

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

January 2016

SUNY GENESEO

Greetings Political Science and International Relations alumni!

The Department is thriving, and rapidly changing. We still hold a record number of majors in political science and international relations, and the department is undergoing rapid change in personnel. We welcomed Dr. Anand Rao from the University of Virginia in September. Dr. Rao specializes in East Asian Politics, but will teach courses in a number of areas. The department is in the midst of a search for a scholar of judicial politics and political theory, in essence to cover the courses previously taught by **Professor Kenneth Deutsch**. In addition to the Political Affairs Club trip to Washington, DC, the Model UN club participated in simulations at the University of Pennsylvania and Yale University; several students received awards at these activities. In January the Model UN club will again travel to Montreal for an exercise. Additionally, the department hosted Tom Hayes and Scott Blinder as speakers, and contributed to a mini-conference on ***"Chinese Views of the Global Order."*** The department expects to be super-busy during the Spring 2016 semester. Our courses are filled to capacity, we expect to host 5 speakers, a presentation on the 2016 Presidential nomination process by Professor Jeffrey Koch, a freshmen dinner in late March, and the academic year capped off with the senior/honors dinner at the Big Tree Inn on April 29th.

The department gives you its best wishes, and do hope that you may be able to visit us at some time.



Table of Contents

Welcome – Introduction	Page 1
Political Affairs Club Trip to Washington D.C.	Page 3
Political Science Association Meeting-- Harneel K. Aujla	Page 5
Scott Blinder Talk	Page 6
Chinese Views	Page 7
Julia Mizutani's Participation in SCUSA 2015	Page 8
Alumni Biographies	Page 10
Alumni Donors	Page 19



Department Faculty and Staff--October 2015

Political Affairs Club Trip to Washington D.C.



Political Affairs and IR Club in DC

From October 1st to the 4th, the Political Affairs Club joined the International Relations Club to make their annual pilgrimage to Washington, DC, accompanied by Professors **Jeff Koch** and **Jeremy Grace**. The two clubs met with **Ryan Callanan '06**, an employee of the defense-contracting firm Booz Allen. He discussed his work for Booz Allen, and the benefits and disadvantages of working under a defense contractor, rather than for the Department of Defense. Following the presentation, students and faculty attended a reception at the Washington Center on 16th Street Northwest. In addition to a bevy of alumni, new Geneseo **President Denise**



Ryan Callanan'06



Changkuk Jung and Jeremy Grace



Chad Salitan and Students at State Department



Eric Gomez with Students in D.C.

Battles was in attendance. The next morning, students were able to rise early for an 8:00 presentation by **Jennifer Dunlap '81**, President of Development Resources International. Ms. Dunlap discussed her career in the non-profit sector, informing the students of the many virtues of a professional life in that setting. After the early-morning discussion, the group rode the metro to meet with **Chad Salitan '09** of the U.S. Department of State. Chad discussed his difficult but meaningful work to



Matt Walter



Liz Allen with
Students at White
House



Mid Atlantic Council on Latin American Studies Conference in Ithaca (from left to right): Amanda Wagner, Professor Karleen West, Kaitlin Senk, Courtney Cataudella, and Patrick McCormick

combat human trafficking. Following this presentation, the IR Club and Political Affairs Club split, and Professor Koch led the members of the Political Affairs Club to 12th and D Street Northwest to meet with **Matt Walter '94**, President of the Republican State Leadership Committee. Mr. Walter kindly provided the students and faculty with lunch, and spent time talking about his professional career and RSLC activities. The two groups joined once again to walk, on a very rainy day, to the Old Executive Office Building to meet with **Liz Allen '06**. Liz works on communications for President Obama, and previously worked as assistant Press Secretary for Vice-President Joe Biden. The IR and Political Affairs Clubs split once more, allowing the International Relations Club to meet with **Eric Gomez '13** at the Cato Institute, while the Political Affairs Club traversed to the Sidley Austin Law

firm on K Street to meet with **Kristin Graham Koehler '91**.

We feel so grateful to have so many generous, accomplished alumni so willing to share their time with our students. The trip to DC was a marvelous success. We look forward to next year's visit to our nation's capital.



Students at the Law Office of Kristin Graham Koehler

Harneel K. Aujla is a senior International Relations major and Sociology minor who applied for Northeastern Political Science Association's 47th annual conference. The NPSA brings together hundreds of political scientists from all fields of study and from all over the world to enhance and expand their knowledge of the political arena. Harneel submitted her research over the summer and received an acceptance a few months later



in September.

The NPSA conference lasted for three days, from November 12 to November 14. On the first day, after arriving to Philadelphia, Harneel attended two panel discussions on "Regimes and Political Change in the Developing World" and on "Sovereignty, Religions and Natural Law." On the second day, she had the opportunity to attend four panel discussions: "Theories and Context of U.S. Foreign Policy", "Future of the Parties, 2016 and Beyond", "Human Rights and Global Governance" and "Rights, Liberalism, Freedom and Punishment".

Her study included research on the various types of violence inflicted on women of Central America and South America. Having lived in India for 19 years, she compared the kinds of violence women

face in India to those in Central and South America. In her research she found that the violence women suffer in these regions is a significant and pressing issue. More than 50% of the women in Central America face some kind of violence. The definition of violence has a vast range, and does not necessarily mean physical assault. It can take on other forms such as emotional pain and controlling behavior. Several measures have been undertaken to help women, such as passing laws that protect the rights of women and funding police stations with female personnel. While some of the data may suggest that great strides are being made in the fight for the rights of women, abuse nonetheless remains a tremendous problem. This salient issue will not be correct overnight, but enforcement of the laws that exist and the passage of even more protective legislation could help nullify this cultural predisposition that is present in Central and South America, India, and across the world.

Harneel believes the NPSA conference was a great opportunity for her to present her research. She is very appreciative for the chance to interact with political scientists from all over the United States and the ability to attend each of the panels and the discussions that followed. Harneel says that she is "very thankful to Dr. Jeffery Koch for being supportive throughout and also to Geneseo's Political science alumni for funding the expenses and helping me make most of this wonderful opportunity". We are very thankful for the support from our alumni, who continuously help provide enriching educational opportunities for the new generation of students.

Scott Blinder Talk



On October 7th, thanks to our speaker's program, we were fortunate enough to have Professor Blinder from the University of Chicago visit Geneseo to address immigration issues overseas. In his guest lecture, "Immigration Images: How Public and News Media in Britain See Immigration, and Why It Matters", Professor Blinder spoke about the way British press presents immigrants and how those depictions affect the public perception.

Professor Blinder began his lecture by speaking of the political and social context that compelled him to do his research- currently, immigration is the second most salient issue for the British public. He discussed party platforms relating to immigration, highlighting that the UK's current majority, the Conservative Party, was able to gain and maintain power due to their anti-immigration stance. Blinder argued that the prevalence of anti-immigration views is due to the distorted portrayal of immigrants in the media.

Before researching how people viewed immigration, Blinder first surveyed 1,000 people in

order to find out which groups they visualized when they were asked to describe the immigrants moving into the UK. Blinder found that while most people envisioned asylum seekers as the majority of migrants, a large percentage of immigrants were actually international students. Blinder refers to this misconception as "imagined immigration". Blinder maintains that imagined immigration comes from the news, as the asylum seekers are consistently front page news, but the bulk of immigrants, like Eastern Europeans and students, rarely make headlines, and are seen as less of a source of contempt. Throughout the lecture, Professor Blinder presented how to apply scientific methodology and quantifiable facts, such as word patterns and usage, to present the influence the press has on the British public.

Professor Blinder received his Ph.D in political science from the University of Chicago, with a specialization in psychology. Many of the publications he has co-authored relate to European public opinion towards migration and its impacts on elections and policy, such as "Imagined Immigration: The Impact of Different Meanings of 'Immigrants' in Public Opinion and Policy Debates in Britain", "The Better Angles of Our Nature: How the Anti-prejudice Norm Affects Policy and Party Preferences in Great Britain and Germany", and "The Anti-Racism Norm in Western European Immigration Politics: Why We Need to Consider It and How to Measure it".



“Chinese Views of the Global Order” Panel

On October 2nd, 2015, Geneseo hosted a workshop on “Chinese Views of the Global Order”. The event was a brilliant model of the teacher-scholar exchange that Geneseo holds in high esteem. A combination of round-table and panel discussions, the day-long presentation discussed China’s views on different aspects of international community. The day’s success demonstrated the importance of events that focus on new research theories and ideas, and how these programs can help support academic growth in the Geneseo educational community.

Professor Tze-Ki Hon of Geneseo’s History Department, with the help of Professor Stapleton of SUNY Buffalo and Professor Xin Fan of SUNY Fredonia, was able to fund the workshop through the SUNY Arts and Humanities Network of Excellence Award. The Department of Political Science and International Relations sponsored parts of the event, particularly the morning roundtable discussion by Professor Anand Rao on East Asian migration. Professor Anand Rao is a member of the SUNY Geneseo Political Science and International Relations department. He received his bachelors degree from Union College, a masters degree from Columbia University, and his Ph.D from the University of Virginia. Currently, he teaches classes on Comparative Politics, Terrorism and National Security, and Politics of East Asia, and his research focuses on those three subjects, as well as Japanese foreign relations.

Other speakers from various colleges also contributed to the event. Following Professor Rao’s roundtable discussion on “International Relations Theory and East Asia”, Professor Ryan Jones of the SUNY Geneseo History Department also led a discussion, titled “The Body in/as World History”. These roundtable discussions were then followed by a series of panel presentations, such as “Locating China in the World at the turn of the Twentieth Century”, “Might is Justice: Non-Communist Authoritarian in China and Its Transnational Origins”



History Professor Tze-ki Hon at China Conference at Geneseo

and “Revolution Going Global: Re-inventing the North Korean Ally in China’s Wartime Popular Culture, 1950-1953”. These discussions were led by members of the SUNY Geneseo History Department as well as guest lecturers from other schools.

By combining the History Department’s extensive knowledge of the political and cultural origins of East Asia with the Political Science Department’s theories and insight into the future, the workshop was able to provide Geneseo students and faculty with a comprehensive understanding of Chinese politics and views of the past and present, allowing us to look forward into the implications these attitudes may have in the years to come.

At the Student Conference on US Affairs at West

Julia Mizutani's Participation in SCUSA 2015

Point in 2015 there were numerous round-tables to discuss US foreign policy concerning pertinent topics around various parts of the globe. Professor Jeffrey Koch was asked to join the round-table discussing the subject of "Africa: Health Inequity" because of his background working in Zimbabwe and Uganda. At his round-table there were 12 students from across the country, as well as from Kenya, Zambia, and UAE, and 4 West Point cadets. His table was also fortunate to have two knowledgeable professionals to guide their conversation, answer questions, and input

and the issues that surround current and past foreign aid policies.

In addition to providing the enriching experience of working with a group of bright and passionate students from all over the world, SCUSA67 was also focused on bridging the divide between civilians and military. Their perspectives and opinions on various issues, although at times vastly different from his own, still had quite a bit of overlap and commonality. All points of view were respected,



suggestions for their foreign policy paper. Dr. James Hentz is the editor-in-chief of the journal African Security and author of South Africa and the Logic of Regional Cooperation. Dr. Iyabo Obasanjo was a Senator in the Nigerian Senate where she served as Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and was eventually appointed the Commissioner for Health in Nigeria. She is currently on the board of the US National Committee for UN Women and a distinguished fellow at the African Presidential Center at Boston University. With their guidance and with the cooperation of all of the students, they were able to create a 10 page US foreign policy paper that responds to the health inequalities present in Africa

which was apparent from the first evening when a panel of both military and UN personnel spoke about global inequalities and oftentimes disagreed with one another respectfully. This set the precedent for the rest of the conference, which was used to create an understanding between military cadets, and civilian students from liberal arts colleges. Starting from the first evening with the mixed-panel, to the second night where Madeleine Albright spoke at length about global inequality, to the final night where civilian and military delegates had the opportunity to relax at a social mixer; SCUSA67 was an eye-opening and fascinating experience.

Political Humor:

"I have left orders to be awakened at any time in case of national emergency, even if I'm in a cabinet meeting." – *Ronald Reagan*

"Diplomacy is the art of saying 'Nice doggie' until you can find a rock." – *Will Rogers*

"Sanity and happiness are an impossible combination." — *Mark Twain*

"That low down scoundrel deserves to be kicked to death by a jackass - and I'm just the one to do it!" - *Texan Congressional candidate*

"Rarely is the question asked, 'Is our children learning?'" — *George W Bush*



"I've been informed that if in the course of the debate Mr. Bates has nothing nice to say he will say nothing at all."

When you give to Geneseo, please restrict your contribution to the department of Political Science and International Relations.

Alumni Biographies



Brian Jerose '94 graduated from Geneseo in 1994, with a major in Political Science and an minor in Environmental Studies. He is now living in Enosburg Falls, Vermont working as the President and Co-founder of Agrilab Technologies Inc. His company provides technical services to farms, businesses and communities on composting, watershed protection and sustainable development. Agrilab Technologies (AGT)

has also developed renewable thermal energy systems from biomass – capturing heat from the aerated composting facilities, and has installed systems in VT, NY, NH and most recently in Boston, MA.

His transformation from a Political Science major focusing on environmental issues in the former Soviet block to the head of a start-up manure management enterprise has been an interesting and rewarding journey. Brian believes his Geneseo experience prepared him in a number of ways, from writing and critical thinking, to public speaking skills and an awareness of governmental structures and issues that affect business, to an increased knowledge of policies and social interactions. He is grateful for Dr. Goeckel, who helped further his interest in European and Russian history and politics. After a study abroad semester in Heidelberg, Germany he co-created the Foreign-Exchange League at Geneseo with Beth Localio, another Political Science major. It helped the growing number of study abroad students share their unique experiences and expose students considering study abroad to the opportunities and challenges. He played Club Rugby from freshman to senior year, becoming team captain in his last two semesters. His involvement on campus earned him the Janosik Leadership Award.

Although he was offered an internship with Syracuse Congressman James Walsh in Washington DC, Brian's interests instead led him to work for the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency on recycling and solid waste management. This was followed by a year of service in the brand new AmeriCorps program created by then President Clinton. He moved to Jaffrey, New Hampshire and was able to work on

park restoration, erosion control and development of community composting programs. He also met his first business partner Darren Kupinsky and his future wife, Joanna Witte, during this year!

After returning to the Syracuse area a few years later while Joanna was in grad school at Syracuse University, he started his first business, WASTE NOT Resource Solutions. He worked with a local livestock farmer to create Toad Hollow Farms Natural Compost, the first facility in central NY to accept food scraps from Wegmans, Price Chopper, and 20+ other sources and convert these residuals into a valuable soil amendment. He also began consulting on farm water quality issues in the Onondaga Lake and Finger Lakes watersheds. He worked part-time towards a masters degree in Environmental and Resource Engineering at SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, and completed his degree in 2001.

He and his wife returned to New England in 1999 and settled into their first home in 2000 – a small farm in Fairfield, Vermont, a few miles south of the Quebec border. It took some work to develop a new client base in Vermont but in a couple years he was able to co-develop new composting systems that included renewable thermal energy capture. There is plenty of work regarding farm and rural town water quality issues, reducing erosion and nutrient runoff into northern Lake Champlain.

Composting and renewable energy systems have increasingly become his focus, inspiring the formation of his new business, Agrilab Technologies, in 2010. It has been an intense few years, from the untimely passing of his co-founder Josh Nelson in 2012, to being selected for the Unreasonable Institute (UI) in 2013, to completing a seed-round capital raise and patent acquisition in 2015. The UI fellowship was a unique opportunity to participate in

a venture accelerator program for socially and environmentally responsible enterprises. He lived in Boulder, CO for six weeks with 24 other entrepreneurs from around the US, Canada, Mexico, India, Kenya, Uganda, Cambodia and Peru. They focused on specific business issues that could help them become a part of a network for change. He really valued that experience and believes it has boosted his business's growth. He is currently working on expanding his project base further out of New England, which he is hoping will spread into western New York.

Joanna and Brian have now been married for 19 years and their daughters, Maya and Lucy, are now 12 and 8. They enjoy living in a small town on a dirt road surrounded by dairy farmers and maple syrup makers. He is active as a volunteer board member for the Missisquoi River Basin Association and the Composting Association of Vermont, and volunteers in the Fairfield Community Center and his daughters' school. He enjoys keeping in touch with the many great friends he made in Geneseo and hopes to return to campus soon!

Laurice Jones Class of '94 graduated from SUNY Geneseo in 1994 with a major in Political Science and a double minor in International Relations and Environmental Studies. While at Geneseo, she became heavily involved with Students Promoting a Clean Environment, or SPACE. She believes that her time spent with them, as well as with other political science majors, debating issues of the day and sharing their ideas, really cemented her desire to make a difference in the world.

Laurice had law school in mind since the day she began at Geneseo, and when it was finally time

to apply, she had decided on making environmental law her specialty. She was accepted to Vermont Law School, well known for its environmental law program, for the incoming class of '97. However, Laurice decided to defer her admission for a year in order to participate in the newly created AmeriCorps program, the organization established by President Clinton to engage young people in a year of public service in exchange for a living stipend and a sum of money at the end of the year to be used for education.

From 1994 to 1995, Laurice worked for an organization called Neighborhood Green Corps, a grant recipient of AmeriCorps. She was assigned to a team that worked on three main projects in New Haven, CT. They worked with a local community support organization to weatherize and make more energy efficient low income housing, the New Haven Department of Health and the Yale New Haven Hospital to educate the public about the dangers of lead poisoning and the services available to them to prevent and remediate the effects of it, and a local community garden organization to help residents establish and maintain urban community gardens across the city. This year of public service was the perfect capstone to her college education at Geneseo, providing invaluable, real world experience before embarking on a career in law.

Following her year with Neighborhood Green Corps, Laurice started law school in the fall of '95. She believes that her experiences with Americorps and Geneseo helped put law school in perspective. Having seen and worked with real communities in need, she was able to focus on what was important to her and get exactly what she wanted out of her legal education.



As a second year law student, Laurice took advantage of Vermont Law School's Semester in Washington, interning at the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) within the White House. The PCSD was established by President Clinton in June 1993 to advise him on sustainability issues and develop "bold, new approaches to achieve our economic, environmental, and equity goals." The PCSD's main mission was to forge consensus on policy by bringing together diverse interests to identify and develop innovative economic, environmental and social policies and strategies. The Council was comprised of leaders in environmental protection and advocacy, social justice and business. As part of the executive staff, Laurice helped reach out to members and pulled together information for reports to the President.

Laurice graduated from Vermont Law School in '98 with a Masters in the Study of Environmental Law and a JD. Soon thereafter, she passed the NY

State Bar exam. With a handful of credentials in her pocket, she headed to Washington, DC, where she began to work in government.

Laurice is happy to have spent almost all of her post-law school career in the federal government. When the opportunity to work at the Environmental Protection Agency came up, she grabbed it. Laurice started out as a Special Assistant to a politically appointed Assistant Administrator (AA). She was responsible for managing all of the information that came in for, and out from, the AA. She prepared him for all of his meetings, advising him on any pertinent issues that may come up.

Laurice has been working at the Environmental Protection Agency for sixteen years, moving around to different parts of the Agency, learning about and working with the various environmental programs. She has been in the Office of Grants and Debarment for the last 10 years. Most of EPA's work is done through the award of grants to fund environmental programs, construction projects, clean ups, and research. Her office oversees the \$4 billion that go out in grants to state and local governments, tribes, non-profit organizations and educational and research institutions.

Currently, she is the Director of the National Policy, Training and Compliance Division, responsible for national grants policy development and implementation, training of EPA staff and recipients on grant rules, and recipient compliance with grant laws and regulations and policies. Her job is to ensure proper stewardship of tax payer dollars to maximize the results of EPA's grants.

Laurice enjoys her work because it allows her to collaborate with every program in the Agency. Most of EPA's budget goes back out to States to run the environmental programs they are required to

implement under laws such as the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. She also has a great deal of interaction with its recipients, seeking their input on new grants policies and requirements. Although she does believe that bureaucratic work can have its frustrations, she says, "I do feel that I am having somewhat of a positive impact on the world, just as I had hoped way back when I was a carefree, idealistic college student at Geneseo."

Dave Bryk '87

Dave Bryk graduated in 1987 from SUNY Geneseo with a B.A. in Political Science and minors in Computer Science, Public Administration and Criminal Justice. After graduation, he began the lengthy process necessary to enter government service. Believing a temporary diversion into the corporate world would be a good distraction while waiting for the government hiring process to be completed, Dave entered the nine-month Management Trainee program of Rollins Leasing Corporation at their Buffalo, NY branch. He quickly found success and never looked back. Rollins, based in Wilmington, DE, was one of the largest transportation service providers in the U.S. with 200 locations nationwide.

Dave was promoted out of the program after just five months and assigned to manage a commercial truck fleet worth \$3 million. In 1990, after eighteen months of successfully managing the short term commercial fleet, he was promoted to lead the company's long term sales efforts of improving its full suite of transportation services in the western New York market. Over the next five years, he enjoyed getting to know the leaders of the area's top companies and assisting those companies in improving the way



in which they brought their goods to market.

In 1995, Dave was promoted to lead Rollins' Midwest Region as the Central Region Sales Manager and he relocated to Chicago, IL. While in Chicago, he was responsible for 24 company locations and 30 Account Executives generating \$50 million in revenue stretching from Columbus, OH to Omaha, NE.

In 2000, he was recruited to join another publicly traded company in the transportation industry, New Penn Motor Express based in Lebanon, PA. He was hired as a Division Vice President overseeing 7 terminal locations across New York and Pennsylvania. This also allowed him to relocate back to western New York to be closer to family and friends. During his time at New Penn, his division continued to grow and eventually New Penn was purchased by Roadway Express in 2001.

The following year, Dave wanted to take a break from "corporate life" at New Penn and decided to join a

small, local transportation company in Amherst, NY called Fetch Logistics. The fledgling firm had started out a few years prior in the basement of one of the founder's parent's home, but Dave saw a bright future there with the proper leadership. He joined Fetch Logistics in 2002 as the Vice President of Sales responsible to lead all inside and outside sales efforts as the company struggled to get a foothold in the highly fragmented transportation industry. With just \$5 million in revenue and 12 employees the previous year, this was a completely new mountain to climb for someone used to working for well established, large companies with rigid corporate structures. Over the next 10 years, Dave led the sales teams in growing the company and by 2012, when Dave became a partner in the company; revenue had soared to \$34 million annually and the company had 80 employees.

Dave also serves on the Board of Directors of Logistics Resources International based in Aston, PA. LRI is a national provider of transportation staffing and support services.

A resident of Orchard Park, NY, Dave is married with four children. The oldest, Matthew, is currently a sophomore accounting major at Geneseo while his daughter, Jennifer, will be starting at Geneseo in August 2016, majoring in biochemistry. Dave looks back fondly at his time spent at Geneseo, saying, "Geneseo is a place that transformed my life and allowed me to step out on my own for the first time. I had successes as well as failures and I learned from both. The small class sizes, relationships with professors and the college community as a whole, was a great experience and I'm pleased

that my children are now able to experience it as well.”

Mary Witting '87 is an Associate Budget analyst for the New York State Unified Court System. After graduating from Geneseo in 1987 with a degree in Political Science and a minor in International Relations, she worked as a civil litigation paralegal in both New York City and San Diego, California. She received a paralegal certification from the University of San Diego in 1989. Through this program and her work experience as a paralegal, she gained extensive knowledge on legal research and writing, statistical analysis and trial preparation.

While living in San Diego, Mary obtained a Master's Degree in Public Administration from San Diego State University in 1998. After relocating back to New York, she worked at the New York State School Boards Association as a Senior Policy Analyst and then transitioned to finance, working in a position at the New York State Division of the Budget. While at the NYS Division of Budget, she maintained budget oversight of several state agencies and made program and budget recommendations for inclusion in the State budget. She also drafted legislation and provided fiscal and program analysis on various legislative actions. As her role grew, she assisted in negotiating elements of the State budget with legislative staff.

After working at the NYS Division of the Budget, Mary accepted a position with the New York State Unified Court System's Division of Financial Management. She currently has budget oversight and fiscal management responsibility for all appellate level courts. Her work allows her to collaborate with other court system staff on numerous contracts with legal service providers, including several large contracts supporting criminal defense and legal



representation for children throughout the state. She develops budget recommendations and fiscal projections for the judiciary budget and assists in the coordination of department activities. Mary works closely with legislative counsel on fiscal and program analysis on legislation. She also assists in the development of database and web based tools for the budget and fiscal processes.

Mary resides in Delmar, New York with her husband Ted and their young son, Liam. She is currently Vice President of the Mater Christi School Board and has also been an active member in local bagpipe bands. She also is very involved with volunteering in her community and church.

The Geneseo experience provided a strong base to pursue further educational and professional goals, ultimately leading to a successful career for Mary. Mary also maintains

close relationships with several alumni and is glad to have made those lifelong connections through Geneseo. She is forever grateful and appreciative for her time at Geneseo.

John Clinch '87 graduated from SUNY-Geneseo in May 1987 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a minor in public administration. Shortly after graduation, he moved to New Hampshire where he enrolled in graduate school at the University of New Hampshire, graduating in 1991 with a Master of Public Administration degree. After graduation, he worked as an Economic Development Specialist for the City of Rochester, New Hampshire. In 1992, he went to work for the New Hampshire Office of Legislative Budget Assistant where he continues to work as a Senior Performance Audit Manager.

Performance auditing is a relatively new field where the auditor objectively examines the performance of a government organization, program, activity, or function in order to provide information to improve public accountability and facilitate decision making by parties with responsibility to oversee or initiate corrective action. The Office of Legislative Budget Assistant is a non-partisan agency of the New Hampshire Legislature that assists the New Hampshire General Court with the State budget and conducts audits of State agencies and programs, providing oversight of the executive and judicial branches of government. All audits conducted by the Division are done so in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* promulgated by the Comptroller General of the United States.

John's education at Geneseo provided him with

the skills necessary to audit a wide variety of state agencies and programs, including: child support enforcement, child protection services, State-owned dams, statewide recycling, Department of Transportation fleet management, Veteran's Home budgeting, community corrections, juvenile justice, Department of Corrections security staffing, Public Utility Commission, state employee health benefits, Judicial Branch, Department of Education construction and renovation programs, succession planning, Year 2000 special reports, Plumbers Board, Liquor Commission, Marine Patrol, and many others.



John took a hiatus from auditing between 2005 and 2007 to become the Director of Finance for the Pease Development Authority where he was responsible for all accounting, finance, human resources, and payroll functions for an organization consisting of 100 employees. The Pease Development Authority was created to redevelop the former Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and today is arguably the most successful example of redevelopment of a closed military base. The Pease Development Authority sits on 3,000 acres and operates four divisions: the Portsmouth International Airport at Pease, Pease Golf Course, Pease Tradeport, and the Division of Ports and Harbors.

Returning to the Office of Legislative Budget Assistant in 2007, John was selected by the National State Auditors Association to conduct peer review audits of the state audit agencies for the State of Missouri, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and most recently, the State of California.

John earned certification as a Certified Internal Auditor from the Institute of Internal Auditors in 1995 and a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA) from the Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) in 2015.

John fondly remembers his classes with Dr. Robert Goeckel and Dr. Judith Gentleman at Geneseo. where he learned how to think critically, analyze information, and write persuasively, skills he uses every day in evaluating the management processes of the state agencies he audits.

John resides in Strafford, New Hampshire with his wife of 25 years Andrea Christman Clinch '88 and their two sons Benjamin (13) and Drew (11). In his spare time, John enjoys boating, reading, and is a computer hobbyist. He can be reached on Facebook at [john.clinch.92](#) or on LinkedIn.

Kathryn Freer-Firkins '87 graduated from Geneseo in 1987 with a B.A. in Political Science with concentrations in both Public Administration and Communications. She then went on to receive her Masters in Public Administration from SUNY Brockport in 1992.

Kathryn attributes her choice of career to two professors from her undergraduate time at Geneseo- Dr. Alan Shank in Political Science and Dr. (Doc) Charles Goetzinger in the Communications Department. "The coursework in Dr. Shank's classes piqued my interest in Public Administration as a career," Kathryn says, "and the Communications courses with Dr. Goetzinger challenged me to use the spoken and written word to articulate ideas and effect change."

In 1989, Kathryn began a long career as a Public Administrator for the Town of Greece, one of the largest towns in the state. She started as an intern in the Finance Department and continued in that department until the late 90s as the Assistant Finance Director. It was in the Finance Department of this large municipality that she honed her public finance skills. Kathryn believes that those years provided her with the knowledge of all aspects of the municipality so she could easily move into other areas of the organization.

During her tenure with the Town of Greece, Kathryn was responsible for the management of a multi-year "bricks and mortar" program, which brought several new municipal facilities to the town. It is Kathryn's work that brought a new town hall, library, community center, and justice court and police precinct to Greece by leveraging cash capital reserves, debt service management



and lease revenue streams. It is here that she further developed her construction and project management skills.

“One of the projects I am most proud of completing was the design and construction of the Town’s Veterans’ Memorial in 1999,” Kathryn says, “At that dedication, so many veterans and their family members came up to me to say how much the memorial meant to them. To this day so many community members still mention it to me. It is rewarding to know that long after I am gone the words etched on the center plaque are words that I wrote, words that people will continue to read and be inspired by for generations to come. It is a great feeling I hope many Geneseo grads will experience.”

Throughout her time with the Town of Greece, Kathryn worked in many levels and different aspects of the town. Her work as debt service administrator included two rating upgrades by Moody’s Investors Service and Standard and Poor’s. In 2001, she was

promoted to the Director of Constituent Services and in 2006 the Department of Human Services was added to her purview of responsibility.

It is her passion for good government that drove her throughout her career. Kathryn was proud to provide the residents of Greece with what they needed - a public administrator willing to take the time to listen to them, work with them, and give them the information that they needed.

Throughout her career, it was the strong ethics and foundation that Geneseo provided that remained in all aspects of her daily duties. She looks back at her years of rising through the ranks from an intern to a high-level local government administrator fondly.

Since leaving public service Kathryn has begun a second career that she is equally passionate about – working beside her husband, Dave Firkins ’87, at their family business **Tile Wholesalers of Rochester**. Kathryn says, “I feel so much pride in being a part of the excellent company my husband has built.” She feels strongly that students should realize that one never knows where their career paths will take them and that if you follow your heart and are true to your passions the path will lead in a new and exciting direction.

As strong advocates for Geneseo, Kathryn and her husband Dave have stayed involved with the College and were honored with the Geneseo Foundation’s Philanthropic Leadership Award in 2015.

Kathryn Freer-Firkins lives in Greece with her husband Dave. Their daughter Shannon is also a SUNY Geneseo graduate (2015) who has since pursued her career goals in California. Their son, Conor, is studying Business Administration at Bowling Green in Ohio.



Jeffrey S. Wood, Director at May Meacham & Davell, has been practicing law in Broward County for more than two decades. He joined the Law Firm of Rogers Morris & Zeigler in 1990. In 1995, he joined the Law Firm of Tripp Scott and was named Director in January of 2000. In October of 2000 he joined May Meacham & Davell, PA as a Director and has practiced with the firm for fifteen years.

Wood is a practicing attorney whose areas of concentration include: business law, counsel to a variety of non-profits, construction litigation, several adoption agencies, and the representation of charter schools and related businesses. He has provided counsel and legal representation to various other non-profits in the State of Florida for many years and has participated and assisted in the formation of several non-profits from their initiation. He is fully experienced and understands regulatory laws both Federal and State. He has also conducted and administered Board member governance training for non-profit compliance for Charter Schools, adoption agencies, and other non-

profits.

Wood devotes his practice to the areas of construction law, banking law, education law, non-profit law, real estate transactions and charter school law. He also handles complex commercial litigation, business law and business transactions. He also occasionally handles adoption matters. Wood is admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Florida, all Circuit and County Courts in the State of Florida, and the United States District Court for the Southern and Middle Districts of Florida.

Wood is currently a board member with the Florida Consortium of Public Charter Schools and provides legal advice and counsel to that association that represents over 500 charter schools in Florida. He also sits on a committee with several Charter School Lawyers drafting a model agreement for use in Florida based on law passed by the Florida Legislature in June 2013 and will become a FDOE rule in November 2014. **Wood has served on the FCPCS Quality Authorizers Task Force for the past three years which assists in setting a cooperative legislative agenda with the authorizers and charter school leaders in Florida.** Wood is a frequent presenter at various conferences on multiple non-profit issues.

Wood has been actively involved within the Florida ice hockey community, currently serving as President of the Statewide Amateur Hockey Association of Florida (SAHOF). He is also current General Counsel to SAHOF and member of the SAHOF Executive Committee.

Wood received his Bachelor degree in Political Science and a Minor in Sociology from State University at Geneseo, New York in 1987. He then received his Juris Doctor from The

Many of the Department's activities would not be possible without the generous contributions of our alums, friends, current students, current and former faculty, and parents. The Department's Senior/Honors dinner, the awards it distributes, scholarships for internships and study-abroad, the Model UN program, the Political Affairs Club, our pizza party, our speaker's program, student participation in the West Point conference, the Political Affairs Club's trip to Washington, D.C., student and faculty research, and other activities depend on support from Geneseo alumni. We wish to thank the individuals listed below for their generous support.

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