PSC Students Participate in Fall Election

In the fall 2006 election, Political Science students worked on get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts and as poll workers, exit pollsters, and even a campaign manager. Many of the students were enrolled in Prof. Christopher Muste’s course on Political Participation, in which students engage in or observe political action and write a research paper analyzing their experience.

Rebecca Pettit managed Holly Raser’s successful campaign for re-election to the Montana House of Representatives. Rebecca organized the campaign, scheduled events, coordinated other volunteers, and campaigned with Rep. Raser. Rebecca received internship credit for her work on the campaign.

Several other students worked on GOTV efforts. Rikki Gregory co-led the ASUM’s “storm the dorms” project, a non-partisan effort to get UM students to register and vote. Rikki went door-to-door in the dorms with information on registration, polling places, and candidates. Other students worked on GOTV efforts for the Montana Democratic Party or Tester campaign. Josh Buchman supervised a door-to-door team in Deer Lodge, while Lindsay Erickson and Michael Nugent went door to door in Missoula on election day.

These students experienced both feelings of accomplishment in contributing to the electoral process and frustration at the difficulty of motivating citizens to vote. According to Michael Nugent, “I think it was important for as many people as possible to vote in such a crucial election. It was exciting to knock on people’s doors and talk to people who were passionate about our state and our country. It was pouring rain that day so most everyone I talked to was thrilled that there were young people dedicated enough to be out on election day getting people to vote.”

Max Ammons and Kyler Lake served as poll workers for Missoula county in an election precinct near campus. They split an all-day shift checking in voters, confirming their registration status, and issuing ballots. Max and Kyler observed some minor problems with the polling technology and gained an appreciation of the difficulty of making the process smooth and accurate.

Students from left to right: Rebecca Pettit, Rikki Gregory, Max Ammons, Lindsay Erickson, Michael Nugent, Kyler Lake, and Josh Buchman.

Ryan Fries and graduate student Erin Burd worked on exit polls conducted by the international research firm of Edison/Mitofsky and used by television networks and the Associated Press to “call” the election winner and analyze the voters’ decisions. Ryan worked as a supervisor for the exit polls in Missoula county, while Erin conducted interviews at one of Missoula county’s polling places. These students gained first-hand experience in how the sometimes-controversial exit polls are conducted.

When the election was over, students had both contributed to and learned something about the complexities and difficulties of the electoral process. According to Prof. Muste, the students’ papers “showed they had carefully observed their own and others’ participation, and effectively applied what they learned in the course to better understand the American electoral system.” Students agreed that the experience was both edifying and enjoyable. According to Michael Nugent, “Prof. Muste told us that we would end up enjoying the experience, and he was absolutely right.”

Since our Department became an autonomous academic unit in 1959, many memorable professors have touched students’ lives.

Five faculty comprised the Political Science Department at its inception. Two remained and became pillars of the Department: Thomas Payne and Ellis Waldron. Payne served as the Department’s first chair and anchored the American politics curriculum until his retirement in 1985. He passed away in 1998 and is remembered for his dry sense of humor and up-to-date, fact-filled lectures. Ellis Waldron guided undergraduates for three decades through the mysteries of American constitutional law and Montana political culture. He founded and directed the Bureau of Government Research, a service arm of the Department that assisted Montana state and local governments until the mid 1980s. Waldron retired to Wisconsin in 1975 and died in 2002.

Serving next as Department chairs were Leo Lott, Lou Hayes, Jim Lopach, Ron Perrin, Jon Tompkins, Mike Laslovich, and Forest Grieves. During their tenure, a high-quality M.A. program was nurtured, the M.P.A. program was established, and the number of undergraduate majors mushroomed. In the 1976 school year, the Department taught 2,180 students. By 2006, 3,038 students were enrolled in PSC courses (not counting online offerings). Yet in both 1976 and 2006, the Department numbered just nine full-time faculty members.

What happened to the professors who taught, advised, researched, and published during the Department’s first 30 years? Hayes, Lopach, and Tompkins remain in the Department, as does Peter Koehn who arrived in 1972 as our public administration and African politics specialist. Mike Laslovich, whose fields were Canadian and – continued on page 2
From the Chair

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American politics, tragically died of diabetes complications in 2002, leaving behind the fruits of his passionate and exacting instruction.

Leo Lott has retired and pursues his hobbies of piano, painting, and community work; recently he was recognized as the Missoula library’s Senior Volunteer of the Year. In good weather, Ron Perrin can be found on Missoula golf courses; at other times, he teaches political theory in the Davidson Honors College and serves on community boards. “Reverend” Grieves has rediscovered in retirement his wanderlust and traveled many times to his second homeland, Germany, and ventured as far away as Tibet.

Other faculty have passed through the Department and left behind important contributions. Mike Urban continues his study of Russian affairs at UC Santa Cruz. Public administration instructors Dick Olufs and Pat Edgar teach, respectively, at Pacific Lutheran and Southern Arkansas. The free spirited Richard Chapman freelances as a writer and editor in Missoula. Howard Schwartz works as an energy policy analyst and adjunct instructor in Olympia. Environmental politics experts Bill Chaloupka and Greg Cawley ply their trade at Colorado State University and the University of Wyoming.

Many have made your departmental alma mater what it is today. Some professors have remained in Missoula, steadfast in their commitment. Others have made their mark and moved on. And new hires equally accomplished and dedicated have filled in behind: Professors Paul Haber (Columbia), Jeffrey Greene (South Carolina), Ramona Grey (UC Riverside), Greg Koger (UCLA), Karen Adams (UC Berkeley), and Chris Muste (UC Berkeley). The result is a Department that continues to deserve its alumni’s pride and support.

IDS Minor Takes Off

— Erin Burd, M.A. Student

The Political Science Department is proud to acknowledge the success of the International Development Studies (IDS) minor now offered at the University of Montana. Less than two years of existence, IDS has become the largest “free-standing” minor at UM. In 2006, the first eight students graduated from the program. Now there 69 students are enrolled. Of those, 31 are PSC majors.

The IDS minor is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the social, economic, political, and environmental challenges that poorer countries, or poor regions within wealthy nations, encounter. UM faculty designed the IDS minor to prepare students for short-term assignments and/or careers in developing nations or regions around the world. Graduating IDS minors possess knowledge and skill sets that prepare them for further (graduate) studies in the field, Peace Corps assignments, and work with national government and non-governmental, and international organizations that focus on development issues.

PSC Prof. Peter Koehn currently serves as the academic coordinator for the minor. According to Prof. Koehn, there has long been demand for a program of this nature, especially among PSC majors. One indicator is UM’s outstanding record of student enlisting in the Peace Corps, which is one of the highest per capita enrollments for universities and colleges nationwide.

Pi Sigma Alpha Update

—Julie Rostad, President

Pi Sigma Alpha has had a busy year. During fall semester, we hosted the Department’s annual fall barbecue and oversaw the Adopt-a-Family project. Thanks to everyone who donated to the Adopt-a-Family project; your donations were essential in granting our family’s Christmas wishes.

On February 15, we hosted a Project Vote Smart forum to educate students about internship opportunities, as well as the importance of civic engagement.

In March, the group hosted the Political Science Career Forum. Four individuals discussed internship and employment opportunities, as well as educational options following graduation. This event was an excellent opportunity for PSC students to discover new career and internship possibilities and to network with internship providers and employers.

On Friday, April 27, PSA will honor its newly initiated members at the annual spring banquet. Our keynote speaker will be Congressman Denny Rehberg.

Eligible PSC students are encouraged to become active members of Pi Sigma Alpha. It is a great way to get involved in your political community and isn’t bad for the resume, either. Any student at UM is eligible to join PSA if he or she has (1) completed at least ten semester hours of work in government, political science, public administration, or international relations, including at least one course that is not open to students in the first two years of collegiate work; and (2) has a B average or higher in all political science classes. Applications are available outside the PSC office.

Current PSA members who are not receiving email updates regarding events and meetings may contact us at psgiamalpaphaepsilonmu@yahoo.com.

We look forward to hearing from you. Best wishes for the rest of the semester, and have a great summer.

PSC Department Newsletter
Editor: Erin Burd, M. A. Student
Editorial Board: Professors Adams (chair), Lopach, and Grey
My Summer as an Intern —John Schiltz

While most of my friends and classmates were living in Missoula last summer, I was interning for the United States Senate Committee on Finance in Washington, DC. As a staffer for the Democratic side of the committee, I was responsible for helping Senator Max Baucus solve Finance Committee issues. My duties and tasks ranged from the mundane (cutting newspaper clips) to the exciting and substantive (researching issues and briefing the Senator). Although I was not paid for my internship, the opportunity was worthwhile because of the people I met, the things I saw, and the knowledge I gained.

Although I met many Senators, my interaction with the committee staff and the other Senate interns proved most valuable. Don’t get me wrong; it was very exciting to ride the elevator with Senator Kennedy and share a Capitol subway car with Senator Obama. But I spent the majority of my time with fellow staffers and interns. Everyone on the committee was dedicated to getting things done, and, as a result, they proved very useful in helping me accomplish my tasks and teaching me things along the way.

Meeting other interns was probably the most beneficial experience because I gained contacts with like-minded young people from all over the U.S. Over the course of the summer, I also witnessed a lot of very interesting things. When I wasn’t working, D.C. provided me with a plethora of ways to spend my time—ranging from visiting museums and monuments to experiencing nighttime Georgetown. Most of my time, however, was spent on the Hill, but that’s not to say that it was all business all of the time. The Congressional Lecture Series gives interns the opportunity to participate in question-and-answer sessions with prominent public officials. As such, I heard speeches from Ralph Nader, Colin Powell, and Chief Justice John Roberts.

Although I will never forget the people I met or the events I attended, nothing can top the knowledge and experience that I gained from interning on Capitol Hill. By attending hearings, researching issues, and writing memos I gained a lot of knowledge about the specific topics being discussed in Congress. However, the knowledge that I gained about the inner workings of Congress may prove even more useful for me as I pursue a career in politics. In the end, I would happily give up another summer in beautiful Missoula to experience Washington, DC, because the opportunity is too worthwhile to pass up.

Alumni

Where are you now? Please let us know where you are living, what you are doing and how you have spent your time since leaving the University of Montana. Email information to karen.boice@umontana.edu.

Would you like to stay in touch? Let the Alumni Association know your email address so we can notify you of upcoming events. Email support@umontanaalumni.org or call the Alumni Records Staff at (406) 243-5211.

The Political Science Papers, Debate No. 3: Bicycles on Campus

Publius: Allowing bikes on campus is a no-brainer. Biking diminishes car use and pollution, which is unarguably good. Bikers should be commended. Let freedom reign.

Brutus: Bicycles should be outlawed from campus because they endanger walkers. Accidents are common. Rather than hog the sidewalk, park your bike and walk on campus.

Distinguished PSC Alumni —Erin Burd, M.A. Student

The Political Science Department takes great pride in the successes of our alumni. In the next several issues, we will recognize the eight PSC alumni who have earned UM’s Distinguished Alumnus Award, which is given annually by the Alumni Association to recognize “distinguished service to the University, the State, or the Nation.”

In 1981, R. H. “Ty” Robinson was the first PSC graduate to receive this award. Robinson graduated in 1940 with a B.A. in History and Political Science. After earning his J. D. in 1948, Robinson joined the law firm of Garlington, Lohn & Robinson in Missoula. He lobbied the Legislature and the U.S. Congress, served as a member of the Montana Chamber of Commerce, worked closely with UM on numerous activities, and served as the director of various businesses and non-profit organizations. Robinson, now retired, resides in Missoula and remains an active member of the community.

Ted Schwinden graduated in 1949 with a B.A. in History and Political Science. One year later he earned his M.A. in Political Science and History. In 1958, Schwinden began his political career as a state representative from Roosevelt County, serving two terms. Later, in 1980, he was elected governor and again served two terms. As governor, Schwinden was known for his fiscal responsibility and his “hands on” approach to governing. Schwinden later taught Contemporary Montana Politics at Carroll College and at UM. Schwinden is now retired and resides in Arizona. He received the alumni award in 1993.

Margery Hunter Brown earned her M.A. in Political Science and History in 1953 and her J.D. in 1975. Her contributions included heading the Montana Human Rights Commission, participating in the rewriting of the Montana Constitution in 1972, and establishing the Indian Law Clinic at the UM Law School in 1980. Brown also co-authored numerous publications on Indian law and policy and was well known and well regarded for her years of mentoring law students. She received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1994.
Calendar

May 12 — PSC Departmental Graduation, 10:30 am, Music Recital Hall

May 21-July 27 — Summer Sessions

August 27 — Fall classes begin

September 28 — PSC Homecoming Open House, 4-6 pm, Liberal Arts 344

Summer Reading Suggestions

Looking for a book to put in your backpack or suitcase and read on the plane, beach, or mountaintop? We asked PSC faculty what they would recommend.

Professor James Lopach
- William H. Rehnquist, The Supreme Court
- Linda Greenhouse, Becoming Justice Blackmun
- Jan Crawford Greenburg, The Inside Story of the Struggle for Control of the United States

Professor Peter Koehn
- Barack Obama, The Audacity of Hope

Professor Jeff Greene
- Morris Fiorina, Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America
- James Q. Wilson, The Marriage Problem
- James Q. Wilson, The Moral Sense

Professor Ramona Grey
- Michael Ignatief, The Needs of Strangers
- George Orwell, Down and Out in Paris and London

Professor Karen Adams
- Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq’s Green Zone
- Greg Mortenson, Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time

Professor Eric Hines
- Franklin Foer, How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization

Your Contributions at Work

Contributions from PSC alumni and friends fund a variety of departmental initiatives, from scholarships and research assistantships to Model UN team travel, faculty development, and publication and mailing of this newsletter. If you would like to support these and other activities, please send a check to The University of Montana Foundation, PO Box 7159, Missoula, MT 59807-7159, with a note on the memo line indicating that it is for the Political Science Department. For more information about making a gift (with no obligation to do so), please contact Julia Horn of the UM Foundation at (800) 443-2593, (406) 243-2646 or Julia.Horn@mso.umt.edu.

“By nature, man is a political animal.”

— Aristotle

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