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The Presidential Undergraduate Prize (Best Undergraduate Essay on a Comparative Topic)

Committee:

- Chair: Corinne Scheiner (Colorado College), Term: 2023-2026
- Rodrigo Martini (University of Georgia), Term: 2024-2027
- Raj Chetty (St. John's University), Term: 2025-2028

Winner: “Between China and Chile: Transpacific Cultural Diplomacy and Poetic Collaboration in the 1960s.” by Diana Deng

With “Between China and Chile: Transpacific Cultural Diplomacy and Poetic Collaboration in the 1960s,” Diana Deng has written an excellent comparative work across languages and regions. She masterfully situates her primary texts—both originals and translations—within their various literary, political, and historical contexts, demonstrating impressive archival research and robust and thorough use of paratextual and secondary sources. She advances a sophisticated analysis of the “failed promise of translatability initiated as a gesture of goodwill but caught in the inexorable a synchronicity between China and Chile” during the Cold War, displaying deep and mature engagement with critical and theoretical texts as well as providing compelling close readings. Finally, the topic of China’s influence in South America is extremely timely, and Deng effectively shows the relevance of these works published over half a century ago and of the complicated narrative of that publication.