Greetings Alumni!

In recent years we have used this newsletter to highlight exciting changes in the Political Science Department. Most of these changes are a result of new faculty additions. This year is no exception, as we welcomed Dr. Shelley Hurt (Ph.D., Stonybrook). Although we have many fresh faces in our department, we also would like to recognize activities and programs offered in the department that are beginning to take root. Energized by a wave of new faculty over the past 5-6 years, we can now point to a vast array of internship opportunities, competitive teams that participate in Mock Trial and Model UN programs, a growing number of research assistantship positions, and regular activities sponsored by the Political Science Club and Pi Sigma Alpha.

As the department continues to blossom, we want to ensure that students graduating from our program view us as more than a passing phase in their lives. Just as the Cal Poly mantra itself, “Learn by Doing,” instills an appreciation for initiative and collaboration, we want our graduates to recognize, as they enter into their new lives and careers, that they themselves become a resource for our current students and for each other. We all have skills, ideas, and experiences to share, and best of all, such exchange generates a sense of community. It is exciting to see our Alumni Board and current students converse and exchange thoughts through new technologies. Want to join in? Check out our new Facebook page!

We hope that this newsletter finds you and your family well. It is meant not only to serve as a reminder of your time here at Cal Poly and to update you on recent developments, but also to affirm the connection that still exists among us all, and the connections that await. Best of wishes to you from Political Science faculty, staff, and students.

Craig Arceneaux
Associate Professor and Chair
The Political Science Department is proud to have an Alumni Advisory Board - Members are:

Co-Chairs
Steven Merrick, POLS 1977
3M Corporation
Austin O’Dell, POLS 1988
City of Santa Maria

Alumni Members
Bryan Corcoran, POLS 1982
The Procter and Gamble Company
Matthew Edling, POLS 2002
Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy
Peter Fedewa, POLS 2004
Ploughshares Fund
Marcia Godwin, POLS 1986
University of La Verne
Jose Henriquez, POLS 1993
El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission
Tim Humphreys, POLS 1972
Trident Services
Brian Craig Kreowski, POLS 1988
Shell Beach Law Group
Jason Stilwell, POLS 1991
County of Santa Barbara
Chad Wohlford, POLS 1989
Wohlford Consulting

Faculty Members on the Advisory Board
Craig Arceneaux, Associate Professor and Chair
Elizabeth Lowham, Assistant Professor
Linda Shepherd, Professor
Jean Williams, Professor

Hello Cal Poly Alumni. I am the chair of the Cal Poly Department of Political Science Alumni Advisory Board. The Board was formed a little over a year ago, with the goal of supporting the department and its students. The Board’s mission statement is:

The Alumni Advisory Board . . .

The Political Science Department Advisory Board is an alumni board that collaborates and enables the department to define and pursue goals relevant to academic excellence.

Current Status: We set specific goals for the Board as well as processes to achieve those goals. We’ve separated ourselves into sub-committees so that we can work on our various goals in parallel. We have made substantial progress on these efforts. We also have established a presence online through both a LinkedIn group and a Facebook page (from your Facebook page, search for Cal Poly Political Science). These are some of the goals we have set to date:

- Improve department discretionary funding to facilitate faculty development and student activities (through improved alumni data collection, more contact with our alums, and continued marketing activities).
- Work with the department to provide additional internship opportunities.
- Develop and maintain corporate relationships.
- Mentor Students-Work with students to illustrate alumni experiences detailing the large number of opportunities available in the job arena beyond what might be considered traditional Political Science expectations.

The board has two meetings that take place at Cal Poly, one in the spring, and one in the fall as well as periodic teleconferences to complete the work necessary to achieve our goals. Additionally, every meeting includes presentations by students and faculty that help the alumni understand current activities in the department. We also include some sort of reception with Political Science students and faculty that allow us to reconnect with the department. This is a great opportunity to mentor the students on what life after Cal Poly is like.

Why do I do it? I have to admit one reason I joined the Board is that I wanted an excuse to come back to San Luis Obispo and visit Cal Poly. I live in the mid-west and without this board would have little reason to return. I also gain a great deal of satisfaction in being able to meet current students and talk to them a bit about how my career has progressed. Finally, Cal Poly provided a great educational foundation that has served me very well, and I welcome the opportunity to give back in this small way. It has been a great experience to this point, and I am looking forward to continuing the progress we have made to serve the Department!

If you have questions or comments about the board, or would be interested in joining, please contact the department.

Steven Merrick, Political Science 1977
Ron Den Otter, Assistant Professor

Interviewer: I heard that you recently published a book.


Interviewer: What is the book about?

Den Otter: It is a book about normative constitutional theory. I not only defend judicial review, but also offer a theory of when courts should exercise this power to invalidate laws.

Interviewer: In terms of research, what are your future plans?

Den Otter: I have begun working on a book manuscript on plural marriage.

Interviewer: What do you like most about the Cal Poly Political Science Department?

Den Otter: I have a wonderful group of colleagues. All of us work well together and try to do everything that we can to ensure that our students receive the best possible education.

Interviewer: How would you describe a typical political science student?

Den Otter: Genuine, intellectually curious, and ambitious.

Interviewer: What do you do in the classroom to challenge your students?

Den Otter: I teach in a semi-Socratic manner. Less lecture, more questions, to stimulate discussions and to encourage the students to be actively involved in the learning process. I also give hypothetical questions on the exams that require the students to apply what they’ve learned and to defend their conclusions. I do that to discourage them from thinking that learning is only about memorization.

Interviewer: You are the department’s pre-law advisor, right?

Den Otter: Yes, I am.

Interviewer: What does that entail?

Den Otter: Above all, I want our students to be as informed as possible about law school and the practice of law. I also assist students with the admissions process. For example, I give advice about how to prepare for the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), how to obtain letters of recommendation, and how to write the personal statement (which includes reading rough drafts of personal statements).

Interviewer: How would you describe the new chair?

Den Otter: A tyrant with a capital “T.”

From our other faculty . . .

Craig Arceneaux, Associate Professor and Chair

This academic year brought dramatic changes for me, and I said goodbye to my old office and moved to our Department office to assume new responsibilities as Chair of the Department. Though I could not consider myself as anything more than a novice at this point, the help I receive from Olivia and Suzy in the office, and the collegiality of the department has certainly made me appear much more effective than I would otherwise. The change has meant less time in the classroom for me; something I do miss. But I am gradually recognizing that chairing just means that I interact with students in a different way, through advising and meetings with student groups. Luckily, I was able to retain my responsibilities with the Model United Nations program, which continues to grow in electrifying ways. Just this January, I took four students to Ecuador for a MUN conference. I can proudly report that they won the Distinguished Delegation award for their representation of Turkey, and the Outstanding Delegation award for their activity in the Security Council. We are already planning for our annual trip to the National Model United Nations in April. As for my own research development, I continue to work on a textbook on Latin American political institutions.
Chris Den Hartog, Assistant Professor

This is a busy research year for me: my co-author Nate Monroe and I recently completed a book manuscript about the role of parties in U.S. Senate decision making and will be making revisions as the year rolls along (and will present the book in a week-long colloquium at Duke University in May). Also, by the end of the year I will have participated in conferences at Vanderbilt, USC Law School, the Midwest Political Science Association, UC Merced, and UC Berkeley. In addition, I’m teaching Policy Analysis in our Master of Public Policy program, the U.S. Congress, the Presidency, and Intro to American and California Government.

Elif Erisen, Assistant Professor

I teach both undergraduate and MPP courses, including quantitative methodology and economic and regulatory policy. The senior projects I am currently supervising are all research projects whereby students use survey methodology and collect first-hand data. I am working along with co-author Cengiz Erisen on a social networks project that focus on how social networks affect citizen attitudes toward policies. I continue my work on school choice with papers and a book project based on my dissertation research.

Shelley Hurt, Assistant Professor

I joined the Political Science Department as an Assistant Professor in 2009, after spending a year at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center at Dartmouth College as a Research Associate and two years in the Department of Political Science at Vassar College as a Visiting Instructor. I’m working on two book-length projects; investigating the contemporary emergence and implications of public-private partnerships in the 21st century and the second, a collaborative project investigating the role of the national security state in U.S. innovation policy and commercial development. This year I’m teaching Introduction to International Relations, International Organizations and Law, Contemporary U.S. Foreign Policy, Technology and Public Policy, and Global Political Issues. I look forward to getting settled into the Central Coast, because it’s close to the beach as well as to family and friends in the SF Bay Area. In addition, I’ve thoroughly enjoyed getting to know and work with the Cal Poly students. I hope to work with them more closely next year as I become the Washington Center Internship coordinator for the department.

Mike Latner, Assistant Professor

I teach courses in American and California Government, Campaigns and Elections, and Political Participation. Students also enjoyed my new course in Political Ecology, which explores evolutionary and ecological models of politics.

This year, community development is also on my agenda. Extending the department’s role as a resource for public education outside the classroom, I am currently president and spokesperson of Vision Atascadero, a non-profit organization dedicated to informed citizen involvement in policy making and community development. The group also advocates for implementation of the economic development action plan that the city commissioned. Development of this plan included participation with students in the department’s MPP program. For more information, see VA’s website at http://www.visionatascadero.com/about.html

As we enter a statewide election year in California, I am also conducting research into electoral reform. The November election is likely to include a ballot initiative calling for a statewide constitutional convention, the first since California entered the Union. One of the top issues under consideration is whether to change the way that the State Assembly and Senate are elected. My paper, “What if California had Proportional Representation? Multi-Party Politics in an Anti-Party State,” explores what types of political parties would likely emerge under different electoral rules, and how the evolution of the party system would impact governance in California.

Anika Leithner, Assistant Professor

I am currently working on several research projects, including an analysis of the rhetoric of the global financial crisis. I’m trying to assess the impact that political rhetoric about the severity of the crisis has had on the American public and on the economy. I will be presenting preliminary findings of this study at the Western Political Science conference in San Francisco in April and a follow-up study in Denmark in September. Other than that, I am still happily teaching my regular classes in international relations and am preparing to propose a new course on political psychology.

Dianne Long, Professor

I continue a partial retirement. I have a number of projects in Malawi and Mozambique to help poor farmers and orphaned children. One project is supporting solar ovens, and another, irrigation. Last summer I visited the former countries of the Soviet Union on the year of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Soviet Union. It was amazing!

The cities are pursuing tourism, the large farms are growing imports, and many people are almost starving as they live off of very small farms and gardens. I am not teaching in the MPP program this year as schedules...
shift, but have a new Ag Policy course at the undergrad level, and it is a lot of fun. Do stop by the department when you are in San Luis! I think of many of you and hope you are doing well. Very best wishes.

Elizabeth Lowham, Assistant Professor

This year finds me teaching an entirely new course-load, which has been quite a bit of fun (and only sometimes overwhelming). One of the new courses, Leadership and Management, has become a core course for future MPP students. I taught this course in the fall and we had a fantastic time discovering leadership in unexpected places and ways. This is my third year directing our Masters program. I still enjoy the opportunity to advise students and help shape our program. In terms of research, I am still working with brownfields, but have also started a new research project investigating how public schools do (or do not) practice democratic leadership. This project has given me the opportunity to conduct research with my father, which has been very fun. We anticipate publishing the findings from our study during the next academic year!

Matthew J. Moore, Assistant Professor

I’ve had a busy year. On the teaching side, I have continued to offer the department’s required political theory course, POLS 230. This quarter we’re reading classic texts from Thomas Hobbes, Carl Schmitt, and the Buddha. In the spring quarter I will be teaching a new version of POLS 112: American and California Government, using a textbook/reader that I recently put together, and which explains American government through American political theory. The department’s two courses on American political thought (POLS 348 and 349) have recently been added to the General Education curriculum, which should mean that we are able to offer them more often and to a wider audience. I also continue to run the department’s Mock Trial program (see separate update). On the research side, I have an article on Ludwig Wittgenstein and politics forthcoming in “Philosophy & Social Criticism,” and one article based on my 2008 survey of professors of political theory has just been accepted for publication in “PS: Political Science and Politics.” I currently have an article out under review, and another that will go out this summer, after revisions. Finally, I have just begun a new research project on Buddhism and political theory; I will present the first paper from that project at a conference in April in San Francisco. On the personal side, my wife and I welcomed our second child (Sasha) in December; big-brother Eli is very excited about his little sister.

Allen Settle, Professor

In these economically challenging times, our department hopes to acquire a new faculty position in law and society. We have a supportive dean, but state budget deficit continues to be a challenge to higher education. Student demand for admission and classes is at an all time high. I continue to have full classes in my subject areas of law and urban and American government.

Economic challenges are also seen in my city council position. The state has taken millions of dollars from our city and others to balance the state budget. At the same time, the city manager, Ken Hampian has retired, and we hired Katie Lechtig from Beverly Hills to replace him. Our finance director, Bill Statler, is also retiring and he will be difficult to replace. It is a loss of institutional memory with these key people departing.

I am under pressure to run for mayor again, but am not surprised others don’t want to run for office under current circumstances. I currently have more time on the council than any other person in the history of the city, having been elected ten times since 1980. Local campaigns will be impacted by the Supreme Court decision to allow corporations and unions to spend unlimited money on elections without having to disclose sources of funds. I am pleased to see several of our graduates now holding positions as city managers, HR directors and council members. We need more of our graduates to serve in local governments, as the demand is great.

Jean Williams, Professor

Greetings! The 2008-2009 academic year was a busy one. I served as a consultant to San Luis Obispo County in designing and executing a county-wide count of the homeless population. As a consultant, I advised the group on all aspects of enumeration methodology, wrote the survey used during the count, and oversaw the interpretation and analysis of the data. The report was published in 2009 and it’s been gratifying to see some of the findings used to improve services in the county. I also published my second book, “The Politics of Virginity: Abstinence in Sex Education,” with coauthor Alesha Doan. The book critiques the abstinence-only curricula that the Bush Administration funded over the past eight years. My current research project analyzes the social movement that has developed to press for abstinence-only curricula and its ties to the Christian Right. As usual, I’ve been fortunate to have the opportunity to hire student research assistants to assist me with my research, as they also learn about the research process.
Ning Zhang, Assistant Professor
Survey work on Chongming Island, Shanghai, China

Very soon after arriving at Cal Poly, I started working with a group of Cal Poly faculty members on a U.S.-China collaborative project. Led by Dr. Linda Vanasupa of Materials Engineering, the SUSTAIN project proposes to help design and build a few sustainable communities in China through cross-disciplinary research and methods of innovative design. Our partner in China is Tongji University in Shanghai, which, similar to Cal Poly, is highly respected for research and education in engineering, environmental sciences, architecture, and urban planning. The overall project will take place over the next 20-30 years and currently focuses on three sites in China: Miaogang village in Chongming County, Shanghai (Eastern China), Tianshuipu County in Gansu Province (Northwestern China), and the city of Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province (Eastern China). These deliberate interventions of community building provide an excellent, laboratory-like setting to examine processes of the emergence of environmental values in China and mechanisms of value change. Our U.S. team is currently working on initiating locally (SLO)-based projects that will mirror the Chinese projects, which opens up possibilities for a range of comparative studies between the U.S. and China.

In September, 2008, I began my work with Dr. Jianfu Zhao (Dean of the School of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Tongji University, Shanghai, China) to launch a comprehensive survey in Miaogang Village of Chongming County, which is one of the three sites chosen for our collaboration. In this initial survey, I designed a series of questions on the inter-relations among several value systems in Chinese society and on the connections between environmental values, attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. On December 19-20, 2009, my Tongji colleagues, 37 students, and I interviewed 280 Miaogang villagers. Before the fieldwork, my colleague at Tongji--Dr. Xiaohong Li (sociologist), Dr. Lili Zhao (sociologist), Dr. Shuyan Liu (political scientist)-- conducted a three-day workshop to train 40 or so student interviewers. A large number of middle-aged men work and live in Shanghai as taxi drivers and factory workers. We plan to dispatch teams of student interviewers in March 2010 to interview this strata of sampled respondents in Shanghai. We expect the final sample size to reach five hundred and the data-collection phase to be completed by May 2010.

Congratulations to our Faculty Award Winner

2009 President’s Community Service Award for Service Learning: Dr. Jean Williams

Dr. Jean Williams applies the research she undertook in her graduate studies to local issues of homelessness and poverty. Students enrolled in Political Science 459, the Politics of Poverty, spend overnight shifts at the El Camino Homeless Shelter in Atascadero to gain invaluable insight into the homeless community and inform their curricular studies. Jean has been instrumental in twice leading the county-wide initiative to count the number of homeless through the 2005 and 2009 Homeless Enumeration projects. These extensive endeavors have done much to create a real and accurate profile of the homeless in San Luis Obispo County and the data has been utilized in extensive educational outreach and as a basis for social advocacy.
Mock Trial Club

The department’s Mock Trial program is now in its fourth year, and faculty adviser Matthew J. Moore is optimistic about the teams’ prospects at intercollegiate competitions in February. Similar to the high-school program, collegiate mock trial allows teams of students from colleges and universities across the country (there are currently nearly 800 teams) to argue a fictitious case before real judges and volunteer attorneys. It is an invaluable way for students interested in a career in law to get some practical experience with legal reasoning and argument, and we have already sent MT alumni to top law schools (including UCLA and Hastings). Two teams formed in the Mock Trial class (POLS 295) in the fall, and 3 club teams formed as an extracurricular activity. The five teams competed against one another in November, and the top four were selected as Poly’s official teams. The official teams scrimmaged against teams from other schools in December, against each other in January, and are getting ready for multi-school scrimmages in late January and early February. In mid-February the teams will travel to Fresno and Los Angeles for the opening round of official competitions. With any luck this will be the year that we send teams on to the second round of competitions (in March)!

From left: Brittney Bylund, Amy Fitzpatrick, Sean Eilenberg (POLS major), Amy Yung (POLS major), Jacob McGowan (POLS major), Janelle Young, Aaron McCoy, Cyavash Ahmadi (POLS major)

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 open to any Cal Poly student—regardless of major—who has completed at least one upper-division political science class, and achieved a cumulative political science GPA of 3.0.

Cal Poly’s chapter, Omicron Gamma, will hold meetings in conjunction with the Political Science Club this year. The advisor for 2009-2010 is Dr. Anika Leithner.

Graduating seniors must turn in a Senior Project in order to complete their studies at Cal Poly. Here are some examples of Senior Projects that have been completed recently:

- Service work in Africa (building a water supply and a school), paired with a write-up of experiences and an analysis of foreign direct aid.

- The development of a course and course materials for an interdisciplinary class on climate change.

- Development of a localized public relations campaign regarding the spread of Hepatitis B in the Los Angeles area.

- A study abroad booklet, including application materials, purpose for the study, admission requirements, classes and field trips, pictures, contact with partner universities, etc. The student also had to complete all of the necessary administrative forms and research all policies.

- “Rock the Vote” event downtown for last year’s Presidential Election. The senior project itself was a handbook of how to set up the event, e.g. contacts, legal issues to consider, how to get sponsors, contract, permits from the city, and all related issues.

- Student worked with women in Uganda, testing how a non-profit company’s attempt to get these women to start bead businesses impacted their self-confidence and their social role in their communities.

Student Research . . .
**Undergraduate Law Association**

The Undergraduate Law Association (ULA) is designed to inform undergraduates about the law school admissions process, the study of law, and the legal profession. My hope is that the meetings will enable students to decide for themselves whether they want to dedicate three years of their lives and spend a considerable amount of money on a legal education when there are other career paths that they could take. Normally, the ULA meets three or four times per quarter, including two meetings with admissions officers, a panel of former Cal Poly students who are now law students and will discuss the challenges of law school, talks by local attorneys (and this fall, by a trial court judge, Roger Picquet), a showing of a film such as “The Paper Chase” or “My Cousin Vinny,” and an annual field trip to the UCLA School of Law. However, this year, we plan to sit in on a class at the Pepperdine School of Law, meet afterwards with the professor, and take a tour of the Malibu campus. The purpose of this trip is to demystify law school in the eyes of our students and to build their self-confidence with respect to their ability to handle the work that is required of a first-year law student. At present, the ULA has more than 100 members, many of whom are political science students.

**Political Science Club**

The mission of the Political Science Club is to inform and foster interest in politics and current events. Our nonpartisan stance allows us to enliven the political climate on campus through debates, conferences, guest speakers, etc. This club is not exclusively for political science majors; any student with an interest in politics may join. In the next few months we are planning for a debate on the California governor’s race, a trip to the Social Sciences Conference at Cal Poly Pomona, and an end of the year social. Also, our soon-to-be-released website and blog will allow for unique student and professor interaction.

Jacques Baritot, President

**Model United Nations**

The mission of Model United Nations is to inform students about the workings of the international community and to provide a forum for practicing the skills of public speaking, debate, diplomacy, and international relations. Our nonpartisan stance allows us to examine current events from a variety of perspectives. Our students continue to pursue rigorous and interesting research projects as part of their second year graduate seminar. Last year, our students presented research on the changing tone of presidential press conferences. This year, we have three students, Jesse Huselid, Chris Lafontaine, and Charlotte Lopez-Schermer, accepted to present their research projects at the Western Political Science Association’s Annual Research Conference in April in San Francisco!
In terms of incoming students, we also continue to see our pool of applicants increase in number and quality as the program grows its reputation both inside the state and across the nation. Last year, we had the largest number of applicants we have seen in any given admissions cycle. This year's first year cohort has an exciting blend of policy interests and previous experience that we believe is a hallmark of our program. We are also drawing more students from across the state and for the past two years, have started pulling students in from out of state. Inside the university, we have also seen an increase in the number of students who are seeking interdisciplinary graduate experiences, pursuing joint degrees across the university. As the program matures, we’re excited about the opportunities to expand elective course offerings, to include graduate students in our research projects and to spread the word about our fantastic program!

Where are they now???

Jeff Peterson—1976. Teresa and I have continued to enjoy an event-filled life in Sonoma County since leaving SLO in ’76. I am currently semi-retired, working in the office at Nordstrom part-time after selling my office supply business of 30 years. We are for the most part “empty-nesters” with our four children living in the immediate area and two granddaughters keeping us busy and entertained. Teresa is teaching a 2-3 combo this year and, as all employed in public education are fully aware, dealing with the constant issues at hand. We spend most of the summer at Lake Almanor in Plumas County and participate in the wide range of activities in Sonoma County.

Tony DiPiero—2005. Since graduation I have gone to and graduated from Santa Clara University School of Law, thus receiving my Juris Doctorate (JD) in May of 2009. I subsequently took and passed the California State Bar exam and am now a licensed attorney in the state of California. I am currently working in the legal department at Adobe Systems in San Jose, California.

Christopher Seymour—1983. After law school at Loyola in Los Angeles and a couple of years practicing in Pasadena, my wife Gail and I moved to Fresno, my hometown, in 1990. We have 2 children, Megan 18 and Patrick 13. I’ve been practicing 23 (ouch !) years now, mostly in real estate and secured lending transactions and litigation, general commercial litigation and bankruptcy creditor representation. Gail is an interior designer. I get back to SLO a few times a year, mostly for fraternity or other Cal Poly functions, but bumming around town and reliving those “student days” is what I enjoy most when I visit (next to visiting the Political Science Department, of course).

Allie O’Leary—2008. I am currently working in Washington, DC, at the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, an advocacy firm for the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Aid (USAID). After graduation, I worked as the assistant to the CFO at the 2008 Democratic Convention in Denver and then worked on the Obama Campaign in Columbus, Ohio, at the headquarters.

Chandani Patel—2005. Minor in Int’l Relations. I have been working at Apple in the iTunes Legal Department. I am currently working full time as the manager for third-party content disputes, and recently moved to San Francisco to obtain my JD/MBA through Golden Gate University’s part-time evening program. I continue to travel and just recently returned from a trip to India. Currently, my favorite past-time includes exploring the city and listening to new music with my wonderful boyfriend.

Nicole Hara (Kimbrough)—2000. Public Admin. Concentration; CSU, Sacramento-MPPA 2004. As Program Coordinator for California Healthy Cities and Communities (CHCC), I assist local leaders with developing, implementing and evaluating inclusionary, community-driven programs, policies and plans which address the environmental, social and economic determinants of health. I have been in this role for the past 2 years. In August 2009, my husband (Scott Hara Cal Poly - BS 1998) and I welcomed our first child Rachel into world. We feel truly blessed to have her in our lives and we are looking forward to what 2010 will bring.

Darin Spiegel—2004. My father, Kirk Spiegel, is a Cal Poly alum, Mechanical Engineering. I have two brothers also Cal Poly alums: Brent Spiegel, Construction Management, and David Spiegel, Civil Engineering. After finishing at Cal Poly, I subsequently graduated from Law School and started my own law practice. My practice areas are personal injury, general civil litigation, and civil rights. I reside in SLO and in my spare time help my family with construction and engineering related projects.
David Camp—1979/80. I have been with Warner Bros since 1995, following several years with Sony Pictures. I am currently Senior Vice President Finance and Operations for the International Television Division. Also earned an MBA from USC in 1982 and I am a CPA. I serve on the College of Liberal Arts Deans Council and enjoy being actively involved with Cal Poly. I have 3 daughters (one at Amherst, one at CU-Boulder and one in high school).

Scott Finch—1975. I am living in Orinda with my beautiful bride Lise. Still practicing law with the same firm in Oakland, Burnham Brown, since 1979 representing primarily design professionals. Don’t get to see either of my wonderful, married daughters or two grandchildren nearly enough. Looking forward to more traveling and SOMEDAY (unfortunately, no time soon) retirement.

Amanda Alquist Pope—2005. I recently graduated from the University of La Verne College of Law and will sit for the February 2010 California Bar Exam. I live in Orange County with my husband Kevin who is a 2005 Cal Poly College of Business Alum. I am the law clerk for the City of Riverside City Attorney’s office. I am currently working on what I hope will be my fourth publication in the area of LGBT rights. My passion for this work really grew through my studies in the Poli Sci department, and it was my senior project that eventually became my first published law review piece.

Mercy-Faith Kimbwala—MPP 2009. Immediately after graduation, I became a member of Teach for America’s 2009 Corp., based in Los Angeles. During the summer, I taught high school physics at Animo Leadership Charter School in Inglewood, CA. In the fall, I received my permanent placement. I am a Middle School Special Day Class (SDC) teacher at Willowbrook Middle School in Compton, CA. I teach 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Math and Science. In addition to teaching, I’m pursuing my MA in Special Education at Loyola Marymount University. As if life wasn’t busy enough, Brian and I will be welcoming a special surprise this June. Our first child is due June 1, 2010. We’re about 80% sure it’s a girl.

Michael Rocca—1997. After graduating from Cal Poly, I attended graduate school at UC Davis where I received a Ph.D. in political science in 2004. I have been an assistant professor of political science at the University of New Mexico since 2005, where I teach courses and conduct research in American politics, particularly the United States Congress and presidency. I live in Albuquerque, NM, with my wife, Tracy, an artist and graphic designer, and two sons, Leo, 4, and Mitchell, 1.

Kelley Bannon Lashley—1995. After graduating, I obtained my JD from Santa Clara School of Law in 1999. I now have a law firm in Pasadena where I specialize in trust, estate and tax planning. I married Dan Lashley (PE/KIN 1996) and we live in Simi Valley with our two children: Emma (6 years) and Rhett (2 years).

Marshall W. Waller—1978. I am married with two teenage children (16 and 15, boy and girl) and couldn’t be happier. Turns out parenthood is pretty cool. I am a divorce attorney practicing primarily in Calabasas, California, with offices in Beverly Hills as well. I am a Certified Family Law Specialist, which is a big deal, and my wife, also an attorney (New York and California) is my business partner. We have two associate attorneys as well. The economy is difficult, of course, and we are fortunate to have a practice that allows us to provide a good education for our children and a happy life for all. Thirty-two years post Cal Poly and all is well. As they say, so far, so good. I’m looking forward to the future, and I hope everyone is doing well and enjoying some level of peace in their lives. Best regards to John Culver, Reginald Gooden, Dan Bertozzi, and all the other mentors responsible for shaping me all those years ago.

Joyce Levy (Fineberg)—1981. I live in Calabasas, CA. I am married and have two boys, age 17 and 20. I worked as a litigation paralegal for years, but I am now taking it a little easier and keep busy with my small baking company. Following in my footsteps, my 20 year old son is currently a Political Science major at American University in Washington, DC. He hopes to become an attorney like my husband. It is fun to compare some of the classes he is taking now to the great Poli Sci classes that I took at Cal Poly.

Jack Holke—1984. Shortly after graduating, I made the quick transition as a Political Science graduate to the then unknown world of mechanical contracting. That I have worked in this profession ever since is testimony to it being a good fit. “Learn by doing” was immediately put to use and I have never looked back to wonder what life might have been like had I stayed the course and applied to law school. That dream belonged to my mother, and it should be noted that she went on to law school after it being a good fit. “Learn by doing” was immediately put to use and I have never looked back to wonder what life might have been like had I stayed the course and applied to law school. That dream belonged to my mother, and it should be noted that she went on to law school after working on what I hope will be my fourth publication in the area of LGBT rights. My passion for this work really grew through my studies in the Poli Sci department, and it was my senior project that eventually became my first published law review piece.

I reside in the bay area and work for ACCO Engineered Systems, where I have been employed since
2000. My wife, Nikki, who also graduated from Cal Poly in 1984 with a degree in Industrial Engineering, and I live in Pleasanton with our three children: Allie, Nick, and Jake. As we have just finished the college application process for Allie and Nick, we now must wait to find out if the odds of winning the lottery in 2010 are better than getting accepted to a four year school. How times have changed from when we used to queue up outside of the gymnasium to register for our classes. And acceptance to a great school did not require a 4-point-plus G.P.A. (I never would have made it otherwise). Speaking of a great school, go Mustangs! There are simply too many fond memories from my time at Cal Poly to recount.


Jeanie Lemaire—1972. (The first graduation class of Political Science). Since then, I have moved into the Healing Arts as a Massage Therapist, Tai Chi/Qigong Instructor, Ordained Minister, Holographic Body Therapist and Humanologist. From all of these experiences, I have authored 2 books: “The Body Talks and I Can Hear It” and “Magical Essence of Being: Human and Divine.” My goal is to get people back to their internal “Knowing-ness” where kindness and connection are a given. I am so glad to have my background in Political Science as we experience all of the financial and governmental concerns happening in our world today.

Theresa (TC) McVey—1978. I retired to Panama with my husband in 2005. We threw ourselves into our new culture by building a house with a contractor who didn’t speak English. Out of necessity, my Spanish improved immensely! We live about 90 kms west of Panama City. Since we’ve been here, I’ve worked at a free clinic treating cutaneous leishmaniasis, an “orphan” disease that is found in 88 countries, and I’ve taught English to adults in a nearby village. I’m becoming a certified yoga instructor and will soon be teaching yoga to the expats in our little mountain community.

Ana (Williams) Kolodzinski—2003. Since graduating, my life has taken me in many directions. I went to graduate school at the Seton Hall’s Whitehead School of Diplomacy and received a masters degree in international relations and a masters degree in corporate and public communications. I met my husband in graduate school. We were married on Isla Mujeres, Mexico, in the spring of 2007. After a timely stint at the United Nations Development Fund for Women in New York, I moved with my husband to Minneapolis to work for the Target Corporation. The cold weather was difficult to bear and we moved to Washington D.C. Currently, I am a Managing Associate at a mid-size strategic communications firm, Chlopak, Leonard, Schechter & Associates.

Dan Buckshi—MPP 2009, with Distinction. Dan has just been nominated to fill the position of assistant county administrator just recently vacated in San Luis Obispo. Buckshi has worked in the administrative office for eight years and has served in the positions of Administrative Analyst III and Principal Administrative Analyst/Budget Director. Before that, he spent seven years in management in the private sector. Recently, he received his M.A. in Public Policy from Cal Poly.

Dan Hossbach—1980. I went to law school, joined Army JAG and served until 1998-then went into public education. I teach gifted English to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. My oldest son graduated in May 2009 (Magna cum laude) and is employed with Wells Fargo; my other son is a senior in high school.

Jonathan Changus—MPP 2005, with Distinction (first graduate of the program if I’m not mistaken). Last year was quite the eventful year: I got married to an incredibly tolerant woman, Suzie; Suzie and I welcomed into our life, Will, our first child; and I left the position of Legislative Director for Assembly Minority Leader Sam Blakeslee to serve as the State Government Affairs Manager for the California Independent System Operator (ISO). The ISO is responsible for managing approximately 80 percent of California’s electricity transmission system. As the State Government Affairs Manager, my primary responsibility is to serve as a liaison to members and staff of the California State Legislature, engaging on energy policy issues, including renewable energy.

My humble beginnings as an unpaid intern in the San Luis Obispo District Office of Assembly Minority Leader Sam Blakeslee as part of Cal Poly’s MPP program led to previous jobs as a:

- Legislative Consultant, then Legislative Director, for San Luis Obispo’s very own Assemblyman, Sam Blakeslee.
- Deputy Director, then a Senior Policy Analyst, for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- Policy Analyst for The Pacific Forest Trust, a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of private forests.

None of this would have been possible without my internship experience in the MPP program.
Cory Taillon—2005. I am currently working as a Firefighter/Paramedic for the Los Angeles City Fire Department. I have been married since May of 2008, and live with my wife in Loma Linda, CA where she is currently enrolled in a Masters program for Occupational Therapy. She too is a Cal Poly Alum. We are excited and privileged to call ourselves Cal Poly Alumni.

Jason Oviatt—2003. After graduating, I attended Chapman University School of Law and earned a Juris Doctor in 2007. I am currently employed as an Attorney in the legal department of YUM! Brands, Inc. (NYSE: YUM), a fortune 500 company, which operates and franchises several quick service restaurant chains, including Taco Bell, KFC, and Pizza Hut. In 2009, I married Jessica Pike, and the two of us reside in south Orange County.

Bryan J. Thoensen—2001 with a minor in English. Bryan is presently a Vice President at William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, a talent and literary agency in Beverly Hills. Bryan is a branding and advertising executive in WME’s Marketing department and works to create award-winning entertainment marketing campaigns for such clients as The Coca-Cola Company, Best Buy, Nestle Purina PetCare, Nokia, American Express, Polaroid, General Motors, and the National Football League. Bryan currently resides in Marina Del Rey, CA with his wife and daughter.

Johnny McElree—1975. Aloha. I sold my mainland business, and in 2005 I moved to the Kohala Coast of the Big Island of Hawaii to retire. Since then, I have unretired and started selling real estate. I am heavily involved in racing outrigger canoes. I am putting my Poli Sci knowledge to work in my homeowner association duties and as a board member of the Waikoloa Canoe Club.

Adam Taylor—1992. As a highly prepared Cal Poly Poli Sci graduate, I am enjoying life to the fullest. I live, work, and play, in Oakland, CA, where I live with my beautiful wife of 11 years and two sons Joel and Justin (6 & 8). I have been involved in education in a variety of positions since graduating from Cal Poly. I am currently the principal of Brookfield Village Elementary School (K-5). I obtained a Master of Education degree in 2003 along with teaching and administrative credentials.

Lars Perner, Ph.D.—1986. After stints at the University of Maryland, George Washington University, UC Riverside, and San Diego State, I got a chance in 2006 to come “home” to my other alma mater—USC. As an Assistant Professor of Clinical Marketing, I currently teach Marketing Fundamentals and take MBA students to Japan during the Spring recess. In case anyone is wondering—yes, I am as eccentric as ever, and am fortunate to be in an environment where eccentricity and absentmindedness are seen as signs of genius and distinction. During the past decade, I have become increasingly involved in the autism community and have written a great deal on this topic.

Wayne Baumgardner—1988, with a concentration in International Relations. After working in the Bay Area for about 12 years, I made a career change. I moved to Korea and am teaching AP English Language and Composition, Comparative Politics and Debate at one of Korea’s most prestigious private boarding schools for high school students, Korean Minjok Leadership Academy. I love both my job and the students and feel that my Cal Poly education set me up for success in life, as I approach most everything with a “learn by doing” philosophy. I hope and trust that everyone else is doing well and wish to you all a rewarding and healthy 2010.

Edrice (Eddie) Angry—1990. I live in Modesto, CA. I am recently divorced and have two children, daughter Brianna, 11, and son Mark, 8. I work for Kaiser Permanente as a Project Manager in the Service Enhancement Department for the Central Valley Area (Manteca, Modesto, Stockton and Tracy) and have been with Kaiser Permanente 14 1/2 years. After completing my BA in Poli Sci - PreLaw, I received another BA in Bible & Theology - Youth Ministries from San Jose Christian College (now William Jessup University), and in 2008 completed a MBA with emphasis in Healthcare Administration with University of Phoenix. The exciting news I have now is that I will begin Humphrey’s Laurence Drivon School of Law in Stockton on Feb. 8th and am so looking forward to it.

Erin Ladd (Anderson)—1998. I live in Franklin, Tennessee now, which is a suburb of Nashville. I have 2 little girls, 4 years old and 6 months old. I am the manager of the personal insurance department at a large insurance brokerage, Full Service Insurance in Franklin. I have been with this company since graduating.

Erin Portugal-Revious—1999. I am currently the proud mother of 3 beautiful children, Emma (6), Brady (4 1/2), and Carter (7 months). We are living in Hanford, CA and I am working at Liberty Middle School in Lemoore, as a school administrator. My husband and I both miss living in SLO and vacation there often. I am still working on my Master’s Degree in Education and hope to have it finished soon.
Kara Groth—2006. After doing two years of service work in Baltimore with Lutheran Volunteer Corps, I started a Masters of Divinity program at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA. PLTS is part of the Graduate Theological Union--a consortium of nine Christian seminaries, three centers for the study of Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism--so many of the classes include people from varied faith backgrounds. In addition to school, I am working at a small church in Oakland, and I will be getting married to Fred Ghansah--a fellow Cal Poly alum!--in June.

Michael Diaz—1993. I have lived in the Austin, TX, area for the last 13 years with my wife Jan. We have a 10 year old daughter named Alyssa who's in the fifth grade and plays club volleyball. Upon graduation from Cal Poly, I have managed two professional careers: civilian and military. In my civilian career, I work for Dell Inc. as a Program Manager in Round Rock, TX. I am also proudly serving our nation as a Major in the Texas Army National Guard. Over the past 6 years, I have been deployed overseas as a Financial Management officer. I also enjoy running marathons and have competed on our Texas National Guard Marathon Team for the past two years.

Clark Jarrett—Int’l Affairs 1977--Teaching Credential 1978 I am an instructor at the Downtown Magnets High School in Los Angeles. I teach history and honor economics. I’m also an assistant professor at LA Mission College, one of the nine community colleges in the area. I teach the humanities and have just received my clearance to teach history. Moreover, I’m still active in the entertainment business, as an actor and documentarian producer.

Nicholas S. Kosla—1999. I am living in the SF Bay Area working on military base reuse projects for a private land development company. I am married to the beautiful Larissa Kosla and have two daughters, Audrey and Grace. Audrey is 3 and took a ski lesson last weekend. Grace is 2 months old and can hold her head up. Larissa is an incredible wife and mother. I’ve been procrastinating my Master’s thesis in Public Policy and Administration from Sacramento State, but have finished all of the other requirements to get it…hopefully this Spring. I’m making pear wine, trying to break 100 in golf, running in the Tilden Park area, not snowboarding or fly-fishing enough, and writing a play. My wife and I like the thought of learning to sail together, but doubt we’ll do it this year, again. Finally, I have mixed feelings about Alex Smith staying on the Niners as the starting QB next year and while I feel like there was some turnaround this year (first non-losing season in several years), at some point enough is enough, and I’m going to dedicate myself to only watching college football, which I’ve gotten progressively more into as I’ve gotten older…speaking of which my 33rd birthday is next week. I’m hoping for an HD camcorder that records to a hard drive.

Jesse Torrey—MPP 2009. I have been working at Cal Poly since December 2008 coordinating the Central Coast Volunteer Corps AmeriCorps Program that operates out of Student Life and Leadership on campus. I oversee 35 AmeriCorps members that are placed in nonprofit and community agencies in San Luis Obispo County helping to expand agency capacity. I live in Atascadero with my 13 year old daughter.

Danielle Walters—1987. After over a decade as a health care lobbyist in Sacramento, I joined Sanofi-Aventis, U.S. -- a French pharmaceutical and health care company. I currently serve as the Associate Vice President of State Government Affairs overseeing a national team that covers all state lobbying and regulatory interests for the company. I live in Sacramento with my husband Ken Smith (a public relations consultant) and our twelve year old son Couver.

Our Heartiest Congratulations to the Following Political Science Student 2008-2009 Award Winners

Angela Kramer
CLA Outstanding Senior Award for Contributing to the Objectives and Public Image of the College

Kayvan Chinichian
Model United Nations Award

Jennifer Rosenberg
Alex Sander
Arthur Goldiner
John H. Lynn Paper Awards

Julie Hopper
Panetta Institute, Washington D.C.
George Clucas was a former political science professor, research director and dean of Finance and Development. He worked as dean of Cal Poly’s Finance and Development Department from 1956 to 1962, when he left to work in the CSU Chancellor’s office and later earn a doctorate in public administration at the University of Southern California. He returned to Cal Poly first as director of Research and Development and then to become the first acting dean of the school of Business and Social Sciences. He later joined the faculty of the Political Science department to teach public administration. He retired in 1982.

Dr. Clucas’ wife, Janice, received her Bachelor of Arts from U.C.L.A. and her Master of Arts in History from Cal State Long Beach. She taught History at Cuesta College. Mrs. Clucas was an active member, serving as chapter Chair, of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club and was honored by the California Sierra Club for her contribution to its formation. She served on a number of city and county planning and advisory committees. Janice Clucas was an active member of the League of Women Voters for over 50 years and was the founding President of the San Luis Obispo Chapter.

Dr. and Mrs. Clucas have spent much of their professional and personal lives furthering both local and statewide civic issues and have made a significant contribution to the growth of San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly.

In 2006, Dr. and Mrs. Clucas established the George and Janice Clucas Scholarship Endowment to support graduate students who have successfully completed their first year of study in the Master of Public Policy program and who exhibit high academic potential and an interest in pursuing a career in public policy upon graduation. In 2008, they established the George and Janice Clucas Award Endowment which is awarded to undergraduate Political Science majors and/or Master of Public Policy graduate students who have meritoriously completed an internship program with a governmental agency or with agencies or offices involved with governmental issues. If you would like to make a gift to the scholarship or award in honor of Dr. Clucas, you may do so by making your check out to the Cal Poly Foundation and mailing it to the Political Science Department, Cal Poly State University, 1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407.

Dr. Clucas died July 11, 2009, at age 88.
INFORMATION -- ALUMNI UPDATE -- DONATION FORM

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Is this an address change?  Y  N

Update on your career and life to be included in the next issue of the Newsletter. Attach additional page(s) if necessary. Mail to Cal Poly Political Science Department at address below or email to PoliticalScience@calpoly.edu.

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A portion of each gift will be used to defray the cost of raising and administering private support for Cal Poly.

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