



Learning with Purpose

Political Science Department Newsletter April 2014



From the Chair



Dear Alumni and Friends of the Political Science Department,

As the new department chair, I welcome you to our first newsletter.

You'll find exciting information about our student successes as well as faculty and alumni achievements.

Alumni, we want to hear from you. Please send your news to Political_Science@uml.edu. We'd also appreciate your feedback on how we can strengthen our department. [Please take a brief survey.](#)

Best,
Ardeth Thawngmung
Department Chair, Political Science Department

Upcoming Alumni Events

[April 26, Washington, DC Alumni Reception](#)

[May 16, Commencement Eve Celebration](#)

[Oct. 24 to 26, Fall Festival](#)

Alumni, please also join us to celebrate our Graduating Students on **April 30, 5:30 to 7 p.m.** at the Allen House, Two Solomont Way, Lowell. Join Chancellor Marty Meehan '78 and your former professors to celebrate our award-winning and graduating seniors. The event includes a reception and recognition ceremony. Come and support our new class of alumni. RSVP [Jeanette Anderson](#).

Donations to the Political Science Department's endowment are appreciated. [Make your gift online.](#)

SUPPORT
UMass Lowell



PS Department Seizes Dugan Hall in Bloodless Revolution



After several years in Coburn Hall, the Department is moving to new offices in Dugan. Drop by to visit faculty or see our new Department Administrator Jeanette Anderson. If you are in need of information or assistance, Jeanette is the one to ask.

During the 2013-14 academic year the Department initiated many changes aside from the new offices. Prof. Ardeth Thawngmung began her term as the new Department Chair. We welcomed two new faculty members who teach International Politics. The

Center for Public Opinion launched several new surveys including an analysis of voters' preferences in the Boston mayoral race. The Model UN Team traveled to Scotland to compete in an international tournament. The Mock Trial Team continued its stellar performance against our New England competitors such as Harvard and other prestigious schools. Our students extended their record of success in local internships in places such as the Lowell Mayor's Office, the UMass Lowell Center for Terrorism and Security Studies, and the Washington Semester Program. Several students collaborated with faculty on research projects, including presenting at national conferences. Students continued to gain admission to graduate schools such as Boston College School of Law. Our faculty published several new books, won teaching awards, were awarded grants, and gave many talks in the region. We are proud of these and many of the other events discussed in the newsletter.

International Club Wins Prestigious Award



The UMass Lowell International Relations Club (IRC) recently returned from the ScotMUN Conference at historic Edinburgh University in Scotland. After months of intense preparations, 17 UMass Lowell students were engaged in a lively simulated Model UN, representing the countries of Japan, Venezuela, El Salvador and Lithuania. Sophomore Jonathan Ross represented Lithuania on the prestigious Security Council, where he was recognized as

Outstanding Delegate.

The students competed against 25 schools and 300 delegates from around the globe, including representatives from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, France, Nepal, Cyprus and many others. They debated issues such as nuclear safety in the face of natural disasters, the impact of the global financial crisis on human rights, the international arms trade, immunization policy and personal genomics. The UMass Lowell team was joined by three special guests, Provost Ahmed Abdelal, Assistant to the Provost Mary Robbins, and Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences Luis Falcón.

Students Gain Real-World Experiences



Political Science students have undertaken a broad range of internships and professional experiences during the past year.

Cody Case and James Christopher are working in the Lowell Mayor's Office. They work directly with Mayor Rodney Elliott in responding to constituent problems and drafting speeches for the Mayor's public appearances. In the photo, left, Cody and the Mayor compete in the annual Human Dogsled Race that was held in Feb.

Christian Nambu is working in the Center for Terrorism and Security Studies at UMass Lowell, run by John Horgan, one of the leading terrorism scholars in America. Christian is profiling mass murderers for "A Comparative Analysis of Violent Radicalization," an ongoing research project of the Center.

Phil Geoffroy, who is working at the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership, won second place in the Trinity EMS YouTube Video Award sponsored by the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce. His video highlighted the mission of the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership to "promote responsible and sustainable home ownership opportunities for first time home buyers." Phil also ran for a record-breaking third term as the Student Trustee for UMass Lowell.

Kathleen Usselman is working in the Department of Planning and Development for the City of Lowell.

Students Conduct Survey for Town of Acton



Students enrolled in Jenifer Whitten-Woodring's political methodology course did more than learn about correlation coefficients and multiple regression. They applied their skills and conducted a Citizen Satisfaction Survey for the Town of Acton. Students Timothy Brunson, Michaela Hyde, Fatmata Kanu and Seyed Golam Reza Sohi led the team and presented the results to the town officials, letting them know what citizens think about the quality of life, local problems and town services as well as civic participation and media usage. The project was a collaboration with the Center for Public Opinion and was supported by a UMass Lowell Service-Learning Mini Grant.

Mock Trial Winners



At the American Mock Trial Association Mock Trial Tournament, Amanda Robinson placed first Best Overall Witness and Michael Taylor placed seventh Overall Witness in a field of students from Yale, Wellesley, Tufts, BC, BU and other schools.

Over 250 colleges and universities in the United States compete in a series of regional and invitational tournaments throughout the fall and winter of each academic year. Students acquire skills such as critical reasoning and public speaking that are transferable to nearly every professional career.

Students Tutor Young Refugees



Three of our International Relations Club (IRC) students -- Nikki Lynch (Political Science), Rita DeFreitas (Political Science) and Emily Fritz (Peace and Conflict studies) -- have been volunteering for the SayDaNar Community Development Center.

The Center's homework help program brings together UMass Lowell volunteers and professors, and over 40 refugee students from Burma. Volunteer tutors provide support with homework and act as role models for the young refugees, all of whom arrived to Lowell from refugee camps in Thailand within the last five years and face challenges adjusting to a new language, cultural system and social norms.

This collaboration between SayDaNar, a community-based self-help organization for refugees from Burma, and UMass Lowell students is proving to be an effective model for resettled refugee populations. Two of our faculty from Political Science Department, Ardeth Thawngmung and John Wooding, are serving on the SayDaNar Community Development Center board. In addition to the homework help program, the IRC club raised \$300 to support fundraising efforts last year at the IRC club's "Celebration of the Diverse Community at UMass Lowell" event. For more information, please [visit www.saydanarlowell.org](http://www.saydanarlowell.org) or email saydanar.cdc@gmail.com.

Alumni Profile: John Traphagan, Ph.D.



John graduated from UMass Lowell in 1983 and went on to complete his master's at Yale and a doctorate in Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh. He is currently a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. In 2013 he published "Rethinking Autonomy: A Critique of Principlism in Biomedical Ethics" (SUNY Press, 2013). He is also a jazz drummer in his spare time.

Professor-Student Debate Wars



In our third round of this annual tradition, students and faculty debated several of the pressing issues of our time. Hosted by the International Relations Club and emceed by Nikki Lynch, this event included vigorous disagreement fueled by crude jokes. Debate topics ranged from serious issues such as the drone strikes, smoking ban on campus to lighter subjects such as Miley Cyrus' decision to promote public twerking.

Faculty & Staff News

New Faculty



Angelica Duran-Martinez recently received her doctorate from Brown University. She will be teaching courses on Comparative Politics, Latin America and the Politics of Development. Her research focuses on the causes and consequences of political violence and organized crime. She has interviewed drug dealers, police officers, activists and politicians in Colombia and Mexico.



Gary Uzonyi completed doctorate at the University of Michigan. He specializes in International Relations and the politics of human rights. His courses will include the Politics of Human Rights and Politics of International Organizations. He will be leading a study abroad group to the Hague in the Netherlands this summer.

In Memoriam: Joyce Denning

The faculty and students of the Department are very sad to announce the passing of Professor Joyce Denning. Joyce taught in the department for over 40 years. Hundreds of students benefited from her knowledge, wisdom and passion. For many years she ran the Second Chance Program at the University, enabling older students to return to their studies and complete their degrees. The office she shared with her friend and colleague, Dean Bergeron, was both a sanctuary for students and faculty, and a place where thinking and ideas were hatched, challenged and nurtured. She had a profound impact on all who took her courses and on all who knew her. We will miss her.

Fred Lewis Retires



Prof. Fred Lewis retired this year after over 30 years of teaching American politics and constitutional law. Fred holds a juris doctorate from Harvard and a doctorate from Tufts. He served as the President of the New England Political Science Association and President of the UMass Lowell Faculty Union. He is author of "The Context of Judicial Activism: The Endurance of the Warren Court Legacy in a Conservative Age" (Rowman & Littlefield).

New Department Administrator



We are thrilled to welcome Jeanette Anderson to the Department. Jeanette served in the Registrar's Office before joining us last fall. You can find her overseeing the new offices in Dugan Hall.

Faculty Awards & Grants

- UMass Lowell Seed Grant 2013: \$9,000 to Morgan Marietta for his research on Dueling Facts in American Democracy. This money funded a national survey conducted by the Cooperative Congressional Election Study in November 2013.
- Creative Economy Grant: \$28,000 to Susan E. Gallagher, Joseph Fisher and Charlotte

Ryan from the Walden Climate Change Collaborative, to create digital resources for climate change education at state parks and historic sites throughout Massachusetts (2012-2014).

- Excellence in Teaching Award for the College of Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Morgan Marietta 2013.
 - UMass Lowell Seed Grant 2011: \$5,000 to Deina Abdelkader for research at the Ottoman Archives.
 - Creative Economy Grant: \$29,000 to John Wooding from the UMass President's Office to study the impact of the creative economy in Lowell.
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Department Speaker Series



The Department began our new speaker series with a talk coinciding with the 12th anniversary of 9/11. Professor Christopher C. Harmon, the Chair of Military Theory at the Marine Corps University, spoke on "Counterterrorism After bin Laden" and discussed his new book, "A Citizen's Guide to Terrorism and Counterterrorism." This book is part of the Routledge Press series Citizen Guides to Politics & Public Affairs, designed to provide clear and concise discussions of current political issues for American citizens. Harmon connected 9/11 to the longer history of American reactions to terror and successful attempts to destroy previous terror movements such as anarchism in the early 1900s.

Center for Public Opinion Launched

[UMass Lowell's Center for Public Opinion](#) was launched in 2011 with the objective of providing an academic-based, methodologically rigorous survey research center. The center asks questions of interest to the public community and supports academic research. Asst. Dean Frank Talty and Assoc. Prof. Joshua Dyck co-direct the center.

New Environment & Society Minor

Environment and Society is an interdisciplinary minor that provides students with analytical and communication skills, as well as the scientific foundation needed to work in areas such as environmental policy, sustainable development and environmental education. Courses explore climate change, sustainability, resource rights, law and regulation and the role of environmental issues in domestic and international conflicts. For more information, contact [Susan Gallagher@uml.edu](mailto:Susan_Gallagher@uml.edu).

Student and Faculty Collaborations

Tim Brunson and Prof. John Wooding are working together to analyze the 50 unpublished notebooks left by American pacifist and scholar Richard Bartlett Gregg (1885-1974). Gregg was the first American to study with Gandhi and the author of the influential "The Power of Non-Violence," which Martin Luther King said was the second most influential book he ever read. (The first was the Bible.) This collaboration will result in a biography of Gregg and his influence on the 20th-Century pacifist movement. Tim is also writing about Gregg's ideas on training for nonviolence and comparing it to his own experience as a military veteran.

Asst. Prof. Morgan Marietta and Todd Bowser are studying the polarization of fact perceptions within the American public. Todd is researching whether the prominent fact-checkers such as PolitiFact, FactCheck.Org, and the Fact Checker of the Washington Post display consensus or conflict about prevailing facts, or whether the experts on facts arrive at the same facts. Bowser and Marietta presented some of their findings at the Midwest Political Science Conference in April 2014.

Daniel Muise is assisting Prof. Ardeth Thawngmung with her book project on grassroots approaches to poverty alleviation in Myanmar and beyond. Daniel is a sophomore majoring in political science with minors in economics and mathematics. He's been an active member of the Honors College and was a founding member of the Honors Ambassadors. He has participated in the IRC's Edinburgh competition, and founded the UMass Lowell Chinese-English Language Club. He is a two-time Honors Co-op Scholar under Prof. Thawngmung, and will be interning as a research analyst in Myanmar this summer. He plans to carry this experience into a doctoral program focusing on developmental economics.

Recent Faculty Books



Deina Abdelkader: "Islamic Activists: The Anti-Enlightenment Democrats," Pluto Press 2011



Joshua Dyck: "Guide to State Politics and Policy," edited with Richard Niemi, CQ Press 2013



Morgan Marietta: "A Citizen's Guide to the Constitution & the Supreme Court: Constitutional Conflict in American Politics," Routledge Press 2013



Ardeth Thawngmung: "The 'Other' Karen in Myanmar: Ethnic Minorities and the Struggle Without Arms," Lexington Books, 2011



John Wooding: "Divided Conversations: Identities, Leadership, and Change in Public Higher Education," Vanderbilt University Press 2012



Jenifer Whitten-Woodring: "Historical Guide to World Media Freedom: A Country-by-Country Analysis" (with Doug Van Belle). CQ Press 2014

Department Endowment

Several endowed funds have been established to aid the Department in our teaching and scholarship. Any contributions to our endowments would greatly aid the work of the Department. [Contribute online.](#)

- **Dean's Discretionary Fund** provides discretionary support for the Department's programs.
- **Scholarship awards** aid students pursuing a degree in Political Science.
- **Coldwell Banker Cares International Peace Scholarship Fund** prepares undergraduate or graduate students for leadership roles in public service and diplomacy. The goal is to direct international peace and understanding between the U.S., the developed and developing nations of the world, with the purpose of fostering friendly relations among people of different nations and working to solve problems contributing to conflict.
- **Charles E. Goodell Endowed Scholarship Fund** awards scholarships to students pursuing a degree in Political Science.
- **Roger Cressey Endowment Fund** supports the Dean Bergeron Model UN Program

and provides scholarships to students who are interested in pursuing a career in government.

Surveys for Alumni and Students

Alumni, please help us strengthen our department by [answering this brief survey](#).

Students, please provide us with feedback on the Department's programs by [filling out this brief survey](#).



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