



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE GRANTS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Challenge Grants application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/challenge/challenge-grants> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Office of Challenge Grants staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Enhancing Orthodox Christian Studies at Fordham University
Institution: Fordham University, Bronx, NY
Project Directors: George Demacopoulos
Grant Program: Challenge Grants



**ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES CENTER
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES CHALLENGE GRANT BUDGET**

Total NEH funds requested:		\$500,000
Year 1:	\$125,000	
Year 2:	\$125,000	
Year 3:	\$125,000	
Year 4:	\$125,000	
Total nonfederal contributions:		\$1,500,000
Total Grant Funds (NEH plus Match):		\$2,000,000

Planned expenditures:

Endowed:

Distinguished faculty-in-residence program endowment (57.5%)	\$1,150,000
Dissertation-completion fellowship endowment (35%)	\$700,000
Programming Funds (7.5%)	\$150,000

Rate of expendable return	4%*
Projected annual expendable income	\$80,000

Uses of endowment income

Distinguished faculty-in-residence annual stipend (s)	(b) (6) **
Dissertation-completion fellowship annual stipend (s)	(b) (6) **
Public lecture, marketing	\$3,000
Publication expenses	\$3,000

*Fordham University’s overall investment strategy for endowments is to maximize long-term capital appreciation that adheres to prudent investment principles, while allocating a fixed proportion of the total return to support endowment-funded activities. To make this allocation, the University determines an annual “spending rate” based on a percentage of a three-year average market value of pooled investments. This spending rate, derived from the three-year average market value of pooled investments, is intended to provide a meaningful amount to each endowed program, while ensuring that the fund will continue to grow against inflation over time. Currently, the spending rate is 4.0 percent.



**The number of distinguished faculty-in-residence scholars and dissertation-completion fellows will grow as the endowment builds. Stipends will be adjusted as appropriate.

ENHANCING ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

Fordham University is applying to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a Challenge Grant of \$500,000 to establish a multi-faceted research endowment in Orthodox Christian Studies. This initiative is one component in Fordham’s current capital campaign, **EXCELSOR | EVER UPWARD | THE CAMPAIGN FOR FORDHAM**. Among the top priorities for this campaign is the financing of the research arm of a new Orthodox Christian Studies Center, which is fully integrated within the University’s existing strengths in the Humanities. Specifically, this endowment will support the following initiatives: (1) a new faculty-in-residence research fellowship and (2) a new dissertation-completion fellowship.

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND INTELLECTUAL QUALITY OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES AS A BRIDGING CULTURES INITIATIVE

1. A Little Known and Rarely Studied Culture with 21st-Century Geo-Political Significance

Eastern Orthodox Christians are currently estimated to exceed 260 million people worldwide. However, less than one percent of United States citizens identify as Eastern Orthodox Christians.¹ As a consequence, most US citizens have little experience with or knowledge of the second largest, and arguably oldest, Christian tradition in the world. Thus, a Challenge Grant Supporting Orthodox Christian Studies is especially well suited for the National Endowment of the Humanities’ “Bridging Cultures Initiative.”

As a field, Orthodox Christian Studies represents more than a single such bridge; it serves to connect an archipelago of cultures, as Eastern Orthodoxy refers to a cluster of religious traditions (here understood broadly so as to include both “Chalcedonian” and “non-

¹ Statistics drawn from The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. See <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports> and <http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Global-Christianity-orthodox.aspx>.

Chalcedonian” communions²) that for millennia have been the dominant form of Christianity throughout Asia Minor, the Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Russia. Although the confessional beliefs and ritual practices of Eastern Christianity were largely formed during the earliest centuries of the Common Era, they continued to take shape during the Middle Ages as these communities expanded and encountered other major religious cultures from which Europe remained relatively isolated. Therefore, unlike the medieval Western Christian tradition that sought cohesion through a centralized administrative system and through the adoption of a single theological language (Latin), the Eastern Christian traditions were heterogeneous, developing loosely-connected but independent institutional structures as well as distinctive cultural and theological vocabularies in Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Georgian, Greek, Slavonic, and Syriac. While the better known of these traditions developed within the confines of the Byzantine Empire and its allied states, others developed separately from Byzantium as minority religious traditions in Islamic-majority territories.

As a consequence of the complex contextual settings in which they matured, the Orthodox Christian traditions offer an incredibly rich trove of artistic, cultural, historical, literary, philosophical, and religious resources for exploring the human condition past and present. In large part, this richness stems from the mutually dependent relationships that have historically existed between Christian and non-Christian cultural forces that helped to shape the Orthodox traditions. For example, a historical study of Eastern Christianity testifies to the diversity of opinions within early Christianity with respect to the ways in which the structures of the Roman Empire should be appropriated and/or resisted as the movement gained religious adherents.

Whereas some Christians were eager to adopt the artistic, philosophical, and political apparatus of

² In 451 CE, a large gathering of Christian bishops who met in Chalcedon (Asia Minor) articulated a dogmatic confession of faith that posited that Jesus Christ was both fully human and fully divine. Though this decision was endorsed by the Roman government at the time, there were many Christian communities in the Eastern provinces (especially in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria) that did not accept the Chalcedonian definition. These non-Chalcedonian communities (sometimes known as “Oriental” Christians) were further isolated from the Chalcedonians when Islamic armies conquered most of the Near East in the seventh century.

the Greco-Roman world, others were far less willing to do so. Thus, a comprehensive investigation of the various Eastern traditions offers a more nuanced view than, and offers an important corrective to, more typical studies of Christianity that maintain a myopic focus on the Christian West. Such a distinction is important because the Christian West was a geographic and political space in which the foundations of the Roman Empire were more completely upended by Germanic migrations of the early Middle Ages and where an ecclesiastical tradition centered in Rome continuously resisted alternative traditions and theological expressions that were not its own.

This insight offers a related avenue for investigation—one of contemporary significance for historians and social scientists who posit competing theories of how various forms of political and religious hegemony are a natural consequence of globalization—which is to examine the ways in which Orthodox Christianity began to coalesce with the Roman government after the conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine (d. 337 CE). Constantine was the first Roman emperor to embrace Christianity and he famously moved the center of his empire from Rome to Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), which inaugurated the Byzantine era. Nearly all scholars of Christian history would acknowledge the extent to which the study of Byzantine Christianity offers an important foundation for understanding humanistic developments in the modern West, particularly those related to the integration of religion and law and/or religion and politics. This is because the basis of modern legal codes and the role of religion in those codes date to legal and political structures of the early Byzantine Empire (famously codified in the *Justinianic Codex*, ca. 536 CE). But most experts in Byzantine Studies would decry the extent to which scholars of Western Europe or the Americas generally misunderstand the complex dynamics of religion and politics in the Byzantine era even though it is precisely these dynamics that make possible the modern discourse that juxtaposes religion/law and religion/politics.

2. *Beyond the Byzantine: Orthodox Christian Studies' Broader Insight into the Humanities*

The critical insights above notwithstanding, the Byzantine legacy for modern humanistic knowledge is, of course, much broader than the intersection of religion with law and politics. Art Historians naturally gravitate to the artistic developments in mosaics, ivory carvings, illuminated manuscripts, and liturgical objects that were created by Byzantine craftsmen and reveal the extent to which Byzantine civilization was a creative integration of numerous cultural forces. Scholars of Archeology and Architecture investigate the imperial and religious monuments still in operation more than one thousand years after their creation. These Byzantine productions drew from but transformed classical motifs, and it is these transformed models that continue to inform artistic design choices (both in the religious imagination and with respect to the architectural design) in the modern West.

But even though Byzantine Studies offers a rich window for research in the Humanities, it is important to realize that the actually broader program of Orthodox Christian Studies has a much greater potential to bridge modern cultures and to increase humanistic knowledge. This is because historically, not only were the Eastern Christian traditions more diverse than the official orthodoxies of Rome or even those imposed by their own Byzantine ecclesiastical and political leadership, but the actual adherents and practices of Eastern Orthodox Christianity—and, by extension, their study—encompassed communities and embraced traditions that were never part of the Byzantine Empire. Not only does Orthodox Christianity (broadly conceived) incorporate the Christian traditions that developed in Slavic regions and in the Crimea (areas in which the Byzantines did have some impact), it also includes religious cultures that developed in the Arabic-speaking world of medieval Islam where Byzantium had little direct influence.

3. *An Alternative Understanding of Christianity's Interaction with the non-Christian World*

Indeed, the “Oriental” Christian traditions of the Arab world provide some of the most important non-Islamic sources for our understanding of the early development of Islam. These

Eastern Christian traditions also offer a valuable testimony to the earliest Christian experience of and response to Islam. This Christian/Muslim encounter predates the eras of Western European colonialism and imperialism, which began with the Crusades and continued later in the so-called “age of exploration.” It is the Western European colonial encounter with Islam that is largely responsible for the modern Christian/Muslim discourse of mutual polemic, which distorts for the modern world the conceptual possibilities of Christian/Muslim cohabitation. A rigorous Humanities-focused investigation of the pre-Crusader, Eastern Christian encounter of Islam will, no doubt, reveal alternatives to the troubled narrative that continues to dominate Western caricatures of the “Oriental” in all of its many forms.

The Oriental Christians, however, are historically significant for reasons beyond their engagement with Islam. Because most scholars of Christianity (whether they study Western Christianity or Byzantine Christianity) typically present the Christian experience through narratives of empire, wealth, and/or Western conceptualizations of church-state relations, the Oriental Christian traditions offer a strikingly different testimony. These communities were never connected to imperial power, were never in possession of significant material wealth, and were never a majority population. Instead, the Oriental Christian communities always existed as minority religions in other cultures and they possessed no expectation of being otherwise. As a consequence, they present strong models for understanding religious pluralism (existing alongside Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism) beyond their engagement with Islam.

Another important reason that the study of Eastern Christian culture offers greater insight into the evolution of the Humanities and Christianity’s engagement with the non-Christian world than is afforded by the more narrow scope of Byzantine Studies is that the Orthodox Christian traditions did not cease to exist with the fall of Byzantium in 1453 CE. However, it is precisely because Eastern Christianity is often misunderstood to be synonymous with Byzantium or Byzantine Christianity that an Orthodox Christian Studies Center in the United States is so imperative: to everyone’s detriment, many in the modern West who are marginally aware of

Orthodox Christianity have unfortunately equated it with a static or, even worse, backward-looking religious tradition that is unable and unwilling to engage the modern world.

Perhaps this is nowhere more true (and significant) than in modern social-scientific discussions that describe a world divided between Western cultures that thrive within democracy and Eastern cultures that are somehow less capable of embracing the religious freedom that is enabled by democracy. In 1993, Samuel Huntington published an article in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs*, “The Clash of Civilizations,” which has since received much attention and has shaped foreign policy attitudes toward traditional Eastern Christian countries. Huntington since developed his thesis into a book by the same name, in which he attempts to justify in a more elaborate form his equation of Orthodox Christianity with Islam. On Huntington’s reading, both religious cultures are portrayed as inimical to Western democratic principles of religious pluralism, tolerance, and human rights. A more nuanced approach to the broader tradition of Eastern Christianity (and to Islam), however, would not only show that Huntington’s thesis is culturally biased and historically flawed, but it would also provide more reliable resources for scrutinizing whether or not Orthodox Christianity is philosophically compatible with the principles of democratic pluralism. While Huntington was correct in his assessment that it is important to focus a lens on the complex relationship between religion, culture, and politics in post-Communist Eastern European countries, his East-West dualism is not the most accurate (or helpful) response. It is, thus, essential that vigorous and independent research in Orthodox Christian Studies provide those working in the Social Sciences (including International Relations, Foreign Affairs, and Political Science) a comprehensive but critical engagement with Eastern Christian communities—both in terms of the length of its historical scope and the breadth of its humanistic dimensions.

4. *Orthodox Christian Studies in the US is joining the Bridge Being Built from the "Other Side"*

The questions related to the ways in which Christians in the historical centers of the Orthodox world engage modernity, democracy, and pluralism are all the more timely because, for the first time in history, Orthodox Christian communities that possess religious majorities (such as in Greece, Romania, or Russia) are beginning to think about existing in a political situation without an emperor or a dictator. The Ottoman occupation of most of the Orthodox world from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries decimated the intellectual resources of Orthodox communities. As a minority religion within the Ottoman Empire, Orthodox Christians were deliberately prevented from engaging their Western counterparts in a fruitful political dialogue at the very time that Western Europeans began to experiment with the democratic principles born of the Enlightenment. While such a discussion did begin to emerge for Orthodox intellectuals in nineteenth-century Russia, the Communist attack on Orthodox Christianity was more brutal than the oppression of the Ottomans had been and, as a result, the Orthodox confrontation with political modernity was again cut short. Given the dramatic transformation in Eastern Europe and Russia following the collapse of Communism, intellectuals from Eastern Christian communities are now, for the first time, beginning this project in earnest. And, in doing so, they are being forced to come to terms with the relationship between ethnic and religious identity and the ways in which that relationship impacts and is impacted by political forces. It is imperative that Western scholars in the Humanities provide the kind of constructive intellectual cooperation that is made possible by academic research and scrutiny. Not only is this cooperation the responsibility of global citizenry, a vigorous and critical Humanities-focused investigation of Orthodox Christian Studies forces a reevaluation of social-scientific, as well as political philosophical, claims about the cultural biases of Orthodox political theology and political economy.

Shifting the focus to the United States, it is worth noting that Orthodox Christianity is possibly the only mainline Christian tradition that is retaining its population in an increasingly

non-religious American landscape.³ In part, this is the consequence of continued immigration from traditional Orthodox countries; in part, this is a result of a substantial number of American converts to Orthodox Christianity. With respect to immigration, it is important to note the significance that Orthodox Christian Studies can have on Immigrant or Diaspora Studies, which have thus far not engaged the experience or consequence of Orthodox migration. Understanding the interplay between immigrant and convert populations in the American Orthodox context and, particularly, understanding the ways in which these communities respond to the challenges of an increasingly secular modern West offer prime examples of why Orthodox Christian culture offers such a rich field for humanistic inquiry and knowledge. Indeed, the study of American Orthodoxy is far more than a study in theology or religion—it offers a gateway to the entire humanistic condition as it explores a range of social, cultural, and political issues (including women’s rights, human rights, and issues of social justice). This research is accessible through traditional Humanities disciplines (e.g., Art History, History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies) as well as newer avenues of investigation, such as Gender Studies, Postcolonial Studies, and Cultural Studies more broadly construed.

5. An Institutional Bridge—A Unique Opportunity to end Academic Balkanization

Despite the numerous and concrete possibilities provided by Orthodox Christian Studies for humanistic knowledge, despite the fact that a critical investigation of Orthodox Christianity offers an exceptional opportunity for bridging modern cultures, and despite the fact that a greater familiarity with the range of Orthodox cultures (from Moscow to Bagdad) is essential for maneuvering in today’s global environment, there is virtually no serious academic study of Orthodox Christianity as a collective whole that occurs in the United States. Typically, scholars of Orthodox Christianity operate independent of one another according to the methodological boundaries that shape humanistic study in the American academy: Anthropology, Art History,

³ <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>.

History, Literature, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Theology. Even when they do gather under more interdisciplinary rubrics, (such as Byzantine Studies, Slavic Studies, or Near Eastern Studies), these scholars often remain bound by chronological and/or geographic divisions that unnecessarily divide and isolate research in Orthodox Christianity. It is unfortunate that there could be such a large body of scholars in the Humanities whose research remains trapped within methodological and/or chronological silos, even though the subjects of these studies so clearly share a common religious frame of reference.

A similar Balkanization of Orthodox Studies occurs in the academies of Western Europe. Indeed, it would seem that the only place in the modern West where Orthodox Christian Studies is actively pursued is in Orthodox seminaries, where research is conducted from a confessional perspective and the inquiry is typically limited by certain community-reinforcing objectives. While it is true that some academies in Eastern Europe and Russia explore Orthodox culture in a non-seminary setting, those academies are themselves typically overshadowed by political and/or ecclesiastical structures that limit academic freedom. A robust, impartial, and analytical investigation of the Orthodox Christian traditions, one that incorporates all of the humanistic disciplines and seeks the benefits of inter-disciplinary research, can only occur in a modern university setting that is free of ecclesiastical and political censorship.

With leadership, independence, and funding, however, the field of Orthodox Christian Studies can be transformed. Initially, it will happen by bringing together scholars of Eastern Christianity who had previously worked independently of one another. The insights of early Christianity, medieval Arab Christianity and Byzantine Christianity will be brought into conversation with (and be challenged by) the ways in which Orthodox Christian belief shapes the cultural, political, and artistic perspectives of modern Orthodox populations. That engagement will be relevant not only for those who study modern Orthodox communities in historic Orthodox regions (e.g., Eastern Europe and Russia) but also for those who investigate Orthodox Christianity as a minority religious tradition in the modern West.

Eventually, the significance of Orthodox Christian Studies could ripple throughout the Humanities and the Academy more broadly. When the study of Eastern Christian traditions becomes more integrated in the Humanities more generally and when scholars of the West come to understand that these cultures are more dynamic, more diverse, more relevant to a much greater percentage of the world's population, those same scholars will no longer be able to describe Christianity as a phenomenon with a cultural and political base in Western Europe. The implications of such a simple shift in focus could be significant. Perhaps this potential is nowhere more apparent than in Postcolonial Studies,⁴ where the typical engagement with Christianity thus far has been to view the religion as a monolithic element of a larger Western-European colonizing force. A more comprehensive appraisal of the experience of the Christian East in the medieval and early-modern eras, however, shows that some Christian populations were themselves subjected to cultural, religious, and political colonization. The complex role that competing Christianities (i.e. Eastern and Western) played in the matrix of identity formation both for the colonized and the colonizer offers an especially rich field for critical investigation—one that is almost certain to problematize current scholarly narratives of Christianity and its “others.”

Given the uncommon possibilities that a critical investigation of Orthodox Christian Studies affords to the understanding of the human condition, given the extent to which Orthodox Christian Studies enables a rare opportunity for the bridging of cultures, and given the current historical moment that finds Orthodox Christian culture to be at the center of so many dynamic global situations (e.g., an emergent Eastern Europe, a simmering of Christian/Muslim relations, and as a proxy for the American religious confrontation with secular modernity), it is paramount that Orthodox Christian Studies be scrutinized with the kind of objectivity, rigor, and critique that

⁴ Postcolonial Studies refers to an interdisciplinary academic discourse that analyzes and responds to the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism in its many forms. No single definition of its aims or content is universally accepted, but Postcolonial Studies often incorporates matters of identity, race, and ethnicity, and it situates them within the interstitial and hybrid realities brought on by colonial rule.

can only occur through advanced academic research. The need for research funding is particularly acute because there is simply no funding explicitly dedicated Orthodox Christian Studies available to university faculty or students in the Western Hemisphere. It is paradoxical, in fact, that the Orthodox Christian experience can be so fundamental to such a large and significantly-situated global population and, yet, there has been virtually no attempt by Western academies to investigate the cultural dynamics, human relationships, artistic expressions, and religious perspectives of that population as a comprehensive whole.

THE LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES AT FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

1. A Firm Foundation at Fordham

Fordham University has arguably the only substantial critical engagement with Orthodox Christian Studies of any American University. For decades, Fordham had on its faculty one of the most renowned Orthodox scholars of the twentieth century—John Meyendorff, a specialist in Byzantine and Russian Ecclesiastical History. Today, Fordham is the only university in the United States in which two of its senior Theology faculty have broad training in Orthodox Christian Studies (Drs. Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos). In order to add to those resources, this spring Fordham University made a senior appointment in its Philosophy Department to Dr. Christina Gschwandtner, who specializes in Continental Philosophy (with a particular expertise in Philosophical Phenomenology) but who also possesses an extensive training in Orthodox Studies. These three faculty (Papanikolaou, Demacopoulos, and Gschwandtner), along with dozens of supporting faculty throughout the Humanities and especially in Medieval Studies, spearhead Fordham University's commitment to advance humanistic knowledge through a critical investigation of Orthodox Christian Studies.

Fordham University's curricular commitment to Orthodox Christian Studies began in 2007 with the creation of the nation's first interdisciplinary minor in Orthodox Christian Studies. The minor is inclusive and welcomes faculty and students who seek a broad-ranging investigation of the Eastern Christian experience. Working closely with faculty mentors, undergraduate students pursuing this minor learn about Orthodox Christianity through a rigorous interdisciplinary and comparative engagement between the Eastern Orthodox and Western intellectual traditions that fosters an integrated reflection on the human condition as it is experienced in diverse cultural, linguistic, political, and religious settings. As an interdisciplinary program situated within the Humanities, students take courses in Art History, Classics, History, Medieval Studies, Philosophy, Russian Literature, and Theology. In their final year, students are asked to draw upon that interdisciplinary experience in a concluding capstone seminar, entitled *Orthodox Christian Ethics*, which scrutinizes the ancient faith commitments of Orthodox Christianity in the context of modernity and religious pluralism.

In addition to its curricular initiative at the undergraduate level, Orthodox Christian Studies at Fordham engages a multi-faceted research agenda. In the summer of 2007, Fordham hosted an international conference entitled "Orthodox Readings of Augustine." The publication of the conference proceedings has received international attention and acclaim. In the wake of that conference, Fordham received pledges for a \$500,000 endowment for the establishment of a triennial conference series dedicated to a critical engagement of the Roman Catholic/Eastern Orthodox division. The first installment of the "Patterson Triennial Conference" occurred in the summer of 2010 and hosted sixteen international scholars for a conference entitled "Orthodox Constructions of the West." The objective of the inaugural Patterson conference was to bring the theoretical insights of Postcolonial Studies to the numerous cultural, historical, political, and theological factors that have come to comprise the often ambivalent contours of "Eastern" Christian attitudes towards an ambiguous and multiform "West." We anticipate a similar positive reception for the proceedings of "Orthodox Constructions of the West," which will be published

by Fordham University Press in the fall of 2012. The outcome of this conference series has the potential for significance far beyond the ecclesiastical domain. As the President of the Republic of Srpska, Milorad Dodik, recently commented, “the work of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University offers a model for cultural integration and cooperation that needs to be implemented in [his own] country.”⁵

In 2008, Fordham University Press initiated a new series, “Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought,” which is edited by Drs. Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos. The only series of its kind at a university press, it publishes books that bring Orthodox Christianity into engagement with modern and postmodern forms of thought. More than simply pursuing historical studies of Byzantine Christianity, it seeks to reinvigorate those studies in Orthodox Christianity by a rereading of traditional sources through the intellectual resources provided by critical theory. The series also moves beyond traditional “Patristic” or Byzantine Studies by encouraging scholarly investigations that explore the relevance and challenges of Orthodox thought in the contemporary world.

Since 2004, the public face of Fordham University’s commitment to Orthodox Christian Studies has been the annual *Orthodoxy in America* lecture that hosts world-renowned scholars from the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions, and offers a unique opportunity for an unfettered discussion of the Orthodox tradition and its future in American public life. Since its inception, every lecture has attracted over two hundred attendees with four of these lectures drawing and audience of over four hundred people. The lecture series has hosted some of the most prestigious Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic intellectuals in the world today, such as Roman Catholic theologian, David Tracy, and the Orthodox historian, Kallistos Ware. In fact, there may be no greater testimony to the international reputation of Orthodox Christian Studies at Fordham University than the decision of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, the Archbishop of

⁵ The comment was made at a breakfast meeting in October 2011, while President Dodik was visiting New York City.

Constantinople and world-wide leader of Eastern Orthodoxy, to give the *Orthodoxy in America Lecture* in October 2008.

2. *A Broad Base of Public Support and Academic Interest*

Public support for Fordham University's Orthodox Christian Studies initiatives has been wide-ranging. In addition to the large number of attendees at the annual lecture and triennial conference, and in addition to the \$500,000 that has been raised for the Patterson Conference Endowment, Fordham has received a \$2,000,000 gift from the Jaharis family foundation to establish an endowed chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture. The final payment for the *Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture* is expected in June of 2012 and an appointment to the chair will be made in the Spring of 2013. The holder of the chair will, naturally, take an active role in all initiatives related to Fordham's newly formed Orthodox Christian Studies Center.

Building on the overwhelming success of these on-going initiatives, in the spring of 2012, Fordham University established the nation's only university-based Orthodox Christian Studies Center. The Orthodox Christian Studies Center (OCSC) at Fordham University provides a space for an intellectually sophisticated engagement with the Orthodox Christian tradition in order to promote a more visible public presence of Orthodox Christianity in Western Culture. The formation of the OCSC is the final logistical piece in Fordham's long-term commitment to Orthodox Christian Studies. The Center serves as the locus for all curricular, research, and outreach activities related to the interdisciplinary investigation of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. To help facilitate this work, the OCSC has inaugurated an external Advisory Council, which helps to direct future initiatives and provides financial resources for their implementation. As a testament to the broad support for this initiative, it is noteworthy that only one third of the board members are alumni of (or are otherwise affiliated with) Fordham.

To be certain, the OCSC is fully integrated into and collaborates with other existing strengths and centers of excellence at Fordham University. Previous conferences have been cosponsored by the Center of Medieval Studies, an active organization that includes nearly forty faculty from eight Humanities departments. The annual *Orthodoxy in America* lecture is routinely cosponsored by the Curran Center for American Catholic Studies, the Center for Religion and Culture, and the Department of Theology. What is more, the undergraduate interdisciplinary minor in Orthodox Christian Studies, which requires broad exposure to humanistic aspects of Eastern Orthodox Culture draws on University resources in multiple departments, including Art History, Classics, History, Modern Languages, Philosophy, and Theology. Building upon these connections, the Co-Directors of the OCSC have, for the past three years, sponsored a Fordham faculty seminar on “Orthodox Christianity and Postmodern Thought,” which has brought together ethicists, historians, philosophers, and theologians.

One of the important outcomes of this fruitful collaboration is that graduates of Fordham’s doctoral programs in the Humanities (especially those in Theology, Philosophy, and History) have benefited from Fordham’s resources in Orthodox Christian Studies. These same students have gone on to positions throughout the academy (at state universities, religiously-affiliated private universities, and non-religiously affiliated private universities) and they have taken with them a knowledge of the Eastern Christian traditions that doctoral programs at other institutions simply cannot provide. Approximately one half of Fordham’s current doctoral students in Theology (roughly thirty students) have incorporated Orthodox Christian Studies into their coursework or more advanced research.

3. An Ambitious Agenda for Growth and Impact

Designed primarily as a research center and operating under the auspices of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the OCSC has set an ambitious fund-raising agenda that seeks to raise an endowment of \$10,000,000 over the next five to seven years. The primary objectives for

the OCSC and its endowment concern the creation of a series of research-related fellowships that will, for the first-time, provide a space for vigorous, independent research in Orthodox Christianity in any and all Humanities disciplines. We anticipate the eventual creation of three to four annual faculty-research fellowships and two to three annual dissertation-completion fellowships. We also anticipate several other research-related initiatives including the creation of additional conference series, increased library holdings, the co-sponsoring of research projects and conferences at other American and foreign universities, and the creation of research fellowships for both graduate and undergraduate students.

One of the main goals of the OCSC is to facilitate faculty seminars (on the model of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University), where scholars could be invited to multi-year interdisciplinary and collaborative projects organized around a common theme. These scholars would gather at Fordham's OCSC to share their research and would be incentivized through honoraria to compose scholarly works on the theme in question. Some examples of possible faculty seminars include: (a) a study of the Orthodox Christian engagement with Islam, (b) the role of religious identity in Eastern European Nationalist movements, (c) the confrontation of Orthodox Christianity and modernity, and (d) an examination of the intersection of Orthodox Christianity and democracy. Given that there is currently no funding dedicated to academic research in Orthodox Christianity at any American university or charitable entity, we are confident that the OCSC at Fordham University will, for the next decade, be truly unique, even though we expect that it will eventually be imitated at other institutions.

As a testament to the premier status that Fordham's OCSC already holds in the international community, it recently served as a host program for a Fulbright recipient from Serbia. Dr. Davor Dzalko, an artist and historian with multiple academic appointments in Europe, came to Fordham in the fall of 2011 to collaborate with Dr. Papanikolaou on an interdisciplinary project that analyzes the intersection between art and the Orthodox concept of

personhood. We anticipate that the number of similar collaborative, interdisciplinary, and international projects will increase in the years to come.

Moreover, the OCSC is routinely solicited for co-sponsorships of international conferences and partnerships. To date, the OCSC has collaborated on two international conferences held at The Theological Academy for Theological Studies, Volos, Greece (<http://www.acadimia.gr/index.php?lang=en>): (1) “‘Neo-Patristic’ Synthesis or ‘Post-Patristic’ Theology? Can Orthodox Theology Be Contextual” (June 2010; a follow-up conference is scheduled for May 2013); and (2) “Nationalism and Ecclesiology” (May 2012). In addition, the OCSC will be the major international cosponsor with the Theology Faculty of the University of Belgrade for a unique conference on Maximus the Confessor (October 2012) (<http://saint-maximus.pbf.rs/>). Future international collaboration projects in the Ukraine and in Bosnia-Herzegovina are being considered. Nationally, the OCSC collaborated with the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount for a conference entitled, “War and Peace: An Orthodox/Catholic Conversation” (March 2011) (http://bellarmine.lmu.edu/ecumenical/Past_Events/war-and-peace.htm).

It is a time of many firsts for Orthodox Christian Studies, but also a time when the Orthodox tradition will slowly regain its intellectual bearings. Fordham University’s OCSC will be the premier venue in which Orthodox intellectuals and those who study Orthodox Christianity (in all of its manifold forms) will meet in dialogue. Not only will the OCSC provide a space for national and international scholars to pursue their research, the Co-Directors of the OCSC at Fordham University (Drs. Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos) will lead the way in an interdisciplinary and theoretically-informed reevaluation of the Orthodox Christian traditions that breaks through current methodological and chronological divisions.

As an example of this, it is worth noting that Aristotle Papanikolaou has recently been awarded a Sabbatical Grant for Researchers from the Louisville Institute to explore how Eastern Christian notions of virtue are relevant for illuminating both the plight and healing of combat

veterans who experience trauma. Papanikolaou's project employs Michel Foucault's notion of truth-telling to scrutinize and elucidate the Orthodox Christian concept of virtue ethics. The end result of this research will be an innovative and constructive vision for understanding post-traumatic stress syndrome in combat veterans.

Similarly, with the help of a research fellowship provided by the Carpenter Foundation, George Demacopoulos has just completed a manuscript entitled *The Invention of Peter: The Development and Reception of a Petrine Discourse at the Close of Christian Antiquity*, which will be published in the *Divinations* series of the University of Pennsylvania Press. Demacopoulos' next project will be a reevaluation, via Postcolonial critique, of medieval encounters between Eastern and Western Christians in the era of the Crusades.

However, it is important to note that while Drs. Papanikolaou and Demacopoulos have secured external funding for their own research projects, they have done so under other disciplinary auspices and in spite of the fact that there currently does not exist any research funding that is explicitly dedicated to Orthodox Christian Studies. The primary goal of the OCSC at Fordham University is to make research funding available to scholars around the world who are engaged in a critical examination of Orthodox Christian culture, history, or thought.

ANTICIPATING THE IMPACT OF THE CHALLENGE GRANT ON ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES AT FORDHAM

Among the priorities set in Fordham's comprehensive campaign strategy, **EXCELSIOR | EVER UPWARD | THE CAMPAIGN FOR FORDHAM**, was the creation of an endowed chair in Orthodox Christian Studies that could become the foundation of future Orthodox Christian Studies initiatives. Almost immediately, the University secured a \$2,000,000 gift for such a chair in addition to a \$500,000 endowment for the *Patterson Triennial Conference*. With those major funding achievements in place, the University has now embarked upon an ambitious \$10,000,000

goal for a fully-funded Orthodox Christian Studies Center that will function primarily as a venue for advanced research in humanistic knowledge. Fordham University's current application to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a Challenge Grant of \$500,000 (reflecting a \$2m target endowment) represents the first-step in this \$10,000,000 campaign for Orthodox Christian Studies.

If awarded, an NEH Challenge Grant would provide critical assistance for the creation of two separate endowments that would enable annual research fellowships in any Humanities discipline related to Orthodox Christian Studies. Specifically, we project that a \$2m endowment (\$500K of which would be provided by NEH) would enable one faculty-in-residence research fellowship and one dissertation-completion fellowship, in addition to programming funds to further disseminate the findings of such scholarly activity at the Center.

Because there is currently no research funding designated for the explicit purpose of studying Orthodox Christianity, these awards will serve as the nucleus of Fordham University's commitment to vigorous and independent research in Orthodox Christian Studies. The near-term outcome of these annual awards will be the production of knowledge through the publication of books and dissertations related to Orthodox Christian Studies past and present. The long-term outcome of these awards will be the further dissemination of this research throughout the Humanities that will be made possible by the interdisciplinary, trans-geographical, and trans-historical nature of Orthodox Christian Studies. To ensure that these outcomes are accurately measured and achieved, the Orthodox Christian Studies Center (and this fellowships program specifically) will undergo periodic assessment audits in consultation with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Associate Dean for Strategic Initiatives, Partnerships and Assessment, and following the criteria required by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

In order to facilitate a transparent and equitable process for the awarding of these fellowships, the OCSC would disseminate a call for applications in the fall of each year. The calls (see Appendix #1 for a sample) will invite proposals from any humanistic disciplinary

perspective to investigate any aspect of Orthodox Christian Studies, past or present. Drawing on the resources of the OCSC Advisory Council and the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, a committee consisting of three to five scholars (including both Fordham and non-Fordham affiliated persons) would be assembled to evaluate the applications and select a recipient.⁶ The committee would announce the winner in the spring of each year and the awardee would spend the following academic year at Fordham.

One Faculty-in-Residence Research Fellowship (\$1.15m):

Funds generated by this endowment will make possible the annual awarding of a fellowship that enables a scholar (from either a US or an international institution) to spend a year of sabbatical research at Fordham University. The awardee would have the benefit of all existing University resources, including extensive library and database collections in the Humanities. During the year at Fordham, the fellowship holder would also have access to the wealth of Humanities resources in the greater New York City area, including the material collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Onassis Center, the New York Public Library, and the library holdings of other New York City universities, colleges, and seminaries (including St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary). Recipients would, of course, benefit from being part of a vibrant community of scholars (both faculty and doctoral students) engaged in various interdisciplinary Humanities-focused projects at Fordham. Fellowship winners would be asked to offer a public lecture of their research and would be invited to run occasional noncredit seminars for doctoral students. Book manuscripts produced during this year of research would be ideal for the *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought* series with Fordham University Press.

⁶ Appendix #2 explains the process by which the OCSC will identify a selection committee. Appendix #3 explains the criteria by which the committee will select a recipient.

One Dissertation-Completion Fellowship (\$700K):

Funds generated by this endowment will make possible the annual awarding of a fellowship that enables an advanced doctoral student (from either a US or an international institution) to spend the final year of research/writing of his/her dissertation at Fordham University without any teaching or service responsibilities. The awardee would have the benefit of all existing University resources, including extensive library and database collections in the Humanities. During the year at Fordham, the fellowship holder would also have access to the wealth of Humanities resources in the greater New York City area, including the material collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Onassis Center, the New York Public Library, and the library holdings of other New York City universities, colleges, and seminaries. Recipients would, of course, benefit from access to the large pool of faculty resources at Fordham University, not only those whose expertise lies in Orthodox Christian Studies but also those who work more broadly within the Humanities.

Programming Funds (\$150K):

Funds generated by this endowment (approximately \$6k per year) will extend, not replace, the resources currently committed by the University to the Orthodox Christian Studies Center. We anticipate an enhanced program of distinguished visitors and guest lectures. Additional programming funds will also make possible a wider dispersal of our current projects, such as the publication, in pamphlet form, of the annual *Orthodoxy in America Lecture*.

Our ultimate goal is to expand upon the elite status of Fordham University's Orthodox Christian Studies Center by making it the world-wide center of independent and vigorous research in Orthodox Christian Studies. Building on all of Fordham's past achievements and commitments to Orthodox Christian Studies, we view the current NEH Challenge Grant Application as a critical step forward in the realization of that goal.

FORDHAM'S PLAN FOR RAISING MATCHING FUNDS

1. Fordham Fundraising and Financial Stability

Fordham University is in the final phase of **EXCELSIOR | EVER UPWARD | THE CAMPAIGN FOR FORDHAM**, its largest and most successful capital campaign. As of March 7, 2012, \$430,112,000 has been raised toward a \$500,000,000 goal. Fordham's Board of Trustees has led the campaign with 100% participation and lead gifts to many key areas of the campaign, including Scholarships, Endowed Chairs, Annual Support, Academic Support, and Facilities including the largest gift in the University's history—a \$25 million gift from Mario Gabelli.

The University has a stable financial history and has maintained its fiscal integrity during the challenging 2008-2009 period when many institutions experienced some erosion in the value of their endowments due to the Wall Street collapse. Fordham's longstanding, effective, and prudent fiscal management, along with the success of **EXCELSIOR | EVER UPWARD | THE CAMPAIGN FOR FORDHAM**, provided a consistently strong position for the University. In fact, Fordham's most successful fundraising year was 2009 with \$70.8 million raised (see Appendix #4).

The early engagement of Grenzebach Glier Associates (GG+A), a leading international consultant to non-profit institutions and organizations of all sizes and the foremost authority on fundraising best practices, along with the commitment of Fordham's leadership and Board of Trustees has produced a plan to enhance Fordham's long-term fundraising efforts for all areas of the University. These efforts include enhancing Fordham's already substantial support for its constituent Institutes and Centers; among these, Fordham looks forward to building upon the successes of its long-term commitment to the interdisciplinary investigation of the Eastern Orthodox tradition through a "unique in the nation" Orthodox Christian Studies Center.

During this campaign period, the Office of Development and University Relations (DAUR) has been greatly strengthened by the recruitment of fundraising professionals with extensive experience. As a result, the OCSC has a highly experienced development director dedicated to the Center's fundraising efforts.

2. *Fundraising for Fordham University's Orthodox Christian Studies Center*

Valerie K. Longwood, Director of Development for Fordham University's Orthodox Christian Studies Center and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, has twenty years experience working in development for several of New York's premier cultural institutions, including the Metropolitan Opera Association and the New York Philharmonic. She has eleven years experience raising money for higher education and more than four years at Fordham University. She has served on development teams that have successfully secured NEH Challenge Grants and fulfilled the matching challenge requirement on time and within the NEH guidelines. She has successfully secured Kresge Foundation matching grants and matching challenges posed by individual philanthropists. Ms. Longwood is spearheading the fundraising team tasked with fulfilling the NEH challenge for Orthodox Studies and she is supported by robust prospect research, marketing, and communications teams.

Working closely with the development staff, the co-founding Directors of Fordham's OCSC have successfully secured major gifts for specific project support as well as built a solid foundation of annual donors making unrestricted, current use gifts. The major gifts include a \$2 million gift establishing the *Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture*. This donation came from the Jaharis Family Foundation, which provides grants to arts, cultural, and religious institutions. It is worth noting that the Jaharis Family had no ties to Fordham University prior to being engaged by the OCSC. Their generosity is indicative of the passion for Orthodox Christian Studies that exists outside of the Fordham family—a generosity that will enable the Center to be financially stable, with its own dedicated revenue stream.

A \$500,000 endowed fund supporting *The Solon and Marianna Patterson Triennial Conference for the Theological and Historical Examination of the Orthodox/Catholic Dialogue* was seeded with a \$300,000 matching challenge. The University more than fulfilled the commitment to

raise \$200,000 to meet the challenge requirement, and did so ahead of the mutually agreed schedule.

Among Fordham alumni and parents who are Orthodox Christians and who have confirmed their support of the Center's mission, the development prospect research team has identified 125 individuals who have the financial capacity to make a philanthropic gift of \$100,000 or more. We have specifically targeted forty individuals who we are in the process of soliciting to support the NEH Matching Challenge. We have identified twenty millionaires and five billionaires, all of whom are being systematically asked to include Fordham's OCSC in their philanthropy. We have also identified four foundations we feel would agree to review a proposal asking them to support the NEH Matching Challenge. Several current donors and major gift prospects have signaled that they are ready to increase their giving by making a 5- or 6-figure gift to support a specific project for Orthodox Studies. We believe that the added appeal of helping to fulfill a NEH Matching Challenge will inspire these individuals to increase their giving.

In the fall of 2011, the co-founding Directors of the Center established the Orthodox Christian Studies Advisory Council and recruited twelve members. We anticipate recruiting another six members before June 30, 2012 and six to ten members in academic year 2012-13. The requested minimum annual gift for an Advisory Council member is \$10,000 a year for three years, for a total gift of \$30,000. Some Council members have already given more than the requested \$30,000; the remaining members continue to give toward that commitment, with 100% participation across the Council. Furthermore, the composition of the Council's members illustrates the broad base of support for Orthodox Studies at Fordham. Eight members are Orthodox Christians; four are Roman Catholic. Several members are Fordham alumni; most are not. Two members are academics from other institutions, specifically Brown University and Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.

Looking further into the future, we have also established a "Junior" Advisory Council to help our young alumni to stay engaged with Center activities after graduation. The Junior Council

members tend to be the children of known philanthropists and we anticipate their philanthropy to continue and extend their parents' support. Members of the Junior Advisory Council are being groomed to lead the Council in the future.

As a final indication of the support for and importance of the OCSC at Fordham—not only for our University community, but the community of greater New York and our nation at large, which without Fordham would be unable to find such an institution or its unique offerings anywhere within its borders—the public lectures and programs in Orthodox Christian Studies that led to the founding of this Center have been among the best attended public programs ever offered at Fordham University. This quantifiably demonstrates the dedicated following the Center has actively nurtured with the full support of its home here at Fordham. The burgeoning Center's programs draw an audience of alumni from all of Fordham's ten schools and colleges as well as from other New York universities and from the Orthodox Christian and intellectual communities beyond Fordham's campus. This strong community engagement directly translates into financial support of the Center because Fordham University has developed the infrastructure necessary to transform the passionate engagement of the Center's audience and alumni into significant contributed charitable giving.

3. Conclusion

Fordham University is a well-organized, financially stable university with exceptional fundraising potential. It is fully prepared to match the \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant with \$1,500,000. We anticipate fulfilling the challenge well within the time frame by successfully closing gifts of \$100,000 to \$500,000 from individuals already engaged and supportive of Fordham's long-term commitment to Orthodox Studies who are looking to support a specific project. The NEH Matching Challenge will further springboard successful fundraising initiatives for the OCSC at Fordham University.