Message from the Chair

Last semester’s POLISCI NEWS focused on internships in settings ranging from the Alaskan DNR to the Minnesota state legislature. This issue of POLISCI NEWS considers the next phase in one’s professional life or “just what can I do with a Political Science degree”? We answer this question by telling the stories of four alums, all of whom combined academic study with internships as well as active participation in clubs and other extracurricular activities. While these stories are only a few of the many we could tell, we hope they give you a flavor of the opportunities available to Political Science students.

Steve Hoffman, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Department of Political Science

Mock Trial Event: Save the Date

The University of St. Thomas School of Law and the Hatting Invitational Committee will host the 9th Hatting Invitational, a four-round tournament, at the UST School of Law in downtown Minneapolis, on Saturday and Sunday, January 24-25. Please email ustmocktrial@gmail.com with any questions.

Alumni Profiles

Brian Garshelis
New Sector's Twin Cities Program Director

Originally from Grand Rapids, Minnesota, Brian directed New Sector Alliance's San Francisco programs for nearly three years before returning to Minnesota to launch and manage New Sector's Fellowships in the Twin Cities. Brian is responsible for recruiting, training, and coaching cohorts of 15-35 early-career Fellows to give them the skills and support needed to complete effective projects and prepare them for long-term careers in the social sector.

Brian came to New Sector with a rich history of expanding and launching new programs, including work on Senator Amy Klobuchar's internship program, the Stanford Graduate School of Business' Career Summit, and the Bloomington Jefferson High School debate team. He was awarded a BA in Political Science and Spanish at UST, magna cum laude, in 2008.

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Alumni Profiles (continued):

Tom Kreitzer
Occupational Safety and Emergency Preparedness Program Manager

Tom majored in History and Political Science at UST. After graduation in 2011, he pursued a Master of Science in Biodefense at George Mason University in Virginia, during which he secured an internship with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the Office of the Secretary. He is currently working as the Occupational Safety and Emergency Preparedness Program Manager for the Office of the Secretary, HHS in Washington D.C. In this capacity, Tom oversees safety and health programs for 15,000 HHS employees, serves as federal emergency response official, and is a recognized subject matter expert in biological agents. He currently lives in Northern Virginia with his wife, who is also a UST alum.

Maggie Meyer
Associate Director, womenwinning

Maggie is currently the Associate Director at womenwinning, the only non-partisan, pro-choice women’s organization with both a State and Federal Political Action Committee (PAC) in the state of Minnesota. womenwinning works to elect pro-choice women candidates at every level of office, from Park Board to President of the United States. As Associate Director, Maggie directs the marketing, development and fundraising aspects of the organization. Maggie was previously employed by Books for Africa, where she successfully led communications and financial operations for the largest shipper of donated text and library books to the African continent. Maggie received her undergraduate degree from the University of St. Thomas in 2011, majoring in International Studies and Political Science. While in school, she kept busy with Model United Nations, Invisible Children, and a number of political campaigns.

Cory Baird
English Language Instructor, Okinawa, Japan

Cory attended the University of St. Thomas from 2008-2012, majoring in Political Science and minoring in Japanese with a focus on international and comparative politics. After graduation Cory found employment in a Japanese Government-sponsored teaching program called JET. He was placed on a small island near the mainland of Okinawa prefecture and has spent the past two years both teaching and being a cultural ambassador as the only foreigner living in the area. According to Cory, being knowledgeable about American civic and political life has been helpful in creating connections and sharing American culture with the local Japanese community.
Club and Event News

This semester, the Pre-Law Society has a number of events on tap for both members and the greater UST community. In early October, PLS hosted its annual "Road to Law School" event open to all UST students, which included information about the application process, the LSAT, letters of recommendation, and other topics related to considering applying to law school. PLS is currently working out the logistics of visiting the UST law school in early November to speak with Admissions and sit in on a 1L class; this event is only open for current PLS members. Additionally, PLS is putting together a debate about religious liberty and sexual orientation non-discrimination; this event will be open to the entire UST community, so keep your eyes open for updates!

In November the UST Foreign Affairs Club’s Model UN Team will attend the American Model United Nations (AMUN) International Conference in Chicago, IL. The team will represent the states of France and Monaco, providing the team with a rare opportunity to play the role of a Permanent-5, veto-holding member of the United Nations Security Council. A member of the team, Chelsea Reinartz, also secured a coveted and competitive position on the International Court of Justice simulation. The team is looking forward to their opportunity to play a very active role in all of the General Assembly committees and Security Council simulations.

The 2014-2015 UST Mock Trial Team will be competing at three invitational tournaments this fall, and likely two additional tournaments in January and February. After losing two members to graduation last year, heavy recruiting has resulted in a team of almost 20 members. We’re excited to embrace the challenges of a new season after our successful run last year, where one of our two teams placed second at the Regional Competition and advanced to the next round in the national tournament. Best of luck this year and may all your hard work and dedication pay off, Tommie Mockers!

The UST Chi Theta Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society, initiated three new members this Fall Semester: Anneliese McCahery, Chelsea Petersen and MacKenzie Watson. Membership in Chi Theta acknowledges their superior academic performance in Political Science.

Two Beyond the Classroom sessions are scheduled for the Fall 2014 semester. The first, which took place on Tuesday, October 21, dealt with the 2014 midterm elections. Members of the faculty talked both about the specifics of the Minnesota elections and a number of national issues, including voter ID laws and various legal challenges to these laws. Representatives from the College Democrats were also on hand to talk about their efforts at voter registration; the College Republicans were unfortunately unable to send a representative.

The second session, “Political Communication Careers: Using Earned and Paid Media to Win Campaigns”, is co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science and the Department of Communication and Journalism. Marcy Stech, a 2007 UST alumni, will discuss lessons learned in her career in political communication. Her experience working in the private sector and on political campaigns, and her work behind-the-scenes and as a spokeswoman, will help demystify what it takes to win campaigns. She will also describe a variety career options in the field of political communications. Stech is currently the National Press Secretary for EMILY’s List, the nation's largest resource for women in politics, which works to elect pro-choice Democratic women to political office. The event will be held on December 2.
Dr. Nicholas Martini has been an adjunct faculty member with the department since 2012. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. His research focuses on topics in both the American Politics and International Relations sub-fields, including the influence and impact of public opinion on foreign policy issues and the role religion plays in politics and public opinion. He has published in various journals including, Political Research Quarterly, Electoral Studies, Social Science Quarterly and Foreign Policy Analysis. In the spring, Professor Martini will be teaching three courses: Introduction to World Politics (POLS 225), Congress and the Presidency (POLS 305) and Comparative Foreign Policy (POLS 321).

Dr. Arijit Mazumdar’s book, Indian Foreign Policy in Transition: Relations with South Asia, was recently published by Routledge Press. So how did Dr. Mazumdar get to St. Thomas and the department of Political Science? Here’s how, in his own words:

I was born in Kolkata (Calcutta), India, and moved to the U.S. in the fall of 2000, enrolling as an undergraduate student at Luther College, IA. My graduate studies took me first to Ball State University for a Master’s degree in Political Science and later to Miami University (Ohio), where I earned a Ph.D. in Political Science. I came to UST in the fall of 2008. As an Associate Professor, I teach courses in Asian politics, comparative foreign policy and developing world politics and government. My research interests include the study of comparative politics and international relations of Asia, with particular emphasis on India, China, Pakistan and Nepal. In my spare time, I enjoy watching Masterpiece Mysteries on PBS Television and am also an avid follower of English Premier League Soccer and the Indian Cricket Team.

Faculty Research and Publications:

Dr. Mazumdar was featured in the Spring 2014 CAS Spotlight article, India Changes With the World. He will also be presenting a paper entitled Indian Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion at the International Studies Association (ISA) annual meeting to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana in February 2015.

Dr. Steve Hoffman and Dr. Renee Buhr presented papers at two recent conferences on the situation in Ukraine. The first, The End of the Post-Cold War Order? Ukraine, Russia and American Security, was sponsored by the Minnesota International Center and various university departments. The second, International law, Sovereignty, and Ukraine: Legal and Policy Implications was sponsored by the University’ School of Law.

Dr. Hoffman presented a paper entitled Tar Sands: Or How to Derail a Sensible Energy Future at the Luann Dummer Center for Women. The presentation discussed Minnesota’s dependence on Canadian-source tar sands crude oil and the impact of its exploitation on numerous First Nation communities.

Dr. Angela High-Pippert spent her Spring 2014 sabbatical buried in Girl Scout handbooks. All of this reading and coding has resulted in two conference papers -- one at the Midwest Political Science Association Conference in Chicago in April and one at the National Women's Studies Association Conference in Puerto Rico in November. She also has an article, "Girltopia: Girl Scouts and the Redefining of Leadership," under review with a Women's Studies journal. Dr. High-Pippert continues to work with Dr. Hoffman on community energy research, with a focus on community solar.