30 years of Jack Parson

In 1980 when Dr. Jack Parson arrived at the College of Charleston, 4,500 students filled the halls and there were fewer than 100 political science majors. Thirty years later enrollment at the College is over 11,000 with about 400 majors. Dr. Parson has impacted the lives of thousands of students, teaching about 6,000 over the course of his career. Dr. Parson says that “being a part of the lives of students keeps us young, challenges us and helps us keep up with generational changes.”

Dr. Parson involved the department with the Model African Union back in 1981, which developed into a course that gave students the opportunity to learn about the African Union, a particular member country and participate in a simulation in Washington D.C. He enjoys the day to day contact with students who are preparing to do big things.

“I am so grateful for the Politics of Africa class and the Model AU. I learned so much and am now a more well-rounded person as a result.”

Annie South (2009)

As Director of International Education for six and half years in the 1990’s, he facilitated the expansion of the study abroad program here at the College. When he started in this role, about 30 students studied abroad each year and when he stepped down, over 300 students were going abroad each year. “Being able to help facilitate students in having international experiences was rewarding” says Dr. Parson. “It gives them a different perspective.”

He also participated in the College’s study abroad program, teaching students in Trujillo, Spain for six weeks as well as in Annot, France. For the past six summers, Dr. Parson has helped recruit and take students to Morocco. He enjoyed the travel abroad and teaching outside the walls of the classroom.

“I will miss the personal interaction with students and colleagues on the daily basis but I won’t miss the paper grading and the student crises.”

says Dr. Parson

The Department of Political Science wishes him well and will miss him.

Dr. Parson valued research and writing in his career as well. He traveled to Botswana twice as a Fulbright scholar in 1984-1985 and again in 1990 and returned a few more times with college funding. He enjoys both parts of being a professor, teaching and professional growth and development.

During retirement, Dr. Parson plans to focus on research and writing about Botswana. He also intends to complete a book manuscript he is currently working on. He looks forward to spending more time with his grandchildren and will travel to see friends in Uganda, Botswana, Namibia and Cape Town.

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Campaigns 101: Students learn from experts

On November 10, 2009, a bipartisan panel of campaign strategists spoke to students about how political campaigns function and how they can get involved. These consultants included: Phil Bailey, who serves as the SC Senate Democratic Caucus Executive Director; Lachlan McIntosh, Founder of McIntosh Consulting; Chris Allen, Managing Director of Jim Dyke and Associates; Wesley Donahue, Owner of Under the Powerlines, which specializes in political website development and online campaign fundraising; and Rod Shealy, consultant who ran the Republican primary campaign for Andre Bauer for lieutenant governor in 2006. Each consultant talked briefly about what they do as a campaign strategist and how they began consulting. All of them emphasized the importance of fundraising and planning for any political campaign. Students asked questions about how they can get involved and the strategists encouraged students to sign up to volunteer for local or governor races in South Carolina.

Inside this issue:

- Fall Geography Lecture
- Fall 2009 class field trips
- Alumni and Student highlights
- Faculty News
- Guoli Liu’s Reading List
- Alumni Spotlight
- Staying Connected

Students signing up to volunteer for campaigns after panel discussion.
Fall Geography Lecture: Paul Robbins

Paul Robbins, Professor of Geography and Regional Development at the University of Arizona, presented a lecture on campus on November 5, entitled "Lawn People: The Politics of Everyday Landscapes."

Paul Robbins delivered both an informative and entertaining presentation based on his book, Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are (2007). Robbins argued that "lawns are the largest irrigated crop in the United States," but we often don't think of them that way. We also rarely confront the contradiction that lawns are both sources of spaces for communities and families and sources of tremendous amounts of pollution and sickness to humans and our pets. It seems perfectly natural to use chemicals on lawns, and to create local policies for lawn maintenance—even while these activities are environmentally destructive to the very communities that lawn users value. Why, Robbins asked, don’t we just plant clover instead of grass? Or use other alternatives that will prevent our dogs’ feet from bleeding?

"After hearing the lecture, I concluded that the lawn is a perfect symbol of modern capitalist oriented life. People face unprecedented social pressures to continue a practice or consumption pattern that logically does not make sense, as it is obviously unsustainable and damaging to us." said one student who participated in the trip to the Carter library.

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Student in Professor Watson’s class

Fall 2009 class field trips

Two political science professors offered optional field trips in their courses during the Fall semester. In November, Dr. Kendra Stewart escorted five students from her Presidency class on a one day research adventure to the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum in Atlanta. The purpose of the trip was to find primary sources for a research paper related to the Carter Presidency. The students provided their research topics to the librarians and archivists at the Carter library who then helped in their search.

“I was fortunate enough to make the trip. It was interesting to be able to see first-hand the documents that floated through an administration. It gave me insight to the inner workings of the White House,” said one student who participated in the trip to the Carter library.

Other students in Dr. Kevin Keenan’s classes visited the South Carolina State Ports Authority’s Port of Charleston. This trip provided them with first-hand knowledge of the logistics industry and the role state government plays in shaping regional trade. The students met with both the director of public relations and an assistant. With Dr. Keenan behind the wheel, they rode throughout the port alongside 18-wheeler trucks picking up shipments, beneath huge cranes used for unloading enormous cargo ships, and next to sophisticated equipment that detects radioactive material. The students queried the tour leader about the politics of shipping, asking about homeland security policies, the role of the state government as a port ‘authority,’ and the competition among regions to get major shippers (such as Maersk) to use their port.

Alumni and Student Highlights

Caitlin Campbell (2009) is a research intern for the U.S-China economic and Security Review Commission for the U.S. Congress.

Melissa Kiacofe Low (2000) is the Director of Industry Resources and Legislative Services for Club Managers Association of America (CMAA).

Karen Moldovan (2001), completed her volunteer service in the Peace Corp in Tonga in June, 2009 and is now the Advocacy Coordinator for the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault in Denver, CO.

POLs senior, Annie Dupree completed an internship with the Foreign Service office during the Fall semester.

POLS seniors, John Carter Foxgrover and Maggie Lyons received MAYS grants in support of their Bachelors Essay research. Carter was awarded a grant for his research on “Lobbying Dynamics” and Maggie for her research on “Human Trafficking.”
Faculty News

Professors Helen Delfeld, Kea Gorden and Guoli Liu are participating in the Global Scholars program. This program is a university-wide initiative designed to increase the capacity of students and faculty to contribute productively as global citizens. The program aims to help meet the changing demands brought about by globalization and recognize students and faculty members who structure their learning and work around developing a wider global worldview.

Dr. Claire Curtis received a faculty research grant to complete her manuscript (“We’ll not go home again” Post-apocalyptic fiction and the social contract).

Dr. Helen Delfeld was invited to participate in the “Post-Conflict Politics: Building on political legitimacy” workshop in Paris.

Dr. Lynne Ford is serving as the Coordinator for Academic Civic Engagement.

Professor Guoli Liu’s Reading list

Non-fiction

*The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (Ballantine Books). Translated by Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont. Confucius is a great teacher and his ideas have been the fertile soil in which the Chinese cultural tradition has flourished.

Peter J. Katzenstein ed., *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives* (Routledge) addresses the following questions: Are civilizations really clashing? Have civilizations replaced the nation state as the relevant unit for understanding our multi-polar world?


Shalendra D. Sharma, *China and India in the Age of Globalization* (Cambridge University Press) explores how the interplay of historical, political, and economic forces have transformed the two most populous countries into economic powerhouses. It also examines the main challenges facing the two Asian giants in the era of globalization.

Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (W. W. Norton). As the international community struggles to make sense of the post-Cold War world, Doyle urges us to look again at the classical theorists. This is an interesting analysis of contending perspectives on war and peace.

Fiction

Luo Guanzhong, *Three Kingdoms: A Historical Novel* (University of California Press). Translated from the Chinese by Moss Roberts. Written by Luo Guanzhong in the 14th century, it is a Chinese historical novel based upon events in the turbulent years near the end of the Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms era of China, starting in 169 and ending with the reunification of the land in 280. I read the Chinese edition thirty years ago and am enjoying this English edition now.

Alumni Spotlight: Anastasia Emelianoff

2007 graduate Anastasia Emelianoff holds a BA with Honors in Political Science from the College of Charleston. She minored in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Spanish. After graduation, she immediately applied for a position with the City of Charleston's Department of Planning, Preservation and Sustainability as a City Planner and Annexation Coordinator. Almost three years later, Anastasia still happily works for the City. She markets the City to home and business owners to recruit property into the City limits. She also serves as a development and construction facilitator and is currently working on the city’s 2010 comprehensive plan. While in college, Anastasia dabbled in event and wedding planning and other creative projects. As a senior in College, she interned for Town of Mount Pleasant Councilmember Thomasena Stokes-Marshall and helped coordinate Piccolo Spoleto’s Sweetgrass Cultural Art Festival. Since then, Anastasia was selected by Mayor Riley to coordinate the 48h International Making Cities Livable Conference, a platform where international delegates discuss ways to rebuild cities to be more ecologically and socially sustainable. In 2009, Anastasia decided to expand her career and started her own business moonlighting as a Creative Director. One of her proudest works is the Charleston Green Plan, a climate action plan for Charleston’s 21st century that is scheduled to be published and adopted by Charleston City Council by 2011. While designing, directing and editing the plan, she also helped analyze Charleston’s greenhouse gas emissions and translate these inventories into quantifiable reduction measures. Anastasia plans to continue her environmental policy work in graduate school next year.
We are interested in hearing from you!

On April 23rd, the POLS faculty will celebrate Dr. Parson’s career. If you have a story or remembrance that you would like to share please email Erin at blevinse@cofc.edu. We would love to include your thoughts in our celebration. Please also share any recent news and/or photos about you too!

Stay Connected

Attend an event
POLS department 2009-2010 theme: “Political Imagination: Creative Solutions to Contemporary Dilemmas.”
Please join us at the POLS Convocation for Majors on Wednesday, February 17, 2010 in Physicians Auditorium at 7 pm. Mark Umbreit, founding director of the Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking, a practicing mediator and a professor at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work, will deliver this year’s presentation on “Restorative Justice in the 21st century: A Social Movement in the Global Community.”

Tom Ricks, former military correspondent for the Washington Post (2000-2009), will speak on campus on February 18, 2010 in Physicians Auditorium at 7:00 pm. For details about Tom Ricks visit http://ricks.foreignpolicy.com

Provide an internship opportunity for current students
Join other alumni like Sam Spence, South Carolina New Democrats.

Volunteer as a Career Mentor
Students often have questions about certain careers and are interested in ideas on how to go about finding their first job. If you would like to volunteer as a career mentor, please get in touch with us or join the C of C Alumni Career Mentor Network online. The information and support you can provide is invaluable to our current students!

Join the C of C Alumni Online Community and see what your classmates are up to.

Contact Erin Blevins at blevinse@cofc.edu to volunteer or provide photos/updates. We want to hear from you!