From the Department Chair . . .

Hello alumni!

The Political Science Department is in the midst of a number of exciting changes. First, I began a three-year stint chairing the department this year. I look forward to serving the department; it should be an enjoyable challenge. Second, we hired four new faculty members in the past two years, and we are beginning recruitment efforts to hire three more faculty who will join us in Fall 2007. As you can see from their remarks below, our new faculty members are excellent teachers and scholars, already very professionally active and contributing significantly to the department in their fields of expertise in the discipline.

In terms of curriculum, our new Master in Public Policy program is in place and has attracted impressive young scholars from across the country. Our undergraduate program continues to thrive. We persist in our desire to teach small classes and provide opportunities for students and faculty to work together both in and out of the classroom, on faculty research projects, student senior projects, and community projects.

While these changes and ongoing priorities invigorate the department and provide new learning opportunities for our students, they also come with challenges. Our faculty members engage in meaningful and important research and have enjoyed success in publishing their work, bringing that knowledge to the classroom and providing students the chance to work on various research projects alongside faculty. Yet these activities are not funded by the university. We have to struggle to find funding to support faculty travel to conferences to present papers, to pay students as research assistants when they want to work with faculty on various projects, and to give our faculty time to write so that they may publish their research.

To get a better idea about our activities, I hope that you enjoy reading the entries from individual faculty in this newsletter. The three new faculty who joined us this fall are Dr. Chris Den Hartog (Ph.D. 2004, University of California, San Diego,) who teaches courses in American politics, including presidency and Congress courses; Dr. Anika Leithner (Ph.D. 2006, University of Colorado at Boulder), who is teaching in International Relations, particularly European government; and Dr. Matthew Moore (Ph.D. 2004, Johns Hopkins University), who teaches courses in political theory. Dr. Ron Den Otter joined us last year. He earned a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1992 and a Ph.D. in political science from UCLA in 2003 and teaches pre-law courses.

The full-time tenured faculty include Drs. Arceneaux, Deoan, Long, Settle, Shepherd, and me. We are pleased that Drs. Gooden and Lutrin continue to teach for us part of the year as part of the Faculty Early Retirement Program.

Our Master of Public Policy program is doing very well; we have begun to graduate students from the program who have gone on to rewarding positions in government agencies and the nonprofit sector. Our MPP degree focuses on teaching the practical skills of policy-oriented research. You can check out developments in the MPP program, as well as our undergraduate internships program, student clubs, and the like, on the Political Science department website.

On behalf of the Department, I send you sincere thanks for your kind words and generous gifts. The state provides minimal support and it is important for us to seek external funds for recruitment efforts, faculty development, student assistance, clubs, and hospitality events. Instructions for donating and for designating Political Science as the recipient of your gift are available at http://www.giving.calpoly.edu/. Click on “Ways to Give” or “Donate Online Now.”

Best wishes from Political Science faculty, staff, and students.

Cordially,

Jean Williams
Associate Professor and Chair

Opportunities to Get Involved . . .

As always, we deeply appreciate any contribution that you can provide. In addition to financial assistance, we
are hoping to involve alumni more closely with the department. We are forming an advisory board that will work with the department on such issues as student excellence and faculty professional development. We would appreciate your input and assistance. Please let us know if you would be interested in serving on the board. Email Jean Williams at jemwilli@calpoly.edu.

Faculty Professional Activities . . .

Craig Arceneaux

I arrived at Cal Poly in September 2001, in the midst of national tragedy and at the onset of a wide-ranging make-over in US foreign policy (though most do not realize how much more continuity there is). As a comparative politics and foreign affairs specialist, I’ve had no shortage of grist for my mill. In my International Relations Theory class we address the challenges and pitfalls of empire. In my Collective Political Violence class we assess the threats posed by terrorism, real and imagined. And in my Model United Nations class we evaluate the workings of this world body in the face of US unilateralism. This year I will introduce a new course, Peace and War, to more closely examine the nasty and brutal ways of mankind.

Throughout my time at Cal Poly, I have especially enjoyed participation in extra-curricular activities with students. Within the department, this includes conference attendance for our Model United Nations program. Last year I accompanied the students in a visit to Ottawa for the Canadian International MUN, and this year I plan to bring the group to the Harvard MUN – previously, students only attended conferences within California. The UN committee simulations required by this program clearly incorporate our university mantra of “Learn by Doing,” and offer student the opportunity to debate and to develop collaborative responses to diverse problems and issues such as genocide, environmental degradation, indigenous rights, global patent rights, and responsible uses of technology. I strive to ensure that our students compete with the best of them – because that’s where they belong. Beyond the department, it has been my pleasure to participate in our university Study Abroad programs – first in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and soon in Cusco, Peru, in a program that Jim Keese (Social Sciences) and I will inaugurate in Summer 2007. On the research front, I continue my writing on Latin American politics. I have an article on democratic protection by the Organization of American States slated for a 2007 release in the journal Latin American Politics and Society. My book, Transforming Latin America (co-authored with David Pion-Berlin – UC Riverside), was published in 2005, and at about that same time I began work on a new project, a supplementary text on Latin American political economy. Research for this project has thus far taken me to Cuba, Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia. If I can legitimate yet more travel, I will – all for the benefit of the book itself, and my frequent flyer account.

In all, I have seen the learning opportunities for our students grow substantially since my arrival. We have new classes, the MUN program now travels out-of-state, and the Peru program will add South America to the list of travel abroad offerings. I am certain that the arrival of new faculty this year and next will bring yet more opportunities. It is an exciting time to be here at Cal Poly!

Chris den Hartog

Most of my current and recent research deals in one way or another with congressional procedures and the ways in which such procedures simultaneously give some members of congress opportunities to influence policy making, and deny other members the opportunity to influence policy making. I focus especially on the question, “how does the interaction between political parties and congressional procedures affect the policy decisions made by Congress?” Because procedures often fundamentally empower or disempower some members of Congress, I also study the ways in which procedures can be (and often are) reshaped by some members so that the legislative process will be more likely to produce certain kinds of outcomes. My two main current projects center around the role of the majority party in the contemporary Senate, and the development of the modern legislative process in the House of Representatives across the 19th century.

I study these topics in both historical and contemporary periods. A theme running throughout my work is that under some circumstances congressional rules limit the ability of the majority party to pursue its goals, while under other circumstances the majority party is able to change the rules in ways that allow it to ensure that Congress adopts the types of policies the party wants. Related research interests include the presidency, courts, and state legislatures—and the ways in which interactions among these institutions (along with Congress) produce policy decisions and policy outcomes.

Ron Den Otter

Let me introduce myself. I received my J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1992 and my Ph.D. in political science from UCLA in 2003. I then taught political theory and public law courses as a lecturer at UCLA and Pepperdine University for two years before joining the political science faculty at Cal Poly in 2005. Last year, I taught courses in
Constitutional Law, Civil Rights, Civil Liberties, and American Government, and this year I will also be teaching Jurisprudence.

In my law courses, I use the Socratic Method to encourage active learning on the part of my students and to improve their respective abilities to argue for a conclusion. I try to prepare them for law school by teaching them how to read carefully, to break down arguments, to anticipate and respond to objections, and to draw inferences from the cases that they read. My exams are designed to force the students not only to memorize holdings and details, but also to apply abstract holdings to new facts and to explain complicated legal concepts in plain English.

Unlike a large research institution like UCLA, the students at Cal Poly should have close relationships with their professors. As such, I try to learn all of my students’ names as soon as possible and make myself available during scheduled office hours and by appointment. I always tell them that they should not leave this institution without acquiring the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills that will enable them to be successful professionals and good citizens. I doubt that many of the political science undergraduates have reflected upon what they expect to get of their education or how what they do (or do not do) during this stage of their life may affect their future. I am convinced that one of the most effective ways of motivating them to work harder is to show them that they will have been cheated if they leave this university without having learned as much as they could have learned.

This summer, I gave a paper entitled “How Not to Argue Against a Right to Same-Sex Marriage,” at the annual Law and Society Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. I am currently working on a book on constitutional judgment and public justification. During my first quarter at Cal Poly, I was a speaker at Constitution Day, which sponsored by the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, and the College of Liberal Arts. As part of the faculty lecture series, sponsored by Women’s Studies, I gave lecture entitled “The Controversy over Roe v. Wade: Much Ado about Nothing?” I am also the faculty advisor of the Undergraduate Law Association (ULA). The ULA is designed to provide its members with information about law school, the admissions process, and the legal profession. Last quarter, we had two local lawyers as guest speakers. Recently, with the deadline for law school admissions drawing near, I have been helping a number of students with their personal statements. I am very pleased to be a member of the political science department here at Cal Poly.

Reg Gooden

After thirty-six years teaching at Cal Poly I bid adios to you all and thank you for the wonderful opportunity to share thoughts and good times. I am indebted of the friends I have made among students and colleagues. Our political science department, although smaller in number than in times past, is in very capable hands. I am proud of the replacements we have hired to continue with the improvement of our curriculum and hope that future students will be up to the task. As a former CSU academic senator I can attest to the esteem with which this campus is held in the eyes of colleagues from the other Cal State universities. Good luck to all and maybe we’ll see each other from time to time at a Mustang football game.

Cheerio

Anika Leithner

Originally I am from Bavaria, Germany, where I did my undergraduate work in political science, linguistics & literature, and history. I recently finished my Ph.D. in International Relations at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The title of my dissertation is: “Rhetoric of Responsibility: German War Rhetoric in the 21st Century.” My research focuses on the role language/rhetoric plays in foreign policy decision-making. My work is highly interdisciplinary, drawing not only on political science, but also on psychology, sociology, and linguistics.

Currently I’m working on several projects, including the publication of my dissertation, a paper on the rhetorical creation of a common European identity, and a guide for foreign graduate students at American universities (as well as for advisers of foreign graduate students). My general areas of interest are: Foreign policy decision-making, foreign policy rhetoric, political psychology, European (identity) politics, military interventions, etc.

I’m very excited to be at Cal Poly, and look forward to my work here!

Dianne Long

Greetings Friends:

London Study Program calls me this fall to work with a group of very eager Cal Poly students who are exploring the City of London and some of Europe’s cities. We are discussing global issues and there is certainly a lot to talk about! Joe Weatherby’s edited book, The Other World, is out in its seventh edition and my colleague Craig Arceneaux is our newest contributor. On the curricular front, I have been teaching in the new Master of Public Policy Program that is in its third year. Many of the courses formerly in the public administration and policy sequence have been reframed.
for this curriculum and I am making new friends among those entering public careers. Administration needs called once again, and I finished another stint as Department chair at summer’s end. In that capacity, I have sent many expressions of appreciation to alumni for donations that have help us to do what we do. Hearty thanks for your gifts and for news of your accomplishments. Do stop by to say hello when you are in the area.

Carl Lutrin
In the last few years I have been studying gambling. I have teamed up with a friend who I was with in Grad School at the University of Missouri. We have been fortunate enough to have gotten a few of our papers published in journals. Last year we were fortunate enough to present our most recent paper at the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago. The meetings are widely attended, and a good forum for useful feedback. As a FERP now I am off during Spring Quarter. My wife and I went to Norway and the Baltics. It snowed in Norway on May 16th! I had been in Norway in 1972, when it was still poor. It is not that way now. We cruised the Fjords--very impressive. The Baltics are doing quite well. My grandfather was from Latvia. We ended our trip in Iceland. I am one of the people who cared about the fact that Iceland had the worlds first parliament.

Matthew J. Moore
I’m delighted to be joining the department starting Fall of 2006. For the past three years, I have been a visiting assistant professor of Political Science at the University of Vermont. Before that, I was finishing up my Ph.D. work at the Johns Hopkins University. My area of specialty is political theory, with special focus on questions of value, pluralism, and moral epistemology. I am currently at work on revisions to my dissertation on Ludwig Wittgenstein and the problems of pluralism. I also teach and do research in the area of public law, and recently had an entry published in the Oxford Companion to the U.S. Supreme Court.

My wife and I have settled in Atascadero, with our 2 cats, 2 alpacas, and 5 chickens. We love the area so far, and look forward to getting to know it better.

Allen Settle
I continue to get my charge out of serving in public office. I am vice mayor for San Luis Obispo and recently joined the Airport Land Use Commission and the Local Agency Formation Commission. It is election season and I’m a candidate for re election to the city council. I finds this creates great flavor to teaching urban government and constitutional law. With all that is going on in Sacramento and Washington D.C. there is not shortage of sensational discussion items to cover in class: Abramoff buying access to Congress, the pile of new federal laws and California ballot measure covering over 40 billion in debt and taxes. Be sure to vote since most depend on only a few votes to win or lose.

Linda Shepherd
Over the last several years I’ve been busy creating a new Institute for Policy Research on the Cal Poly campus and serving as its first Executive Director. The Institute is playing an active role in helping community organizations to conduct research and in assisting Cal Poly faculty with curricular and grant assessment. Special thanks to students who provided excellent service as research assistants in the Institute for Policy Research – Rob Fitzroy, Jeff Porto, Jr., Phil Alonso, and Jonathan Changus!

This year, after having finished the implementation of the new Institute, I returned as Director of the Master of Public Policy program. My graduate seminars have specialized in research methods, quantitative analysis, and public policy; I count myself fortunate to be able to assist and support students in the process of discovery as they design and complete their own original research projects. Each quarter is filled with new opportunities for students who embark upon the path of research in politics and public policy.

My own research has proceeded in the interdisciplinary field of political psychology, with specific focus on formal modeling and terrorism group formation and behavior. Within the last two years I have presented my research at international conferences in Barcelona, Toronto, and Bucharest as well as the NATO Advanced Research Workshop on Terrorism held in Castelvecchio Pascoli, Italy. This summer I served as Section Head for the Social Theory and Political Psychology Section of the International Society of Political Psychology and was elected President of the Psycho-Politics Research Committee of the International Political Science Association.

My publications for 2006 include the manuscript Suicide Terrorism: Modeling Group Dynamics and Individual Behavior which will appear in the NATO Proceedings, the edited volume Political Psychology with chapters from leading authorities in the field, and the manuscript Reclaiming Public Life: Relationships among Economic Threat, Community Involvement, and Racial Trust, which appears in Political Culture, Socialization, and Education: Interdisciplinary and Cross-National Perspectives for a New Century (Russell Farnen, Editor).

I look forward to continuing to build our MPP program and to supporting the process of research among students and faculty. I also look forward to hearing from our students as they move forward in their
lives and contribute in a variety of ways to enhancing political understanding!

John Culver, Professor Emeritus

I'm in the last stages of my move to Walla Walla, WA. This is where William O. Douglas grew up before heading east. Durango is a hard place to leave; great area, but getting pricey. I hope to be active in the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival after I do my part to assist rational minds regain control of national politics. It's frightening to be on the sidelines as politics gets dumbeddown with each passing year. I'm hopeful for a turnaround before long.

I'm always delighted to run into former students and to hear of the activities of our graduates. I am sorry to leave Durango before getting to Albuquerque to see Mike Rocca, one of our stellar grads who earned his Ph.D. at Davis. Mike is now an assistant professor of Political Science at the University of New Mexico, the joint where I spent some time in the seminar rooms a hundred years ago. Best wishes to all grads.

Jean Williams (Chair)

I continue to teach courses on social welfare policy, the politics of gender, race, and class, and social movements for the department. It's a pleasure to be able to teach courses that are so closely informed by my research, and to do research that I know will inform my teaching. My book on homeless women, entitled "A Roof Over My Head": Homeless Women and the Shelter Industry, was published under the name Jean Calterone Williams and came out in 2003. For the past year, I've been working on a coauthored book with Alesha Doan that analyzes sex education policy, critiquing the abstinence-only curricula that has received so much attention (and funding) in the past several years. The book, Abstinence Education and the Politics of Virginity, will be published by Praeger. Alesha and I were delighted to be able to have several of you work with us on this project as research assistants during your undergraduate careers.

My work with many of the local antipoverty and homeless organizations in SLO has been a most rewarding experience. Last October, we completed a first-ever count of the homeless population. We were able to uncover important demographic information about the homeless in SLO County that we hope will improve services for the homeless here. Special thanks to alumnus Phil Alonso for all the effort he put into managing and analyzing the data, and assisting in writing the final report for the community organizations.

I've enjoyed hearing from many of you about your lives since graduation. Keep in touch!

Lecturers

Bud Evans

Over the past two years, I have been working on a project to link academic courses at universities around the world through videoconferencing. The first partner will be the University of Winneba in Ghana, which is currently acquiring a videoconferencing facility with funds from the Carnegie Foundation. We are currently working to expand this effort through a consortium titled Universities Fighting World Hunger in association with the World Food Programme that will include academic initiatives to create and diffuse knowledge about global food issues. We are proposing our interdisciplinary POLS/UNIV 333 World Food Systems course as a model.

I have just been appointed to a Provost's Faculty Advisory Committee to help develop a multi-track certification program in disaster management/homeland security at Cal Poly. I hope to include in that program a new interdisciplinary course I recently developed with Bill Simbieda and Ken Topping in City and Regional Planning and Chris Dicus in Natural Resource Management titled Building Disaster-Resistant Sustainable Communities. The course evolved from an international Symposium on Disaster Response and Preparedness held at Cal Poly last year.


Alison Keleher

Fall 2006 finds me beginning my second year of full-time teaching for Cal Poly. I was fortunate to spend the two years prior, while working on my dissertation, as a part-time lecturer for the department. Since filing my dissertation in May of 2005 I have been working on expanding my dissertation's data set of congressional campaign finance data, as well as beginning work on a project which studies the Republican Party club, the Log Cabin Republicans. Of course, my research interests have been pursued around the edges of my full teaching load, where I have taught classes as varied for the department as the American Presidency, Jurisprudence, and Political Analysis. This year I am excited to have a chance to teach Campaigns and Elections for the first time, a class previously taught by the now retired Dr. David George. Again this year I have had the pleasure of participating as a volunteer facilitator for the PREFACE program, where I worked with incoming freshman all of whom were asked to read the novel The Lovely Bones and then discuss the book during WOW week. I look forward to working again this year with Dr. Ron Den Otter as co-advisor to the
newly re-invigorated Undergraduate Law Association, as well as to my new assignment as advisor to the department's chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha - the political science honor society.

Nick Theobald
Over the last few years I have graduated from Cal Poly (Class of 1998), attended graduate school and taught at Texas A&M University, and taught at the University of Kansas. Now I am back at Cal Poly and am excited to be teaching the course that led me to graduate school, POLS 360-Political Analysis, in addition to courses on public policy and American and California governments.

While at Texas A&M, I was the research director at the Texas Educational Excellence Project (TEEP). As research director, I was able to direct my interest in education policy by guiding policy reports on the state of education in Texas. Of particular interest were the annual reports on minority education in Texas. These reports recognized school districts that excelled in educating African American and Latino children.

In addition to my work on policy reports for TEEP, I have published several articles in academic journals and edited volumes. These works include studies on how organizational factors influence education performance, the difficulty in using policy performance measures, and the effect of federal grants on state budgeting decisions. A chapter from my dissertation will soon be published in a forthcoming book on Latino politics, "Latino Politics: Identity, Mobilization, and Representation." This chapter assesses the role of Latino superintendents on bilingual program resources. Currently I am working on a project assessing how the race of police officers affect citizen evaluations of police actions.

Model United Nations
Model United Nations is a rewarding experience. Learning new research techniques, improving public speaking skills and working with students from all over the world to find solutions to world problems are just some of the benefits.

There is plenty of time for social gatherings and meeting fellow delegates on a more personal level. Previous conferences for Cal Poly's MUN team have included the Far West MUN in Burlingame, CA, the Berkeley MUN and the Canadian International MUN. Professor Craig Arceneaux has been working diligently to prepare for the upcoming Winter 2007 Conference at Harvard. This will be my third year participating in the MUN conferences, and I anticipate this year to be the best yet. Submitted by: Noah Kornblith, Secretary-General of the MUN Club.

Pi Sigma Alpha
Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, is the only honor society for college students of political science and government in the United States. Pi Sigma Alpha is a member of the
Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) and is designated as a "Specialized, Upper-Division" society by ACHS. There are now over 615 chapters of Pi Sigma Alpha located on college and university campuses in every state of the United States and in Guam. Membership is possible only through local chapters; Cal Poly’s chapter is Omicron Gamma.

Undergraduate Law Association

As faculty advisor to the Undergraduate Law Association (ULA), I have ambitious plans for this academic year. Last year, I resurrected the ULA with the intention of informing undergraduates who might be interested in attending law school about the law school application process, law school itself, and the legal profession. I had hoped that we would have at least ten or fifteen members. In fact, at the outset, more than forty undergraduates, most of whom were aspiring law students, joined the club. This year, so far, more than fifty students have signed up, and we plan to meet every other week, four times a quarter. Last spring, two local attorneys, one who practices Civil Rights law and the other who is an assistant district attorney, spoke about the kind of law that they practice and answered questions from the audience. At one of the other meetings, I spoke about how to prepare for law school and what to expect during the first year of law school, including how to read cases and how to prepare for law school exams. During this year’s first meeting on October 10th, I spoke about letters of recommendation, the LSAT, and personal statements. For our other three meetings this quarter, I have scheduled two other local attorneys and an admissions officer from a law school to speak. Ultimately, in having a wide variety of guest speakers, my goal is to ensure that Cal Poly students are better informed before they decide to attend law school, that is, better informed about law school and the legal profession. As such, I am trying to expose them to the professional opportunities that exist for people with law degrees and also to make them aware that there are many different kinds of lawyers and many different kinds of legal practices. Submitted by Ron Den Otter.