



Department of Political Science Newsletter

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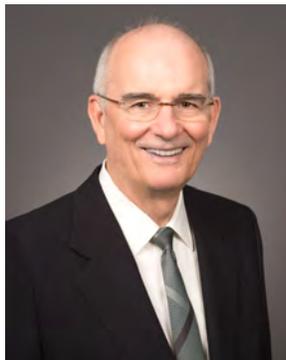
A Note from the Chair

Every academic year has a rhythm. Summer is a time when most undergraduate students vacate campus and work in jobs or internships. Routines continue, though, as the university prepares for the next incoming class. Orientation programs, that is, Colonial Inauguration, occur as waves of new students and their families come to campus. Class schedules are finalized, book orders are placed, and syllabi are prepared. The university’s work as a center of scholarship, though, really takes center stage. Faculty and grad students devote most of the summer to their research agenda. Grad students and faculty conduct field work in far away locations. Others bury themselves in archives to examine documents. Still others analyze survey data or voting data. Faculty turn their full-time attention to building our understanding of social and political events. Yet, this is occurring under the surface of the more subdued campus.



This edition of the newsletter features articles on the awards and recognition earned by our scholarly faculty, our engagement in university life, our students who are making an impact, and alumni who have left campus to accomplish great things. We also highlight the 2015 edition of commencement. Congratulations to our newest alumni!

- Paul Wahlbeck, Department Chair



Williams Wins GW Alumni Award

Gregory Williams has been named a recipient of GW’s Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award. Williams holds multiple degrees from the university, including an M.Phil. (’77) and Ph.D. (’82) in Political Science and a law degree (’71). He worked with John Morgan during his graduate career at GW, writing a dissertation on “Legal and Political Problems of Police Discretion.” Williams overcame racial and economic obstacles in his childhood, chronicled in his 1995 best-selling autobiography, *Life on the Color Line*, for which he received the Los Angeles Times Prize for Book of the Year. He has been recognized for his many

contributions in scholarship, academic leadership, fundraising, diversity, and college athletics.

Williams has held leadership positions in law and academia throughout his career. In 1977, Williams joined the University of Iowa Law Faculty as an assistant dean, rising to associate vice president of academic affairs of the university. He later served as dean of the Ohio State University College of Law and as president of the Association of American Law Schools. He received the Judge A. Leon Higginbotham Award from the National Bar Association, and “Dean of the Year” Award from the National Association of Public Interest Law. Williams later served as president of The City College of New York and president of the University of Cincinnati.

Williams will be recognized at a ceremony during Alumni Weekend.

Faculty Recognition**Professor Sarah Binder Elected to American Academy of Arts & Sciences**

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences announced that it has elected **Sarah Binder** as one of 197 new members of its honorary society.

Binder, who has been on the political science faculty since 1999, joins a group of inductees who include Nobel Prize-winner Brian Kobilka, Tony Award-winner Audra McDonald and novelist Tom Wolfe.

She is an expert on Congress and legislative politics and has received several awards for her work on government affairs. Her 2003 book, *Stalemate: Causes and Consequences of Legislative Gridlock*, received the 2004 Richard F. Fenno, Jr. Prize, given to theoretically and empirically strong writing published on legislative studies.

“I was both surprised and thrilled to hear about my election. I’m grateful to my department colleagues at GW for creating such a supportive and fun place to grow as a political scientist,” Binder said.

Since 1780, the American Academy has been a leading center for independent policy research and among the country’s most prestigious honorary societies. It has elected the world’s most highly regarded scholars and thinkers from each generation into its ranks—the university’s namesake George Washington was elected in the 18th century.



Binder joins **Martha Finnemore** as department faculty who are members of this prestigious organization. Finnemore responded, “Professor Binder’s selection as member of the Academy is a well-deserved recognition of her outstanding scholarship and stature in the field. I am delighted to welcome her as an Academy fellow.”

Department chair Paul Wahlbeck exclaimed, “Sarah is a world-class scholar, and this recognition reflects the regard in which Sarah and GW faculty are held in the discipline.”

- *GW Today* contributed to this story

Faculty Honored**Award Winning Scholarship**

Several faculty received recognition for their scholarship this year. **Nathan Brown** won GW’s Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg prize for scholarship. It is presented to honor outstanding research accomplishment. Professor Brown, who studies Middle East politics, commented on his scholarship, that he finds satisfaction “when I’m doing research in the field, talking to sorts of people that I would never talk with in the states, like preachers and tele-evangelists, and trying to find ways to understand the world as they see it and then trying to translate that to make their world views more accessible.”

Alexander Downes was named the first ever winner of the Emerging Scholar Award from the International Security Studies Section of the International Studies Association. The award recognizes scholars under the age of 45 or within 15 years of receiving their Ph.D. who have made significant contributions to the field of security studies. Professor Downes has broad interests in the study of international security, including why states target civilians in wartime and whether doing so helps them achieve their objectives. Downes responded to news of the award: “It is an unbelievable honor to be named the recipient of the first Emerging Scholar Award by ISA’s International Security Studies Section. I am grateful to the selection committee for recognizing my work in this fashion.”

Eric Grynaviski won the 2015 Jervis-Schroeder Best Book Prize, which is awarded by the American Political Science Association’s International History and Politics section. His book, *Constructive Illusions: Misperceiving the Origins of International Cooperation* (Cornell University Press), explores the role of mutual understandings in international cooperation. Grynaviski reacted to the award, saying “I was thrilled to win such an important award, and credit my colleagues, Colombian College, and my students for their support in writing the book.” This recognition of his research highlights the contribution that he has made.



Nathan Brown

Engaged Students

Student Earns MSNBC's College 'Women-in-Politics' Honor

Victoria Gonçalves '17 has followed her political passions through every destination in her life—from her birthplace in Caracas, Venezuela, to her hometown of Miami, Florida, to GW's Washington, D.C., campus. Championing causes like immigration reform and gender equality, the political science rising junior has eagerly assumed the mantle of student government leader and proud advocate for Latino Americans. And her next stop may well be Capitol Hill.

Her dream job is to be a congresswoman, she said, and to use her voice in politics to make a difference in people's lives.

She's off to a good start. Gonçalves has a well-earned reputation as a campus crusader who gets results. And now she has been recognized as one of MSNBC's "Women in Politics: College Edition," a web-based series that highlights promising women leaders in student government on campuses across the country. Throughout 2014, MSNBC editors and political commentators identified future movers-and-shakers from female college activists, highlighting their accomplishments and soliciting their voices for online discussions of female candidates and women's issues on a national level.

"I'm really excited about corresponding with the other women who have been chosen and talking to them about the issues they are working on at their colleges," she said. "I'd like to compare notes on how we are all trying to enact change."

Gonçalves is making a difference on campus — both as a senator on the Student Association and an executive board member with



the GW chapter of the Organization of Latino American Students (OLAS). She sponsored a Student Association bill to create a student-run peer support hotline for young people who are hesitant to approach counselors or professionals with a problem. She is working with the OLAS to start a Latino student mentorship program. During GW's Latino Heritage Celebration in October, Gonçalves organized a panel discussion on the Latino vote in the 2014 elections, bringing College Democrats and College Republicans together for a bi-partisan debate.

"It's easy to get students to sit together and identify a problem, but the tough part is coming up with real solutions," she said. "A big challenge that I've faced has been turning great conversations about challenges that students are having into real actions."

"My GW courses have also inspired me to continue fighting for social justice," she said, mentioning Associate Professor of Political Science **Ismail White's** class on African American Politics.

- John DiConsiglio, *GW Today*

Faculty Participate in GW Admissions Events

Recruitment of undergraduate students is a major undertaking. GW, like most universities, has an admissions staff that visits high schools and attends college admissions events all over the country. This past year, their work resulted in nearly 20,000 applications. The university hosted more than 6,000 admitted students at five Admitted Student Days, which are now called "Inside GW."

Several political science faculty, including **Danny Hayes** (pictured at right), participated at InsideGW events. Hayes, **Alexander Downes**, and **Stephen Biddle** gave mock lectures to admitted students this spring. Although Touran Waters, director of undergraduate admissions communication, told the students "we have some computers set up in the lobby where you'll all be taking a test" after the lecture, these lectures simply showcased some of GW's outstanding faculty.



Danny Hayes giving a lecture at Inside GW

Celebrating Commencement

Congratulations, 2015 Graduates!

Graduation is a time for celebration. On May 16th, we honored our students at the annual Political Science Commencement reception. We also had the opportunity to hear **Corrine McConaughy** as the faculty speaker at the Columbian College Celebration that followed our reception.

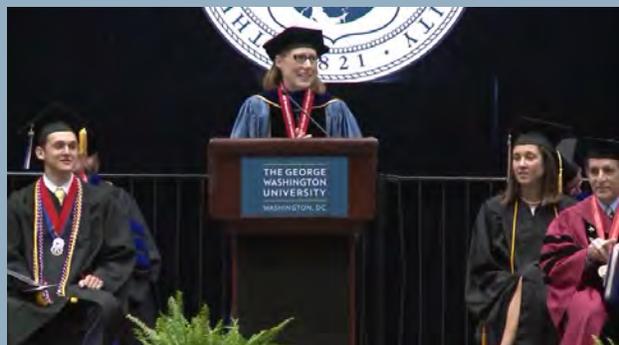
Nine students were recognized as recipients of department prizes. **Sameer Aggarwal**, **Sean O'Connell**, and **Benjamin Woolf** received the John A. Morgan Prize, which honors the top graduating seniors who plan to study law. The Joshua Evans III Prize, given to graduating seniors who have demonstrated ability in the social and political sciences, was awarded to **Jacob Emont**, **Nicolas Gumas**, **Morgan Smith**, **Jacqueline Sodano**, **Charles Sucher**, and **Christopher Walling**. The Howard C. Sacks prize, which is given to a student in the study of Far Eastern affairs, went to **Kristoffer Rhodes**.

Thirty-one members of the class of 2015 are members of the National Political Science Honor Society, Pi Sigma Alpha. These

members were honored at the annual ceremony on April 23rd. Pi Sigma Alpha is the only honor society for college students of political science and government in the United States and has over 730 chapters around the country.

Our graduating seniors are going on to pursue many exciting opportunities. Several students report plans to continue their education, with many having received prestigious scholarships and fellowships. Some students will pursue graduate degrees at universities such as Vanderbilt University, the University of Chicago, and Duke University, while others are continuing their education here at GW. Other students reported that they are going on to study law at schools such as UCLA, Emory University, Boston University, and Case Western Reserve.

Many of our graduates will be entering the workforce. Future employers include the federal government, Boeing, KPMG, IBM, and many others. Congratulations to all our graduates and best of luck in all your future endeavors!



Alumni Connections

Jeremy Gosbee Selected as New GW Alumni Association President

Jeremy Gosbee, B.A. '98, M.B.A. '02, recently succeeded fellow Political Science alumnus, **Steve Frenkil**, B.A. '74, as president of the GW Alumni Association. Gosbee discussed his goals for the future of the GW alumni community.

Q: What does this appointment mean to you?

A: It's very meaningful to me. I'm very happy to serve an organization where the primary mission is to support the place that has given so much to me both personally and professionally. It's with tremendous gratitude that I accept this nomination of my peers to take this organization into its next phase.

Q: GWAA President Steve Frenkil has placed an emphasis on the idea of "Colonials helping Colonials." What does that phrase mean to you?

A: I applaud Steve for raising that idea as a core value of our association. It's something we've always believed but never said explicitly until his presidency. We should never lose an opportunity to reinforce the responsibility that we, as alumni, have to each other. There are a lot of us, and we're in a huge world with a lot of people facing challenges in their lives. And knowing they have peers they can count on is tremendously valuable for people.

Q: What's your favorite GW memory?

A: That's a really tough choice. I have quite a few, but I think the moment at my undergraduate commencement when President [Stephen] Trachtenberg stood up and said, "I hereby confer your degree," was one of the most memorable. Sitting on the Ellipse with thousands of other graduates and realizing that I'd accomplished so much because of GW was a very powerful feeling, and one I hope to share with other alumni for the rest of



my life.

Q: What are some specific alumni goals you are most passionate about?

A: I really want to strengthen our role as ambassadors for the GW alumni community. That means ensuring we're the voice of alumni and helping GW see us as a resource. One thing we hear often from people who are engaged is they got engaged because somebody asked them. I want to make sure we're never stepping away from that person-to-person interaction. I'm intending to engage the board in a program that involves everyone reaching out to alumni directly, asking them to attend an event, get involved in an activity and volunteer.

Q: What are some long-term projects you'd like to begin or enhance during your tenure as president-elect and president?

A: We'll also see a lot of emphasis on how we continue to engage with alumni who haven't been involved in activities in the past. I think the question of how to engage with "non-traditional" students who may not have stayed all four years on the Foggy Bottom Campus is a challenge we'll want to address. We want them to feel like part of the GW family as much as everyone else.

-James Irwin, *GW Today*

Donations Support Department's Educational Mission

You may notice the page in each newsletter that thanks donors for their generous support. These gifts play an important role in supporting many exciting activities advancing the department's educational and scholarly mission.

Some of these funds are spent directly on our undergraduate program. We host events like the graduation reception and this year's politics in film night. Harvey Feigenbaum hosted a movie and pizza night. Students watched *Three Kings*, a movie about the first Gulf War, followed by a discussion led by Professor Feigenbaum. We also employ undergraduates to assist faculty with their research projects. These students worked on data collection from original Supreme Court documents, presidential speeches, and Indian newspapers.

The department provides small research grants to graduate students. These funds have been used to pilot survey studies and

support field work. One example comes from a project by **Jackie Schneider** and **Julia Macdonald**. They explored the preferences for unmanned aerial vehicles held by military personnel with combat experience in Iraq or Afghanistan. The funds were used to support interviews conducted at Army, Air Force, and Marine bases. The funded projects have led to publications and dissertation improvement grants from the National Science Foundation.

Donations also enable faculty scholarship. One unique activity from the most recent academic year was a conference hosted by the department. The American Political Science Association held its 2014 annual meeting in Washington. In the days preceding the meeting, we hosted a workshop with four panels of nationally known scholars who presented research on authoritarianism and democratization; reforms, institutions, and violence; innovations in international relations; and the strategic logic of diaspora management. It was a great opportunity to highlight our faculty scholarship.

ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

Christina Shelton, B.A. '71, M.A. '72 published *Alger Hiss: Why He Chose Treason*, which was published by Simon and Schuster.

Vicki Anderson Higman, B.A. '73 is Associate General Counsel for Claims Management at United Educator and will celebrate her 15th anniversary there.

Phil Matthews, B.A. '74 is partner at Duane Morris LLP handling complex insurance disputes and loving San Francisco.

Robert Lockwood, B.A. '76 published his eighth novel: *Jacob's Legacy*, a saga about three generations of a New York City family searching for the rightful owners of Nazi-looted art recovered by Lt Col Jacob Rosenthal.

Peter Zahn, B.A. '79 is a member of the City Council in Solana Beach, California.

Debbie Klugler Irwin, B.A. '81 is a Municipal Court Judge in the City of Passaic, New Jersey.

Ken Winneg, B.A. '82 article "Stephen Colbert's Civics Lesson: How Colbert Super PAC Taught Viewers About Campaign Finance" won the 2014 best article of the year in the journal *Mass Communication & Society*.

Veronica Rice, B.A. '87 earned a Master's of Public Administration from Capella University.

Chris Crowley, B.A. '90 was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve JAG Corps and works as a civil litigator in Fort Myers, Florida.

Jeremy Gosbee, B.A. '98, M.B.A. '02 began service as president of The George Washington Alumni Association in June.

Matt Hoffmann, Ph.D. '01 was promoted to full professor at the University of Toronto and is working on a new book from Cambridge University Press entitled *Transnational Climate Change Governance*.

Jason B. Blank B.A. '02 was elected to the Executive Council of the Criminal Law Section of the Florida Bar.

Ken Halla Ph.D. '09 published his first book, *Deeper Learning Through Technology: Using the Cloud to Individualize Learning*.

Steven Rogers B.A. '07 received the American Political Science Association's William Anderson Award for the best dissertation in the field of federalism or intergovernmental relations, state and local politics and was co-recipient of the APSA State Politics & Policy Section's Christopher Mooney Dissertation Award.

Chelsea St. Onge-May, B.A. '11 received the Joint Service Achievement Medal for meritorious service during a deployment to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Ryan Last, B.A. '11 graduated from New York Law School in May 2015.

Alex Yudelson, B.A. '14 was hired recently by the White House Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Check out the Department's Alumni webpage for more News & Notes: <http://politicalscience.columbian.gwu.edu/class-notes>

Have news to share? Send us a sentence or two telling us about your recent academic or professional accomplishments to polsci@gwu.edu and include "Class Note" and your degree/year in the subject of the email.



Save the Date:
 Alumni Weekend Department Open House
 on September 25, 2015
 4:30-5:30
 Sigelman Seminar Room
 (Hall of Government/Monroe 428)



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<http://www.facebook.com/GWPoliticalScience>



Thanks to Our Donors

The Department of Political Science would like to gratefully acknowledge the following generous donors who made a gift to the department from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015. Your gifts are used to help us support undergraduate engagement, graduate student training and research, and faculty scholarship. We couldn't have done any of this without you. Thank you for your support!

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