

# Department of Political Science Newsletter

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Note from the Department Chair - Forrest Maltzman

## Greetings from Political Science

Three years ago, I was elected chair of the GW political science department. When folks congratulated me on my election, I usually responded, "I think condolences are more in order." I was stealing a line that academics have long used upon being elected as chair. But, I lied. Chairing a department that is known for its collegiality, that is emerging as one of the nation's premier departments, that is located within a university that is absolutely committed to the department, and that has both a faculty and set of students who intellectually engage each other is nothing but a pleasure. When I began my term in 2008, we were a department that had an extremely strong foundation, a faculty that believed in the collective good, and a vision of where we wanted to go.

The strength of the department today is reflected in our top twenty-five ranking by the national research council, the productivity of our faculty, the popularity of both our graduate and undergraduate programs, the success of our students, and even the willingness of our alums to give back to a program that so many of us care about. And I am convinced that the department is stronger today than it was three years ago. Over the past three years, we have recruited new faculty away from the University of Chicago (Charlie Glaser), the University of Minnesota (Michael Barnett), Stony Brook (Brandon Bartels), and Duke (Alexander Downes). Finally, over the past three years, we have been joined by first rate colleagues who are just beginning their careers (Celeste Arrington, Eric Grynaviski, Jai Kwan Jung, Llewelyn Hughes, Stephen Kaplan, Harris Mylonas,



Elizabeth Saunders, and Caitlin Talmadge). Over the next few years, the department is slated to make a number of hires, and I anticipate the department will continue to grow and to improve.

The GW political science is simply put a department that has been and continues to fire on all of its cylinders.

One of the many strengths of the department is that we have been fortunate enough to be in a position where we regularly rotate leadership positions and where many people step up to the plate. Beginning next month, my colleague Paul Wahlbeck will chair the department, having been unanimously approved by our colleagues. I stepped down to take on a role in the GW provost's office. I know Paul will thrive as chair. Paul has long been committed to the department's norm of high standards, collegiality, and a commitment to disciplinary pluralism. And Paul has long promoted an agenda that will engage our undergraduate and graduate students. Upon his election, I gave Paul my condolences. I lied.

## Faculty Focus

### Finnemore Honored

Martha Finnemore was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, joining the ranks of some of the nation's most prominent scholars. Finnemore and GW President Steven Knapp are among the new members who will join one of the nation's most prestigious societies for achievements in science, scholarship, business, public affairs and the arts.

Department Chair Forrest Maltzman commented, "This is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon an academic. The honor reflects the innovative and creative approach Marty has brought to the table."

Finnemore, the first member of the Department to achieve this distinction, is "home grown." She began her career at GW in 1992 after completing her degree at Stanford. Her research and teaching

explore global governance and international organizations. She has written several award-winning books: *Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics* (coauthored with Professor Michael Barnett) won the International Studies Association prize for best book in 2006; *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* won the 2004 Woodrow Wilson Prize for the best book on government, politics, or international affairs.

"Being elected to the academy is a great honor," Finnemore remarked, "but I could never have done this research without the smart, sympathetic colleagues I have here at GW. They keep me on my toes intellectually, and Washington provides a never-ending stream of political puzzles to challenge us."



Martha Finnemore at the celebratory reception hosted by the Department and the Elliott School of International Affairs

## An Engaged Faculty

### Department Middle East Experts Opine on Democracy Movement

This spring has seen democracy protests in the Middle East – first in Tunisia and Egypt, and then seen in Libya and Syria among other nations. Political science faculty have led the discussion and analysis of these developments. Nathan Brown and Marc Lynch have been interviewed for articles appearing in a host of sources: CNN, National Public Radio, and the Washington Post. Brown appeared on Capitol Hill in April to testify about Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood before the House Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism, Human Intelligence, Analysis and Counterintelligence.

Underlying their analysis is their scholarship. For instance, Brown's research examines three issues that are related closely: Islamist movements, constitutionalism, and semiauthoritarianism. "What is most notable to me," Brown remarked, "is how

much the upheavals have been about the last two—they really center on core issues of constitutional structures and governance—and not the first. Islamist movements have been players but hardly the most significant ones in the upheavals." Movements, like the Islamic Brotherhood, are coping with a more democratic environment, rather than the more familiar authoritarian regime.

These developments affect the content of Brown's courses in comparative politics. He is able to explore with students how much existing academic approaches to understanding the Middle East help us explain what is happening and how much they are now outmoded. Brown said, "It made, quite obviously, for very engaged discussions." In the coming semester, Brown anticipates rewriting some of his lectures based on the events.

GW offers a unique vantage point to discuss these events. There is a great deal of interest in Middle East politics on campus: students take regional languages, attend programs on Middle East issues, and enroll in courses on Middle East

politics. This attention has been advanced by the "Project on Middle East Political Science," directed by Marc Lynch. This center is "designed to bring academic expertise to bear on public discussions," according to Brown. This makes GW a player as a center for studying the Middle East. Given GW's location in Washington, various governmental arms and journalists routinely come to our faculty for expertise.

What does the future hold? As recent developments have demonstrated, the era of change is not over. The one constant may be the ability of GW faculty to assess political developments with a grounding in their scholarship.

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.

Follow the Department on Facebook

Navigate to <http://www.facebook.com/GWPoliticalScience> for Department and alumni news and updates

## GRADUATE STUDENTS SERVICE PROJECT

Nine graduate students and staff gathered on April 17 to serve lunches to about 100 people at So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.), an interfaith community-based organization dedicated to helping the poor and homeless in DC. The graduate caucus also collected four boxes of food for S.O.M.E. "It was a really positive experience," recounts Christina Caan, "and SOME is an amazing organization. We hope to work with them again in the future!" The graduate caucus collected pet supplies to donate to the Washington Animal Rescue League in the name of Lee Sigelman.



Richie Wilcox and Lisel Hintz at S.O.M.E. (above); Chris Deering at the Washington Animal Rescue League (left)



## Students Engaged in Washington Undergraduates Thrive in Internships

Political Science undergraduates enrich their education through internships with government officials and public interest groups. Year in and year out, more than 80 students enroll in internships for credit. The 2010 graduating class reported that 77 percent had worked in an internship during their college years.

This year, as in years past, students served numerous organizations. These include government agencies, like the Department of Justice and the Department of Veterans Affairs, policy advocacy organizations, such as the Heritage Foundation and Planned Parenthood, and members of Congress or campaigns.

Interns help Washington work. They update databases, give tours, take phone calls, and write summaries and reports. Jazmine Dorsey, who interned at the Department of Veterans Affairs, wrote

articles about the Department's decisions on employment discrimination complaints. These articles were posted on the Department's Online Digest to make its regulations more comprehensible by "painting a real-life picture for management officials" on how to handle complaints.

Gary Wong interned at The Center for Responsive Politics. In addition to updating the Center's campaign contribution database, he wrote news reports for their website about the role of money in politics. One of Wong's reports gained a reference in a New York Times op-ed essay.

Students pick up internships by hook or by crook. Jacob Stewart, who worked at the Supreme Court for the Curator's Office, pursued his fascination with the judiciary by googling "Supreme Court internship" to see what was available. He found that their website provides information on how to apply. Dorsey discovered the Veterans Affairs internship on the Career Center's website. The internship in the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication was a good match given her interest in the law and her goal to become a judge. As she put it, "Because the Office is an adjudicating body, I was exposed to some very critical skills which judges use daily when making and writing decisions."

Internships are valuable on a number of dimensions. Stewart said of his Supreme Court internship, hearing oral

argument was fascinating. "The dialogue between the lawyers and Justices," he observed, "would keep me on the edge of my seat." Dorsey commented that the people at the Department of Veterans Affairs made the internship great. "The people that I worked with demonstrated that internships are not just about assigning errands and grunt work to students. Instead, it's comprised of a symbiotic relationship in which building and fostering mentorship and professionalism that prepares students for the real world is essential." Wong reinforced this view: the interactions with Center staff made "the work environment ... very friendly and conducive for professional growth."

These students found that internships expanded their knowledge about policy-making institutions and the impact of policy. "I learned much more than just applicable skills for the 'job world.'" Stewart commented that he "learned something new every day at the Court." Wong, recounting his experience at the Center for Responsive Politics, said, "The internship complemented my GW education in the sense that I gained a better understanding of the significance of recent campaign financing laws, and its impact on elections." Dorsey said that the internship was more than just a resume builder, but offered "exposure to the work that I love (legal research and case analysis)."

## Alumni Careers

### Alumni Advance in Many Fields

Political science alumni pursue many different vocations. In the last half year, our alumni have made a mark in educational software development, journalism, government affairs, business, and the law. The following are snapshots of two alumni, their career, and the role played by their GW education.

#### Andrew Dixon (B.A. 1992)



In August 2010, Andrew Dixon was appointed as an Administrative Law Judge for the Social Security Administration in Tallahassee, Florida.

His path to this position began after graduation when Dixon worked for the DC Government's Office of Personnel. He represented the city in administrative unemployment compensation hearings against former District employees. As he routinely beat attorneys in hearings, he thought he was ready for law school, moving to Miami to attend the St. Thomas University School of Law.

Dixon's legal career began as an Assistant State Attorney in Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale). Dixon later landed a job at the Department of Health and Human Service as an Attorney Advisor for the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals in Miami, authoring Medicare Appeals decisions for Administrative Law Judges.

In his current position, Dixon presides over and adjudicates social security claims. The position requires extensive review of medical documents, review of opinion drafts prepared by decision writers, as well as conducting hearings and eliciting the sometimes emotional

testimony of the claimants seeking social security benefits.

Dixon concludes today that his decision to attend GW in political science was the right decision. Knowing that GW's political science department had an excellent reputation, a degree from GW would be advantageous to his career by demonstrating of what he was capable if he "could handle the coursework requirements of GW's Political Science Department."

The connection of his coursework and his interest formed one of the highlights of his GW years. He studied the inequities of funding for inner city school districts vis-a-vis their suburban counterparts. Dixon used the knowledge that he gained in class "to become more knowledgeable on a subject that had always interested me."

Like many pre-law students, Professor Emeritus John Morgan inspired Dixon. "He was a charismatic older professor who made his classes on constitutional law so interesting that I forgot to take notes!" Morgan was the one professor with whom Dixon made sure to have his picture taken on Graduation Day.

#### Mary Beth Merrin (Ph.D. 1976)



Mary Beth Merrin uses her graduate training by advising corporate decision makers. Her dissertation, reflecting her interest in public opinion and public policy, was entitled "The Issues in Issue Voting: An Analysis of the 1972 Presidential Election."

How did Merrin move from a focus on public opinion to a career as a corporate advisor? She commented that each position "built on and drew from experience in the previous positions. However, each was grounded in the strong foundation I had from my Ph.D. studies at GW."

Her career began as a faculty member at Georgia State University where she taught courses on public opinion, public policy, and research methods. Returning to the DC area, Merrin worked at a survey research company that developed a new survey methodology for the Defense Department, directed program evaluations for the federal government, and examined the Nielson ratings for NBC evening news.

Merrin then went to Marriott for 10 years. As a Vice President she had responsibility for all research across the various operating divisions including marketing, customer satisfaction, human resources, operations, food and beverage, new product development and the globalization of the Marriott Brand. Merrin also held a similar position for Choice Hotels.

Today, Merrin's marketing research and communications company, Decision Making Research - DMR, conducts analytical work for global corporate leaders, non-profits, and new ventures.

Merrin comments that her GW experience influenced her career path in three ways: sharpened her analytic skills; provided options to work in a wide range of positions; made her "recognize the importance of not just knowing the facts, but moving beyond the facts to their implications."

The highlights of Merrin's GW career included serving as a teaching fellow in quantitative methods and analysis. She found it rewarding to "help students in the process of discovery." She also spoke highly of the opportunity to work with her major professor, Hugh LeBlanc, with whom she published articles while in graduate school.



## GRADUATION RECEPTION

The Political Science Department hosted a reception for our graduates in the CityView Room on May 14. We were joined for the festivities by nearly 300 graduates and their families. The reception gave everyone the opportunity to celebrate the many accomplishments of our students. Graduation, following the GW tradition, took place on the National Mall.





## ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

Katie Hogan (B.A. 2006) named deputy press secretary for the 2012 Obama campaign.

Jason MacDonald (Ph.D. 2003) published an article, "Limitation Riders and Congressional Influence over Bureaucratic Policy Decisions," in the American Political Science Review.

Alumnus David Malet (Ph.D. 2009) received a Federal STAR grant from the EPA's Homeland Security branch to study public communications after a bioterrorist attack.

Alumna Maria Rublee (Ph.D. 2002) named one of the new editors of International Studies Perspectives.

Corey Shott (B.A. 2004) works in the National Wildlife Federation's National Advocacy Center.

Julie Silverbrook (B.A. 2009) created a program, Constitutional Conversations, for the Institute of Bill of Rights Law at William & Mary, and it was awarded the 2011 Virginia Public Library Directors Association Award for Best Cooperative Program in the State.

Jared Starr (B.A. 2003) developed an educational, interactive DVD adventure, which received a Parent's Choice Approved award.

*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](mailto:polsci@gwu.edu)*

### The Newest Alumni Undergraduates Finish Strong

The Department's graduating class is an award-winning group! Two students, Tayler Lofquist and Sally Nuamah were named Columbian College Distinguished Scholars and spoke at the Columbian College graduation ceremony on May 14.

Fourteen students, perhaps a record number, won Department prizes. The Sacks award was given to Tayler Lofquist and Annie McGinnis, the Sigelman award went to Emily Baer Bositis and Sally Nuamah, the Morgan award was awarded to Dan Blumenthal, Danielle Desaulniers, and Tabisa Walwema, and

the Evans prize went to Jennifer Casazza, Amitis Darabnia, Thomas Giannettino, Brett Grey, Stephen Hawkins, John Meserve, and Peter Wilson.

Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honor society, welcomed 37 new members at their annual ceremony.

Our outstanding class of graduating seniors are going in many exciting directions. Several report plans to continue their education with 14 students pursuing graduate degrees and 11 students planning to attend law school. In addition to graduate degrees in political science and public policy, students will study elementary education and business. Our future law students will attend elite programs, including GW, Michigan, Columbia, Washington & Lee, Ohio State, Loyola, and Southern Methodist. Future employers include the federal government, corporations, advocacy groups, and law firms.



Students at the Pi Sigma Alpha ceremony on April 17

Employment also includes service to members of Congress and teaching.

We wish the Class of 2011 well as they begin their new adventures.





## Thanks to Our Donors

These individuals made contributions to the Political Science Department or the Sigelman Fund in the 2010-2011 academic year (May 1, 2010 - May 31, 2011). We very much appreciate your kindness and support for our various activities.

Robert Adcock \*\*

David Algranati '97

Diego Areces \*

Kyle Bird '09

Emily Baer-Bositis '11

Elliot Bell-Krasner '08

Sarah Binder & Forrest Maltzman \*\*

Lindsay Brooker '09

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Joan & Maurice Kong \*

Daniel LeClair '05

Marian Lee '76

John Mancus '76

Elizabeth Matto '00

John '75 & Sharon Moeser

Michael Moran \*

Wynne Walker '85 & Randall Moskop

Eric Nakano '04

John '75 & Karen Nelson

Leigh Noel

Toshiya Ozaki '04

Robert Poogach

Rebecca Rene '80

Peter & Sue Rogers

James Sadowski '89

Joseph Sarreal '10

Arun Selvaratnam \*

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Carol and Lee Sigelman

Julie Silverbrook '09

Nidhi Srivastava '11

Steve & Mariam Strosnider \*

Frederick Thide, Jr. '08

Paul Wahlbeck \*\*

Lisa Williams '03

Eric Wilmeth '73

William Ziegler

### Viola Political Science Graduate Scholarship Endowment Funded

Gennaro Viola made a generous bequest to the Department to support international graduate students.

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Gifts to the Department of Political Science allow us to further our research and educational goals. Each gift, no matter how large or small, makes a positive impact on our educational mission and furthers our standing as one of the nation's preeminent programs. You can make your gift to the Department in a number of ways:

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- Mail your check, made out to The George Washington University and with "Political Science Department" in the memo line, to the University at 2100 M Street, NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20052
- By calling the GW Annual Fund at 1-800-789-2611

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