



CESS Elections 2019 – Candidate statements

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Candidates for President (one vacancy)

[Morgan LIU](#)

[Daniel Schafer](#)

Morgan LIU

Central Eurasian studies has the potential to speak more urgently to global issues in history and today, and to conceptual debates within academic disciplines. The region has always been a complex nexus of multiple kinds of interconnections, so understanding it can illuminate social, political, economic, environmental, bio-medical, linguistic, artistic, religious, and cultural phenomena on wider scales. I have seen CESS as a crucial institution in promoting a broad vision of Central Eurasian studies, where different disciplinary perspectives substantively engage each other to make fuller sense of the region's issues, and where knowledge of this region also speaks to problems beyond it. I would like to further these goals by serving as its President. Here is some relevant experience:

2014-2017: CESS Board Member

2013, 2017-18: Interim Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Cultures, The Ohio State University

2014: CESS Book Award for best monograph in the social sciences in 2012-2013, for *Under Solomon's Throne*.

2008: Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Grant, for total of 6 months of fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan, 2009

2002-06: Junior Fellow, Society of Fellows, Harvard University.

2016-present: Writer on religion & world affairs for The Huffington Post.

2013-present: Advisory Group, Global Centre for Pluralism, Ottawa, Canada.

2012-present: Associate Professor, Anthropology & NELC, The Ohio State University, teaching on culture theory, Islam, Central Asia, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East

Some key publications:

2018: "Governance and accumulation around the Caspian: a new analytic approach to petroleum-fueled postsocialist development." *Ab Imperio* 2018(2):169-98.

2017: "Uzbek political thinking in the third decade of independence", in *Constructing the Uzbek State: Narratives of Post-Soviet Years*, Marlene Laruelle (ed.), pp. 69-83, Lexington Books.

2014: "Massacre through a kaleidoscope: fragmented moral imaginaries of the state in Central Asia." Pp. 261-284 in *Ethnographies of the state in Central Asia: performing politics*, edited by Madeleine Reeves, Johan Rasanayagam, and Judith Beyer. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

2012: *Under Solomon's Throne: Uzbek Visions of Renewal in Osh*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press.

2011: "Central Asia in the Post-Cold War World", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40:115-131.

I am starting a new project on the networks of Uzbek business elites in post-Karimov Uzbekistan, as they connect with corporate and governmental elites and institutions across Central Asia, Russia, China, Turkey, the European Union, and the United States.

Daniel SCHAFER

I am a Professor of History at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. I have been involved in Central Eurasian studies for three decades, with a research focus on the political and cultural history of Tatars and Bashkirs in the late Russian Empire and early Soviet Union. My dissertation described the circumstances leading to the formation of the Tatarstan and Bashkortostan republics during the Russian civil war, when the improvised Soviet policy on non-Russian peoples had to grapple with the complex ethnic situation of the Volga-Ural region. I have published articles in *Central Asian Survey*, the *Journal of Central Asian Studies*, the *Armenian Review*, and *Vatandash* (Ufa). My recent work considers the history of the Tatar literary language as it relates to national identity issues. My book chapters include "Reforming the Language of Our Nation: Dictionaries, Identity, and the Tatar Lexical Revolution, 1900-1970," in *Empire and Belonging in the Eurasian Borderlands* (Siegelbaum and Goff, eds., Cornell, 2019), and "Bashkir Loyalists and the Question of Autonomy: Gabdulkhair Kurbangaliev in the Russian Revolution and Civil War," in *Russia's Home Front in War and Revolution, 1914-1922: Book 1* (Badcock, Novikova, and Retish, eds., Slavica, 2016). My current project is the compilation of a historical Tatar-English dictionary that will include both Cyrillic and Arabic spellings as well as words that were removed from the written lexicon during language reforms of the twentieth century.

At my university I have extensive administrative experience as department chair, faculty senator, director of the First-Year Seminar program and editor of the FYS anthology, director of short-term study abroad programs in Turkey and Morocco, and support faculty for programs in Norway, Eastern Europe, and China. I teach courses on imperial and post-1917 Russia and initiated my school's first survey of Central Asia, a survey of the modern Middle East, and a seminar on Islamic social and religious thought. I also cover the historical methodology and historiography course and have been an active teacher in our university's general education program. My colleagues know me as a detail person who takes notes at every gathering and likes nothing better than a well-run and productive meeting.

I have participated in CESS activities since the fourth CESS conference in 2004 and have presented papers or chaired panels several times since then. In 2007-2008 I was co-editor with Pinar Akçali of the Conference and Lecture Series section of the *Central Eurasian Studies Review*, published by CESS in 2002-2009. Since last year I serve as chair of the CESS Graduate Student Paper Award committee. I am honored to be nominated to run for the position of president of CESS. I love the way that CESS brings together a truly international community of scholars, fosters cross-cultural learning and cooperation, and works to protect and empower scholars, activists, and other individuals throughout the diverse regions of Central Eurasia. If elected I look forward to working with Marlene Laruelle, Ali İğmen, and the rest of the board to strengthen the CESS and its vision of transnational learning and cooperation.

Candidates for Board members (two vacancies)

[Artemy KALINOVSKY](#)

[Ablet KAMALOV](#)

[Regine SPECTOR](#)

[Mohira SUYARKULOVA](#)

Artemy KALINOVSKY

I am honored to be considered for the CESS board. I originally trained as a historian of the Cold War and international history, but my PhD work on the [Soviet war in Afghanistan](#) drew me to Central Asia. Since then, CESS has helped me develop expertise in a region I originally knew little about, and I am grateful for the opportunities it gives to learn about new work being produced within the region itself and around the world. I couldn't imagine completing my [recent book](#) without the intellectual stimulation and support I received over the years through CESS.

I have also been trying to make sources on Soviet Central Asia available to a wider audience. Last year I published a dossier of translated documents on [Central Asia and the Global Cold War](#) for the Cold War International History Project, and, together with Isaac Scarborough, am working on a project with the Central Asia Program and the site Islamicperspectives to digitize memoirs on the Soviet period.

If elected to the board, I would particularly welcome the opportunity to further strengthen ties between CESS and scholars in Central Asia, and to help young scholars establish themselves in the field.

Ablet KAMALOV

I am a historian working primarily on the cultural and intellectual history of the Uyghurs of Central Asia and Xinjiang. I earned my PhD degree from the Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg and a Doctor of Science degree from the Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty. My recent works discuss the transformation of social institution of Uyghur male gatherings in Central Asia.

I am currently a Professor of History at Turan University in Almaty, where I teach courses on history and international relations. I also lead research projects on ethnic minorities. One of these is a project on the preservation of Uyghur cultural heritage in Kazakhstan, which we are implementing in collaboration with SOAS, University of London.

I have extended experience in developing projects for enhancing academic and teaching excellence of young researchers and university teachers of Central Asia. As Academic Leader in History at the Educational Center "Bilim-Central Asia", for many years I coordinated programs for Central Asian scholars (ReSET, CARTI etc). I have previously held the position of visiting scholar at the University of Washington, the University of Oxford, the Library of Congress, Indiana University, and Maison des Science de l'Homme. I also served as an international expert of the European Commission, Volkswagen Stiftung, Radio Free Asia, and Open Society Foundations.

I have been a CESS member since 2002; I served on the Executive Board in 2003–2006 and was a candidate for CESS President in 2013. Presently, I am a Board Member of the European Society for Central Asian Studies (ESCAS), and in this capacity I contributed to organizing the 16th ESCAS Conference at the University of Exeter, UK. I believe that my ESCAS Board Membership will be a plus for coordination of links between CESS and ESCAS, especially given that CESS is committed to holding its Regional Conferences jointly with the ESCAS Conference.

Regine SPECTOR

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to run for election to the CESS board. I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at UMass Amherst. I have sought to better understand the creative, contentious, and politically fraught processes related to trade, apparel production, and property ownership in contemporary Central Asia. My first book, *Order at the Bazaar: Power and Trade in Central Asia* (Cornell 2017) won two honourable mention awards (ASEEES and ISA). Other research has appeared in a range of disciplinary and area studies journals. My newer research projects on hydropower and water issues in Eurasia are in dialogue with scholarship in environmental sciences, social sciences, and humanities. I have regularly taught an undergraduate Central Asian politics course at UMass Amherst, and am an active faculty affiliate of the interdisciplinary Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies Program at UMass Amherst, which seeks to promote undergraduate study, language, research and travel in Eurasia.

I am dedicated to building community and fostering dialogue and collaboration in a variety of different ways. In the past I have published with co-authors, worked with colleagues to organize panels at ASN and APSA, and collaborated with committee members at CESS on the public outreach award committee and the best graduate student paper committee. If elected to the CESS board, I would like to first be attuned to and learn from existing board members as well as the general membership about what needs and visions are most pressing for the organization. I would also like to promote avenues for global, multidisciplinary research and public outreach collaborations and information sharing; support annual conference organization and planning; and find other ways to help to ensure that CESS continues to thrive.

Mohira SUYARKULOVA

I am currently an Associate Professor in the Sociology Department, American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. After completing my PhD in International Relations at St Andrews University (UK) in 2011 I have held teaching and research positions in Europe and Kyrgyzstan. I am a member of the editorial board of *Central Asian Survey* journal. My research interests have evolved from the politics of nationalism in Central Asia to include environmental politics, gender and sexuality.

In my research I seek to not only satisfy my scholarly curiosity but to make the results accessible and usable to people in the region. Since 2015 I am co-leading a multi-site transdisciplinary research project on the 'social life' of the Syrdarya river. This summer we launched an exhibition based on the results of our research. Additionally, we commissioned and published a children's book "Tanais and Tal" to accompany the exhibition. I believe that the social and political relevance of scholarship on Central Asia is advanced by such efforts to reach out to the communities we study.

I am also engaged in feminist, LGBTQ+ and leftist activism. Last year I led a participatory action study of sexual lives of queer people in Bishkek, the end goal of which is to create a queer feminist sex education curriculum. This year I started teaching queer sex ed classes based on our study at Labrys's community center. I am in the process of writing a book based on this research.

In my work within CESS I would like to contribute to greater engagement of scholars from the region and to the recognition of work that is being done outside of the academic institutional frameworks to advance the understanding of Central Asia at the service of social justice causes.