News From The Chair

As we began a new academic year in the Department, it was difficult to believe that it had been one year since the traumatic events of September 11th transpired. Dr. Huskey organized a campus-wide discussion panel consisting of six faculty members to analyze and discuss the aftermath of the attacks. Approximately 100 persons attended this thought-provoking forum. A forum to discuss “civil liberties” is also scheduled in October.

In this issue we identify some of our Political Science alumni involved in competition for electoral office. We recognize that political campaigns are exhausting undertakings and we are proud of all of you for making a personal sacrifice for the sake of public service. We will be watching all of the races closely, and we invite candidate alumni to send us your impressions of campaigning via email, if you can find some spare minutes. (See Alumni Notes)

So many Books...so little time (and money...). If you are interested in a specific way you might help out the Political Science department, we will soon be over budget once again in our purchase of new books for the library. One explanation for this annual dilemma is that we continue to introduce new courses, such as Dr. Maris’s “Contemporary Political Thought” and Dr. Huskey’s “Central Asia,” which require new core collections. You may make a gift either to Library Associates sent to duPont-Ball Library, or to the Political Science department with instructions on how you would like the gift used. We will be happy to place a book plate, “Gift of (your name),” in the book(s) purchased to show our appreciation.

Another designation for your support is the “Dr. T. Wayne Bailey Scholarship Fund” honoring the founder of our Department. The gifts from these Scholarships will go to the tuition of sophomores, juniors and seniors who have successful academic records and financial need. Any donation may be sent to the Office of Planned Giving, Stetson University, Deland, FL 32723, with the designation for “Dr. Bailey Scholarship.” This is a wonderful tribute to a man who has been mentoring students at Stetson for 40 years.

Finally, you have a standing invitation to visit the Department, sitting in on a class or visiting during office hours. You may find the current course schedule on the Registrar’s page on the Stetson website. We always enjoy visiting with and hearing from you.

Dr. Anne Motley Hallum

Department Chairperson
Reflections

(Diplomatic career is foreign to many young Americans - The U.S. Foreign Service is experiencing a personnel crisis. Young Americans still want to join the diplomatic corps, but as they mature through the ranks they are increasingly reluctant to subject themselves and their families to the hardships of dangerous or out-of-the-way posts, even with the lure of special benefits.

One cannot blame Foreign Service officers with children for refusing assignments to countries such as Pakistan, where terrorists have targeted the families of diplomats. But in many cases the posts are not especially dangerous, simply uncomfortable and, well—foreign.

Take the American consulate in Ekaterinburg, Russia. This is the capital of Russia's industrial heartland, a city of 2 million people that is only four hours away from Frankfurt by regular Lufthansa jets. From what better perch could one view Russia's economic and political transition? Yet when I was there in May, American diplomats complained that it was proving impossible to attract promising Foreign Service officers for the post.

To be sure, alongside some very pleasing pre-revolutionary and post communist architecture are somber, gray high-rises from the Soviet era. And, yes, the winters are long - it was snowing on May 25! But Ekaterinburg is essentially a modern, European city with high levels of literacy and hygiene.

A few weeks earlier I had encountered a very different American spirit in another part of the former Soviet Union. While in Samarkand on a State Department speaker's tour, I met several Americans who were living in this provincial Uzbek city or in the villages around it, which are only a couple of hundred miles from the Afghan border.

One man in his late 60's had been teaching English in Samarkand's Institute for Foreign Languages for several years. Three young women, Peace Corps volunteers fresh out of college, were working as health-care specialists in small villages, learning Uzbek and adapting to life without running water or indoor plumbing.

Having been evacuated from the region temporarily after the war began in Afghanistan, these Peace Corps volunteers returned to their assignments eagerly and with a renewed commitment to offer assistance, on however modest a scale, to a society in transition from communism.

How do we infuse the spirit of these short-term volunteers into the corps of career diplomats?

Recruiting the right people is, of course, one means of ensuring that we have American diplomats who view distant embassies and consulates as a professional challenge rather than a personal hardship. Those who have shown an ability to adjust to difficult surroundings, whether in this country or overseas, should receive special consideration.

Graduates with backgrounds in area studies are often excellent candidates because of their knowledge and appreciation of foreign languages and cultures. Although some American diplomats have a superb command of the language of the host country, an unacceptably large number still arrive at their posts with rudimentary language skills.

One of the most disturbing discoveries for me during a year of doctoral research in Moscow two decades ago was that many Foreign Service officers in the U.S. Embassy could not speak passable Russian. For example, an American political officer whose assignment was to cover a speech by a Soviet official on the Iranian revolution had to rely on me to interpret the lecture for him.

Perhaps even more important than recruitment or training is the lifestyle that the Foreign Service nurtures in overseas posts. In trying to recreate the housing and culinary conditions that one finds in the United States, the government creates diplomatic ghettos that isolate personnel from the host culture. Recently enacted rules only deepen this isolation by discouraging contacts between diplomats and foreign nationals in many countries. Soviet citizens in sensitive professions lived under such rules for decades, and it is troubling that our government is now reinstating this relic of the Cold War.

Instead of standing apart from the host society, the American Foreign Service officer should become something of an insider. Viewing the country from this perspective not only sharpens linguistic skills and the analyses of local economic and political developments, it also reduces the psychological strain of living away from home for long periods.

We have worried for far too long in this country about our Foreign Service offices “going native.” It’s time to recognize that the greater danger lies in their not being native enough.)
Alumni Highlights

Senator Jack Latvala 73’

Senator Latvala is the Florida Senator from North Pinellas/West Pasco counties, including the city of Clearwater. His path from college to a major political office started in his early years at Stetson University because politics was his career goal even as an undergraduate. In his senior year at Stetson, Jack played a major role in Bud Fleuches’s campaign for the U.S. Congress on the Republican ticket, which helped him land a position in the 1970’s as the Finance Director and Acting Executive Director for the Republican Party. After Jack Eckerd’s unsuccessful bid for the governorship, Jack worked with him to help recruit Republican candidates throughout Florida. This led to an interest in, and eventually, a business in direct mailing. He established a highly successful direct mail business which made him the direct mail consultant for Republican parties in twenty-eight states. In 1994 he decided to go directly into politics and ran for the state Senate. He won, was re-elected in 1996 and again in 2000. Due to term limits in Florida this is his last term as State Senator.

While in office, Senator Latvala was the Senate majority leader for two years and headed the Senate’s committee on congressional redistricting. This committee was one of the most important committees in the Senate as Florida prepared new congressional district lines.

When Dr. Maris asked Senator Latvala his source of greatest satisfaction in his political activities, he replied, “helping to restructure the water program system for three counties in the Tampa Bay area.” This was a critical need and now has a good solution.

Finally, when asked what advice he would offer to present students in preparing for a successful career, especially in politics, Senator Latvala replied, “Develop the ability to stand on your feet and express yourself.” He pointed out that his experience with Young Republicans and other organizations on Stetson’s campus, along with his classroom speaking were important in this regard.

To contact Senator Latvala via Email: latvala.jack.web@leg.state.fl.us
Alumni Notes

Class of...

'67  U.S. Senator Max Cleland, running for re-election for his third term as Democratic Senator from Georgia.
'83  Joe Negron, Running for re-election as Republican Member of the Florida House of Representatives.
'91  Joe Lee, Republican candidate for the Florida Senate from West Palm Beach.
'90  Andy Gardner, Running for re-election as Republican member of the Florida House of Representatives.
'98  Suzanne Kosmas, running for re-election as Democratic member of the Florida House of Representatives.
'94  Daniel Herron, Campaign Manager for Wayne Hogan, Democratic candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, St. Augustine.
'02  Lou Barbieri, Campaign Manager for Jim Ward, Democratic candidate for Florida Senate.
'02  Will O’Neill, Campaign Manager for Andy Spar, Democratic candidate for Florida House of Representatives

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