News From the Chair

Welcome to our first edition of Polity! This is a newsletter which the Department of Political Science at Stetson University hopes to produce each semester in order to keep you up to date on major happenings in the department, and to give graduates a forum to let us all know your latest adventures and achievements.

The Political Science department at Stetson continues to be a prestige department here at Stetson. For instance, we are an award-winning department. Dr. Maris was one of the first recipients of the McEniry Best Teaching Award in 1984; Dr. Huskey was one of the first recipients of the Hand Research Award in 1997; Dr. Bailey was the first winner of the Hand Community Impact Award in 1999; and Dr. Hallum was the second winner of the Hand Community Impact Award in 2000 for her work in Guatemala.

Meanwhile, we are also a publishing department, as Dr. Huskey receives sterling reviews of his 1999 book on the Russian Presidency (M.E. Sharpe, publishers); and Dr. Nylen publishes an article in the major journal, Comparative Politics, while he also completes his book manuscript analyzing the Worker’s Party in Brazil.

When Dr. Gary Maris left his position as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in order to return to teaching, it put the department in the wonderful position of having five outstanding faculty members, so that we may provide more course offerings than ever before. (Perhaps some of you remember when Dr. Bailey was the only faculty member, and the many years when only Dr. Bailey and Dr. Maris "covered the waterfront" of the Political Science discipline. Having five faculty members seems luxurious indeed to these two!) We are able to teach new courses such as Comparative Public Policies; and International Trade and Finance; and The Unknown Asia: Politics and Society in the Russian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern Borderlands.

Let us know what you think of this newsletter, and also feel free to send a brief email message about your own activities to dbungard@stetson.edu, with the subject: Polity. We’ll include it in a special column in our next issue.

With warm regards from your Alpha Mater,
Anne Motley Hallum
Chairperson, Department of Political Science
CURRENT EVENTS

September

13th: Citizenship Day, 12:30 Swearing In Ceremony, Elizabeth Hall Chapel

21st: 1 p.m. Multimedia Presentation from Estela Armengol, Scott Smothers and Luerne Herrera who visited Kyrgyzstan with Dr. Huskey, Library Presentation Room

October

9th-13th: Presidential Student Straw Poll
23rd-26th: International Symposium on Cuba (CUB)

November

13th: 6-7:30 p.m. Presentation from students who worked in Nicaragua; Elizabeth Hall, 3rd Floor

December

5th: 7 p.m. Thurman Lecture Series presents Andrew W. Manis, "Civil Religions and the Problem of Race in the New Millenium"

31st Model United State Senate in March 22, 23 & 24, 2001

ALUMNI


-Shawn Tedman (1998) is attending North Carolina Law School at Chapel Hill.

-Dr. David Hill (1995) is an assistant Professor of Political Sciences at Bridgewater College, Boston.

-Lila Jaber (1989) was appointed by Governor Bush in 2000 as Public Service Commissioner for the State of Florida.

-Jim Daughton (1989), formerly a personal aide to Governor Lawton Chiles, is now an Associate with the law firm of Holland and Knight.
For three weeks in May, I accompanied three Stetson Political Science majors to Central Asia as part of a mentored field course entitled The Politics of the Silk Road. En route to Central Asia, the group was in London for two days, where they spent an evening at the home of the Kyrgyzstani ambassador and met leading Western specialists on Central Asian history and politics.

Once in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, Professor Huskey, Estela Armengol, Luerne Herrera, and Scott Smothers conducted interviews with two dozen officials, scholars, and journalists. Among those interviewed were prominent parliamentarians, party leaders, and presidential candidates, the ambassador of the OSCE, and the editor of the opposition newspaper, Res Publica. From these meetings, and from informal discussions with Kyrgyz students at the American University of Kyrgyzstan and with host families, the students acquired a sophisticated understanding of the political, economic, and social challenges facing Kyrgyzstan in its transition from communism.

There was also time to enjoy the beauty and culture of this mountainous country, whether in the cafes or clubs of the capital or in the pristine environment around Lake Issyk-Kul, which is one of the world’s great inland lakes. For four days, we travelled with a Kyrgyz host family around Lake Issyk-Kul in a minibus. One of the most memorable spots was Jeti-Oguz, a series of red mountains that marked the entrance to spectacular alpine valleys. Beyond the rugged snow-capped mountains was the Chinese Border. As part of the course, the students gave a multimedia presentation on their trip to interested members of the University community and the public on September 21.

Life has taken on the intellectual delight of being back in the classroom after 12 years as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. I’d almost forgotten how pleasant it is to engage in classroom discussion of everything fromberman politics to the political strategies and ethics surrounding abortion issues. It’s particularly nice to be working with students in a more positive fashion since life as a dean often means working with students with a multitude of problems.

One of the special summer pleasures has been spending a couple weeks each summer in Mexico trying to learn some Spanish and reading about Mexican politics in the Mexican newspapers for my Comparative Politics course. This summer was especially fruitful with respect to learning about the politics since it was the election summer and one which would have an historic impact on Mexico due to the first change in the party controlling the presidency in 71 years. I had the opportunity to attend the political rally in Oaxaca for Vicent Fox, the man elected to the presidency. This was an interesting spectacle, even before Fox, arrived with a number of “stump speeches” by other politicians rallying the party faithful.

The rest of the summer was spent catching up on the reading that I had missed for the last decade and also learning some of the new jargon political scientists are throwing around these days. Social scientists have a knack for developing new words to say old things as well as some new things.