves, in part through the selfie and TikTok cultures that drive many younger audiences to visit these sites. Asking what is being made visible (and consumable) through these forms of self-representation, what drives these systems of representation, and to what ends, the talk explored the relationship between (not) seeing and being seen and probes the spaces in between.

#### University of Washington

The University of Washington's South Asia Center hosted a lecture with Dr. Sidra Kamran titled "Splintered Intimacies: Work and Friendship in Karachi's Service Economy" on May 1, 2025. This talk drew on ethnographic fieldwork to explore the social lives of low-wage women workers in Karachi, Pakistan. Dr. Kamran notes that "most women in stigmatized beauty salon and retail jobs are divorced, separated, unmarried or otherwise abandoned by the state and the family, and therefore, they turn to each other for social and economic support. However, status struggles in a heightened context of stigma splinter women's emergent non-kin intimacies, which become marked by discourses of secrecy, competition, and suspicion. Labor control in the workplace and patriarchal control in the home additionally impinge upon women's ability to forge meaningful

relations. Consequently, women's relations with each other are often truncated, antagonistic, and episodic, rather than solidaristic." Bringing together feminist framings of friendship with broader theories of worker solidarity, she argued that understanding how class-gender dynamics fracture this precarious social terrain is crucial to developing a feminist politics of class struggle.

Dr. Kamran is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Lewis & Clark College. Her research broadly focuses on labor, social class, feminist theory, gender and sexuality, and digital culture.

#### University of Wisconsin-Madison

The University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for South Asia hosted the 52nd Annual Conference on South Asia (ACSA), a four-day event held from October 30 – November 2, 2024. The conference drew over 1,200 attendees from around the globe to Madison, WI.



The 2024 conference theme, "Democracy and Authoritarianism," provided a timely and thought-provoking focus for the various panels, roundtables, and lectures. Renowned experts from diverse fields explored the interchange between democratic and authoritarian tendencies in South Asia, shedding light on pressing issues such as political polarization, human rights, and social justice.

UW-Madison also hosted a lecture with Ms. Sayed Gul Kalash on February 6, 2025. Her presentation, "Impact of Modernization on Kalash Traditions of Northern Pakistan," explored the challenges the Kalash face as their community encounters globalization and modern influences.

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**Contact information:**

[aips@pakistanstudies-aips.org](mailto:aips@pakistanstudies-aips.org)  
[www.pakistanstudies-aips.org](http://www.pakistanstudies-aips.org)

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