Challenges and opportunities.

The challenges that our department and our discipline have faced in recent years have been plenty, and have forced us to think about the opportunities that Political Science provides both for our students and for the state and nation that we serve. In 2011, Governor Scott openly questioned the value of a liberal arts degree in an economy that so desperately needs jobs growth. “You know, we don’t need a lot more anthropologists in the state. It’s a great degree if people want to get it, but we don’t need them here. I want to spend our dollars giving people science, technology, engineering, math degrees. That’s what our kids need to focus all their time and attention on. ... So when they get out of school, they can get a job.” While the governor used anthropology as a specific example, he was really questioning the value of all social science and liberal arts majors.

This year, Political Science was a specific target. In the continuing resolution that funded the federal government through September 2013, Congress drastically restricted National Science Foundation funding of Political Science research to only that which “promotes national security or the economic interests of the United States.” No other NSF program is similarly restricted, though scholars in other disciplines must wonder if theirs will be next.

In this issue of The Partisan, we try to answer the question about the value of a liberal arts and Political Science major through the lenses of two alumni, three of our professors, and a memorial to one of our alumni whose intellectual work has shaped both constitutional law and how we think about privacy in our daily lives.

Our survey of our graduating seniors this year confirmed what most of our alumni probably know already: Political Science is a gateway to multiple opportunities. Many of our newest alumni will be pursuing traditional paths for Political Science majors by attending prestigious law schools and a variety of graduate programs (Ph.D. programs in Political Science at Penn and at Duke, as well as Masters programs in Political Science, Public Administration, Public Health, Natural Resource Management, Counseling, International Relations, Women’s Studies, and Arabic and MidEast Studies). But many others will be interning or starting their careers with major corporations, Teach for America, our Armed Forces, interest groups, a US Embassy, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a think tank. In their interviews with The Partisan, Gordon Owens (a 1990 alumnus) and Melody Marcan (one of our newest alumni) explain how the global perspective and analytical skills in their Political Science major helped them to obtain and flourish in their positions as financial advisors.

Three of our professors, Larry Dodd, Michael Bernhard, and Ken Wald, remind us how the comparative method, which is endemic to so much of Political Science research, can help us see our own politics from different perspectives and methodological frames. Finally, Alan Westin’s memorial reminds us that our discipline addresses fundamental questions about the relationships that states have with their citizens.

So, yes, Governor Scott, we care about jobs, and our alumni are contributing to our society and economy in a variety of ways. We also fundamentally care about informing our citizens about how political institutions evolve and interact with civil society, both at home and abroad.

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue of The Partisan, and that you will keep in touch.
One abiding consequence of the financial crisis is that public universities are under constant pressure to provide measurable value added to graduates. While this increasingly takes the form of emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics ("STEM"), colleges of liberal arts and sciences continue to provide a broad-based education that stresses critical analytical thinking applicable across a range of professional paths. This year, we asked two Political Science alumni, in different stages of their finance careers, to reflect on how their training in the major prepared them for success. (Editor’s note: Gordon Owens also serves on the Department’s Board of Advisers.)

Are there specific skills that you took away from your coursework in political science that have benefited you?

The most valuable skills that I took away from my coursework at UF were analyzing global issues and effectively communicating those ideas to others. Understanding global events and how countries interact with each other and then applying the knowledge to the global financial markets have been paramount skills that I attained from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Governments and financial markets are interrelated and therefore, understanding the landscape of each country and certain country unions, whether it be formal or informal, have been very beneficial in better understanding the global financial markets.

How did you come to choose finance after pursuing a major many expect to lead to law school or government?

I had always had an interest in studying countries throughout the world as well as the global financial markets. After graduating from University of Florida and obtaining additional post graduate work, I found myself entering the field of finance at an International Advisory firm. I discovered that my background in Latin American politics was very helpful in understanding and directing assets in that part of the world. Back then, the connectivity of the world was not as pronounced as it is today so an intimate knowledge of each country was necessary and it gave me a significant advantage.

Do you see a need in your firm, or your profession, for a continued “supply” of political science/liberal arts training?

I do think there is a continued need for political science training. I feel it is critical to have a sound understanding of countries’ government, economics, currencies, natural resources, people and history. The ability to analyze current events on the global stage and have the background of understanding each country’s unique attributes helps to provide sound financial decisions.

How My Political Science Degree Helped Me Enter the Field of Finance

by Melody Marcan

People generally assume that political science majors only have two viable options after completing their undergraduate studies: to go to law school or to pursue a career in politics—which usually entails the completion of a Masters or Ph.D. program. For a long time, I falsely believed that these options were indeed my only ones. However, during my senior year, I realized that while studying political science, I have gained skills desired by many other industries—industries such as finance.

I recently accepted a position in the finance sector as an associate for a wealth management firm. My personal interest in finance and the skills I acquired during my study of political science constitute a solid basis for a successful career in the field. I realized that strong writing and communication skills, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills are extremely important for employers. Luckily, many political science professors stress the importance of strong writing and analytical thinking by assigning lengthy and complex papers. I was able to submit two of my papers to a conference and to a summer school in Europe at which I presented my research. These experiences allowed me to gain a solid foundation that will prove to be helpful in my career.

However, one class has been particularly rewarding: research methods in political science. In my research methods class, I learned how to create various statistical models and, most importantly, I learned how to analyze them. These analytical skills not only served as strong talking points on applications for academic awards, but they were also of interest during interviews. All in all, I feel equipped for a rewarding finance career, and I am looking forward to applying my skills in the professional world.
Our Eminent Scholars play a central role in building our curricular offerings at all levels. We asked three current PhD students to spend some time talking with our three Eminent Scholars about their research trajectories, thoughts on political science, and current activities.

Lawrence C. Dodd  
Manning J. Dauer Eminent Scholar

How would you characterize your career trajectory up to now?

I got my Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. My fields were comparative and theory fields, and I also had a lot of methods training. That program taught me to think theoretically and comparatively, even if you’re studying one country. There weren’t any professors in that department doing Congress; they were focused on comparative legislatures. My dissertation was comparative, applying game theory to the European Parliaments and looking at the determinants of Cabinet durability.

My first job was at the University of Texas. I had just finished the book based on my dissertation, and I received an APSA Congressional fellowship. I went to Congress in the midst of the 1970s reform era. What I observed on the Hill was what was perceived to be impossible by all of the theories at the time. That became the puzzle of my career, and has left me fascinated with issues of change and epistemology. We have lots of data on Congress, but not as much theory. There’s the questions of, what is the data telling us? How do you make sense of it? The core of my career has been focused on these questions. I’ve made an effort to drive a dynamic theory of Congressional change.

I’ve also been able to apply my research in a comparative context, working with Leslie Anderson on Nicaragua. I think like a theorist and see the world like a comparativist, which allows me to bring a different lens to Congressional research.

After I left the University of Texas, I worked at Indiana University and the University of Colorado. I came to UF in 1995.

What research are you working on now?

There’s a vacuum of congressional research on study of incivility and polarization, which is what my current research is focused on. I’m looking at those patterns in Congress from the 1800s to the present, trying to explain the interplay between the incivility of members, party polarization, and the passage of landmark legislation. I’m also continuing my work with Leslie Anderson on Nicaragua. We’re now studying municipal democracy there with data we gathered through an NSF grant and the Dauer chair funds.

I’m also now in a new role as the SPSA president, and I’ve enjoyed being able to give back, and highlight the South and its forward movement in political science.

What’s your vision for the building the graduate program at UF?

The Dauer chair gives me the opportunity to teach two graduate courses a year, and it has allowed me to make graduation education and mentoring my major focus, and to play a role in building the institutional program here. I love teaching Scope and Epistemologies. It was one of the reasons this department hired me. I created the course at Colorado in 1986 to help students understand the different perspectives of positivism and interpretivist approaches. I think it creates a climate of mutual patience and support in the department. I’m also committed to American Legislative Development and Empirical Theories of Politics. I see theory as the heart of politics.

We have one of the best designed doctoral programs in the county in the breadth of epistemological doctrines we introduce students to. Everyone gets some qualitative and quantitative training and some theory. That core foundation is what makes the vibrancy of this department; it discourages divisions among students and makes the department more collegial and forward-looking. It’s helped us do surprisingly well in terms of competing with other programs on completion rates and placement.

The challenge for us now is the financial crisis. The big problem is losing perspective. If we value this program and prioritize it and continue to take those actions that ensure our success in completion and placement, I think the university will reward us down the line. It’s a matter of staying the course. Now is not the time to lose faith in what we’re doing.
Kenneth D. Wald
Samuel R. “Bud” Shorstein Professor of American Jewish Culture & Society

You received your Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. I’m curious what about the program or professors there made an impression on you and your career?

What I liked about the department and what really prepared me for a career were a couple of things. One was that the department did not recognize fields. At a very early stage, I learned not to take fields too seriously, and I established a comfort level with doing work American for one week, but switching to a comparative project the next week. My dissertation was on British politics, but my chair was Bob Salisbury, an Americanist, and that was not unusual in the department. I think intellectually it prepared me for a career spanning some of the conventional divisions.

I went in during my second year to talk to Bob [Salisbury] and I told him, 'I don’t know exactly what I want to do, but I’m really interested in how religion affects politics and vice versa.' He said if that’s your passion then that’s what you should study, but there are three things you should keep in mind. First, you’re going to have to do something outside the US because religion is not really important in American politics. Secondly, I’d have to do something historical because religion wasn’t really important anywhere today. Third, nobody in the profession cared about religion so there would be no one reading my material. Years later, I realized that he was being supportive but trying to tell me this was a bad decision. When you look at the things I was doing, you would have predicted a disaster for me in terms of my career, and yet they funded me for a year of research abroad anyway.

What questions will your book on American Jewish behavior address?

We’re really trying to answer three main puzzles about Jewish political behavior in America. The first is that American Jews are, and have been since the New Deal, substantially more Democratic than the rest of the population. That’s particularly puzzling because Jews, in socio-economic terms, are much more affluent and much more educated than the general population. And when you compare Jews not just with the population, but with the equivalent population, their partisan and political attitude differences are massive. So the question is why? The second puzzle—and this is where I became more and more interested—is that this is not true for Jews in general. It is true for American Jews but not for Jewish communities in most other countries: Jews in Britain, South Africa, France, and elsewhere are not consistently to the left of the population. Then the third puzzle is that even though this generalization holds, there has been short term movement in American Jewish politics. In the late 60s through the 80s, Jews were moving discernibly to the right in America. They were still to the left of the population, but they were more likely to be voting Republican, and identifying as such, than had been the case before. Then suddenly, in the late 80s, they swing way back to the left and since ’92, Jewish support for the Democratic presidential candidates has been around 80% which is close to what it was back to the 40s and 50s.

“Judaic” explanations, which draw on something in the Jewish religious tradition to account for Jewish liberalism, can’t explain why this behavior is limited to American Jews or why Jews do show movement between liberalism or conservatism.

And finally, where would you like to see the graduate program head in the future?

We are facing some real problems now due to attrition. If we can get beyond that point, one of the things we are trying to do is develop religion and politics as one of the department’s specialty areas. We have three faculty—Phil Williams, Leo Villalón and I—who do this and others who have some interest in it. So, it would be great if we had some resources that could be dedicated specifically to that. I’d like us to maintain a strong program with a pluralistic emphasis, one that turns out students who can read the journals and be conversant with both the qualitative and quantitative research.
Michael Bernhard  
**Raymond and Miriam Ehrlich Eminent Scholar Chair**

**Could you tell me a few words about your career trajectory to the present?**

I defended my PhD at Columbia in 1988 and immediately got hired as an assistant professor at Penn State. I was at Penn State from 1988 to 2008 and worked my way up to the ranks from assistant professor to full professor. Then I moved to the UF in January 2009 after I was hired into the Ehrlich Chair.

**Let's talk a bit about your research. From what I know at the start of your career you were interested in Poland and spent some time there?**

Yes. My dissertation was on the pre-history of the Solidarity movement in Poland. I did a year of fieldwork there and extensive archival work looking at the underground publications of illegal democratic movements. Those served as a source material for my dissertation and my first book, the *Origins of Democratization in Poland*. In this period I also began working on one of the abiding questions of my career, the relationship between the civil society and democratization. After I got tenure, I worked on democratic survival coauthoring several papers with Christopher Reenock and Timothy Nordstrom, who were graduate students at Penn State at the time. Both are tenured professors now, Chris at Florida State and Tim at Mississippi. In addition, I've worked lately on the topic of democratic performance in Eastern Europe with Ekrem Karakoç, now assistant professor at SUNY-Binghamton, as well as with Rüçhan Kaya, who is a current UF graduate student.

I have looked at questions of democratization for most of my career. I spent a great deal of time in 1990s and 2000s working on the politics of constitution-writing in Germany and Poland for my book *Institutions and the Fate of Democracy*. Recently I've been engaged in the politics of memory, particularly looking at how interpretations of the past are used in contemporary politics. Jan Kubik of Rutgers and I just put together an edited volume called *Twenty Years After: The Commemoration of the End of Communism*. With several collaborators, including my UF colleagues Aida Hozić and Conor O'Dwyer, we look how governments and publics in seventeen East European democracies marked the 20th anniversary of the fall of Communism. Finally, a good bit of time is taken up by the Varieties of Democracy (V-dem) project, a truly global effort led by my UF colleague Staffan Lindberg. V-dem involves scholars from around the world and aims to create the most comprehensive dataset to date on democracy. When it is done it will include several hundred indicators on all countries in the world from 1900 to the present. That is over 20 million bits of data.

**So the last question concerns your vision for the graduate program building and the specific areas you support with the eminent scholar endowment.**

There was a pretty strong consensus among comparativists in the department for what is called a “multi-method” approach to comparative politics. In fact, that is one of the major reasons why I took this job. To train our graduate students we have taken a three-pronged approach. We encourage them to develop strong methodological skills that allow them to marshal convincing evidence for their arguments. And we make sure they develop both competence in an important substantive issue in the literature (e.g. democratization, nationalism, the state, social movements), as well as knowledge of a particular area of the world. Most of our students work on Europe, Africa, or Latin America.

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**In Memoriam: Alan Westin**

Alan Furman Westin, a political science undergraduate major and University of Florida graduate who went on to become the leading privacy expert in America, died Monday, February 18, 2013, at the age of 83. Westin, who was born in New York City October 11, 1929, went from UF directly into Harvard Law School at the age of 19, receiving his law degree in 1951. He married Bea Shapoff, a teacher, while practicing law in New York in the mid-1950s, and the couple had three children. By the end of that decade, he began teaching at Columbia University and earned his Ph.D. in political science, again from Harvard, in 1965.

Westin’s research consistently focused upon the issue of privacy, a subject of much debate in the mid-1960s, because of the controversial U.S. Supreme Court case, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965), in which Justice William O. Douglas, writing for the 7-2 majority, established that a right to privacy could be inferred in “penubras” emanating from
other constitutional protections in the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights. The Supreme Court subsequently extended the Griswold precedent in the landmark Roe v. Wade (410 U.S. 113, 1973) abortion decision.

What made Westin’s research on privacy distinctive and important is that it specifically engaged, well before their time, issues involving the relationship between technology and privacy. Westin’s foundational approach to privacy in this area essentially defined the terrain of public policy regarding the private information that corporations can gather and use in the computer age. He wrote Privacy and Freedom (Westin, 1967) in 1967, followed by Databanks in a Free Society (Westin and Baker, 1972), and these works became models for privacy legislation in America and other Western nations.

Said Jeffrey Rosen, a law professor at George Washington University, “He was the most important scholar of privacy since Louis Brandeis. He transformed the privacy debate by defining privacy as the ability to control how much about ourselves we reveal to others” (New York Times, 2/23/2013). Westin’s research was steeped in social history and persuasively engaged the philosophical basis of privacy in a democracy, staking out the claim that privacy essentially makes freedom possible. He then developed a pragmatic approach for balancing personal freedom against commercial interests and governmental authority.

Westin remained on the faculty at Columbia until his death, while also engaging in privacy-related outreach activities. His other research focused on the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. During the 1970s, he edited the Civil Liberties Review, a bimonthly publication of the American Civil Liberties Union, and in the 1990s he co-founded with Robert Blair (a Washington, DC, attorney) a non-profit research and consulting entity, Privacy and American Business, which operated until 2006.

In 2005, Westin received the Privacy Leadership Award of the International Association of Privacy Professionals, and, in 2012, he was a recipient of the first Louis D. Brandeis Privacy Award from Patient Privacy Rights. The current debates over issues of Internet and medical records privacy will certainly keep Alan Westin’s research legacy alive for years to come.


Faculty, Student, and Alumni Highlights

Faculty

- Staffan Lindberg and his Varieties of Democracy team received several grants, including a recent €475,000 (~$614,000) from the European Commission, and a SEK 6.8 million (~$1,023,000) grant from the Swedish Research Council.

- Katrina Schwartz received a $25,000 subcontract on an NSF Long-Term Ecological Research grant for the Florida Coastal Everglades.

- Amie Kreppel won a €100,000 (~$129,000) from the European Commission Life Long Learning Program for the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, and a €25,000 (~$32,000) grant from the same program for the European Union Studies Association.

- Leo Villalón won a $1.2 million three-year grant from the Department of Defense Minerva Initiative to support his research on “Political Reform, Socio-Political Change, and Stability in the African Sahel.”

- Bryon Moraski won a Fulbright Fellowship for research in the Ukraine in Spring 2014.

- Aida Hozic won a CLAS Advisor of the Year Award. Aida was instrumental in our initiation of Political Science Evenings this year.

- Larry Dodd began his term as President of the Southern Political Science Association, and also began a term on the American Political Science Review Editorial Board.
• Amie Kreppel just completed her term as President of the European Union Studies Association.

• Ken Wald began his term on the American Political Science Association Council.

• Staffan Lindberg was the Program Co-Chair for the 55th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association in Philadelphia in 2012.

• Laura Sjoberg continued as the homebase editor for the International Feminist Journal of Politics.

• Mike Scicchitano continued as editor of State and Local Government Review.

• Leo Villalón began his term as an editor of the Journal of Modern African Studies.

• The team of Ben Smith, Staffan Lindberg, Michael Bernhard, Kate Baldwin, Bryon Moraski, Conor O’Dwyer, Philip Williams, Petia Kostadinova, and Leo Villalón continues to edit the APSA-Comparative Democratization Newsletter.

• Laura Sjoberg won the campus-wide award for the Best Advisor from Student Organizations and Involvement for her work with the UF Mock Trial LitiGators.


• Ido Oren will succeed Michael Martinez as Department Chair in August 2013.

Graduate Students

• Jennifer Boylan received a 2012 Boren Fellowship and Nicholas Knowlton received a 2013 Boren Fellowship to conduct fieldwork in Africa.

• Victor M. Olivieri was awarded a fellowship by the Economic and Social Research Council to support his dissertation research in residence at the University of Edinburgh next year.

• Scott Feinstein won a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2013-14.

• Nicholas Knowlton received a 2013 Boren Fellowship to conduct field research in Ghana.

• Keith Weghorst won a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad grant to fund his field research in Tanzania and Zanzibar, and began a three-year research fellowship at Vanderbilt University.

• Evegenia Ilieva won a Graduate Student Teaching Award from the UF Graduate School.

Undergraduate Students and Alumni

• Patricia Posey and Juan Tellez were selected as APSA Minority Fellows for 2013-14. Patricia will join the PhD program in American politics at Penn, and Juan will join the Comparative Politics program at Duke.

• Danielle Feinstein (BA, 2010) won a 2012 Boren Fellowship.

• Breanne J. Palmer was selected for the Dr. Tsehloane C. Keto Student Leadership Development and Mentorship Program.

• LaChrista Douglas, was accepted to the Public Policy and International Affairs Fellowship Program at Princeton University.

• Sami Alsawaf was recognized as the Statewide Model Intern at the Office of Economic and Demographic Research in Tallahassee.

• Michael Givel (BA, 1976) was promoted to full professor of political science by The University of Oklahoma.

• Shelley Greenspan participated in the White House Internship program last fall.

• Diego Garcia, an undergraduate student who spoke at The Graham Center/ Poli Sci/LAS event about immigration reform published an op-ed piece with his story in Huffington Post.

• Devin Barrett, Kevin Bowie, and Manuel Machin participated in the 54th Air Force Academy Assembly in Colorado Springs.
Thank you to our alumni and friends for your support!

Through contributions from alumni and friends of the Department, we’ve been able to support student and faculty travel to academic and policy conferences, a dynamic speakers series, awards for our best student papers and theses, and student summer research and internship opportunities. As state revenues to the University decline, your support has become even more important in helping us maintain and expand the quality of our undergraduate and graduate academic programs.

We especially welcome contributions to our

- Political Science Fund (001039) for general undergraduate, graduate, and faculty support
- International Relations Fund (017507) supporting our International Relations Program
- Distinguished Professor Goran Hyden Fellowship Fund (014625) supporting student research in African politics.

Please send your investment in our program to

The University of Florida Foundation
P.O. Box 14425
Gainesville, FL 32604-2425

Or online at http://www.polisci.ufl.edu/alumni/supportpolisci.html