Political Science Department Newsletter

Note from the Chair

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to share with you the latest developments in KU’s Department of Political Science. With this Fall, 2007 issue we are re-energizing the newsletter series. We plan to have a new issue each fall. The newsletter will also be available on our website at http://www2.ku.edu/~kups/

One key piece of news is that top British political commentator and market research pioneer Sir Robert Worcester has committed a gift of $2 million to establish a distinguished professorship in the Department of Political Science at KU. Sir Robert’s gift to the Kansas University Endowment Association endows the Sir Robert Worcester Distinguished Professorship in Public Opinion and Survey Research. We hope that there will be news of the filling of this very important position in the near future. We are tremendously grateful for the opportunity that Sir Robert’s gift has provided and committed to translating that opportunity into a reality.

Meanwhile, as the remainder of this newsletter shows, there are additional positive developments. Three new faculty members joined the department this year (see page 3), the latest in a wave of exciting new faculty recruited in the past few years. I encourage you to visit our web site to see our full current roster of faculty and information on their specialties. There is also information inside this newsletter on some recent faculty activities of interest.

On a sadder note, we regret the passing of two emeritus faculty – Carl Lande and Russell Getter and our colleague Deborah (“Misty”) Gerner. The department is that much richer for the intellectual and educational contributions that they made. I would like to thank Prof. Gary Reich, who recently ended a fine tour of duty as Undergraduate Studies Director/Director of the International Studies Co-Major, Prof. Fiona Yap, who then took on these important roles, and Prof. Juliet Kaarlo who continues to provide great leadership as Graduate Studies Director. Inside this newsletter you will find updates from them on these programs.

Finally, you will note the introduction of a new feature spotlighting recent alumni. Future issues may also spotlight current students and long-term alums. If you have suggestions for the spotlight, I would welcome them. These along with any other alumni notes, comments, or changes of address can be sent to me at esharp@ku.edu.

Elaine Sharp
Chair, Department of Political Science

Spotlight on Recent Undergrad Alumni

John Paul Fawcett got his B.A. in Political Science with the International Studies co-major in 2000. Through the Political Science department’s Washington D.C. Internship Program, he did an internship during his junior year with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and he did a semester of Study Abroad in Cairo during his senior year. After graduating from KU, John worked for Save the Children. This fall, he was appointed Legislative Director of RESULTS—an advocacy agency devoted to ending hunger and poverty by empowering individuals to exercise individual and political power.

Taylor Price got her B.A. in Political Science and History in 2007. Through the Humanities and Western Civilization Study Abroad Program, she studied in Florence and Paris in her junior year. Her senior year she did an internship at KCUR, the NFC affiliate in Kansas City. Throughout most of her college career, she worked as a research assistant for Prof. Schrtd on grant funded projects on contentious politics and international relations. In the summer of 2007, she accompanied Prof. Britton on a fieldwork trip to Namibia and South Africa, where she attended a conference on gender-based violence. Her experiences that summer have inspired her to pursue a Ph.D. in political science.

Prof. Britton (left), Taylor Price (right)
This picture was taken in Namibia at Sister Namibia, an organization they visited while there.
Recent Faculty Activities

Associate Professor Hannah Britton - spent 3 weeks in Namibia and South Africa this summer doing research on gender-based violence.

Professor Al Cigler and Professor Burdett Loomis - authors of Interest Group Politics, the 7th edition of the influential volume was published by CQ Press.

Assistant Professor Dorothy Daley - has been named the book review editor for Policy Studies Journal.

Professor Paul D’Anieri - continues to serve as Associate Dean for the Humanities in KU’s College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

Assistant Professor Alesha Doan - her book Opposition & Intimidation: The Abortion Wars and Strategies of Political Harassment has just been published by The University of Michigan Press.

Associate Professor Don Haider-Markel - is working on a book on representation in state legislatures for Georgetown University Press and collaborating with two faculty members in KU’s Department of Public Administration on a research project on racial profiling.

Professor Ron Francisco - received the newly established Best Data Set award from the American Political Science Association’s Comparative Politics section for a publicly available data set that has made an important contribution to the field of comparative politics. The award was presented at the August 2007 meeting of the association.

Professor Tom Hellke - has been named Associate Vice Provost in KU’s Office of International Programs.

Associate Professor Erik Herron - is spending the fall semester in the Ukraine on a Fulbright Fellowship.

Professor Paul Johnson - received a W.T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence this fall recognizing his excellence in teaching and advising at the graduate level. The awards were established by a $500,000 fund from the William T. Kemper Foundation-Commerce Bank Trustee, and $500,000 in matching funds from the KU Endowment Association.

Associate Professor Mark Joslyn - (along with co-author, Professor Don Haider-Markel) has a new article on public support for counter-terrorism policies that will be coming out in Social Science Quarterly.

Associate Professor Juliet Kaebo - was in Turkey in June 2007 at the height of that country’s pre-election tensions and constitutional crisis, doing research on Turkish foreign policy.

Assistant Professor John Kennedy - has established, with Chinese colleagues from Northwest University, Xian, a research center for training in social science research methods and conducting surveys in rural northwest China. The center got $150,000 from the Ford Foundation this year and additional funding from Plan International, a development foundation.

Associate Professor Sharon O’Brien - has been named Associate Director of KU’s Indigenous Nations Studies Program.

Associate Professor Gary Reich - has a forthcoming article in State Politics and Policy Quarterly on the issue of in-state tuition for undocumented students. The article is co-authored with recently graduated KU Political Science major, Alvar Ayala, who is now in his last year at the University of Michigan Law School. Prof. Reich also has a forthcoming article on constitutional bargaining in Brazil in the journal Constitutional Political Economy.

Professor Elaine Sharp - has been designated the Norton Long Career Achievement Award winner by the American Political Science Association’s Urban Politics Section. The award was presented at the August 2007 meeting of the association.

Professor Paul Schumaker - his book From Ideologies to Public Philosophies is being published by Blackwell Publishers (London).

Professor Philip Schrotte - has been elected president of the American Political Science Association’s section on Political Methodology — the best in APSA. Philip Schrotte, along with Ohio State University’s political science professor Janet Box-Steffensmeier, have received a grant for $250,000 from the National Science Foundation to support the section’s activities.

Assistant Professor Brent Steele - his book Ontological Security in International Relations is being published by Routledge as part of their new series in international relations.

Assistant Professor Kate Weaver - was named editor of the journal Review of International Political Economy, a top ten journal in the international relations field.

Associate Professor Fiona Yap - spent part of the summer in Taiwan as part of a delegation invited by the Taiwanese government discuss the Taiwan-United Nations issue and the country’s upcoming elections with political candidates and ministers.
New Faculty are a welcome addition to the department

Christina Bejarano (Ph.D., University of Iowa, 2007) is a specialist in Latina legislative electoral prospects. More generally, her research and teaching interests include the conditions under which minorities and women successfully compete for electoral office and how they shape or influence the current electoral environment.

Michael Lynch (Ph.D., Washington University, 2007) is a specialist on the quantitative modeling of legislative outcomes. More broadly, his research and teaching interests include bureaucratic and inter-branch politics in the U.S., public choice theory and quantitative methods. On a more personal note, Michael became a father for the first time early this semester when son Parker was born.

Mariya Omelicheva, (Ph.D., Purdue University, 2007) is a specialist on human rights and state responses to terrorism. Her research and teaching interests include Eurasian security policy, Russian foreign policy, human rights law, and the role of non-governmental organizations in world politics.

Comments from the Graduate Director, Juliet Kaarbo

The Graduate program in Political Science at KU is the only political science department in the state of Kansas to offer a Ph.D., and one of only a handful in the Big 12 that do so. In addition to the Ph.D., we offer the M.A., and in both degrees, students are free to develop their interests within several subfields-political theory, U.S. government, public policy, international relations and comparative politics. Many of our faculty have received awards for graduate mentoring. Our graduate seminars are small, allowing for individual attention.

There is independent evidence that we are a strong graduate department. A recent ranking of doctoral programs in Political Science ranks KU’s doctoral program 6th in the nation. The ranking is based on the scholarly output of the faculty. These results are reported in an article in the electronic issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education, dated January 12, 2007.

Our graduate students come to us from around the United States and around the world. They are busy and productive. Many of them serve as teaching assistants in our political science undergraduate courses. They also work on research.

In the last year, they have published more than seven articles and have presented more than twenty-five research papers at professional conferences. In the 2006-2007 academic year, seven students completed their M.A. degrees and three completed their Ph.Ds. Several have received fellowships and awards this past year as well.

I believe things are looking up for graduate students in our department. The new Provost and the new Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences have made graduate education a high priority at KU. This has already resulted in better salaries for our graduate teaching assistants.

We are hoping to be even more competitive in the future and to secure more support for our graduate students to attend conferences and professional workshops.

Information about what the graduate students are up to can be found at the graduate association link on the political science departmental website. If you would like to communicate with a graduate student, email us at kusga@gmail.com. PGA officers would love to hear from you and what you have been up to since your KU days.

Comments from the Undergraduate Director, Fiona Yap

Political Science remains one of the majors of choice among our undergraduates at KU. Our Advising Specialist, Dawn Shew, reports that the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has a total of 603 undergraduates declaring their intent to pursue political science as a major and 282 declared majors. Among the 603 intended majors, Dawn estimates that 450 have completed the necessary requirements to fulfill the major and predicts that these students will be declared majors soon.

We are also delighted that our undergraduates are completing the major in a timely fashion. In particular, Ms. Shew reports that we are graduating approximately 160 undergraduates each year, so that we are seeing a completion rate that is about four years.

With the help of our alumni support, we hope to continue to ensure that the undergraduate program continues to retain and graduate good students in four years.