Chair’s Greeting by Neil Kraus

Welcome to the 2015 UWRF Political Science Department newsletter. Our faculty and students have been involved in a number of different activities throughout the past year, and we are looking forward to an exciting 2015-16 school year as well. I continue in my roles as Department Chair as well as Pre-Law Advisor. My departmental colleagues are involved in a number of interesting research and teaching activities which they describe in this newsletter. In an attempt to always make Political Science speak to current political events, we will be offering another new course next year as a Special Topics, The Politics of the Middle East, taught by Chris Simer. And we look forward to presenting more off campus speakers next year in our Contemporary Political Issues Roundtable series. As always, please let us know what you are up to, and thanks again for your continued support!

Send us your news! POLSnewsletter@uwrf.edu

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Students participating at one of the roundtable discussions in the University Center.
The fall of even numbered years are always an exciting time for me since I teach American Political Parties and Elections while an election is taking place. This fall, in addition to the regular curriculum for that class, each of the students was asked to choose 2 of the 2014 congressional races to study in depth – one that had been identified as “too close to call” and another, more typical race, where the odds heavily favored one candidate. When I made a presentation on “Key Races in the 2014 Elections” as part of the department’s “Contemporary Issues Roundtable,” Joe Draxler, JiYeon Ryu and Morgan Stippel (3 of the students from that class) joined me and presented highlights of their races to room full of students, faculty, and community members in the University Center. Another election related event was when I was interviewed by Fox 9 TV News about the changing requirements and court rulings related to voter photo-ID in Wisconsin.

Last summer I spoke on the topic of “Engaging Students on Issues, of Race, Class, and Gender” at a conference on teaching political science held at the University of Minnesota. I attended many other panels and workshops on other teaching topics at the conference. However, what was most fulfilling about the conference was the opportunity to discuss broader issues that arise for those who teach about government and politics. For example, one of frustrating aspects of politics in America today is the degree to which many citizens have become disengaged from the process. My political science students are not typical citizens in that respect. They are more knowledgeable and active than most citizens. That gives me some hope for the future, but I am concerned about the state of democracy when I realize so few people know about issues and participate in politics. It was useful to talk about these concerns with others in my profession.

As an outcome of those discussions on citizen engagement, I want to encourage all of us commit & recommit ourselves to learn about policy issues facing our society, figure out where we stand on those issues, and actively engage in politics to help make our society a better place for all.

Send your news to POLSnewsletter@uwrf.edu so we can include it in our next year’s issue!
Political Science Newsletter

Faculty Updates (continued)

Wes Chapin, Professor
Dr. Wes Chapin continued in his role as Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs during 2014-15 and also found time to remain engaged with political science and students. He completed his second term as President of the Wisconsin Political Science Association, is leading a group of 29 students to Germany in May as part of his German Politics class, served another year as President of the UWRF Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, and continues to advise both students and the Model United Nations Club (once known by this name, and renamed to International Relations Club, Global Politics Club, and now back to the original name). He accompanied the club and eight of its students to the Annual Arrowhead Model United Nations Conference in April, where they represented Austria and Germany. Wes and his wife are living in Woodville, Wisconsin with their three children, and are looking forward eagerly to their next international adventure. He would love to hear where you are and what you are doing, so please send him an email update when time permits (wes.chapin@uwrf.edu).

Chris Simer, Lecturer since 2010
Dr. Chris Simer teaches in both the Political Science and History and Philosophy departments. The Political Science classes he has taught include:
- POLS 110 Controversies in Politics
- POLS 245 Comparative Politics
- POLS/INTS 480 Senior Seminar

He is looking forward to teaching 110 and 245 again and is developing a class on Middle Eastern Politics for next Spring. Research areas which interest Chris include ISIS and terrorism, as well as transnational drug trafficking. He is also expanding his knowledge of contemporary strategic and defense policy, particularly in regard to the Middle East. Over the summer he intends to renew his acquaintance with the German and Greek languages.

Sergio Valverde, Lecturer
Professor Valverde taught Introduction to Political Philosophy, Latin American Politics and Western Political Thought: Greece to the Middle Ages and Renaissance to Marx. He also presented a roundtable discussion: “The 2014 Children’s Humanitarian Crisis at Our Border.” Sergio is an avid bicycle rider and enjoys working on his house in his spare time.

2015 CONTRIBUTORS
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THANK YOU!

WAYS TO GIVE
Thank you for considering a gift that will help educate the next generation of UWRF students. The Foundation (Alumni) Office accepts gifts by check, credit card http://www.uwrf.edu/Give/Waystogive/Index.cfm “Planned Giving.” http://uwrflegacy.org/ or phone 877-258-6647 or 715-425-3505 for more information. Be sure to specify a scholarship or the Political Science Department Foundation fund.

Our sincere gratitude and many thanks for supporting our students!
The informal political discussions began in September. The idea for the roundtable events was initiated by Dr. Neil Kraus, Political Science Department Chair. They highlighted the expertise of the Political Science and International Studies staff and gave UWRF students the opportunity to listen and discuss current topics outside the classroom. The roundtable events were free and open to all students and the general public. The events were hosted by our student organization, The Political Science and International Studies Society as a way to increase the interest of students in these areas.

The roundtable events, topics and presenters are listed below:

- September 24, 2014: “ISIS: Background of the Terror State,” Dr. Chris Simer
- October 21, 2014: “Key Races in the 2014 Elections,” Dr. Davida Alperin and students
- December 10, 2014: “Making Sense of North Korea: Mad Brilliance or Brilliant Madness?” Dr. Sooh-Rhee Ryu
- March 6, 2015: “The New Race Politics: Political Divisions in Twenty-First Century America,” Andrew Aoki, Political Science Department Chair at Augsburg College

The roundtable discussions were well-attended and discussion lively for each of the events. Clearly students enjoyed having a chance to hear the 30-minute presentations followed by a question and answer period. The department will continue with the event next year, with new topics.
This is the second year that the Political Science and International Studies Society has been a recognized student organization at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF). In our second year, we have been more active and have effectively established our presence on campus.

Out of all the events the Political Science and International Studies Society hosted during the 2015-2016 academic year, the Contemporary Political Issues Roundtables (read more about these events on Page 4) were the most effective in attracting students from various backgrounds and generating interest in the subject areas of Political Science and International Studies. Furthermore, these events also attracted members from the greater River Falls community, serving to connect our student organization to both the University and the city of River Falls as a whole.

In addition to the bi-weekly meetings, the Political Science and International Studies Society hosted events that featured outside speakers. Roger Stippel, a Social Studies teacher from Stillwater Area High School, came to speak to our organization twice throughout the year. We also hosted a Study Abroad Seminar where a group of representatives from Global Connections came to talk about the various study abroad opportunities offered at UWRF. Finally, the Political Science and International Studies Society hosted social events such as Cocoa and Cram at the end of fall semester.

As the year comes to a close, we are preparing to undergo a leadership transition for the 2015-2016 academic year. However, I am confident that the students who have expressed interest in leading the Political Science and International Studies Society will be committed to continuing to build our student organization’s membership and positive reputation.
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Alumni, Scholarship News

Jeremy Singleton (2013)

Jeremy graduated in 2013 and has been attending the University of St. Thomas Law School. He will be finishing his second year and hopes to complete his degree in 2016.

Andrew Harrison (2014)

Andrew graduated in 2014 with a degree in Broad Field Social Studies, with a major in history and a minor in political science. Andrew is currently substitute teaching in the southern Metro school districts, especially Burnsville. He reports that he loves subbing and developing his teaching skills.

Send us your news!
We are proud of the amazing accomplishments of our graduates. Please e-mail your greetings to us at: POLSnewsletter@uwrf.edu so we can include your news in a future newsletter.

Political Science Students Receive Honors and Scholarships

Denis P. Hickey Memorial Scholarship: awarded to a junior majoring in political science who has completed 60 or more credits, is in the upper third of the class, shows evidence of leadership through active participation in school, church, or community, and be satisfactorily progressing toward a degree.
David Murphy, 2015-16 recipient.

Dominic Svec Family Memorial Scholarship: must be majoring in political science with preference given to a student from the Ellsworth area and seriously considering working for the federal or state government in some capacity.
Christine Marriott, 2015-16 recipient.

Lawrence R. Gansluckner Political Science Scholarship: awarded to a full-time junior level student majoring in Political Science with a GPA of 3.00 who demonstrates community involvement or engagement.
Hannah Pechacek, 2015-16 recipient.

Lew Garrison Coit Scholarship: awarded to students who have an outstanding academic record (preferably in government or economic-related courses), demonstrated leadership ability, and satisfactory deportment.
The following Political Science majors are recipients of this scholarship for 2015-16:
Shelby Hehr
Christine Marriott
Hannah Pechacek

Each year UWRF recognizes students for outstanding educational achievement and/or community service.

HONORS
CONGRATULATIONS to Political Science majors graduating with honors:
Grady Nelson, Cum Laude
Morgan Stippel, Summa Cum Laude

SCHOLARSHIPS
Dr. Ray Anderson Scholarship: awarded to a political science major/minor who has completed a least six semester hours in political science, active in partisan or nonpartisan politics at the national, state, or local level, or in student government. Preference is given to students who are involved in environmental politics.
Shelby Hehr, 2015-16 recipient.

Robert L. Berg Scholarship: awarded to a student in political science, has completed at least 60 credits with 8 credits in political science, has demonstrated leadership ability, and a GPA of no less than 3.0.
Thomas Crawford, 2015-16 recipient.

Richard J. and Maurine K. Brynildsen Scholarship: awarded to a sophomore, junior or senior student with a political science major. The student must have an interest in international affairs and be in good standing.
Chris Morgan, 2015-16 recipient.
The National Conference of Undergraduate Research (NCUR) was held at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, WA. As a group Andrew Trapp, Reven McGee, Shannon McNamara, and myself (Arianna Pajtash) presented our research on our UWRF Survey on Women and Development. The goal of this research was to determine the level of support that UWRF students have for policies of the U.S. government regarding women and development at the domestic and international levels, and allow us to compare policy support across demographic categories. The process of this survey and analysis took all year. In the fall semester we gave out the surveys to various classes that we were all taking and then spent our time inputting the data onto an online database. During the spring semester we worked on the analysis. We would get together once a week and discuss results and by March we had a few topics we wanted to put on our poster for NCUR. After that we spent time putting together the poster.

We flew with URSCA to Washington on Wednesday, April 15th. We presented our research Thursday, the first day of the Conference. We spent our time before our own poster presentation going to other presentations we thought would be interesting. Also, we tried to support the other students from UWRF by going to a few of their presentations. Overall the conference was very successful and interesting. We want to thank Dr. Erick Highum for being our faculty advisor for this research project. He was very helpful in the whole process and was always willing to help us out if we got stuck. I’m very glad that I was able to participate in NCUR for two years and I’m grateful for the opportunities that I’ve received being an International Studies major with a double minor in Asian Studies and Political Science. You can find the survey and results on the Political Science website: [http://www.uwrf.edu/POLS/AcademicProgram/SurveyResults.cfm](http://www.uwrf.edu/POLS/AcademicProgram/SurveyResults.cfm).