Greetings from Political Science

This past year was a year in which the Department, its faculty, and its students continued to excel in a number of different dimensions.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, members of the Department were the principal investigators for $2.6 million of new grants from external organizations such as the Bradley Foundation (Henry Nau), Carnegie Corporation (Henry Hale, Marc Lynch, and Henry Nau), Folke Berneditte Academy (Holger Schmidt), the Fulbright Scholar Program (Steve Balla, David Shambaugh, and Alasdair Bowie), the Lincoln Institute (Hal Wolman), the MacArthur Foundation (Mike Mochizuki), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Hal Wolman), the Transatlantic Academy (Jim Goldgeier), the U.S. Institute of Peace (Manny Teitelbaum, Henry Farrell, Marc Lynch, and John Sides), and the National Science Foundation (Bruce Dickson and myself). These funds provide important external validity, and simultaneously both lead to new discoveries and facilitate the work of graduate and undergraduate students. I will be the first to admit that external resources are central to our continued ability to reach our potential, but such funding needs to be thought of as a means to an end, not simply an end itself.

I am particularly proud that during the 09-10 academic year several faculty members published books with some of the nation’s top academic presses, including Sarah Binder (Brookings Institution Press), Nathan Brown (Routledge Press), Charlie Glaser (Princeton University Press), Jim Lebovic (Johns Hopkins University Press), Bernie Reich (Scarecrow Press), Mike Brown (MIT Press), Martha Finnemore and Susan Sell (Cornell University Press). In addition, several faculty published articles in some of the nation’s top peer-reviewed academic journals (for example, both Martha Finnemore and Sharon Wolchik published in World Politics; Eric Lawrence, John Sides, and Henry Farrell in Perspectives on Politics; Harvey Feigenbaum in Political Science Quarterly; Elizabeth Saunders in International Security; Jai Kwan Jung in Mobilization; Chris Deering in Publics; and Brandon Bartels in the American Political Science Review). And, almost every member of the Department published at least one book chapter or journal article. These publications ensure that the research being done at GW will shape our understanding of the public sphere long into the future.

Although I am pleased with what we have accomplished, my colleagues and I are not content to declare victory. Thus, we have begun a series of initiatives to further improve the Department. These include an effort to more carefully evaluate the extent that we teach our students analytical reasoning and to ensure that our graduate students move through the program more expeditiously. During the next academic year, much of this effort will be overseen by my colleague Kimberly Morgan, who begins a term as Director of Graduate Studies. The current director, Martha Finnemore, is taking a well-deserved rest from the Department’s most taxing leadership position. My colleague Paul Wahlbeck will continue as associate chair. Paul, like Martha, has done a tremendous job taking the lead on numerous projects, including...
In Memoriam

Lee Sigelman

Lee Sigelman, distinguished GW Professor of Political Science, died on December 21 after a battle with cancer. The Department hosted a memorial service on February 5. Speakers included GW President Steven Knapp, APSA President Henry Brady, Professors Forrest Maltzman, Chris Deering, and Mickey East, and family and friends.

Before becoming Department chair at GW in 1992, Sigelman was a dean at the University of Arizona, taught at Texas Tech and the University of Kentucky, and served as program director at the National Science Foundation. Under Sigelman's guidance the GW Department became a nationally ranked department and a GW center for excellence.

His teaching and research centered on public opinion, mass communication, and electoral behavior, but extended in several directions, including American national government, research methods, comparative political analysis, and popular culture. His books include Attack Politics (University Press of Kansas, 2008), Race and Place (Cambridge University Press, 2001), Black Americans’ Views of Racial Inequality (Cambridge University Press, 1991), Nominating the President (University of Tennessee Press, 1991), Political Mythology and Popular Fiction (Greenwood Press, 1988), and he contributed scores of articles to such journals as the American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, and Journal of Politics. He also edited the American Politics Quarterly and the American Political Science Review.

Sigelman was recognized with two of the highest awards given by the University: for scholarship in 1999 and for service in 2008. The American Political Science Association granted him the Frank J. Goodnow Distinguished Service Award in 2007, and the National Capital Area Political Science Association gave him its Walter Beach Pi Sigma Alpha Award in 2008.

Sigelman's passing comes almost two and a half years after he was diagnosed with colon cancer. During that time, Sigelman published a book, edited another one, published a dozen articles, helped to start one of the most successful academic blogs in the country, directed GW’s honors program, chaired two different university professor searches and the Department’s chair selection committee, served as a member of the Department's Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure committee and American politics search committee, took the lead coordinating numerous academic program reviews throughout the college, and regularly ate a large cookie in the Department's lunch room.

To his students and colleagues, Sigelman was the perfect colleague and role model. Few people have touched as many people in such a positive way as Sigelman. He was an institution builder, scholar, mentor, friend, and loved one. His wisdom will live on within us and will shape our Department, university, discipline, and lives in the years ahead.

Lee Sigelman established a fund to support the research of junior faculty. Donations to the Sigelman Fund for Political Science can be sent to: Sigelman Fund for Political Science, Department of Political Science, George Washington University, 440 Monroe, 2115 G Street NW, Washington, DC 20052

Engaged in the Community

Grad Students Run in Cancer Relay

Political Science graduate students spent 12 hours circling a track with more than 80 teams of undergraduate and graduate students. The event that joined these teams together was the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life.

The Relay took place at the Lerner Health and Wellness Center. The ten-person team took turns running and walking around the track. There was someone on the track “at all times during the event because,” as the American Cancer Society puts it, “cancer never sleeps.” Graduate students participants were Christina Caan, Jake Haselswerdt, Kelly Bauer, Kerry Crawford, Robert Griffin, Julia MacDonald, Daniel Nerenberg, and Amir Stepak. Also participating were Jennifer Haselswerdt and Matthew Steele (M.A. 2009).

The team raised $2,107 for the fight against cancer, while the event raised more than $64,000. “Because the GW Relay for Life raises money for the American Cancer Society,” Caan said, “it was a perfect opportunity for us to come together as a Department to honor Lee, raise money for cancer research, support all our loved ones battling cancer, and be active in the GW community.”

Jake Haselswerdt working while awaiting his next turn in the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life.
A Faculty Engaged in Washington
Binder and Dove Testify in Senate

When the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration convened on April 22, two GW faculty members were at the witness table: Professors Sarah Binder and Robert Dove. The Committee was exploring the history of the filibuster.

The hearings were the product of interest and frustration from both parties about getting things done in the Senate. Some freshmen Democratic senators have supported reform of the Senate’s Rule 22, which requires a three-fifths vote to cut off debate in the Senate or cloture. Reformers argue that Rule 22 limits the power of majorities, allows a minority of the Senate to tie the chamber in knots, and more generally undermines the legislative capacity of the Senate. This hearing focused on the history of the filibuster, as part of an effort to clear away the underbrush of myths that surround the history of the filibuster.

Binder, an expert on the origin of Senate rules, testified about the genesis of the filibuster. “As best I can tell from early procedural accounts,” Binder commented, “both the House and Senate started out with the same set of rules. Both chambers had a rule that House majorities would later use to cut off debate by simple majority vote. The House kept the rule, but the Senate gave up its rule in 1806.” Without that rule, there was no way for a simple majority of the Senate to cut off debate.

It is somewhat reassuring that, once in a while, senators turn to academic scholars of the Senate to help them understand the strengths and weaknesses of their institution. However, senators from the majority and minority parties often turn to academics hoping to gain support of their view. Binder recounts that when Republicans controlled the Senate, their staffers were reading her book on the politics of the filibuster. Now that Democrats are in control and are considering reform, all the calls asking about the book come from Democratic staffers. Procedure is all about politics, not about high-minded philosophical principles.

Another witness before the hearing was Robert Dove, the Parliamentarian Emeritus of the Senate. Dove also teaches a very popular seminar on congressional leadership. “Our presence there together at the hearing reminded me,” Binder remarked, “about what a neat place GW is for studying Congress and legislative politics.”
Students Engaged in Learning

Undergraduate Research Flourishes

Undergraduates have continued the tradition of engagement in research. Several students published research articles, made conference presentations, and received research support.

Iranga Kahangama, a graduating senior, will publish "Israeli-Iranian Relations: Inherently Ideological or Strategic Maneuvering?" in The Orator, a publication for undergraduate political science research. Kahangama writes that the relationship between Israel and Iran has been more about regional and strategic security than their ideological and religious differences. The article originated in Professor Bernard Reich's proseminar on Advanced Israeli Politics. Kahangama also published two op-ed pieces in World Politics Review.

Annie McGinnis, a junior who spent this past year at the London School of Economics, wrote an article that is also appearing in The Orator. The article, "Legitimacy in Contemporary China," explores how an authoritarian regime, like China, is able to maintain substantial political legitimacy despite having no elections, a limited civil society, restrictions of civil liberties, and human rights abuses.

Students also published on blogs devoted to matters of public affairs. Basil Maudave de Mezieres wrote three essays that appeared in an European Institute blog; the essays spanned the topics of French President Nicolas Sarkozy proposed tax on Google ad revenue, the U.S. Air Force's tanker contract, and Hungarian elections. Michael Ross wrote "Virginia to Enact Amazon Tax, Too?" for a blog published by the Tax Foundation.

Emily C. Baer-Bositis presented a paper this spring at the Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting in Chicago. Her paper was “Rethinking the ‘Convention Problem’: How Political History Provides New Insights into the Role and Functions of American Party Conventions.”

Several political science majors won Luther Rice fellowships. These awards are part of a Columbian College of Arts and Sciences initiative to promote discovery- and inquiry-based education throughout the undergraduate experience at GW. Josh Rovenger spent the past school year examining the Supreme Court's use of international law. Two students, both of whom will work with Professor John Sides, received Luther Rice fellowships for the 2010-2011 school year. Tabisa Walwema will study why some young people vote differently than their parents—especially in light of the big swing to Obama among young people in 2008. Max Delahanty will seek to understand better the motivations behind Tea Party activists.

FACULTY WIN RESEARCH AWARDS

The 2009-2010 was a banner year for the Department: 12 faculty won external research awards, while several faculty received GW support.

Bruce Dickson and Forrest Maltzman won grants from the National Science Foundation. Dickson’s award supports his project “Generating Popular Support in Non-Democratic Regimes: The Case of China.” Maltzman’s project examines “Legislative Tactics and the Durability of Legislation.”

Two faculty were awarded Fulbright awards to support their fieldwork in other nations. David Shambaugh research on China was supported during the 2009-2010 school year. Next school year, Alasdair Bowie will be a recipient of a Fulbright, enabling him to conduct research in Vietnam.

Several faculty earned research support from private foundations. The Macarthur Foundation provided funding to Mike Mochizuki. The Carnegie Corporation funded projects of Henry Hale, Marc Lynch, Henry Nau, and Nathan Brown. The United States Institute of Peace made awards to Lee Ann Fujii and Manny Teitelbaum. Nathan Brown’s research was supported by a Woodrow Wilson Center fellowship, while Henry Farrell anticipates Wilson Center fellowship in this upcoming year.
A Passion for Teaching
Faculty Earn Teaching Honors

Two faculty members and a graduate student were recognized for their teaching in 2009-2010.

Bruce Dickson won the 2010 Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Teaching Award. Dickson regularly teaches the introductory Comparative Politics class and classes on “Democracy and Democratization in Comparative Perspective” and the Politics of China. “It might seem like a no-brainer to give teaching awards to our faculty, but it is too rarely done,” says Dickson. “Most of the attention is rightly given to our research, whether in landing new grants or getting books and articles published. Teaching is too often taken for granted, even though it is integral to what happens within GW and other universities. So it is very flattering to be recognized for contributions in teaching.” Dickson, as the award-winning faculty member, addressed the commencement audience.

Steven Kelts won the 2010 Spark A Life Award for faculty. This award is given to honor a person who “formed a positive mentoring relationship which has impacted the development of the student or registered student organization and the contributions they make to the GW and or Washington, DC communities.” Kelts, known for his “Madison on Mondays” events, which is a weekly dinner for the students in his Constitutional History and Theories. Kelts has the opportunity to interact with students on both a casual and intellectual level as a Faculty in Residence who lives in a residence hall.

Michelle Jurkovich received honorable mention recognition in the Philip Amsterdam Graduate Teaching Assistant Awards for Outstanding Teaching. This award honors individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to GW teaching and recognizes the important contribution graduate students make to the educational process.

Faculty Focus
Sapin Made Lasting Mark at GW

Burt Sapin arrived at GW in the summer of 1969 as Dean of the then School of Public and International Affairs and Professor of Political Science and International Affairs. After serving as dean until 1983, he returned to full-time teaching until he retired in June 1994. Sapin taught an undergraduate course in U.S. Foreign Policy and Policy-making and the graduate sequence in U.S. National Security Policy and Policy-making.

Sapin played a significant role in developing several new programs at GW. Those programs included Security Policy and Science, Technology and Public Policy (STPP), which have continued to thrive. Through the STPP program, GW was able to bring first-rate talent to both the Department and the Elliott School: John Logsdon, Henry Nau, and Bob Rycroft.

In the case of Security Policy, GW benefitted from the participation of some outstanding adjunct and untenured faculty. Professor William Lewis, who possessed strong governmental as well as academic credentials, developed the program and then directed and taught in it. The University brought some outstanding part-time talent to the program: e.g., Robert Komer, the famous "Blowtorch Bob" of the Vietnam and later era; and Martin Blumenson, one of the great historians of World War II. But, in Sapin’s view, probably most significant was Dr. Richard Kugler, top analyst at the Rand Corporation and leading American authority on NATO, who brought sophisticated quantitative and analytical skills to the program, and communicated them to the students with great effectiveness. He taught the students skills that were highly marketable and made great contributions to the program.

Sapin was impressed with the excellent undergrads that he had the opportunity to teach in the Department and the School of Public and International Affairs. For example, Sapin had the pleasure of working with David Shambaugh, currently a professor of political science and international affairs at GW, while he was an undergraduate. He also enjoyed working with graduate students. There were many very good ones, but the Japanese students who began enrolling in the mid-1970s were particularly interesting and satisfying to teach.

Overall, GW has shown impressive growth in size and quality in the 31 years since Sapin first arrived, taking advantage of its Washington location to become a strong educational institution. Like most programs around the country, Sapin observed that the Department has become more rigorous methodologically, more quantitatively oriented. At the same time, Sapin commented, “I think that the Department has been sustained by its strengths in international politics, comparative politics, and area studies.” It includes people like Cynthia McClintock, Bernie Reich, Harvey Feigenbaum, and some of the Russian studies faculty, to name just a few.

When Sapin retired in 1994, he joined the Rand Corporation where he worked with colleagues like Zalmay Khalilzad, later US ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq. Sapin worked on U.S.-Japan relations at Rand and wrote some papers on that topic and a short unpublished book. Sapin also published three articles in the Mediterranean Quarterly, which is edited by Nick Stavrou, who received his doctorate at GW before Sapin's arrival. These articles focused on foreign policy and policymaking in the Bush administration, two of them coauthored with William Lewis.
New Beginnings

Every spring brings graduation and the launching of new careers for our latest class of alumni. The Department graduated 214 majors this spring. With students branching out in many different directions, we asked members of the class of 2010 to let us know their plans.

As you would expect from political science majors, many plan to enter law school in the fall. They will enroll in an impressive set of schools, including Boston University, Cardozo, Columbia, Duke, Florida State, Georgetown, Harvard, Maryland, Miami, Michigan, Penn State, St. John’s, Stetson, Suffolk, Vanderbilt, and William Mitchell. Two graduates will continue their education at GW law school. Other students will enter the legal profession by working in law firms in the fall.

Law schools do not hold a monopoly on our former students who are pursuing advanced degrees. Some graduates plan to pursue degrees in international affairs, public policy, business, education, religion, and music.

Perhaps continuing experiences begun with internships, other recent graduates plan to work for advocacy organizations. These run the gamut from AARP to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the North Korean Human Rights Database Center.

Public service jobs also attract the Department’s graduates. Two alumni will work with the Peace Corps, while five alumni will work for Teach for America and another graduate will work with AmeriCorps. Students have also taken jobs working for local government agencies and the federal government, including jobs in housing and the Justice Department.

In addition to these endeavors, other students are entering the business world. These include jobs at JPMorgan Chase, Altegrity Risk International, MS&L Worldwide, and New England Insurance Services. Other students will work for media companies, including CNN, Voice of America, and London Sunday Times.

As GW has become an increasingly national and international university, it is not surprising to learn that our graduates spread across the nation and globe.

Although Washington, DC is the most popular home, our new alumni will call 19 states and two countries home.

We wish all of the members of our class of 2010 well as they embark on their adventure.

ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES


Scott McGearry (BA 1977) is the area manager for government and business relations with Washington Gas. He was reappointed by the Arlington County Circuit Court to the County Board of Zoning Appeals and served as the chairman of that board in 2009.

Maria Rost Rublee (PhD 2004) won the 2010 Alexander George Book Award for her book Nonproliferation Norms: Why States Choose Nuclear Restraint (University of Georgia Press).

Daniel Tannebaum (BA 2005) was appointed Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Compliance Manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Send News to: Political Science Newsletter, George Washington University, 2115 G Street, NW, Monroe 440, Washington, DC 20052; or email us at polsci@gwu.edu.
Thanks to Our Donors

These individuals made contributions to the Political Science Department or the Sigelman Fund during the 2009-2010 academic year (July 1, 2009 - May 31, 2010). We very much appreciate their kindness and support for our various activities.

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STUDENTS HONORED

Students and faculty gathered on April 19th to honor the 31 students who were inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honor society. Also honored this spring were Josh Rovenger and Chris Avellaneda, recipients of the John Morgan prize. The Joshua Evans III award was won by Ahuva Grossman, Jamie Tunis, Ashley Wells, and McKenzie Wilson. The Howard Sacks award was given to Adam Mickley.