

Political Science/International Relations Student Newsletter

January 2005

Greetings! In spite of the harsh winter weather I hope you are doing well as we begin the Spring (?) 2005 semester. I view the Spring semester as a sprint to the finish, the reward of the awaiting summer gives me the drive to make it through. This is the 3rd newsletter I have sent to students since becoming chair of the department: its purpose is to keep you informed of important developments in the department, of which there are many.

As many of you know, the department conducted a search this year to hire a new professor to teach courses in American politics. I am pleased to announce that the department offered the position to Marilyn Klotz, she has accepted the position and will begin teaching courses in Fall 2005. Her areas of concentration are American Public Policy and the American Presidency. Ms. Klotz plans to defend her doctoral dissertation at Indiana University this summer. We are happy to have her on board as a member of the department, believing she will significantly strengthen our offerings.

Last semester the department reinstated the local internship program. This program will have a slightly different form than previously. Students who do a local internship will regularly meet with the faculty member who serves as internship coordinator during the semester of their internship. Students will work on their research papers as well as meet as a class to examine topics in political science, such as government, politics, globalization, and democracy. Responsibility for coordinating the internship program will rotate among most of the faculty. Professor Drachman handles this responsibility this academic year. I will assume this responsibility next year. Most students who do an internship treasure the experience, I urge you to give serious consideration to doing one.

As you might recall, Geneseo received a visit from its junior Senator this past September. Senator Clinton came to Geneseo to announce the creation of the Finger Lakes Trading Cooperative (FLTC)—a new program designed to help small businesses thrive and grow in Livingston and Wyoming Counties. She spoke in the Alice Austin Theater. The political science department had nothing to do with the planning of this event, but



many students (and some faculty) enjoyed the opportunity to do a little “star gazing.” Sean Gavin, a junior majoring in political science, is serving as an intern in Senator Clinton’s Washington, D.C. office. Sean and a few of his special friends are pictured here.

In addition to the visit by Senator Clinton, Democratic Assembly woman Barbara Lifton, a Geneseo graduate who majored in Speech Pathology, and Republican Assemblyman Dan Burling (from the Livingston County area) came to Geneseo on October 14th. Each spoke of the respective strengths of their political parties, New York state politics, and their own political careers. On October 28, 2004, the department sponsored a discussion of the then upcoming presidential elections. We gave our views on what was at stake, the consequences of the outcome for American politics, and even ventured predictions (half of us even made a correct prediction). We mostly had fun, and I think the students who were in attendance did as well. In 2008 we will do it again.

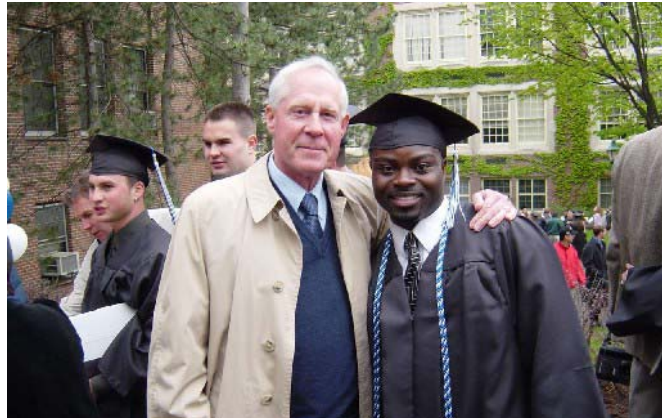


In October, Kevin Lovecchio (class of 2002, pictured at right, in black shirt) came to Geneseo to speak to students interested in attending Law School. Kevin is in his first semester at Harvard Law, reportedly enjoying the challenge.

One important way that many Geneseo alumni have contributed to our program is by simply coming to Geneseo to talk about their professional lives. During last year's program review, one of the ways we evaluated the department's effectiveness was to examine the careers of former students. The accomplishments were impressive and the career choices varied tremendously. Many students pursued careers clearly related to the political science or international relations major, and many others chose lines of work with, at least on the surface, little connection to political science. One former political science major is employed by the Dallas Mavericks basketball franchise, another works as a private investigator in Southern California. Many Geneseo graduates work in government and law. Geneseo Political Science and International Relations alumni are scattered throughout the United States. I certainly believe each Geneseo graduate deserves the lion's share of credit for his or her success, the faculty feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with students with tremendous potential and ambition. We like to think that we have played at least a small role in helping students move toward their life's goals.

This brings me to my next important announcement. On the evening of March 3rd the department will sponsor a career night. At this event several Geneseo alumni in Political Science and International Relations will return to campus to discuss the path they took from Political Science/International Relations undergrad to holding a successful career. It is pretty easy for me to locate former students who are doing well, there are many of them. They will talk about their current careers, how they made the move from student to gainful employment. I believe this will be an invaluable opportunity for you to learn about some of the options before you as you plan for life after Geneseo.

The number of Political Science and International Relations majors continues to grow. There are currently over 200 Political Science majors and more than 100 IR majors. Consequently, Political Sciences courses are filled to the brim. Until only a few years ago, 300-level courses rarely contained more than 20 students. The typical 300-level course today contains 30 or nearly 30 students. The department's 200-level courses now hold 40 students, and many reach that number. In the past 4 years the number of Political Science majors has increased by 50% (the number of faculty has actually decreased during this same time-span). Perhaps it is due to 9/11 or the war in Iraq, but student interest in politics throughout the country has witnessed an upsurge. The consequence of this for Geneseo is high demands on faculty time. It is great, however, to see such student interest in politics.



The faculty at Geneseo remains busy. Bob Goeckel took a group of students to Moscow this past June to study Russian history and contemporary politics in that rapidly changing country. He is hoping to take a group of students to Berlin in March to study Germany. Professor Cunningham, on leave last semester after giving birth to an adorable baby girl; returned to teaching in January. Jeremy Grace went to Afghanistan and Pakistan this past summer to make arrangements for the registration of Afghani refugees for that country's recently held elections. Ed Drachman will present a paper at a conference in New Orleans this March on immigration policy. Professor Deutsch continues to teach courses in political theory and legal studies as well as edit books on political theory. I went to Chicago this past September to present a paper at the American Political Science Association's annual meeting on black and white differences in approval of homosexuals and homosexuality and policies designed to benefit gay Americans. I plan to travel to Cambodia in May to teach Political Science and History Professors about how elections and political parties enhance peace and stability. Cambodia is a country with a fascinating past but has endured its share of misery in recent times. I am very excited about the opportunity that awaits me. I will also travel to the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago in April to review others scholarship and the American Political Science Association's Annual Meeting in September in Washington, D.C. At the latter I plan to present my recent research on "correct voting." Professor Philip Nicholas is teaching courses this semester on American Politics, being particularly helpful in enhancing our offerings in public policy. He has made valuable contributions to our department this semester. Sue Federico continues to serve as the Department secretary, continuing to help move things along in as smoothly as possible.

I want to take this opportunity to notify you of other important events that will occur this semester. On February 24th Dr. Harry Boyte of the University of Minnesota will come to



Geneseo to speak about civic engagement. Dr. Boyte has a national reputation for his scholarship in this area. I hope many of you will attend. The department plans a number of other speakers, including Joe Fornieri. Joe is a Geneseo graduate in Political Science who currently teaches at Rochester Institute of Technology. He will speak on a collaborative project with Dr. Deutsch on Abraham

Lincoln. We plan to have a few other speakers in Political Science.

The academic year culminates in the Senior/Honors Dinner. This dinner will be held April 21st in the Hunt Room. All graduating seniors and students receiving Honors will be invited. Most of the costs of the dinner are covered by contributions from Political Science and International Relations Alumni. I look forward to seeing you there.

I hope you will have a most productive and enjoyable Spring 2005 semester.

Best regards,

Jeff Koch
Professor and Chair of Political Science



Bob Goeckel and students in Russia