Chair’s Greeting by Neil Kraus

Welcome to the 2016 Political Science Department newsletter. I continue in my role as Department Chair, and Chair of the International Studies Program as well as Pre Law Advisor. As of this semester, we have a new Program Associate, Katie Possehl. Because of the retirement of Connie Simpson, Katie, a UWRF Graduate in Psychology and Music, has joined the university as Program Associate for both the Political Science and Geography Departments. We want to thank Connie for all of her hard work for the university over the years, and wish her the best in retirement, while also welcoming Katie!

Our faculty and students have been engaged in many different activities, and we use this newsletter to keep the campus and our graduates informed. The big news for Political Science, of course, is the fact that 2016 is a Presidential election year, which is making for a very interesting and exciting year for both faculty and students alike. While we have already been contacted by several news outlets seeking comments on the politics of Presidential primaries and caucuses, we expect to be even more active in the media in the remaining months of 2016. In addition, we have continued our Contemporary Political Issues Roundtable public lecture/discussion series this year, and anticipate some excellent sessions this fall related to the Presidential election.

To our graduates: Please let us know what you have been up to! We are planning an information panel next year about careers for Political Science graduates, and would love to hear from as many of you as possible prior to that event. Thanks again for your continued support!

Send us your news!
POLSnewsletter@uwrf.edu

Neil Kraus advising Political Science student, David Bergland
Dr. Neil Kraus, Professor and Department Chair

Currently, I have several different projects underway. This Fall, in my course The Politics of American Cities, I will be working with local governments in the region on service learning projects for small groups of students. Several years ago in a class, I utilized service learning projects, and it was an excellent educational experience. I look forward to giving our students experience in field research, while also providing local officials with some useful work. I am also working on several of my own research projects. For example, I recently published a chapter entitled “Coping with Urban Inequality,” in the CQ Press Guide to Urban Politics and Policy in the United States, and will be presenting a paper on urban education policy at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Philadelphia later this summer. In addition, I am working on my third book, which focuses on K-12 education politics and policies in the United States. Finally, with two under my belt, I plan on running the Twin Cities Marathon again this fall, provided my legs hold out!

Dr. Davida Alperin, Professor

This academic year I taught in the fall semester and had my first ever sabbatical in the spring semester. The focus of my sabbatical has been on promoting critical thinking in political science classes. It has been good to have the time to dive into a topic in depth, but I will be happy to return to the classroom in the fall. I am particularly curious to find out what students are thinking about this unusual presidential nomination season. In late April I was honored to be among 9 faculty and staff who were recognized for having worked at the University for 25 years. At the same lunch employees who have served for 10, 15, 20, 30, and 35 years, as well as those retiring this year were also recognized. It is hard for me to believe that I have been teaching here that long. At the same time I appreciate that fact that the university takes the time to recognize all of those who reach these milestones.

Dr. Sooh-Rhee Ryu, Professor

Professor Sooh-Rhee Ryu continues to teach courses in International Studies and International Relations. She is currently on leave enjoying spending time with her newborn son, Declan Joon-Woo Cha, and managing the rest of her work responsibilities from home. She will return in the Fall semester to her regular teaching assignments.

Send your news to:
POLsnewsletter@uwrf.edu
We will include it in next year’s issue!
Dr. Wes Chapin, Professor

Wes led a group of 50 students to Europe in March 2016, where they visited Berlin, Vienna, Nuremberg, Dachau, and Munich, studying German history, culture, and politics. He also served a term as past president of Phi Kappa Phi, and continued in his role as vice president of the Arrowhead Model United Nations Association.

Dr. Chris Simer, Lecturer

Chris currently teaches three Political Science courses; Politics of the Middle East, Intro to Comparative Politics and Controversies in Politics. He also advises the Shaolin Kempo Karate Club here at UWRF and has continued his own practice of Tai Chi Chuan and other Chinese martial arts.

Chris is happy to be teaching in the Political Science department, and continues his research on ISIS and related topics on the Middle East.

2016 CONTRIBUTORS

Our sincere gratitude and many thanks to the following for their generous contributions to support political science scholarships and/or the Political Science Foundation:

Manley and Ann Olson
General Mills Community Action
Robert and Barbara Coyle
Jack and Marilyn Bostrack

Robert Agranoff and Susan Klein
Dale Isley and Beth Garaas-Isley
Charles White and Ruth Ann Benson White

THANK YOU!

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Be sure to specify a scholarship or the Political Science Department Foundation fund.
2016-17 Political Science Student Honors and Scholarships

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

HONORS

Congratulations to Political Science majors graduating with honors!

Thomas Crawford  Summa Cum Laude
Shaine Ahlstrom  Senior Merit
Brett Johnson  Senior Merit
Andrew Trapp  Senior Merit
Joseph Wallace  Senior Merit

SCHOLARSHIPS

Dr. Ray Anderson Scholarship: awarded to a political science major/minor who has completed at 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. Awarded to Alex Saxe

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. Awarded to Alex Saxe

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. Awarded to Paige Walter

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.

Awarded to Anthony Moua

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.

Awarded to Dashawn Shafer

Kenneth S. White Memorial Scholarship: supports an entering sophomore or junior student with a political science major pursuing the pre-law curriculum. Selection will be based off the highest cumulative GPA.

Awarded to Jenna Foertsch

Charles and Patricia White Scholarship: Awarded to students in good standing in the College of Arts and Sciences who are pursuing the Pre-Law Curriculum.

Awarded to Jenna Foertsch

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.

Awarded to Hannah Pechacek, Anna Welch, Travis Bretoi, Logan Sexton, Alex Saxe, David Murphy, James Inlow, Brittany Thomas, Shelby Hehr

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.

Professor, Davida Alperin, received her medallion at the UWRF Employee Recognition Luncheon on Thursday, April 28th in honor of her 25 years of service to the University. Congratulations!

Political Science major, Hannah Pechacek, was inducted this spring into Pi Sigma Alpha, the national Political Science Honor Society. Congratulations Hannah!
My Journey as a Political Science Major, by Hannah Pechacek

Becoming a political science major was not something that I planned when I first came to college. It just happened. In my very first semester at UWRF, like many other students, I took a number of general education courses. Political science classes were among the options, and since I had always enjoyed learning about civics, history, and social studies in high school, I opted to take Pols 110 (Controversies in Politics) with Dr. Simer. This class was captivating and fascinating, and the whole field of political science took on a much greater dimension for me. Towards the end of that semester, from out of nowhere one day, Dr. Simer told me that I should major in political science and to visit the department chair and make all of the official arrangements. I was already a marketing communications major, but I knew that I loved political science and that I wanted to continue studying it. I decided that I was up for the challenge of a double major.

The rest is history. My professors continue to challenge and encourage me, and I am very grateful for them and all that they do. The past three years have flown by, and I can’t believe that I only have one more year left as a student here at UWRF. I am beginning to explore my post-graduation options, and although nothing is concrete, I am considering the possibilities of working in government or political communications, working for a nonprofit organization, or attending graduate school. I don’t know what my future holds, but I do know that this program and the classes that I have taken have expanded my horizons and broadened my perspectives, and are providing me with the necessary tools to be an informed citizen and an effective leader.

2015-16 “Contemporary Political Issues Roundtable” Events

The idea for this series of informal round table discussions was initiated by Dr. Neil Kraus, Political Science Department Chair, in September 2014. The series highlights the expertise of the Political Science and International Studies staff as well as guest speakers from the surrounding area. UWRF students, staff and members of the community are given the opportunity to listen and discuss current topics outside the classroom. These events are held on campus and are free and open to all. The department has been very active this past year and continues to present new topics of interest.

The Roundtable Series resumed in the fall when Joe Peschek, Professor of Political Science at Hamline University, was invited to UWRF to speak on “The Unsustainable Presidency” on September 29, 2015.

Robert Agranoff, UWRF Political Science Alum and Professor Emeritus from Indiana University-Bloomington, led a Roundtable discussion on October 14, 2015 entitled “What I Have Learned Since I Left UWRF.” Agranoff also presented a public lecture that evening, “The Challenges of Managing Multi-level Governance.”

A discussion entitled “The Greek Economic Crisis: What The Media Won’t Tell You (Because They Don’t Know),” was presented by John Mazis, Professor of History at Hamline University on November 19, 2015.
