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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly History Professor Named Cambridge Visiting Research Fellow

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Cal Poly History Professor Matthew Hopper has been awarded the 2015-16 Smuts Visiting Research Fellowship in Commonwealth Studies at the University of Cambridge in England.

Hopper will travel to Cambridge in January 2016 and spend nine months writing and researching material for his new book project, "Liberated Africans in the Indian Ocean World." He will be based in Wolfson College and affiliated with the Centre of African Studies.

Selected as the fellow from a pool of applicants from all over the world, Hopper's success is a testament to the quality and level of his work.

"Receiving this fellowship is an extraordinary honor," Hopper said. "I've had wonderful support from my recommenders, advisors and colleagues, as well as from my college, department and students at Cal Poly, and my family. I hope to make them all proud."

The fellowship will provide Hopper with access to leading scholars and critical archival materials necessary to complete his book, which explores the history of 10,000 enslaved Africans who were captured at sea by the British Royal Navy in the western Indian Ocean between 1858 and 1888. Many of the enslaved Africans were transported to one of seven locations within the British Empire in the Indian Ocean.

The narrative will hone in on the lives of liberated slaves at each location, with one chapter of the book devoted to each area. Each narrative will begin with the ship's capture and will follow the captives through their release in an effort to track a more comprehensive history of liberated Africans.

Hopper has been a professor in the Cal Poly History Department since 2006. He earned a doctorate in history and a master's in African studies from UCLA, and a master's in history from Temple University.

Links

- Smuts Visiting Research Fellowship: <http://www.ist.admin.cam.ac.uk/smuts-memorial-fund>
- History Department: <http://history.calpoly.edu>
- College of Liberal Arts: <http://www.cla.calpoly.edu>

About the Cal Poly History Department

Students in Cal Poly's History Department acquire multiple perspectives on the complexity and diversity of the past and present while developing effective methods of research. Students learn historian methodologies — the ability to gather, synthesize, analyze and interpret evidence and present conclusions in a lucid and logical manner. These skills are put into practice with the student-produced and award-winning historical journal, The Forum, and are preparation for a variety of professions.

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