

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SUNY GENESEO

Greetings Political Science and International Relations Alumni!



Greetings and Happy New Year to Geneseo Political Science and International Relations alumni. During the summer of 2018 I returned to Geneseo from my stint at the U.S. Air Force Academy. I had a most enjoyable time in Colorado Springs. While I do miss the view of the Rocky Mountains from the office I was issued in Colorado I can report that all is well, great in fact, with the Political Science and International Relations Department in Geneseo. Sir!! I feel blessed to be here, working with great students and colleagues, and with wonderful interactions with our alumni. There are currently more Geneseo Political Science majors than ever!! Over 240 Political Science majors! And more than 190 International Relations majors. Our faculty continues their productivity. **Karleen West**, recently promoted to Associate Professor, has not only published a book with Oxford University Press, but a **MOVIE** was made about the project!! The title of the book (and movie) is Who Speaks for Nature. We plan to have a special showing on campus during the Spring semester. Professor **Robert Goeckel**'s book Soviet Religious Policy in Estonia and Latvia. Playing Harmony in the Singing Revolution was published by Indiana University Press!!! These are excellent accomplishments. Did I mention that I am happy to be back to Geneseo, in spite of the fact that it seems I have not seen that round yellow object in the sky in what feels like three weeks.

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Scenes of Fall 2018



Professor Koch at U.S. Air Force Academy



Alumni John Pekarik & Tom Bryant speaking to students



Professor Koch and Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul



Kathy Hochul delivers a lecture in Legislative Politics class



Alums Chad, Ryan, Greg, & Rizzy in DC

Department Meeting 2018



Jeremy Grace & Jo Kirk



Karleen West, Carly Herold, & Revi Mfizi



Jim Moor, Anand Rao, Bob Goeckel & Aaron Herold



Political Affairs Club Trip to D.C.

On September 27th student members of the Political Affairs Club loaded up their gear into four vans for the annual trip to Washington, D.C. The trip has become immensely popular with students, many commented to the department's survey of students that it was one of the events they liked best. Professors Grace and Koch accompanied students on this trip. We did things a little differently.



Allison Hoppe'13 at the EPA meets students in D.C.

A career panel consisting of **Ryan Callan** (Booz Allen, a firm that contracts with the Defense Department) **Rizzy Qureshi** (Department of Justice), **Greg Stoneberg** (Defense Intelligence Agency), **Chad Salitan** (State Department). Each Geneseo Political Science graduate discussed their career trajectory, what the mission of the current entity with which they currently work, their specific responsibilities, and other professional positions they held, as well as the mission of that entity. Ryan, Rizzy, Chad, and Greg also focused on their time at Geneseo, and those aspects of their undergraduate experience they found most beneficial for the professional lives.



Students & Alumni at a reception in Washington D.C.



Students and Alumni in Washington D.C.



Constance Christakos

Following the career panel **Liz Allen'07** and **Tom Lankford** joined **Jeff Koch**, Professor and Chair of the Political Science Department to discuss the 2018 midterm elections. Each offered comments on contemporary American Politics, as well as forecasts for the midterm elections. At the time of our visit the Senate Judiciary Committee's hearings on President Trump's nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to serve on the Supreme Court were occurring. In fact, on that very day Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Justice Brett Kavanaugh provided testimony that riveted most political junkies. Liz and Tom also discussed their professional paths, and the experiences they found most rewarding at Geneseo. Great alumni!! Making great contributions to Geneseo.



Beth Semel'07 of the Aspen Institute

On September 28th the students met with **Beth Semel'07** of the Aspen Institute, **Allison Hoppe** of the Environmental Protection Agency, **Bridgett Frey** Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, **Matt Walter** from the Republican State Leadership Committee, and **Eric Gomez** from the Cato Institute. The students also met with **John Pekarik**, and **Tom Bryant**, both who work at the Internal Revenue Service. Each of these alums was extraordinarily generous (special shout out to John and Tom for tolerating a misunderstanding on the date of our visit!!).



Liz Allen, Professor Koch, & Tom Lankford discuss midterm elections



Beth Semel'07, Max Schulte, and others at the Geneseo-D.C. Reception



Alum Bridgett Frey and PAC Students at the Senate Building



Matt Walter on the Republican State Leadership Committee speaks to students



Beth Semel '07 speaks to students in D.C.

Although I do not anticipate a career change from my current gig, I still enjoy learning about the careers of each of our alums. I know our current students find meeting with our alums inspiring, and I know that someday they will achieve their professional success.



Yale International Policy Competition Kristen Armstrong



On the 12th of October, **Isabella Barsalona** and I, **Kristen Armstrong**, departed on a six-hour trek to Connecticut.

There, we were to compete against nearly 45 other schools in the Yale International Policy Competition (YIPC).

Isabella, a Junior Political Science student with a minor in Conflict Studies and I, a Junior

International Relations and Economics student with a minor in Geography, represented SUNY Geneseo in this nation-wide competition.

The purpose of the competition was to gather teams of four students together to discuss a policy solution to a current international relations problem—which was first revealed on the day of the competition. The opening speech was made by Dr. Michael Chase, a senior political scientist at RAND, a not-for-profit policy think tank headquartered in Santa Monica, and a China studies specialist adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Students were given a basic description of the issue: Chinese physical and political overreach in the South China Sea. Students were tasked with creating a realistic policy that would solve some of the socioeconomic and geopolitical problems between the countries in the region as a result of this issue.

Our group, Isabella and I, as well as two Political Science students from Quinnipiac University met up for the first time right after the opening ceremony and had

the rest of the day to come up with our policy solution. We decided to concentrate our policy on easing tensions within the fishing industry in the area—a small point of focus but a very prominent point of conflict in the region that has greatly exacerbated overall relations. After nine hours, two lost nametags, and about 100 cups of coffee, our group had submitted a policy proposal and a PowerPoint to be presented the next day. We presented for only five minutes in a classroom in front of Dr. Chase and a graduate student from Yale and were then asked one question each about how the policy would work.

The winner of the competition came as a huge shock to everyone...Yale University. Though we were, for the most part, expecting this, Isabella's endless optimism was a driving force in our team. Now that we have had some experience, however, Yale will surely take second place next year right after SUNY Geneseo. Setting the actual "competing" aspect aside, the YIPC allowed students to work together to solve real-world issues. We were able to apply our studies in a way that is not often seen in the classroom, and it was a very beneficial and exciting experience. We were also given the chance to network with a panel of professionals—this year all of whom focused on global peacekeeping. The Yale International Policy Competition was a valuable experience that I hope Geneseo will offer annually. I suggest YIPC to any Political Science or International Relations student who is excited to apply their knowledge in a team to solve the global issues that they hear in the news every day.

Phi Beta Kappa Sponsors Harold Koh Visit



The department had the pleasure of welcoming Harold Koh, renowned scholar of International Law and Human Rights, to campus on October 25th. Koh, a professor and former dean of Yale Law School has also served as the U.S. State Department's legal advisor and the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. His expertise and willingness to act on behalf of International Law rather than in favor of a given political agenda was the focus of his Phi Beta Kappa lecture. In visiting Political Science classes and sharing lunch with invited students, Koh shared anecdotes from both his personal and professional life, highlighting the importance of being a "scholar diplomat".

Koh's talk, "The Trump Administration and International Law", based on his recently published book of the same name, took place in Doty Recital Hall. His optimistic lecture tells us that the Trump administration is not "winning" in its efforts to withdraw the US from its leadership status in international institutions such as the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Human Rights Council. Koh's insistence on the rule of law is the main guiding principle of his work in both academia and government.

When making a contribution to Geneseo, please make sure to specify Political Science or International Relations Department



Highlighting Student Excellence: Senior Political Science Major Jocelyn Stuto

Jocelyn Stuto '19, a senior Political Science major with a minor in Sociology, had the opportunity to work in Albany through the New York State Assembly Internship. Sponsored by the New York State Assembly, this program allows exceptional students to participate in the state government during the legislative session while also earning academic credit through weekly lectures and classroom activities. Through her Political Science curriculum, Jocelyn gained an interest in the policy making process. Assembly interns also attend weekly issue forums with highly-ranked New York State officials.

As a session intern for Assembly Majority Leader Joe Morelle, who graduated from Geneseo in 1986, Jocelyn had the opportunity to interact with legislation hands-on. Working in tandem with fellow interns, lobbyists, and assembly members provides students with practical experience in government. Jocelyn points to one of her most unique experiences as sitting in on the joint session proceedings appointing Hon. Barbara Underwood as the first female Attorney General of New York State.



Geneseo Political Science in Cuba



In October 2018, three department members presented in Holguin, Cuba, at the first Law, Political Science and Society: International Conference for TransAtlantic Dialogue on Politics and the Law, hosted by the Department of Social Sciences, University of Holguín. Associate **Professor Karleen West**, Lecturer **Joanna Kirk**, and student **Jimmy Connolly** were among four SUNY members to participate in the conference, along with one Canadian, one Spaniard, and various Cuban faculty from the universities of Camagüey, Habana, Oriente, Santiago, and Holguin.

Most of the Cubans present were law faculty, with a few in sociology and/or anthropology; this is due, at least in part, to the fact that there is no political science department at Holguin (and probably the other public Cuban universities), so political science becomes the purview of related departments. Certainly, the presentations and discussion were political in nature and more liberal than expected – constitutional proposals include, for example, an amendment to recognize and enforce private property rights.



Jo Kirk, Jimmy Connolly, and Karleen West in Cuba



West and Connolly presented on “Decentralization and competitive visions of democracy: the case of Venezuela,” while Kirk presented on “Public accountability for private action: The legal responsibility of the state for gender-based and domestic violence.” There was also time for a few hours of touring Holguin and surrounds in a 1965 Chevy taxi.

Kirk will return to Holguin in April 2019 for a multidisciplinary conference with Political Science and Sociology Major Caitlin Williams.



Political Humor

John Kennedy on Enemies

"Forgive your enemies, but never forget their names."

Will Rogers on Politicians vs. Comedians

"Everything is changing. People are taking their comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke."

Mark Twain on the World

"Sometimes I wonder whether the world is being run by smart people who are putting us on, or by imbeciles who really mean it."

John Kennedy on Knowing Nothing

"You know nothing for sure...except the fact that you know nothing for sure."

Barack Obama on His Strengths and Weaknesses

"If I had to name my greatest strength, I guess it would be my humility. Greatest weakness, it's possible that I'm a little too awesome."

Jimmy Carter on People Waving At Him

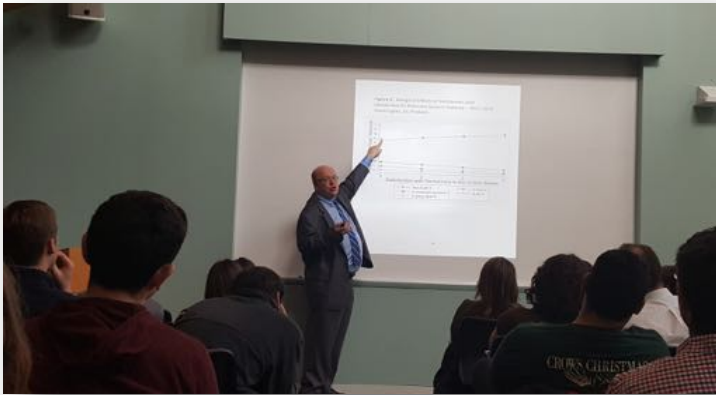
"My esteem in this country has gone up substantially. It is very nice now when people wave at me, they use all their fingers."



Students with late former President George H.W. Bush
(circa 1994)



Dr. Michael Heaney Presents “Democracy Under Protest”



THE STATE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

On October 17th, the department of Political Science hosted Dr. Michael Heaney, an internationally recognized expert on protest movements and professor at both the University of Michigan and a Research Fellow the University of Glasgow. He is the author of the book *Party in the Street: The Antiwar Movement and the Democratic Party after 9/11*, as well as a contributor to numerous journals including the *American Political Science Review*, and the *American Journal of Sociology*. As he encouraged plenty of audience engagement and participation, Heaney emphasized the wave of political protest currently sweeping the United States.

His research has includes surveys of the American National Election Studies, of protesters at party conventions, and of protesters at various marches and rallies since January 2016. He concludes that the period of the Trump presidency stands out relative to the last 20 years in terms of witnessing more protest and more violence.

Heaney's sharing his data and analysis allowed audience members to contemplate future trends in attitudes toward democracy, toward the use of violence as a tool of protest, and toward protest as a pursuit of political goals. Perhaps the most engaging point of the lecture was Heaney's having attended nearly a hundred protests in the past two years, including the Women's March, March for Science, People's Climate March, and both Unite the Right and Black Lives Matter protests. Students and faculty alike were in attendance.



Geneseo Alumni Joe Morelle '85 Elected to U.S. House of Representatives

Democrat Joe Morelle, an alumni of Geneseo's Political Science department, has a long history in Rochester politics. An Irondequoit native and former chair of Monroe County Democratic Committee, Morelle's recent electoral successes are a testament to the commitment of the Political Science department to practical engagement in government. Two of his three children also attended SUNY Geneseo.

After serving in the New York State Assembly since 1992 and working his way through various committees, Morelle was first appointed a Chairmanship in 2001, first serving as chairman of the Tourism, Arts, and Sports Development committee and later as chairman of the Insurance committee. Morelle was appointed the Majority Leader in 2012 and served the role until he left the seat for his Congressional run, making him the second highest ranking member of the State Assembly. His continual commitment to Rochester and the surrounding area was affirmed in 2018 when he was



elected to represent NY-25 in Washington, D.C, filling the vacant seat of late Congresswoman Louise Slaughter. Having won the special election on November 6th, Joe was sworn into office on November 13th to finish off the remaining term, and will continue on complete another two-year term.



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