DEAR POLITICAL SCIENCE ALUMNUS

We hope all is well and that you are surviving these difficult times. Will the economic recession and the oil spill in the Gulf impact the November elections? Will the Republicans reclaim the Congress? What impact will the recession have on the election contest in Connecticut? Needless to say, the forthcoming elections will be fascinating!

Much has transpired during this past Academic Year which we would like to share with you. In addition to describing our department’s activity, this year’s newsletter contains two special features. Our special features include a summary of Dr. K.’s address at the inaugural ceremony of the John F. Kikoski Scholarship, and Dr. Lesley DeNardis’ “Reflections of a Convention Delegate.” We trust you will find this year’s newsletter informative and thought provoking.

Constitution Day

On September 17, 2009, Congressman Jim Himes, who represents Connecticut’s Fourth Congressional District, served as our “Constitution Day” guest speaker. The Congressman spoke before a standing room only audience in the University Commons. He delivered a riveting and well-researched lecture on constitutional principles and addressed the challenges that confront a freshman member of Congress. The Congressman also conversed with students long after his formal delivery. This was the fifth “Constitution Day” lecture sponsored by the Department of Government and Politics. Mr. Andrew Schneider, Executive Director of the Connecticut ACLU will serve as our guest speaker in September. The topic will be the Eighth Amendment and the death penalty in the U.S. Admission is free and open to the public.

The John F. Kikoski Scholarship

As many of you know, there is now a scholarship in Dr. K.’s honor that is housed within the Office of Alumni Relations. The scholarship was inaugurated in a special ceremony conducted in the Board Room of the William H. Pitt Health and Recreation Center on April 8, 2010. Dr. K. served as the inaugural ceremony’s guest speaker. Approximately twenty-five political science alumni were present for this special event. Ms. Heather Falsetti, a double major in political science and philosophy, and Ms. Whitney Wildman, a double major in political science and history, were
Dr. Kikoski dispensed more wisdom, telling his former students that over the course of his life he’s learned you can’t plan everything. “But you can follow your heart, set your goals, and do something that you love. There wasn’t a day that went by when I didn’t wake up and not love what I was doing. I was excited every September as another academic year began and to be here with you.”

Dr. Kikoski also advised the audience to trust their instincts. “Instinct or intuition can be wrong, but it is more often right. There is a nerve that begins in the most primitive, pre-verbal part of our brains that we share with reptiles, and it goes to our intestines, or ‘gut’.”

Dr. Kikoski said that when he was younger, he dreamed of becoming a physician and planned to attend medical school. “One day, I pulled up in the university parking lot, opened the car door, put one foot on the tamrac, and -- instead of going to the organic chemistry lab -- went to the political science department and asked for an application. To this day, I don’t know why I did it but I had an epiphany. Trust your ‘gut.’ Do what you love. I once read a line that said, ‘All truth is feeling.’ Trust it,” he said.

“Love what you do, love each other, no act of kindness goes unrewarded,” he continued. “You can’t be loved if you don’t love.” The reflective Dr. Kikoski said that a series of “awful things” had happened to him many years ago because of certain people, and he finally realized that if he didn’t forgive them, they would continue to control him. “The only way to get rid of them was to forgive them and that leads to a much better life.”

Dr. Kikoski also called on the audience to have faith in order to accomplish anything different, new, or substantial. “Show me the evidence that Bill Gates or Steve Jobs who started Microsoft and Apple knew beforehand that they would become the giants that they are. The evidence isn’t there. Those men had faith. If you want to accomplish anything in life, you have to have faith.”

In his final thoughts, a tearful Dr. Kikoski told his students, “I pray for all of you every day -- by name if I’ve heard one of you is in difficulty or in thanks for your success -- but I pray for all of you and you will always be with me.” He concluded by advising his student audience, “And don’t wait until you are age 65 (like I did) to enjoy good beer, good scotch,
good wine and occasionally a good cigar,” he said with a chuckle.

Candidates Day at SHU

On April 13, 2010, the Department of Government and Politics in conjunction with the College Democrats and College Republicans hosted “Candidates Day” in the University Commons. The event was a great success. More than twenty candidates for public office were present for what essentially was a “meet and greet” for the University community. Hundreds of students, faculty staff and members of the outside community were provided the rich opportunity of personally meeting candidates for the U.S. Senate, Congress, the Connecticut governorship and the Connecticut state legislature. Candidates were provided a personal booth which allowed them to prominently display their campaign literature and other promotional material. The extraordinary success of “Candidates Day” has encouraged the Department to host the event on a regular basis.

A Revised Political Science Major

The valuable feedback we received from last year’s survey of political science alumni has resulted in a revised political science curriculum. PO301: Ancient and Medieval Political Thought and PO 302: Modern Political Thought have now been collapsed into one mandatory theory requirement, PO300: Foundations of Political Thought. Additionally, PO200: Approaches to Political Science is now a required course for all political science majors. A number of alumni thoughtfully suggested that a methods course be required of all majors. We have responded to your suggestions by mandating PO200. The new political science curriculum is as follows:

**Required Courses:**
- PO 121: Introduction to American Government
- PO 122: Introduction to International Relations
- PO 200: Approaches to Political Science
- PO 300: Foundations of Political Thought
- One Course in Comparative Politics
- PO 395: Senior Seminar in Political Science
- 18 Credits of Political Science Electives (can include up to 9 credits of internship)

**Total required credits = 36**

**Faculty Scholarship**

The political science faculty were active scholars this past Academic Year.


**Dr. Alka Jauhari** presented a paper at the African Studies Association Conference, “Sudan: A Divided Society.” She also completed a manuscript “Colonial and Post-Colonial Human Rights Violations in Nigeria.” Additional activity included reviews of chapters in a book entitled International Relations in an Uncertain World published by Oxford University Press, and continued work on an article, “South Sudan: A Fledgling Nation.”

**Dr. Steve Michels** prepared and offered two new political science electives: Politics and Humor, and Politics and Literature. He has also prepared a new course entitled Democracy for the fall, 2010 semester. The three new courses will likely be cataloged in the near future. He also co-authored a chapter with Religious Studies professor Dr. Brian Stiltner, “Religion, Rhetoric, and Running for Office: Public Reason on the Campaign Trail,” in Religious Voices in Public Places (Oxford University Press, 2009). He is looking forward to his sabbatical next spring, when he will complete work on a book-length project, The Case Against Democracy.

**Dr. Gary L. Rose** completed and published another book, Shaping A Nation: Twenty-Five Supreme Court Cases That Changed The United States (Academica Press, 2010). Dr. Rose’s book explores what he perceives as the most profound U.S. Supreme Court rulings in the history of the United States. Unlike other works on constitutional law, this book provides the reader with extended political, economic and social context for the purpose...
of understanding the high court’s rulings. The cases selected for review range from Marbury v. Madison (1803) to Bush v. Gore (2000). In addition to this project, Dr. Rose is working on a case study of Connecticut’s Fourth Congressional District from World War II to the present. He continues to provide political analysis for national, state and local media.

Outstanding Student Achievements: AY 2009-2010

Shana Beladino was this year’s recipient of the Silver Medal of Excellence in Political Science. Shana has been accepted into the Teach for America Program sponsored by the federal government. She will teach students in one of Connecticut’s inner-city schools upon completion of the program this summer.

Elizabeth Cronin was accepted into the education graduate program at Sacred Heart University.

Cory Emilia was accepted into the graduate program in international relations at Rutgers University.

Heather Falsetti was this year’s recipient of the Gold Medal of Excellence in Political Science. Heather was accepted into the graduate program in political science at Fordham University. A double major in political science and philosophy, Heather won first place in the Writing Across the Curriculum contest this year for her research paper entitled “Is Religion Necessary or Superfluous?” Heather placed first in last year’s contest as well. She was one of two recipients of the Dr. John F. Kikoski Scholarship Award.

Jennifer Wysocki was accepted into the Quinnipiac University School of Law.

Internships

Many political science students during the 2009-2010 Academic Year worked as interns in a wide variety of settings. Although not a formal requirement, practically all of our political science majors are placed in at least one internship prior to graduation. A lengthy research paper, or several book reviews, are routinely assigned to complement the internship experience. Political science majors served as interns at the following sites:

• Connecticut State Capitol
• Office of Congressman Jim Himes
• Office of Senator Joe Lieberman
• Office of Congressman Peter King
• Campaign staffs of gubernatorial candidates
• Campaign staff of candidate for Trumbull First Selectman
• Local law offices
• Connecticut Superior Court
• College Republicans National Headquarters in D.C.
• Port Authority of New York
• International Institute of Connecticut
• City Attorney’s Office, Bridgeport, CT
• Village of Sag Harbor, Long Island, NY
• Department of Homeland Security

Pi Sigma Alpha Induction

Seventeen students were inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha on April 15th, 2010. Mr. Anthony Cilento (’02) an organizer for United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (AFL-CIO) served as this year’s guest speaker. Anthony spoke on the goals and values of organized labor in the twenty-first century. Several parents were in attendance and a reception followed the ceremony.

Alumni Update

Javier Lopez (’09) was accepted into Syracuse University School of Law

Lauren Black (’07) was accepted into the social work graduate program at Boston College.

Jeff Guillot (’04) is the Legislative Director for New York State Assemblyman Richard L. Brodsky (D). Jeff recently received his MA in American Government from C.W. Post in Long Island, and serves as the Finance Director for the Queens County Young Democrats.

Aaron Chrostowsky (’00) is the Town Manager in Clinton, Maine

Cindy (Lisa ’99) Egloff recently completed her Masters in Adolescent Education and is working as the Graduate Advisor for the School of Management at Long Island University, CW Post campus.
Reflections of a Convention Delegate

Dr. Lesley DeNardis served as a delegate to the State Republican Nominating Convention held in Hartford on May 21-22. Her reflections regarding this unique political experience are presented below.

This past May I had the honor of attending the State Republican Convention as a delegate. Every four years, delegates from each major party gather for the purpose of selecting nominees for the offices of U.S. Senate, Congress, the Governor as well as all state constitutional officers. Attending the convention as a delegate was especially meaningful given that my father, Lawrence DeNardis, was a gubernatorial candidate. A former Third District Congressman and University of New Haven President, my father decided to seek the nomination after Governor Rell announced her decision not to seek reelection last November. I had the honor of making the seconding speech on his behalf before fifteen hundred delegates and members of the media. It was an experience like no other and one which I shall never forget.

Connecticut is one of only a few states that still utilize the convention as a method of selecting nominees for state and national offices. Most states have moved to a primary system whereby rank and file registered party members select candidates directly. In Connecticut, we have both a convention and a primary system. The convention is the first step in an arduous process that ends with the general election in November. This year was unusual in Connecticut gubernatorial politics with a highly contested race with a total of six candidates all vying for the nomination. The objective was to gain at least fifteen percent of the total delegates in order to reach the necessary threshold to qualify for a primary. Advocates for the state convention view it as a means of testing a candidate’s viability before entering a larger scale race. Detractors view it as less democratic by placing too much power in the hands of a small group that is not necessarily representative of rank and file party members. Nonetheless, it remains part of the political landscape in Connecticut and poses the first major hurdle that any candidate must clear before entering either the primary or general election phase of the process.

Delegates are selected on the basis of their membership on their respective Republican town committees. The size of each delegation varies based on a formula that takes into account the number of registered Republicans and election turnout in a particular town. For Hamden, our delegation consisted of sixteen delegates, plus one superdelegate. Superdelegates are individuals who are members of the Republican State Central Committee or state elected officials. As a member of the Board of Education in Hamden, I am an ex officio member of the Republican Town committee and therefore automatically eligible for membership in my delegation. In the weeks and months leading up to the state convention, delegates are courted with an intensity not seen in recent years. Like other candidates, my father spent an enormous amount of time crisscrossing the state to meet with Republican Town Committees as well as to participate in numerous gubernatorial forums and debates.

Our particular delegation, given the long history of involvement in politics by my father, was unanimously in support of their “favorite son”. Other towns split their support among the three gubernatorial candidates, some for Foley, others for Fedele and Griebel. Each candidate displayed pockets of support in the different regions of Connecticut. As the result of his forty years of public service in the Greater New Haven area, my father drew most of his support from this region. A few surprise “pop out” towns like the Windsor Locks delegation supporting my father made the process interesting and somewhat unpredictable.

On Saturday morning, the focus was on selecting a gubernatorial candidate. The voting went in the order of congressional districts, with the third Congressional district going first according to a set rotation. After each delegation cast its votes, the tellers would announce the results over the microphone. To the surprise of many delegates, votes were manually tabulated instead of by computer. This long, arduous process is the most difficult part of being a delegate and can take several hours. After the votes for each town have been recorded, the process known as switching begins. Delegates are allowed to switch their votes before the second ballot. In the case of my father, he did not reach the fifteen percent threshold necessary to qualify to stay on the ballot and therefore he “released” his delegates. This allows for those who were previously committed to him to switch their votes to another candidate. At this moment it helped me to remember that the ultimate purpose is for fellow Republicans to reach an agreement about the nominee and ideally to emerge from the convention unified. The switching resulted in Foley garnering enough votes to qualify as the convention endorsed candidate. Lt. Governor Michael Fedele and Oz Griebel each qualified to force a primary.

Despite the fact that the outcome was not what we would have wished, I am extremely proud of the spirited and issues oriented campaign that my father conducted. Many delegates had approached me to say that they appreciated the high level of preparation and qualifications he exhibited for this office. However, other considerations entered into the equation most notably fundraising ability which has grown in importance as the cost of campaigns has risen exponentially over the years.

All in all, the experience of being a delegate, especially while my father was a candidate, was a rich and rewarding one for which I am grateful.

We trust that you have enjoyed this year’s newsletter. We are proud of our department and proud of the fact that you are an alumnus of the political science program at Sacred Heart University. Please keep in touch, and let us know what you are doing with your life.

Stay well.

Sincerely,

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