Greetings from Political Science

A Note from the Chair

Greetings to all our friends and alumni. If you’ve made it this far thank you for opening the email and following the link. This is the first of what I hope will be a consistent form of communication between the department and our alumni.

The idea is to let you know a bit about what is going on in the department and thereby open up a line of communication. I actually write this in my last few days as department chair, a job that is full of challenges and rewards at today’s GW. The most important thing that I wish to communicate is that we’ve been working very hard to mold a department of which you can be proud. And we think that we have done just that in recent years.

To continue this momentum we seek outstanding scholars with active and promising research programs. This past year we welcomed Robert Adcock (PhD, Berkeley) and Elizabeth Saunders (PhD, Yale) to our ranks. Next year, we will be joined by Llewelyn Hughes (M.I.T.), Jai Kwan Jung (Cornell), and Harris Mylonas (Yale). These new faculty members strengthen a very active and distinguished group of scholars and teachers. No doubt you hear from them through both electronic and print media.

The new chair will be Forrest Maltzman, who takes over at the beginning of July. I hope that this finds you all happy and well.

— Christopher J. Deering, Chair

7th History of Congress Conference Hosted by GW Political Science Department

The Department played host to 40 congressional scholars from around the US and England on May 29-31 for a discussion of current work on the evolution of legislative institutions and behavior. The Conference was organized by professors Sarah Binder, Forrest Maltzman, Eric Lawrence, and Garry Young. The conference previously has been held at Columbia, MIT, Stanford, Washington University, Yale, and Princeton.

In the photo below, some of the conference participants gather at the cenotaph honoring Reps. Nick Begich (D-AK) and Hale Boggs (D-LA) during a tour of the Congressional Cemetery guided by Associate Senate Historian Donald Ritchie (in coat and tie on the left).

Faculty Scholarship Earns Recognition

We are pleased to note that the following books by faculty authors have been recognized for their excellence.

- James Goldgeier, Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After the Cold War (Brookings Institution Press), Leopold Prize for the best book on international relations published in 2003.
- Lee Sigelman and colleagues, Race and Place: Residence and Race Relations in an American City (Cambridge University Press), American Political Science Association Award for Best Book on Urban Politics, 2002.
If you have been out of school for more than just a couple of years you might not know about the tremendous strides made by the department. Evidence comes in several forms.

In 2004, a “global ranking” of political science departments based upon faculty publications rated us 36th worldwide. Our rank based upon the absolute number of scholarly articles was 19th overall, while our impact rank was 18th.

A recent survey by scholars at the College of William and Mary placed our doctoral program in international relations 24th nationally, and the ESIA M.A. program in international affairs 7th nationally.

In that same survey, Professor James Rosenau was ranked 18th among scholars having the greatest impact on the study of international relations over the last 20 years. Martha Finnemore ranked 4th among scholars seen as doing the most interesting work in recent years and 18th among scholars having “the most profound impact” on the work of international relations scholars. A 2001 analysis ranked the department 11th nationally for the quality of incoming faculty.

Lee Sigelman just finished a stint as editor of the American Political Science Review, the “flagship” research journal of the discipline. And The Hill (a widely-read Capitol Hill newspaper), placed GW among the top political science graduate programs in the country and named Sarah Binder a “Top Congressional Scholar.”

Political Science has been on the move these last few years. We have moved up in the rankings, of course, and we’ve also grown larger as a department — to about 45 fulltime faculty.

But we also have been physically on the move. Four years ago, we departed our longtime home in Funger Hall (which many of you will recall as Building C) at 2201 G Street. This was because the new Duques Hall was being built for the business school while Funger was renovated.

For three years we occupied quarters on F Street in a building called Old Main. But our brand new quarters are on the fourth floor of the renovated Hall of Government and Monroe (pictured from Kogan Plaza on the right). The new digs feature a nice computer lab, large and small conference rooms, and plenty of offices for the growing faculty.

We are pleased to be settled into this new and functional space.

Lee Ann Fujii will be travelling to Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina this summer to investigate why ordinary people participate in political violence against neighbors.


This summer, Fujii plans to revisit her original research sites in Rwanda and hopes to interview the same people she spoke with in 2004. In Bosnia, she will meet with local scholars, researchers, lawyers, and NGO workers to discuss research conditions in Bosnia. She will begin the US portion of her research in the fall.

Fujii earned her PhD from GW in 2006. She is currently program coordinator for International Politics for the Elizabeth Somers Women’s Leadership Program at the Mount Vernon College campus.
POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY AUTHOR BLOGS

As befits the computing age, Political Science faculty are currently key authors of three different, widely read academic blogs.

The newest is The Monkey Cage (http://themonkeycage.org), which aims to publicize political science research, provide commentary on political events, and generally to just think out loud.

The founding bloggers are current Political Science faculty members David Park, John Sides (top right), and Lee Sigelman. Its name is inspired by a quote from H.L. Mencken: “Democracy is the art of running the circus from the monkey cage.”

They have since been joined by another blogger, colleague Henry Farrell (middle right), who is himself a contributor to the widely read social science blog Crooked Timber — with an international cast of characters and quite an eclectic orientation.

“Out of the crooked timber of humanity,” it is said, “No straight thing was ever made.” Crooked Timber and its bloggers can be found at http://crookedtimber.org.

Finally, there is Abu Aardvark, by Marc Lynch (bottom right), a recent addition to GW’s Political Science Department and the Elliott School of International Affairs. Abu Aardvark’s main focus is Middle Eastern politics and the media’s role in the Arab world. Abu Aardvark’s epigram is “The battle’s won and we kind of won so we sound our victory cheer: where do we go from here?” (http://abuaardvark.typepad.org).

GOLDFEIER’S AMERICA BETWEEN THE WARS PUBLISHED

James Goldgeier’s latest book America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 has been published by Public Affairs Press. The new volume is co-authored by Derek Chollet, who worked at the State Department during the Clinton Administration.

Goldgeier examines the period from the fall of the Berlin Wall (11/9) and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 as a contested but formative period in US foreign policy that informs the US role in the world today.

Writing in the New York Times (June 17, 2008) Michiko Kakutani praises the work as “an astute and highly informed book, lucidly mapping the forces that have been reshaping the post-cold-war world as a clearly defined superpower rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union has given way to a far more complex and chaotic set of circumstances…”

The analysis carefully lays out the alternative perspectives that emerged within successive administrations and the two political parties while treating the problems of globalization, non-state actors, failed states, and weapons of mass destruction.

The authors criticize the failures of both recent administrations and at the same time observe that emerging positions sometimes make for some rather strange political bedfellows. A thought provoking prospect in the lead-up to Election 2008.

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—Kakutani

2008 GRADUATES EARN DEPARTMENTAL PRIZES

Each year the Political Science Department recognizes talented members of the graduating class. The awards are funded or endowed by grateful alumni, family, and friends in honor of former faculty and friends of the department.

The Joshua Evans III Prize was established in 1937 and is given annually to top graduating seniors in political science. The awardees for this year are Colleen Fisher, Robert Misulich, and Jennifer Sabatello.

The John Andrew Morgan Prize is given annually to top graduating seniors who plan to study law. The awardees for this year are Molly Carter and Rory Schneider.

The H.C. Sacks Prize is given to a top student interested in the study of Far Eastern Affairs. The awardee for this year is Anthony Tysenn.

Congratulations and best of luck to each of these individuals, to our Phi Beta Kappa inductees, and to all 242 of our 2008 grads.
DONATE TO GW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE TODAY

We are deeply appreciative of the gifts from our alumni to the Department. Each gift, whatever the amount, allows us to further our research and educational goals. If your check is made out to the Political Science Department, the money is earmarked for our use. If not, it goes into the general fund. So please remember to cite the Political Science Department E&R Account on any gift. Many thanks to each of you for your thoughtfulness and your past contributions.

THANKS TO OUR RECENT DONORS

The following individuals have recently made contributions to the Political Science Department. We very much appreciate their kindness and support for our various activities.

- Ms. Linda Abendroth
- John T. Del Negro, Esq.
- Mr. Todd L. Dickson
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- Drs. Lee and Carol Sigelman
- Mrs. Julie M. Welch
- Dr. Wilfried Witthuhn and Ms. Marilyn Mon-ter

GW Political Science

The George Washington University Political Science Department is a nationally recognized program with emphases in American Politics, Comparative Politics, and International Relations. Faculty and graduate student research is cutting edge and takes advantage of the Department’s Washington location to leverage data and resources unique to this national and world capital.

The Department ranks among the top 20 in the country for articles published in the best peer-reviewed journals in the discipline and is recognized by both the National Research Council and U.S. News as one of the most rapidly improving doctoral programs in the country.

We are on the web!
http://www.gwu.edu/~psc