For years in academe the Latin phrases maxima cum laude and summa cum laude distinguished the names of a college’s top graduates. Today, at The University of Montana, the names of the graduating elite are graced by the phrase “high honors.”

To be in this rarefied category, a UM graduate must meet special requirements set by the University and the major department.

The general academic policies stipulate that a senior graduating with high honors must have earned a 3.70 or higher cumulative grade point average not only in all courses presented for the degree, but also in all courses completed in the major. The University further requires that the high-honors senior must have received the recommendation of the major Department.

UM’s academic departments differ in how they make their high-honors recommendations. Political Science is one of the most rigorous. It requires that each student desiring to graduate with high honors pass separate written and oral examinations, besides having the prescribed G.P.A.

This year’s graduation program listed eleven Political Science graduates as having earned “high honors.” This laurel signified that each of the eleven had chosen an examining committee of three Political Science professors, received from each of these instructors two complex questions dealing with the Political Science curriculum, written on one of each professor’s questions during a two-hour, closed-book session, and, finally, sat for a one-hour face-to-face grilling by the three professors.

Surviving the ordeal with “high honors” and proudly wearing their gold braid on commencement day were 14 percent of the Department’s 2010 graduates: Kristin Carey, Kelly Driscoll, Kathryn Gallagher, Kendra Halverson, Jared Kiess, Jennifer McDonald, Aimee Ryan, Brianna Smith, Kelsi Steele, Samantha Stephens, and Emma Young.
I write at the commencement of my chair duties, so this is necessarily a view forward rather than a reflection of past activities. Our outgoing chair, Jim Lopach, has served us well during his tenure and I will no doubt seek his sage advice as I learn the ropes and develop my own way of doing things. I also count on the support of our able administrator Karen Boice, my political science colleagues, and last but certainly not least, polisci alumni and current students. Our collective goal is always to make the department a bit better and improving quality is always enhanced if not dependent upon honest and insightful feedback from those that care.

One way of monitoring our performance as a department is the exit survey. This asks outgoing seniors to evaluate how well they have improved in six areas: expository writing, oral expression, research, critical analysis, citizenship and knowledge of political science. As previously reported by Professor Lopach in the newsletter, we have received strong marks in recent years.

My own view on such measures is that they are valuable but stronger when combined with other sources of information. In this context, this includes conversations I will be having with current and past students, faculty colleagues in political science and other departments, administrators, and perhaps others in a position to provide insight into how well we have defined our program-wide goals and how well we are meeting those goals.

One of the first tasks I have set for myself as incoming chair is to study and evaluate our current course offerings. I plan to contrast what we are doing to other departments of relatively similar size. This assessment will be discussed within the department and will then be the basis upon which we consider changes in our current offerings with existing faculty and also will help us to plan for future hires. No doubt such an assessment will conclude that some of what we do is fine just the way it is. I would suspect that we will also determine that it sure would be nice to do this or that, but we lack the resources to do so. In that case, we will see what we can do to get those resources. We will also likely conclude that we are both willing and able to make some changes without new resources by changing current practices.

For better and worse, every new chair brings his or her set of biases to the job. One of mine is being a strong advocate of study abroad. There are schools in the United States that require – and help fund – all undergraduate students to undertake at least a semester abroad. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to do this. However, I will continue to advocate from the bully pulpit of the chairmanship the value of learning languages other than English and visiting places other than the United States. Some believe that this is of particular importance for those with an international emphasis but I would argue it is equally important for those whose focus is the United States. As students at The University of Montana, you have a wide range of programs from which to choose. Some of them are run through individual departments, some by an individual faculty member, and some are administered university-wide.

As some of you are aware, I have for the past eleven years led a summer study abroad program in Mexico where students earn at least six political science credits and three credits of Spanish. It is my observation that there are many students who would like to study abroad but do not do so primarily because they perceive that they do not have the funds to do so. It has also been my experience that with some planning, virtually all students can find a way to make it happen. In fact, I challenge any student who can find the money to study on campus to defend the proposition that they cannot find a way to pay for study abroad if they are willing to be creative and plan. It is one of my jobs to help students who want to study abroad to study abroad. So, come talk to me.

I look forward to a fruitful 2010-2011 school year. Stop by and see me.

Did you know? -- Although students concentrating in International Relations and Comparative Politics now account for one-quarter of all PSCI majors, just one of the Department’s nine scholarships rewards international study. Please contact Kelley Willett at 406.243.2646, if you would like to establish or contribute to a scholarship in this field.
Interesting Internships

Every year, several dozen PSCI majors participate in local, state, national and international internships. Internships are a valuable way to see how politics work and to develop professional experience and contacts. To help majors and alumni better understand internships, we interviewed several UM students and recent graduates about their unique experiences working in the U.S. and around the world.

For more information on internships at The University of Montana, please contact the faculty member who oversees internships in your area of focus and visit Internship Services in the Lommasson Center.

Ashley Zuelke, U.S. Embassy in Paris and U.S. Senate Finance Committee

I remember while studying in the University Center I found it was possible for me to add a major in international relations/comparative politics to my journalism degree. I doubted I could work in my budding passion until I became active in Model United Nations my senior year. Our traveling team represented Iceland at the national MUN conference. Two weeks after that conference, I received an e-mail from the State Department that changed everything. Four paragraphs in an e-mail let me know I received an internship at the U.S. Embassy in Paris for the fall after my senior year. I spun around to my co-worker and asked him to read it and determine if it was real. Then I called my mom.

My first week at the Chancery bordering Place de la Concorde, I found a mentor in the trade officer. She exposed me to issues that gave me a basis for my future experiences at the Senate Committee on Finance and Department of Commerce.

My education at the Embassy began with a conference on global trade protectionism in the wake of the recession. I started writing briefs for the Embassy’s daily newsletter to Washington and translating stories from the leading French financial newspaper. I pulled a much larger story from one of those briefs, about the visit of the Turkish President. The trade officer let me arrange interviews with French officials and other delegations in Paris to compose a cable to Washington about the economic implications of France’s cultural promotion institutions.

I even found a Montana connection while escorting one of the founders of UM’s Kimmitt Public Service Internship program to a courtesy call with the Ambassador. My voice couldn’t contain my excitement as I related my experience to the Deputy Chief of Mission at the end of my four months in Paris.

All of my highlights – attending a Legion of Honor reception at the Ambassador’s Residence, meeting a Sénateur, and sending my first official e-mail in French – rank just below one experience. Each day I savored the sunset on the Champs-Élysées from my window and watched as the Eiffel tower began twinkling for the first time each evening at six o’clock.

In Paris, my world opened, but it was just the beginning. That January, I became an international trade associate for the Senate Committee on Finance in Washington, D.C. I drew from my experiences in Paris to work on issues in the U.S.-European economic dialogue. I saw how we develop our trade preference programs, which are used to aid economic growth and alleviate poverty in developing countries. I learned how to write for a Senator and helped carry the voice of Montanans who lost their jobs, because of competition from imports, to the Department of Labor, which administers trade adjustment assistance programs.

After two internship terms at the Committee, I took my current position in the liaison office for Congress and state governments at the Department of Commerce. The programs and professors at The University of Montana gave me confidence and the foundational knowledge necessary to pursue my interests on a professional level.

For more information on PSCI internships, talk with the department’s internship coordinators:
-Legislative, campaign and public interest groups: Christopher Muste
-Local government and public administration: Jeff Greene
-International: Karen Adams
-Legal: Jim Lopach
Initially, I didn’t apply for a “veteran’s fellowship” in Senator Max Baucus’ Washington D.C. Office – I didn’t even know one existed. Shortly after submitting my application for a “legal clerkship” with the Senate Finance Committee, I received a call from one of the Senator’s Legislative Assistants. Having researched the Committee’s jurisdictional responsibilities and recent politics, I was ready for an intensive phone interview on precisely those topics. Yet, as the interview progressed, I noticed a lot of questions were related to defense and veterans policy. At the conclusion of the interview, the Legislative Assistant unexpectedly said, “Congratulations Charlie, you have been selected as the first recipient of Senator Baucus’ “Defenders of Freedom Fellowship.” Slightly taken aback, I replied, “Great!” It’s a good thing as I wound up spending seven months working directly for Senator Baucus and his Military Legislative Assistant, Andrew Person, during a dynamic period in American politics.

There isn’t much routine while working “on the Hill.” About my only regular task was morning prep on current issues related to defense and veterans policy, then attending the Senator’s daily strategy sessions to brief and discuss the issues of the day. After adjourning, routine gave way to a lively and unpredictable workday. I did anything and everything the Senator asked or needed. I researched and drafted policy memoranda, letters to constituents, and several floor speeches. I led meetings, attended hearings, organized and ran a congressional staff briefing, and represented the office at various D.C. think-tank functions. Several times, Andrew and I briefed the Senator on current events in Afghanistan and, when queried, offered our recommendations on the best policy or political positions to take.

The fellowship’s most rewarding experiences came when I researched, drafted, and helped push several pieces of important legislation meant to help veterans of the current conflicts. One bill modernized and streamlined Defense Department programs meant to address service member PTSD and the recent rash of veteran suicides. (After the bill passed, I was able to attend the White House ceremony and watch President Obama sign the bill into law.) I also worked on a bill that creates a robust tax credit and streamlines the filing process for employers who hire recently discharged veterans. Senator Baucus recently introduced it on the floor, reading a speech that I helped draft.

This fellowship was an absolutely incredible experience and I highly recommend applying for it or the myriad of other opportunities to work or intern in D.C. For additional information, feel free to contact me or Senator Baucus’ office.

Charlie Cromwell is a recent graduate of the Joint JD/MPA Program. He is an Army Captain and Iraq War veteran. Charlie can be reached at: charles.cromwell@gmail.com.

A Glimpse of Graduation

PSCI student graduation speaker Kendra Halverson (second from right) with PSCI faculty at Spring 2010 graduation.
arguing simply for a revolutionary approach, I contend that a strategic combination of electoral politics at various levels and a continued, strong, social movement presence is the best option for achieving social justice in Ecuador currently.

These situations, however, can undoubtedly change quickly and Ecuador has certainly seen its share of revolutionary upheavals in the past. On the other hand, some social movements in Ecuador, following a similar path throughout Latin America, do not seem interested in seizing state power as much as cultivating smaller scale solutions to local problems. Whether this is indeed the proper strategy for creating fundamental change is a whole different question, but one I hope to research while I am living in Ecuador for the next year.

Understanding public approval ratings, while difficult to comprehend due to various input sources, is not solely academic as understanding how and why citizens form their opinions of legislators and government institutions is vital for any representative democracy to function. The ramifications of extremely low public support could lead to very low voter turnout, which in turn could affect compliance with policy output, consent of the governed, and the very legitimacy of our democratic system.

There exists within the study of political science a dichotomous relationship between public approval ratings of individual legislators and that of Congress as a whole. Historically, individual legislators receive relatively high public approval ratings among their constituents whereas Congress as a whole traditionally receives the lowest public approval ratings of all three branches of government.

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Aaron Augsburger, “Twenty-first Century Socialism”

My research focused on the degree to which Ecuador has been able to alter its development strategy from neoliberal capitalist democracy towards what is vaguely termed “Twenty-first Century Socialism” by its most vocal adherents. Placed within the larger Latin American context of an unprecedented electoral swing to the left, significant debate exists regarding the extent to which these self-defined left-leaning elected officials have actually enacted economic, political, social, and cultural policies that are significantly different from those of their neoliberal predecessors. The failure of these new left-leaning regimes to fully enact their campaign promises at once has lead some activists and scholars to claim that the continued use of electoral politics will fail to bring about fundamental change. They argue that the only real possibility of altering class relations and political power while creating a more socially just society is through the revolutionary politics of mass mobilization.

Using the case study of Ecuador after the election of Rafael Correa in 2006, I argue that advocating a purely revolutionary approach for the specific case of Ecuador is wrong on numerous counts. First, it fails to acknowledge the fundamental political, economic, and cultural changes occurring since Correa took office. Second, it misconstrues or disregards the actual demands of the supposedly revolutionary actors, which in this case would be the national, indigenous, social movement headed by the CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador). Finally, encouraging a solely revolutionary method fails to accurately take into account the current domestic and international political opportunity structure.

Through an empirical investigation drawing on a number of political, economic, and cultural variables, I argue that an important shift is occurring towards a more inclusive, democratic, equitable Ecuador since Correa took office. In contrast to those

William Hudson Blair, “Congressional Approval Ratings”

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Kudos

Congratulations to the students who were awarded this year’s Political Science scholarships:
Emily May, Merrin Chivers, Austin James, Nicholas Feeney, Ashleen Williams, Emily Gutierrez, Jonathan Wemple, Daneal Paddock, Nicole Allen, Marissa Perry, and Logan Timmerhoff. Great job on your hard work!

The following graduate students were awarded teaching assistantships for 2010-2011:
Jessica McCutcheon, Nicholas Feeney, Dale Swapinski, Kimberly Sharpe, and Oleg Salimov.

The UM Political Science Department Newsletter

PSCI Majors Present at National Research Conference

The University of Montana hosted the 24th National Conference on Undergraduate Research from April 15-17, 2010. The conference, titled “Meet Me in Montana,” featured nine political science majors who presented their research on a variety of topics.

The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) is dedicated to promoting undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity in all fields of study. The annual gathering, which is billed as the premier event for undergraduate research in the country, welcomes scholars and their faculty mentors from all institutions of higher learning in the United States. This year’s conference attracted about 2,300 students, faculty and other interested observers. About 1,500 students presented their research, including 60 from UM.

Each student submitted a research proposal for acceptance and worked closely with an academic mentor who supervised the projects and provided important feedback.

PSCI majors who participated in NCUR included the following:
- Samantha Stephens, “Inevitable Iran: The Use of Coercive Diplomacy in Confronting Iran’s Nuclear Enrichment Program.”
- Stephanie Strope, “Missoula County Community Council Needs Assessment.”
- Kate Olp, “Adam Smith’s Visible Hand: Public-Private Partnerships in Multilateral Economic Institutions.”
- Mike McDonald, “Intensified Animosity Between the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and the Industrial Workers of the World: The 1917 Lynching of Union Organizer Frank Little.”
- Andrew Dusek, “Crisis in Kosovo: The Ethical Dilemma of Humanitarian Intervention.”
- Robert Coleman, “The IWW and Northwest Montana’s WWI Timber Strikes.”
- Jessica Scharf, “International Criminal Court.”

Research (cont. from page 5)

This research paper examines the sources of public opinion about Congress, particularly the effects of Congressional earmark spending on public approval of Congress as an institution and approval of individual senators. I assess ten states (Virginia, Iowa, Alabama, Massachusetts, Washington, California, Kansas, New Mexico, Kentucky, and Missouri) over a four year period (2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008), hypothesizing that higher levels of state earmarks and increases over time in a state’s earmarks will increase senators’ approval ratings, but that increased earmark spending will cause declines in approval of Congress as a whole. Analysis of the relationships shows modest support for the hypotheses, and merits further analysis of additional cases to clarify the relationships.

In isolating earmarks as an input in formulating public approval ratings, this research adds to previously existing literature in an effort to explain whether factors used in formulating public approval ratings carry the same weight when the object varies. This is significant within the discipline, as the relationship is currently considered academically inconsequential due to the inverse and perhaps irrational explanations. Outside of the discipline, measuring public approval ratings with regard to earmarks could educate legislators of their actual effect on approval ratings and could alter the inclusion of earmarks in legislation.
Jim Messina, a University of Montana graduate and the current White House Deputy Chief of Staff, visited the university during homecoming 2010 to discuss national politics in the run up to the midterm elections. In an afternoon discussion on the Friday before homecoming titled “Law and Politics: Update from Washington,” Messina shared some of the highlights of work in the West Wing and reminisced about his time at the university.

Messina said that even though his job in Washington keeps him away from Montana more than he likes, his ties to the university have remained strong. An Idaho native, Messina graduated from the university with a degree in journalism in 1993 and has since served as chief of staff for Sens. Max Baucus and Byron Dorgan, as well as Rep. Carolyn McCarthy. He also served as national chief of staff for President Obama’s 2008 election campaign.

It was during a Griz game in 2008 that then President-elect Barack Obama called to offer Messina his dream job. “He said, ‘hey Messina, want to go change the world?’” Messina couldn’t say no and added that, as an emotional person, he immediately started crying.

Sitting just 41 feet from the Oval Office, Messina said that his duties consist of everything the chief of staff doesn’t want to do. Never afraid to get his hands dirty, Messina has been entrusted with tasks ranging from securing crucial votes for healthcare reform and making sure personnel appointments are approved in the Senate to investigating the couple who crashed the State Dinner for Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. For Messina, it’s all in a day’s work.

There are obvious drawbacks associated with the dream job, however. At the opening of his discussion, Messina quoted Josh Lyman, his fictional counterpart on television’s The West Wing.

“You spend your whole adult life wanting it and once you get it, you wouldn’t wish it on your worst enemy,” he said. Messina still struggles with the speculation about his life and career in the press. “I hate being the story,” he said. “I like being the guy in the back fixing it.” He added that he’d prefer to go back to running Missoula City Council elections.

Messina said that it was a group of great teachers that inspired him to pursue a career in politics. One professor, who taught Introduction to American Government, read the lyrics to Bruce Springstein’s “Born in the USA” and made Messina realize that “college is going to be the greatest thing of all time.” Though he would leave the university three times to work on various campaigns, Messina credited the Political Science Department faculty with drawing him back to finish his degree. The professors worked behind the scenes, helping to facilitate learning outside the classroom and checking in to make sure things were going well, he said. For a man who has gone on to become a fixer himself, that behind the scenes contact made all the difference.

Pi Sigma Alpha, Epsilon Mu Chapter -- PSCI Student Honor Society

By Professor Christopher Muste, Faculty Advisor, and Brittany Harris

Pi Sigma Alpha is the national honor society for Political Science students, and Epsilon Mu is UM’s chapter. Poli Sci majors are eligible for membership if they have earned 12 PSCI credits, at least 3 of which are in upper division classes, have a 3.0 GPA, and have junior standing. We welcome sophomores and freshmen to participate in all Pi Sigma Alpha-sponsored activities.

Last year, Pi Sigma Alpha organized a range of activities. We co-sponsored the campus visit of UM Alum (1993) Jim Messina, Deputy Chief of Staff in the White House, who gave a talk to the campus and community, and also spoke to several Political Science classes, including Professor Saldin’s Parties and Elections and Professor Muste’s Political Participation class. We also co-sponsored a talk by David Sheldon, a military defense lawyer, who discussed the cases of the detainees at Guantanamo, the role of military and civilian courts, and the death penalty in military cases. We also co-sponsored a presentation by Professor Karen Adams of our own Political Science department, who discussed her January trip to Vietnam, described elsewhere in this newsletter.

In November 2009, Pi Sigma Alpha held a showing of the movie “Crash” about race relations in Los Angeles. Following the movie we had a lively discussion with Professor Christopher Muste concerning ethnic and racial stereotypes, misperceptions, prejudice, and the politics of identity.

article continued on page 14
Reflections of an Award-winning Model UN Delegate

Stephen M. Carnes

I first participated in Model United Nations at my previous college, Victor Valley College in Victorville, California, where the program impacted my education and understanding of world politics. I was very excited to learn that The University of Montana also participates in the same program and also takes part in the New York National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference. The conference brings over 3,000 university students from around the world together to practice diplomacy, challenge our intellectual boundaries, and broaden our understanding of issues facing the world. For me, Model UN is a way to cast off preconceived notions of far off lands and broaden my own understanding of other cultures.

In California, I was fortunate to be selected to represent my college in Washington, D.C. and New York for NMUN conferences, where my team won awards. This past year, Professor Karen Adams invited me to represent The University of Montana at the 2010 New York conference. Due to the past success of Montana delegates, our university was given two countries to represent in the 2010 NMUN Conference. One was the nation of Vietnam, which gave us presence in a number of General Assembly Committees, and also a seat on the Security Council. Our second nation was Burkina Faso, which gave us a seat in the second Security Council Committee; this is the nation I represented. Having even one seat on the Security Council at this conference is very impressive; needless to say I was a bit nervous. I was new to the University and to the MUN program and the Security Council committees are often filled with the most knowledgeable and most competitive students. You have to be extremely knowledgeable of current events, be able to adjust to changing events and crisis simulations, and practice diplomatic skill in every aspect of the committee.

Preparation is vital. At times, this required up to 15 hours a week of independent study. Not only did we continuously read newspapers and Security Council resolutions while keeping up to date with new developments in the world, but we also learned a lot about the country we represented. Learning the culture, government, foreign policy, past history, present developments, and future ambitions are just a few important aspects to study. Once you have established what country you will represent and formulated an accurate worldview, it is up to you to apply that view to contemporary events. This part is a lot of fun. As a political science major emphasizing in international relations, I really enjoy gaining an understanding of cultures outside the United States. My specific interests include nations in Africa and Asia. My curiosity particularly stems from my time in the Marine Corps. I was stationed in Japan for three years and was deployed to many Southeast Asian countries.

The day of my first Security Council committee session, I was nervous about how everything would go. Luckily, I had great teammates who kept me calm. It turned out that I was very well prepared for committee and was able to make friends with the other delegates immediately. We all worked well together and even managed to draft and pass a resolution that all 15 nations approved, a feat relatively unheard of in the Security Council. I was very much embraced by my fellow delegates and was dubbed the “Father of the Committee” by the end of the conference because of my willingness to work with everyone and ensure that those who felt left out were included in every aspect of committee proceedings. My performance earned me the Top Delegate Award in my committee. Professor Adams later said that specific distinction was the first ever bestowed upon a University of Montana student.

The 2010 NMUN Conference was an amazing adventure for our UM team. We all represented the university very well, and as an experienced Model UN member, I was extremely impressed with the level of maturity and professionalism illustrated by my teammates, especially those who were participating in their very first conference. We all became very close while participating at the conference. It was very exciting to have delegates from all committees commend The University of Montana delegates representing Vietnam and Burkina Faso. It came as no surprise on the final day of the conference before the closing ceremonies when our university was awarded a Distinguished Delegation Award. It was pretty amazing to stand as a team in the Grand Hall of the United Nations, where the leaders of the world often speak, to be recognized for our hard work.

For more information, contact faculty advisor Karen Ruth Adams or visit the MMUN web site at http://www.cas.umt.edu/mun/.
FAQs about PSCI’s MA and MPA Programs

We interviewed several faculty members about exciting opportunities for students within the department. With many students contemplating the next step after graduation, faculty members shared some advice on topics from gaining international experience to applying for graduate school and finding employment. This is what they had to say.

Master of Arts Program

• Associate Prof. Ramona Grey, MA program co-director
• Assistant Prof. Chris Muste, MA program co-director

Q: When should students in the department start preparing for grad school? How do students apply for the program?

You should start thinking about applying for graduate school fall semester of senior year (especially for the purpose of getting faculty recommendation letters.) Our MA program doesn’t have a deadline for applying for the program, but if you wish to be considered for a Teaching Assistant position or scholarship, then you need to be admitted into the program with ‘full’ standing before April 1st (the deadline for TA applications).

To apply for the PSCI MA program, you need to complete & submit the on-line graduate application form, a brief statement on why you wish to pursue a Masters in Political Science, an official transcript, GRE (Graduate Records Exam) score, and 3 letters of recommendation.

Q: What sets UM’s MA program apart from others of the same size and subject matter?

We offer the only graduate Masters in Political Science in the state. Our “Comprehensive Study” option allows you to tailor your graduate course work and professional papers to the areas in political science that interests you. Masters students can take courses in other departments, including the Law School, and do internships and independent study for credit towards your MA degree. This flexibility enables you to focus your studies on preparing for careers in a wide range of fields, from development work to careers in government, journalism, NGOs, the private sector, and as preparation for further graduate study in political science and law.

Q: Is it possible to receive early admission?

Yes, you need to have a 3.0 GPA, have six or fewer credits left to complete the BA (with 30 credits completed in political science), and take the GRE by the end of your first semester of enrollment in the Masters program. If you are interested in early admissions, you should contact Prof. Christopher Muste (243-4829).

Master of Public Administration

• Prof. Jeffrey Greene, MPA Director

Q: When/how should students begin preparing for admission to the MPA program?

You can apply at any time to the MPA program. It is required to have a bachelor’s degree or be in one’s final year as an undergraduate. The application form is available online on the Graduate School’s website.

Q: What sets UM’s MPA program apart from other programs at similar institutions?

UM’s MPA program dates back to the 1970s. It is a small program where you get more attention than you would in a much larger program. UM’s MPA program is also available on campus or online. You can take a combination of campus and online classes, or complete the program totally on campus or totally online.

Q: What are the benefits of having an MPA?

The MPA is the most common administrative degree found in the government and the non-profit sectors. It is a degree that is similar to the MBA (business administration) but focuses on public sector settings and institutions. It is often beneficial to have an MPA when applying to public sector or non-profit organizations because the degree is often expected.
FAQs about International Opportunities

Summer in Mexico Program

- **Professor Paul Haber**, Program Director

Q: Who is eligible to participate in the Politics of Mexico study abroad program?

The program is open to anyone from Freshmen to graduate students. It is preferred that applicants have completed Spanish 101 and 102 before enrolling in the program, but there are some exceptions. For example, the program is open to students who are rising Sophomores who can take upper division political science classes and expectations are adjusted accordingly.

Q: How do students apply for the program?

Students are requested to write a brief statement of application (one to two pages) that addresses the following questions: 1) Why do you want to go on this program? 2) What personal attributes or experiences do you have that prepare you to do well in this program? Also, please include basic information (such as year in school, contact information, and level of Spanish completed by spring 2011).

Q: Are there any plans to create more learning and travel opportunities to other countries?

Not at this time. The department is always open to individual initiative, in terms of faculty members who want to lead programs. It would be preferred that these programs take place over winter or summer breaks so faculty members are available for instruction during the semester.

International Development Studies Minor

- **Peter Koehn**, Advisor for IDS Minor

Q: Why should students consider adding an IDS minor?

There are two reasons. First, the minor compliments a political science major with an option in international relations and comparative politics. Second, the university has a lot of students who are interested in working in low income countries. This is reflected in our high rate of enrollment in the Peace Corps. People interested in Peace Corps service have found that the minor strengthens qualifications and provides great preparation to be a good volunteer.

Q: When should students add the minor?

The earlier the better. Core and content courses for the minor aren’t always offered each semester, or even every year. Also, starting early provides time for study abroad or international internships that can be applied to the minor. That being said, it is possible to complete the minor in one year. If students have sufficient flexibility in their schedules, it can be done. It is especially easy for political science majors because the content courses are required for the degree. All they need to do is take four core courses and it’s almost a slam dunk.

More International Resources

For more information on study abroad opportunities, please visit the office of International Programs or visit the website at http://www.umt.edu/ip/.

For more information on international internships (especially through the IE3 program), please visit the office of Internship Services or visit the website at http://www.umt.edu/internships/.

Your Contributions At Work

Contributions from PSCI alumni and friends fund a variety of department initiatives. If you would like to support the Political Science Department, please send a check or money order to The University of Montana Foundation, P.O. Box 7159, Missoula, MT 59807-7159, with a note in the memo line indicating it is for the Political Science Department. For more information about making a gift (with no obligation to do so), please contact Kelley Willett of the UM Foundation at Kelley.Willett@mso.umt.edu or (800) 443.2593, (406) 243.2646.
**FAQs about Finding Work**

**How should I choose a career?**

Professor Lopach: It’s always seemed to me regarding careers that there are two kinds of people: those who know at age 9 what they want to be, get on track, stay there, and find a lot of happiness in their work, and those who don’t know at 29 what they want to be but work hard at each job they get, build a foundation for the next step, and ultimately find themselves in a productive and satisfying career. I think these latter people find more happiness in who they are as opposed to what they are doing. I confess that I was - and think many of our majors are - in the second category. As an advisor, I have found that the first group needs less career assistance than the second group. I tell the second group to be patient, take advantage of each opportunity that is presented, however modest it might seem, continue to build your resume as a responsible and accomplished person, and soon you will discover your niche and be rewarded for your contributions.

Professor Muste: Networking is important. Think about who you know who works in a field or organization that interests you, and talk to them about what they do, what kinds of opportunities are available, and what qualifications people in their field should have to be hired and succeed. Talk to faculty, people you may have worked with in a volunteer effort, internship, or other activity, and anyone else you know who has experience in an area you’re interested in, including former UM students now in the working world. Once you’ve landed a position, don’t stop networking, seeking new responsibilities, building your skills, and learning. And let the Poli Sci faculty and UM Alumni association know what you’re up to, as part of our informal Poli Sci network.

Professor Adams: If you know you want to work in Washington, D.C., NY, or some other city, move there and do everything you can to make contacts. I have seen this work well many times. For example, one of my students, who was very short of money but very sure she wanted to work in DC, moved there and signed up with a temp agency that she knew provided temporary workers to the IMF, World Bank, and other international agencies. She started as a temporary file clerk at the IMF. Later she was a temporary receptionist at a non-governmental organization that specialized in environment and energy, two of her main interests. Once there, the staff realized how valuable she was and kept promoting her until she was in charge of running the organization’s annual conference.

To make contacts, attend talks on issues that interest you and introduce yourself to others in the audience. Many cities have a World Affairs Council, a Commonwealth Club, UNA-USA, and UM alumni clubs. In DC, you could also attend talks at the Brookings Foundation, the Heritage Foundation, the New America Foundation, and many more.

When making contacts, you never know where something may lead. You could meet someone with similar interests and background who would be a good compatriot as you navigate the options. Or you could meet someone who has a job and may be interested in hiring you. Or you could meet someone who does work you’d like and would be willing to talk with you about their career path. Regardless, you will be most favorably remembered if you have an open and friendly manner, introduce yourself with your full name, can talk about your interests and goals in a few short sentences, express interest in them, and have a business card with your contact info.

Many groups provide job listings. Women in International Security is especially good. You need not be a woman to join. WIIS has an excellent list of jobs from entry- to high-level in US and international agencies related to international affairs. WIIS also sponsors job fairs and panel discussions on current events and professional matters. The Council on Foreign Relations is also has a good, free database of current job openings, as well as podcasts of recent CFR events.

**Where can I make contacts?**

**How do I find a job in a bad economy?**

Professor Greene: My advice on finding employment with a political science degree in the current bad economy is to look at federal positions. The only sector of the economy that is actually growing is the federal government. Over the years we have had numerous MPA graduates who now have good positions with a variety of federal agencies. Some of our recent graduates have applied and been hired by agencies, such as the Forest Service and Department of Agriculture. There are currently positions in the federal sector. Once the economy improves, it is likely that state and local government will also start growing again. Despite the poor economy, there are still many management training positions available in cities like Long Beach, CA and Phoenix, AZ.

Professor Adams: One option is to work part-time at whatever job you can find so you can afford to intern for free. Internships, like temp work, often lead far beyond the initial job description. At the very least, you will make contacts.

*article continued on page 12*
FAQs about Finding Work (cont. from page 11)

How can I gain international work experience?

Professor Adams: To get international work experience, look at the job and volunteer postings at idealist.org. There you will find all sorts of opportunities, from short term to long term, all over the world. Among the best for demonstrating your commitment are stints with disaster relief agencies, which often cover your airfare, lodging, and meals while you provide labor in, for example, a refugee camp. I first learned of this from a high-level staffer at an international refugee agency. According to her, with several weeks of volunteer work like this under your belt, NGOs and IGOs will take your application more seriously.

Don’t put all of your eggs in one basket. Even if you pass the Foreign Service written and oral exams on your first try (which is extremely unusual), it could be years before you are called to work. Thus before, during, and after the application process, do everything you can to keep busy and build your resume. This will improve your posting and will give you alternatives in case you’re not posted.

Professor Haber: I often talk to students who are interested in working abroad after graduation. Sometimes students simply want some international experience before moving on to where they are going to go next and others are exploring whether the life abroad is for them. In my experience, the best options are usually either to teach English or join the Peace Corps. There are of course other options as well, but these both have some clear benefits.

Teaching English can usually pay the bills, as long as the bills are simple living. Or, close to paying the bills with a little savings kicked in. The usual route for doing this is to search on-line in the country or countries in which you are interested in living. The usual time for doing this is six months to a year. Commonly, to get your foot in the door, you will teach at a language institute or sometimes even a grade school, high school or college. Teaching kids at English speaking private schools is certainly an option. Making good money teaching English almost always requires giving private lessons, something difficult if not impossible to arrange from afar but possible sometimes to arrange once you are in-country.

Students interested broadly in development (economic, political, human rights, etc.) often pursue the idea of working for a non-profit, non-government organization (NGO). While this is certainly an option for some, and can be researched on line or with reference to a book called “Alternatives to the Peace Corps”, I have found that this is often difficult to arrange from afar. Simply put, there are not that many NGOs in other countries willing to invest in young people from abroad who are still learning the language. Why not hire a Peruvian young person to work in Peru for a Peruvian NGO? I am not saying it is impossible, but it is not easy.

The Peace Corps is a realistic option. It provides some institutional support and pays a stipend. Furthermore, there are graduate programs linked to doing Peace Corps service, so you can earn a graduate degree while also serving as a volunteer. UM has such a program, run out of the department of Forestry (contact: Professor Steve Seibert). UM also has a permanent recruiter on campus. The main reservation about doing Peace Corps is that it is a two year commitment.

Professor Koehn: Although not for everyone, the Peace Corps provides an opportunity to demonstrate (to employers and graduate schools) that one can succeed in challenging living and project contexts and also offers ample opportunities for networking with NGOs for post-PC assignments.

How can I become a more marketable applicant?

Professor Adams: Take advantage of UM’s career center to get advice on your resume. Also show it to your professors and employers to get their feedback. Make sure it is short (no more than 2 pages) and clearly organized and that it summarizes all relevant experience, including course work, employment, leadership positions, activities, and awards.

Professor Muste: Think about what skills and experiences you have, in general areas like written and verbal communication and research, as well as in the specific responsibilities you’ve had in internships, jobs, and special projects in your courses. These are your qualifications, and you should be able to articulate what they are and why they matter to the people and organizations you talk to in your job/career search.

Internships and volunteer activities can lead to new opportunities. If you’re still a student, take advantage of the range of internships available in Missoula and elsewhere, including Helena, Washington, DC, and internationally. Both internships and volunteer work build your skills, experience, and resume, and connect you to useful networks.

Alumni: Please Share Your Career Advice
If you have tips for PSCI students who are building their resumes, looking for jobs, and applying to graduate school, please send them to Department Secretary Karen Boice at karen.boice@umontana.edu. We will publish them in our next newsletter.
Associate Professor Karen Ruth Adams

In January 2010, I travelled to Hanoi, Vietnam and gave five lectures at Vietnamese universities. One of the lectures was sponsored by USAID and the government of Vietnam. In that lecture, I introduced faculty of law and economics at Ho Chi Minh University to the subject of international politics so they can include it in the curriculum taught to Vietnamese government officials. While in Vietnam, I explored Hanoi with a student from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam. In addition, I flew to the city of Hue and toured the former demilitarized zone between North and South Vietnam with a former member of the South Vietnamese army, who served as a scout for US Special Forces during the Vietnam War. It was a fascinating trip and motivated me to include discussion of both historical and contemporary Vietnam in my forthcoming book on international security.

Associate Professor Ramona Grey

I’m currently teaching water aerobics at Currents for Misoula Parks & Rec department. This semester I’m doing a MWF 9-10am class with 10-25 participants, seniors and working adults. We’ve been doing a series called “Muscles of the Month,” in which I take the participants through a series of water exercises that work particular muscle groups, and talk about how those muscles work (and sometimes don’t work.) And to make them forget how hard they are working, I throw in a mini-lecture on Plato and Marx.

Professor Jeffrey Greene

This year I followed state elections around the country, given that many state houses and governorships were expected to change. There are lots of things happening at the state and local level, including: an increase in the use of privatization to deliver services or selling state properties to help balance state budgets, lawsuits between the states and federal government over a variety of issues, and elections. I am working on a book about the use of privatization at the state and local level, titled Tough Choices and Tough Times: The Use of Privatization by State and Local Governments in a Period of Economic Uncertainty.

For more than 30 years the Western Political Science Association has hosted a roundtable on budgeting and policy. A publication is produced by the University of Utah that includes papers from all 13 western states and Texas. The UC-Berkeley Electronic Press plans to begin publishing the papers next year. This will give the panel more visibility and make data more easily available for other researchers. I have been on the roundtable since the mid-1990s.

During fall semester, I sat on forums, moderated candidate forums, and gave several talks about federal-state relations in the current political environment since federalism has changed under the current administration. In the spring I look forward to teaching public policy since many policy changes are occurring, including the new health care law, potentially cap and trade, and efforts to improve the economy. It is an exciting time in politics. I am also teaching the public budgeting class in the spring, which should also be interesting since Congress failed to pass a federal budget in the fall before the elections.

Professor Peter Koehn

As some of you know, I began my teaching career at Haile Selassie I University in Ethiopia. This semester break, I’ve been invited back (same school, but now called “Addis Ababa University”) to teach seminar courses for Ph.D. students in Political Science and give public lectures. I’m excited about the prospect of returning to the AAU campus, interacting with the current generation of graduate students, becoming acquainted with the faculty in PSCI, bringing back new insights about development for incorporation in my courses, introducing my family to Ethiopia, and enjoying authentic Ethiopian cuisine.
Assistant Professor Christopher Muste

Since this is an election year, I’ve been following the campaigns closely and have had the opportunity to talk about the election in a number of venues. Before the election, I was interviewed several times by the Lee newspaper Montana bureau, gave a talk on “Voters and Issues in the 2010 Election” at UM’s Mansfield Center, and wrote about how Montana is likely to be affected by this year’s national political tides on The Hill, a Washington DC blog. On election night, I served as a commentator Montana Public Radio.

Pi Sigma Alpha (cont. from page 7)

Both U.S. and international students attended, providing a range of perspectives on the issues raised in the film.

In April 2010, we held our annual members’ banquet, this year featuring State Representative Dave McAlpin as our speaker. Representative McAlpin spoke about the interplay between low taxation and the resulting difficulties state government experiences in funding education, infrastructure, and other services.

Our annual essay contest was based on the topic: “Defend or critique the following policy statement: ‘the University of Montana will conduct all classes on a four class day schedule.’” Our top three student essayists won cash prizes for their essays.

This year we have already held several events and are planning more. We’ve co-sponsored a visit by former Members of Congress Les AuCoin (D-Oregon) and Gil Gutknecht (R-Minnesota), who gave a talk at the Mansfield Center and later held a discussion of campus issues with student leaders. We also co-sponsored Professor Muste’s talk on “Voters and Issues in the 2010 Election,” at the Mansfield Center, and an interactive video conference with U.S. State Department officials, held in conjunction with three other universities, on “The UN and U.S. Foreign Policy.”

More plans are in the works. We’re working on organizing a panel discussion on whether state judges should be elected or appointed in the aftermath of this year’s Montana Supreme Court election. We’re also planning to host a student-led debate on current policy controversies, and to organize a roundtable of state legislative leaders during the “break” in the middle of the legislative session in spring 2011. Another movie night is in the offing for spring. And in late spring 2011 we will hold our annual banquet to celebrate the year and officially induct our new members.

We invite all eligible Political Science majors to join Pi Sigma Alpha and to participate in our event planning, and invite all majors to participate in our programs and activities. If you’re interested in finding out more, please contact Brittany Harris at bh112997@umconnect.edu or Professor Muste at christopher.muste@umontana.edu.
I am currently an administrator for the U.S. Forest Service in the Administrative Center for Excellence located at Fort Missoula.

In a nutshell, I am authorized to spend government money. More specifically, I perform the full range of purchasing tasks pertaining to specialized requirements, such as negotiating price with a sole source vendor, persuading reluctant vendors to bid, and collecting data to determine price reasonableness for requirements not acquired previously or recently. I also collect and analyze pertinent information or data regarding service trends, changes in customer preferences, or deviations in standard practices.

I purchase the resources necessary to aid USFS employees in doing their jobs to accomplish the overall FS mission, which is to most efficiently and effectively manage our national forests and grasslands. From office clerks and technicians, to scientists, foresters, rangers and the Forest Supervisor, my job is to get them the resources they need as efficiently as possible and at the lowest cost to the taxpayer.

Gregory Treible, B.A. 2009

Aaron Augsburger, BA 2008, MA 2010, has departed recently for Ecuador, just in time to witness firsthand street protests. His plan is to teach English and study Spanish in preparation for applying for a Ph.D. Program not too far down the road. He also hopes to continue his interest in Ecuadorian social movements there, perhaps co-authoring an article with Professor Haber.


Brian Dockstader, B.A. 2005, is pursuing an M.A. in international development at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Before that, he was the Online Communications and Database Specialist at Campaign for America’s Future.

Kedra Hildebrand, B.A. 2005, is pursuing her Ph.D. in Political Science at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where she received a full-ride scholarship. This summer, Kedra served as a graduate student mentor to 19 Southeast Asian students studying environmental politics at UM. The group was sponsored by the Mansfield Center and the US Department of State and toured Montana, Louisiana, and Washington, D.C.

Tyler Kendall, M.P.A. 2010, is working for the Department of Agriculture in Boise, ID.

David Knobel, B.A. 2009, is in his first year of law school at the University of Miami. Before enrolling there, he was a Tier 1 Support Technician at Cutthroat Communications in Bozeman.

Stephan Langley, M.A., 2003, is now a Vice Consul in the U.S Embassy in Manilla, Philippines.

Dylan Laslovich, M.A. 2010, is working as a legislative correspondent in Senator John Tester’s office in Washington, DC. According to Dylan, “The majority of my day is spent responding to policy questions from constituents and working with other offices and agencies. I am really enjoying it.”
Paul Moe, B.A. 2008, has been selected to attend the US Navy Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI. He says, “It is 3 months, and then off to the fleet! Hope all is well, and say hello to all the MUNers for me!”

Samantha Stephens, B.A. 2010, is in her first year at UM law school and is TA-ing and coauthoring background guides for Montana Model UN.

Jenna Tatsey, B.A. 2010, is her first year at UM law school. In addition, she is working for the Native American Community Development Corporation in Browning, MT, where she has documented the expenses of the Cobell v. Salazar lawsuit and participated in Forward Blackfeet Community to prepare for the Two Medicine River Bridge Project.

Averiel Wolff, M.P.A. 2005, lives in Albuquerque, where she works in human resources for the US Forest Service.