

**FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUNDS**

Nathan Deutsch Development Fund

**Award Date:** Spring 2016

**Proposal Title:** Engineering and Biography in Mexican History

**Principal Investigator:** Justin Castro

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Department:** History

## **Engineering and Biography in Mexican History**

This award will allow me to participate in the Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies Conference in Santa Fe, NM. Specifically, I will chair a panel titled "State Building on the Margins in 19th Century Mexico," chair, present, and comment on another panel titled "Engineering Modern Mexico," and participate in a professional round-table discussion titled "Claiming a Place for Biography in Latin America." My presentations will focus on my current book project on Modesto C. Rolland, a little known but important figure in the Mexican Revolution and twentieth-century engineering. I will be discussing the current renewed interest in biography in Latin American history, how to use biography to examine larger historical processes, and the need to better understand the role of engineers who came out of the Mexican Revolution in order to examine the successes and failures of sustainable development in Mexico. I will also be arguing that the Mexican Revolution, through figures including Rolland, needs to be connected to the global progressive movement occurring in the English-Speaking world. Participating in this conference will allow me to receive crucial feedback on the Rolland project, which is now under contract with the University of Nebraska Press. It will allow me to advertise this forthcoming book and my book *Radio in Revolution*, which will come out on the University of Nebraska Press in July 2016. Lastly, my participation will bring attention to the increasingly impressive level of scholarship coming out of Arkansas State University's History Department.