Professors give back to the community

Political Science faculty are kept busy with teaching, research and various projects on campus but somehow they find time to engage in community projects in a wide range of areas. From local projects to projects in other states and abroad, their involvement brings interesting perspectives into the classroom and benefits the community. Here are just a few of the many projects they are involved in.

Several political science faculty have served as faculty mentors for high school seniors at the Academic Magnet including Phil Jos, Guoli Liu, Kevin Keenan, John Creed and Helen Delfeld. Claire Curtis and JoAnn Ewalt serve on the School Improvement Council for Buist Academy. Guoli Liu is a Board member of the Chinese Association of Greater Charleston and is a regular volunteer with Meals on Wheels in East Cooper. John Creed has made several presentations to groups such as Charleston Creative Retirement and Lynne Ford reviews grants for the Mayor’s Office of Children Youth and Families and AmeriCorps/Vista.

Kevin Keenan has linked his courses to a community of practitioners outside of the College, including noted planners in the County and City, the Ports Authority, and private developers.

Annette Watson has developed a collaboration with the Nulato tribe of Koyukon Athabascans in Interior Alaska. She will be working with this tribe on the politics of salmon management in the transboundary (US/Canada) Yukon River drainage, and other projects on geography and natural resource management and subsistence economies. She is looking forward to possibly bringing students into the field this summer.

As the VP for Programs of the Charleston Chapter of The Links, a women’s group, Marguerite Archie-Hudson has helped develop and direct “Links to Okurase”, a Chapter program that provides support for approximately 2500 women and vulnerable children in the Village of Okurase, Ghana. The project is a collaboration with the Nkabom Artists and Craftspeople Association of Ghana, Gethsemani Circle of Friends of North Charleston, SC (the Union Heights Area) and The Family Services research center of the Medical University of South Carolina. Five years ago these three organizations joined together and formed an NGO to create a sustainable and environmentally friendly village with an infrastructure that supports health, education, economic self-sufficiency, shelter and family support. Links to Okurase provided sewing supplies to fully equip the Village’s Sewing Center enabling the women to create children’s clothing, market bags, backpacks, purses and a variety of products for sale in the U.S. They equipped a Pharmacy for the Village, including a full-range of medical supplies and equipment. In June 2011, a team of MUSC medical professionals conducted two weeks of medical screenings and surgeries in the village. To date over 50 boxes of supplies have been transmitted directly to the Village. In January 2012, MUSC will host an exhibiting describing the work that Links and the NGO collaborators have been able to accomplish in the Village of Okurase.

Our professors lead by example, encouraging students to get involved with their community.

New Faculty to join department

Claire Wofford joined the Department of Political Science in January 2012. Her teaching and research interests are in the field of American politics, with a particular emphasis on the U.S. legal system and the role of race, class, and gender in structuring political power. She will offer courses on American Government, the Judiciary, Constitutionality, Law, Civil Liberties, and Gender and the Law at the undergraduate level. Wofford earned her Ph.D. in Political Science from Emory University in December 2011. She also holds a J.D. from Duke University School of Law and a B.A. in Political Science from Wellesley College. Her dissertation, funded in part by the National Science Foundation, examines the selection of legal rules by the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court. Her current research focuses on how ideological, jurisprudential, and institutional concerns affect the doctrine promulgated by the Court. She is also researching how the gender of litigants influences their decision to seek remedies through the legal system.
Professors reach out to students considering Graduate School

Over the past few years, few students have participated in the Graduate School information sessions that the Department of Political Science has hosted for students interested in learning more about graduate school for political science or related fields. This year Professors Erin McAdams and Jordan Ragusa are serving as the department’s Graduate school resource and decided to take a more pro-active approach to reaching students. They attended most upper division political science classes and POLS 251, spending 10 minutes in each class, introducing themselves, answering questions about graduate school and asking students interested in more information to provide their email address so they could be contacted.

Over 125 students signed up to be contacted and Professors McAdams and Ragusa sent out a short survey to find out what kind of graduate school information sessions these students were interested in. Professor McAdams hopes this new approach will allow them to “tailor the support system to the student’s individual needs.”

Based on the student interest, the professors chose to host two sessions this fall, one on “Thinking about graduate school” and the other on “Applying to graduate school”. Several students participated in each of these sessions, learning about the graduate school application process and timeline, as well as, what to consider when thinking about going to graduate school.

Professor McAdams and Ragusa are also available to meet with students one on one; since making class presentations they have seen around twenty students individually.

Professor Ragusa said that “The interest is out there, it is just on us to tap into it and find a way to foster and nurture that interest.” Both Professors McAdams and Ragusa hope to continue to reach out to political science students through informational emails, additional graduate school sessions and class visits.

Student highlights

The Political Science club invited the City of Charleston Mayoral candidates to speak on campus. An event was held for each of the candidates running for office that accepted the invitation. Incumbent Joe Riley and David Farrow spoke to an audience of students, faculty and community members.

College of Charleston’s South Carolina Student Legislature (SCSL) delegation of six students attended the Fall SCSL Session held in Columbia, SC in the State House Chambers and the Embassy Suites.

Our student delegation presented bills on a variety of topics including education, tort reform and gambling, of which three passed. Although this year’s CofC delegation was small compared to past years, our delegation won the Best Large Delegation award.

The College of Charleston Mock Trial team participated in the Georgia “Capital City” Mock Trial invitational in October. Twenty-three teams competed. CofC competed against Tennessee, Furman, University of Alabama and Georgia. This was the first competition for all but one member of the team.

“Although the CofC team did not win any individual rounds”, says Bob Culver, “our team gained valuable experience competing against some of the top performing teams in the nation, and the team should be well positioned after our scrimmage against Coastal Carolina in January to perform at the Regional Competition set for February.”

Alumni Highlights

Caitlin Campbell (2009) has been recently promoted to Policy Analyst for Foreign Affairs and Energy at the US–China Economic and Security Commission.


Lindsay Moon Findley (2004) is the Chapter Executive Director for the American Red Cross Aiken County Chapter.

Phoebe Schiff (2011) Account Coordinator, Statler Nagle LLC, Strategic Marketing Research and Consulting in Washington D.C.

Mike Mooneyham (1976) was inducted into the inaugural class of South Carolina Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame. He has been covering professional wrestling since the mid 60’s and writes a weekly pro wrestling column for the Charleston Post and Courier.

Jamie Huff (2007) pursuing a PhD at the University of Connecticut and Lee Rogers (2008) pursuing a PhD at UCLA, presented papers at the National Women’s Studies Association.

Jonathan Marcantel (1999) was appointed Assistant Professor of Law at the Charleston School of Law.

Kenny Gardner (2008) is a Business Litigation associate with Nexsen Pruet’s Charleston office. He earned his J.D. from Charleston School of Law in 2011.

Patricia Maples (2007) Owner at Bird’s Eye Maples, is offering classes and personal instruction in yoga, pilates and healthy living / cooking in New York city area.

Delacey Skinner (1995) is a Senior Vice President at GMMB., a “political, issue and cause communication firm” in Washington D.C.
Faculty News

Hollis France traveled to Guyana in December to do preliminary research for a paper on Food security and neo-liberal trade policies.

Brian Fisher is now the Director of Sustainability for the College of Charleston.

Kevin Keenan organized field trips for his Suburbia class, visiting the I’On development in Mount Pleasant to see new urbanism planning principles in action and the Noisette Development in North Charleston to study the politics of master planning in a sustainable community.

Jordan Ragusa is the recipient of a $5,000 summer 2012 grant from the Initiative for Public Choice and Market Process for his research project: “Observing the Status Quo: Legislative Organization and a Century of Repeals.”

Annette Watson (Principal Investigator) has been awarded a two year South Carolina Sea Grant ($106,746). Her co-Pls include Kendra Stewart, Kevin Keenan, and Susan Lovelace (of NOAA/MES). The project is called “Coastal Livelihoods and the Local Sense of Place: Assessing Social-Ecological Relationships and Environmental Values in the Face of Demographic Changes in Mount Pleasant, Awendaw, and McClellanville, SC.”

On the lighter side, I read the most recent P.D. James mystery, The Private Patient (not her best) and The Girl Who Played With Fire (I actually don’t think too much of Stieg Larsson’s writing style but somehow I keep reading happily).

The next book on my list is Thinking Fast, Thinking Slow by Daniel Kahneman.

Professor Philip Jos’ Reading list

“I am currently reading: The autobiography of Katherine Graham (Personal History) which won the Pulitzer for biography in 1997. She was born to wealth and privilege but was constrained by a male dominated family and profession. The book is the story of someone who had to learn to trust her own talents and judgments in order to emerge as the widely respected leader of the Washington Post. A book by John Donahue called The Warping of Government (2008). Donahue’s thesis is that the transformation of the private sector economy over the last three decades (less job security, widening inequality) and the relative stability of government jobs, has created a huge gulf between private and public sector work that is making it difficult for government to attract managerial talent.

On the lighter side, I read the most recent P.D. James mystery, The Private Patient (not her best) and The Girl Who Played With Fire (I actually don’t think too much of Stieg Larsson’s writing style but somehow I keep reading happily).

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Alumni Spotlight: Nadeen Bir

Nadeen Bir graduated in 2002 with a double major in Political Science and Spanish, with a minor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. While at the College of Charleston, Nadeen held leadership positions in the Political Science club and Spanish club and had the opportunity to participate in Model OAS and AU, studied abroad in Santiago, Chile, and had a short stint in Student Government. Upon graduating, she was offered an internship with Student Action with Farmworkers to work directly with migrant and seasonal farmworkers teaching English as a Second Language and connecting migrant labor camps to rural churches to build community in Dunn, NC with the Episcopal Farmworker Ministry.

From 2002-2010, Nadeen has held various positions in advocacy organizations, direct service organizations, and a union aiming to improve the lives of Latinos, youth, and workers in North Carolina. Currently, she is the Advocacy and Organizing Director at Student Action with Farmworkers in Durham, NC. Nadeen organizes young people and supports them as they begin to advocate and raise awareness about farm labor conditions in order to improve the laws that effect farmworkers and to hold corporations accountable.

“The professors and courses at the College of Charleston in both the Political Science Department and in the Hispanic Studies Department were key in my development as a leader in the social justice movement” says Nadeen.
Attend an event
The Department of Political Science 2011-2012 theme is Cultural Change, Politics, and the Law. The political science Convocation of Majors, featuring Lisa Gilinger, an attorney who serves on the Board of Directors of TransYouth Family Allies, will speak about “The Experience of Gender” on February 21, 2012 at 7 pm in the Physician’s Auditorium. On Monday, March 19, 2012, Larry Knopp, Professor of Geography at the University of Washington, will present a Geography lecture on “Sexuality and Space” at 3:30 pm in the Stern Center Ballroom.

Provide an internship opportunity for current students or volunteer to be a guest speaker.

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 and Student 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!

You can donate ONLINE directly to one of these funds:

**Political Science Fund (R307)**
Support Student Awards and Student/Faculty events such as best paper awards and special learning opportunities.

**William V. Moore Memorial Fund in Political Science (R531)**
Support programs such as the William V. Moore Student Research Conference being held on April 6, 2012. Advanced high school and undergraduate students at public colleges will have a chance to present research to peers and College of Charleston Faculty.

**William V. Moore Endowed Scholarship in Political Science (E544)**
Provides a renewable scholarship to a political science student who demonstrates a commitment to improve the quality of life for all South Carolinians.

**Donate Online**
To make an online donation to one of these funds, visit http://giving.cofc.edu, select “Online Giving” on right hand side of page, select “Other” in the designation section and indicate which one you want to contribute to in the comments section:

**Political Science Fund (R307)**
William V. Moore Memorial Fund in Political Science (R531)
William V. Moore Endowed Scholarship in Political Science (E544).

Please contact Phil Jos, Chair, Department of Political Science with any questions about the funds at josp@cofc.edu.