**PROPOSAL TO LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS**  
**UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON INTERNAL GRANTS**  
**Faculty Research Grant Proposal**

Name: Rian Thum  
College/Department: HUNS / History

Rank: Assistant Professor  
Chair/Professorship: N/A

Date Submitted: 7 Nov 2012

Start Date: June 2013  
Completion Date: July 3, 2013

Title of Project: Uyghur Islam: Text and Practice

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**Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Supplies (itemize below)</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Printing &amp; Copying</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Journal Page Charge</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Travel (itemize below)</td>
<td>$3516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Per Diem (itemize below)</td>
<td>$1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other Costs (itemize below)</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4716</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Budget Justification:**  
*(Please do not attach other budget pages.)*

**Travel**

Flight (round trip New Orleans – Beijing – Urumqi – Kashgar: 1830 + 430 + 210) = 2470

Airport Taxi, round trip (New Orleans, Beijing, Urumqi, Kashgar: 80+30+20+16) = 146

Hotel (average $30 per night x 30 nights) = 900

Total: 3516

**Per diem**

Per diem ($40 x 30 days) = 1200

Per diem includes local transportation and meals.

The official US State Department per diem rate for Beijing is $119 and for Urumqi $79. I’ve used my own, lower estimate of $40, based on my experience travelling in China.

If the full amount requested in this application cannot be awarded, I am willing to use my own personal funds to make up the difference. This research is essential to my work.
Where would the results be published, exhibited or performed?
The results will form the basis of my second book, which will be published with a university press. Harvard University Press will probably have right of first refusal based on the contract for my first book, which is under review now. Cornell University Press also expressed interest in my previous book on the Uyghurs, so it's possible that I would send the next book to them, depending on my experience with Harvard University Press in publishing my first book.

What other sources of funding (internal and external) have you identified for this project?
none

If you have received any prior Loyola University grant funding within the past three years, please list the years and amounts. For each award, specify whether a final report was submitted. If any documents are outstanding, please explain why and specify whether a formal extension was granted
2010-11 Marquette: $7500; report submitted
2011-12 faculty research grant: $3482; report submitted

Does your research involve human subjects? _X_ Yes _____ No. If yes, funding for this project is contingent on receiving IRB approval. If you have IRB approval prior to submitting your proposal, please attach the approval memo to your application. If you do not have IRB approval at the time of your submission, please complete the IRB protocol as soon as possible after your proposal submission.

Narrative Description of Project (use no more than one additional page and please write for a general academic audience): see attached page
OVERVIEW: I am applying for a faculty research grant to support the first round of field and archival research for my second book project, *Uyghur Islam*. The book will be a comprehensive survey of Islam as it has been practiced among the Uyghurs, a group of 10 million Turkic-speaking Muslims in Western China. The Uyghurs have become increasingly enmeshed in global politics through their resistance to Chinese rule and through the imprisonment of several Uyghurs in the U.S. facility at Guantanamo Bay, a convergence that renders their local form of Islam of utmost significance to political actors today. There has been no book-length study of Uyghur Islam, and the few published chapter-length surveys suffer from serious errors of omission. A detailed and accurate survey of Uyghur Islam is in great need, not least because the Chinese government prosecutes its own war on terrorism, in part with aid from the US, based on deep misunderstandings of Islam among the Uyghurs. The Chinese mischaracterization of local Uyghur forms of Islam has been abetted by ignorance of Uyghur Islam in the West, and has led to draconian restrictions on Uyghur cultural and religious practices. While my project is in too early a stage to seek a publisher, the previous reactions to my work on the Uyghurs suggest that publication will be easy to achieve. The rising prominence of the Uyghurs and the shortage of quality research concerning their culture led to interest in my first book from several university presses, and a modified chapter from that book was published in the most selective journal in my field, *The Journal of Asian Studies*. The terms of publication of my first book, the full manuscript of which is under peer review at Harvard University Press, grant that press the right of first refusal for my next book, so I expect to submit *Uyghur Islam* to them first. In any case, once the book is completed, it is extremely likely that this project will result in publication with a major university press, as several presses have shown great interest in all work on the Uyghurs.

THE ROLE OF THIS BOOK: The few modern treatments of Uyghur Islam have been very brief and have suffered from two important weaknesses. First, they have tended to assume that, because Uyghurs practice a form of Sunni Islam, that their practices generally follow the contours of Sunni Islam in the Middle East. My fieldwork has already shown this assumption to be quite untrue. For example, the activities of the healers called *duakhon*, the use of a particular stone for rain-making, and Uyghur shrine practices are quite unlike the Sunni Islam of the Middle East. These phenomena were all omitted from the standard summary of Uyghur Islam, which was based on insufficient ethnographic fieldwork. The only scholar who has included these practices in her short analysis of Uyghur Islam omitted something equally important. She did not consult any of the major indigenous sacred and instructional texts of Uyghur Islam. In fact, amazingly, no one has engaged in any study of these texts since the late 1800s. By combining the results of extensive field research with reading of the important primary texts, I aim to produce the first reliable and accurate survey of the Uyghurs’ very extraordinary expression of Islam.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: Research will consist of preliminary ethnographic fieldwork and archival work in Urumqi, Kashgar, and Khotan. I have already done extensive fieldwork on shrine veneration among the Uyghurs for other projects, but I also need to observe some religious practices that I have not previously focused on. Some of these are quite ordinary and easily accessible, such as the daily prayers in mosques, while others, such as the officially forbidden activities of *duakhon* healers, will require me to tap my network of contacts to develop new informants. I will also use the trip to access key religious texts that are unavailable outside of China and have been completely ignored by modern scholars. These include modern manuscripts and underground publications in print, both of which are only found in the informal book trade that flourishes in the bazaars of Kashgar and Khotan. In Urumqi, I will access older manuscripts in the archives of the Xinjiang University Museum and the Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences library, both of which I have used before. Together these sources will provide me with texts unique to Uyghur and Central Asian Islam, such as books of auspicious dates, primers for local religious schools, and locally authored histories of Islam. The fieldwork and archival work I propose will fill in the gaps in my knowledge of Uyghur Islam, and, combined with data from my previous research, help me to develop a broad but detailed picture of Islam among the Uyghurs for my second book.