Becoming a Town Meeting Member

After years of studying politics and policy-making, and armed with some advice from Department faculty, PhD Candidate Chris Chanyasulkit ran for and won a position on Brookline’s Town Meeting this past spring.

I always thought that I might run for public office at some point, to understand the process firsthand while helping to better my community. This March, I dove into the political ring and pulled nomination forms from the Brookline Town Clerk’s office to run for a position as a town meeting member in my precinct. Town Meeting is Brookline’s Legislature and consists of 240 elected town meeting members, with five elected from each precinct every May.

After submitting my forms, I quickly realized that I needed to campaign. Having exactly zero campaign experience, I sought the advice of some experts. Professor Dukakis wisely told me that “there is no mystery to the Town Meeting process. Ring the doorbell of every voting household in your precinct, and stand in front of the polling place all day long on election day.”

With the assistance of several undergraduate interns and many friends, over the next two months, we leafleted my entire precinct, did mailings, and went door-to-door trying to meet every person. I also attended a number of candidate events. In one week, I attended a number of candidate events. In one week, I attended a number of candidate events.

Speaker DeLeo and Students Honored at Annual Recognition Dinner

On April 17, the Department sponsored the annual Political Science Recognition Dinner. A number of students were recognized for their accomplishments, and the Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Robert A. DeLeo (D-Winthrop), delivered the keynote speech and was awarded the Department’s Distinguished Service Award.

State Representative DeLeo has represented the 19th Suffolk District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives since 1991. He became Speaker of the House on January 28, 2009, and since then he has concentrated on ethics, transportation and pension reforms.

Representative DeLeo received his bachelor’s degree from Northeastern as a political science major in 1972. During his keynote speech, he noted that Northeastern’s commitment to experiential education and his co-op experiences are what led him into a career in politics. He then thanked his family, including his son, Robert DeLeo, Jr., who recently received his MPA from Northeastern and now continues as a PhD student in the Department of Political Science.

During the evening, awards were also presented to two exceptional seniors: Rachel J. Anemone as the Outstanding Senior in Experiential Education and Sonja R. Yuhas Cove as the Outstanding Senior in Political Science. In the annual Best Paper Award contest, four students received awards: graduate students Hans Eijmberts and Robert DeLeo, Jr. and undergraduates Brendan Cahalin and Stefan T. Kaluziak, Jr. Additionally, thirty-four undergraduate students and seven graduate students were inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society.
Note from the Chair. . .

This was a busy spring in the Department of Political Science. In this newsletter you can read about some of the events and happenings in the Department over the last six months. The annual Presidents’ Day lecture brought former Boston Globe editor and presidential scholar David Shribman to campus (see below), and our annual Recognition Dinner featured the new speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Robert DeLeo (see cover). This spring also concluded the review and approval process for the renaming and restructuring of our doctoral program, from the PhD in Public and International Affairs to a PhD in Political Science (see page 3).

To our alumni, I hope you enjoy reading about the latest news from the Department. We conducted an on-line alumni survey this spring and heard from 120 of you (see page 7). We appreciate your comments and suggestions. We look forward to hearing more from you. Please drop us a note or come by if you are in the area. In addition, I hope you will consider supporting the activities of the Department. At the end of this newsletter is a section focused on charitable giving opportunities. Your support is much appreciated. Best wishes for the summer.

John Portz,
Professor and Chair

Highlights from Our Spring 2009 Events

Presidents’ Day Speaker
On February 18, 2009 David Shribman gave the annual Presidents’ Day talk. David Shribman is the Executive Editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and former Washington Bureau Chief for the Boston Globe. Mr. Shribman discussed the origin of Presidents’ Day as a celebration of the birthdays of Presidents Washington and Lincoln. He then applied several key lessons of their presidencies to the challenges facing newly-elected President Obama.

Spring Commencement
Northeastern University celebrated its spring commencement on Friday May 1, 2009. This included students who completed their studies in January or May, and students planning to complete their studies after this summer. From the Political Science Department, 93 bachelor’s degrees were awarded in the morning undergraduate ceremony, followed in the afternoon by sixteen Master of Arts recipients, six Master of Public Administration degrees, and three Doctor of Philosophy degrees. We offer special congratulations to the three students who completed their PhD in Public and International Affairs: Joseph Coelho, Kaitlyn Kenney Walsh, and Robyn Olson.

Most Department sponsored events are open to alumni. Please watch our website for dates and locations.

Faculty and Students Well Received at Spring Research Expo

Political Science students and faculty had the highest turn-out of any social science department participating in Northeastern University’s Research Expo on March 26, 2009.

First, PhD candidate, Kristen Hudak’s poster, “Political Institutions & Grassroots Development: The Political Economy of Microfinance,” was recognized as the best graduate student poster in the category of Social Sciences, Business and Law. Kristen was presented with a certificate by Provost Stephen Director and we plan to frame her poster for viewing in the Department.

Professor Kirsten Rodine Hardy presented a poster titled, “Globalization and Liberal Telecom Reform.” Her research assistant, Beth Boorman, undergraduate political science major, helped Professor Rodine Hardy in preparing the poster.

MPA student, Caitlin McAllister and Professor Christopher Bosso presented a poster titled “Local Government and Conditions of Uncertainty: Cambridge and the Regulation of Nanomaterials.”

PhD candidate Hans Eijmberts and Professor W.D. Kay’s poster was titled “Nuclear Lessons for Nanotechnology: How Governments May Handle Emerging Technologies by Learning from the Past.”

Professor Denise Garcia — along with Political Science and International Affairs undergraduate students, Richard McLaws, Suzana Loureiro, Emily Turner, Briana Keene, and Jessica Robinson — presented a poster titled “The International Arms Trade.”

Finally, Professor Denise Horn from the International Affairs program presented a poster titled, “The King and I: Nationalist Projects and the Manipulation of Civil Society.”

To learn more about these research projects and the Northeastern University Research Expo, please visit, www.expo.neu.edu.
PhD in Political Science

After more than a year of planning and discussions, the Department is pleased to launch the new PhD in Political Science this fall. Northeastern’s Board of Trustees gave final approval in May, and the curriculum is in place for the coming academic year. The PhD in Political Science replaces our PhD in Public and International Affairs, launched in 1997. The new program is structured to reflect major fields in the discipline of political science and a renewed effort to attract students from the domestic politics side to complement the already strong interest shown by students interested in international and comparative politics. Otherwise, it provides many of the same features and strengths of the original program. For example, public policy remains an important element in the program, and we will continue to serve students interested in academic careers as well as research and practice.

The new PhD has four fields of study: international relations, comparative politics, public policy, and American government and politics. Students complete the core seminar in each field. They also identify a primary field and secondary field as areas of emphasis. Students may develop a traditional academic focus, or they may highlight a policy orientation through the public policy field. For more information, visit our website at www.polisci.neu.edu.

Community-Based Research Initiative

Since 2002, the Department has offered an experiential learning course called the Community-Based Research Initiative (CBRI). Spearheaded by Professor David Rochefort, the CBRI class offers students the opportunity to work together with a Greater Boston area partner—often a non-profit or advocacy organization—on a research topic that is of importance to the community. Each class culminates in a published report that includes the core findings of the research group along with a series of recommendations designed to meet a public need.

In 2007, the initiative gained external grant support from the National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative funded by Learn & Serve America/The Corporation for National and Community Service. As part of this national network, a Northeastern team including Professor Rochefort, James Stellar, former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and PhD students Robert DeLeo, Jr. and Kevin Donnelly were asked to present their experiences and perspectives with regard to community-based research at the annual grantee conference, held April 18-19, 2009 in Princeton, New Jersey.

To kick off the conference, Dr. Stellar spoke on a distinguished panel titled “Sustaining and Valuing CBRI in the Academy.” The following day, Professor Rochefort shared his wealth of community-based research experience on a panel titled “Linking CBRI to Policy Outcomes.” Kevin Donnelly and Robert DeLeo, Jr., both of whom directed their own CBRI courses, shared their unique experiences on a panel titled “Designing and Implementing CBRI Projects and Courses.” In addition to offering three very different perspectives, these panel presentations solidified Northeastern’s prominent role at this year’s meeting. More importantly, each participant learned important information related to community-based research that they have brought back to share with the Northeastern community.

For more information about CBRI and to view the growing volume of CBRI reports, please visit www.cbri.neu.edu.

-Kevin Donnelly (PhD Candidate)
**Northeastern’s UNA Continues Growth through Another Year**

The United Nations Association of Northeastern (UNA) took home several awards this past year while participating in intercollegiate competitive Model United Nations and Model Arab League simulations. Additionally, they hosted a number of successful conferences and events on campus.

The UNA, in conjunction with the Model United Nations class taught by UNA Advisor Dr. Philip D’Agati during the fall semester, fielded one of its largest delegations ever for the prestigious Harvard National Model United Nations Conference. Also in the fall, Northeastern took home eight individual awards, as well as Outstanding Delegation, during its first year of participation in the Boston Area Regional Model United Nations at Boston University.

In November, the UNA hosted the Northeast Regional Model Arab League Conference. In addition to preparing, hosting, and providing almost all the staff for this conference, the UNA also claimed success as delegates, receiving an Outstanding Delegation award for its performance.

In the spring, through its Model Arab League (MAL) class, the UNA continued to build upon Northeastern’s strong national reputation in the MAL program, taking on the role of delegates from the Republic of Iraq in the simulated debates of the League of Arab States. The team received an Outstanding Delegation award for its second-place finish at the highly competitive Southeast Regional Model Arab League on March 13-15.

Two weeks later, Northeastern’s MAL team brought 28 representatives, the largest team in its history, to the National University Model Arab League (NUMAL) in Washington, DC. Overall, Northeastern’s team placed third out of 23 teams at NUMAL this year.

Beyond its participation in intercollegiate models, the UNA also engaged with high schools and middle schools in the Boston area through a partnership with the United Nations Association of Greater Boston. (See page 6.) During the 2008-2009 year, the UNA brought over 600 high school and middle school students to campus for Model UN simulations, and UNA members went into the community to work directly with students in Boston Public Schools.

-Matt Cournoyer (Executive Vice President of UNA)

**Presidential Scholar Heads to White House**

“**W**hen people ask me what my major is, I tell them, ‘It’s African-American studies and politics,’” said junior Jordan Clark. “So basically, it’s Barack Obama.”

As of May 22, the presidential scholar has continued his studies right next to the Oval Office working as an intern in the communications department. Clark learned on April 24 that of 6,000 applicants to the White House summer internship program, he was among the few chosen for the job. When anticipating his new position in the communications office, Clark wasn’t just eager. He was overjoyed.

“I’ve been following Barack Obama since ’04 when somebody told me there was a black senator. I was quickly just amazed by him. I read his book and found him to be a real inspiration,” Clark said. “My mother is white and my father is black, and I just saw parallels with President Obama’s life.”

As soon as Obama got into office, Clark made it his goal to obtain an internship. He put the White House internship Web page up as his homepage and got to work writing the three required essays of application.

“I think I spent 25 or 30 hours working on them,” he said. “I’ve been dreaming about this job.”

Although he wasn’t sure what his exact role in the communications office would be, if he could help to get Barack Obama’s message out, he’d be eager to do it.

Throughout his studies at Northeastern, African-American Studies Professors Robert Hall and Kwamina Panford have inspired Clark to seize opportunities that have come his way. When Clark learned of the White House internship program through his affiliation with the Washington, DC-based Institute for Responsible Citizenship, a leadership program for high-achieving African-American men, he seized his chance. It was also through this organization that Clark earned an internship last year in Sen. Edward M. Kennedy’s office.

Before starting his internship, Clark travelled to St. Croix with the Dialogue of Civilizations program to study the region’s native music. From there, he travelled to Washington to begin the experience of a lifetime.

“This is really like a dream come true,” he said.

-Susan Salk (Senior Writer, Marketing & Communications)
A Sabbatical Amidst Rockets

The following is an excerpt from an article originally published in The Chronicle Review, written this January by Professor William Miles, while on sabbatical conducting research in Beersheba, Israel.

Forty-eight hours after I arrived here to conduct research as part of my sabbatical, this gateway city to Israel’s Negev Desert was hit with rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. This was not part of my sabbatical proposal. When the sirens went off, I had no idea what to do while on the 10th floor in my host university’s apartment building. By the time I mentally processed the alternatives, the missile had already hit.

I was soon to learn about “duck and cover,” something I hadn’t practiced since I was in elementary school during the height of the Cold War. Each floor of the building has its own shelter. “You must act according to the following directions within 15 seconds,” instructs the leaflet titled, Directions for Behavior During Rocket Fire that the Home Front Command had thoughtfully slipped under my apartment door after days of attacks.

In the shelters, you learn to listen for different sounds. Gadi, an army paramedic and the son of a high-school friend, alerts me to the sound of an overhead helicopter. “When you hear that,” he explains, “it means they’re heading for the hospital and carrying either traffic-accident casualties or wounded soldiers. These days, it’s probably soldiers from Gaza.” Since then, I have been hearing helicopters.

Gadi’s sister, Chava, inadvertently changed my future policy toward late submissions of student papers. When classes had been canceled, I offered her a ride to her kibbutz home. She demurred: “I’ve got to hand in my paper. It’s due today, and I’m not sure if the professor will accept it late.” Rockets rain down on her city, but Chava insists on handing in her assignment on time. It will take extremely creative excuses from procrastinating students to top that.

The next day I was on an unfamiliar floor of the university’s humanities-and-social-sciences building when the sirens went off. Only then did I realize that I had no idea where to go. The boom that finally came was the loudest I had heard yet. Lesson: The first thing you do when venturing to another floor within the university is to locate the nearest bomb shelter.

The rockets come at any time, even while sleeping. Why had I assumed that even rocket launchers go to sleep at a decent hour? Rushing from slumber to shelter requires another level of skill. Lesson: In times of rocket attacks, disregard the usual advice to lock your apartment door at night. It’s not worth the fraction of a nocturnal second fumbling to unlock it.

Although I am a political scientist, I intend neither political analysis nor opinion by this harried account. As a visiting academic, I try to maintain a sense of detachment and objectivity, even as I adjust my research agenda to periodic, random shelling that has emptied schools — a primary arena of my research into border pedagogy.

So, politics aside, one tries to go on. In fact, between attacks, life here is quite ordinary. You do not spend the entire day covering in a shelter, waiting for the next shelling to occur. I shall soon leave my 10th-floor co-coon and take the 15-minute amble to my office.

-Professor William Miles

Two new faculty members will join the Department this fall. First, David Lazer joins the Department as an associate professor with a joint appointment in the College of Computer and Information Sciences. Professor Lazer is an outstanding scholar in network analysis with research focusing on the role that networks and other information technologies play in shaping politics and policy. Professor Lazer received a PhD in Political Science from the University of Michigan.

Tom Vicino joins the Department as an assistant professor. His area of expertise is urban and suburban politics and policy. He will teach several courses in that area along with courses in public policy. He comes to us most recently from Wheaton College. He received a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Faculty Updates

Professor Minton Goldman presented two papers over the summer. One was at the annual meeting of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America in Jersey City, and the other was at the annual meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology in Dublin. Professor Goldman’s new book, Rivalry in Eurasia: Russia, the United States, and the War on Terrorism is due out in early August.

Professor Robert Gilbert was appointed Edward W. Brooke Professor of Political Science, effective July 1, 2009.

Professor Ronald Hedlund and Kevin Coombs (PhD Candidate), along with Nancy Martorano and Keith E. Hamm have published an article titled “Partisan Stacking on Legislative Committees” in the May 2009 edition of Legislative Studies Quarterly.

Professor William Mayer was approved for promotion to full professor by the university this spring. Mayer joined the Department in 1991 after receiving his PhD from Harvard University. He is an expert in campaigns and elections, with a recent focus on the presidential nomination process. His most recent books are two edited volumes, The Swing Voter in American Politics and The Making of the Presidential Candidates.

Professor Eileen McDonagh completed a book on women and leadership. In The Motherless State: Women’s Political Leadership and American Democracy (University of Chicago Press, 2009), Professor McDonagh explores the reasons why the United States lags far behind other countries in the participation of women in leadership roles in national politics.

Professors Robert Gilbert, Ronald Hedlund, Eileen McDonagh, Suzanne Ogden and Michael Tolley made presentations at the International Political Science Association Conference in Santiago, Chile in July 2009. Professor Ogden was joined by PhD candidate Chow Bing Ngeow.

Department Welcomes Two New Faculty
Career Choices for Political Science Seniors

Once again, it looks like the legal profession is the most preferred occupation for graduating Political Science seniors. During the year, 85 of our 100 graduating seniors completed a survey about their experience at Northeastern and their future plans. When asked – “What do you see as your probable career occupation?”—35 of the 85 seniors checked “lawyer” as their number one priority. The box at the right lists the top occupational preferences. Interestingly, most seniors do not see their academic careers ending with a bachelor’s degree. When asked – “What is the highest academic degree you intend to obtain?” – 81 of the 85 students responding to the survey noted a higher degree: 37 students hoped to earn a law degree, 32 students planned to earn a master’s degree, and 9 students set their sights on a PhD.

In a pattern similar to last year, however, most students will work for a year before pursuing their academic goals. Sixty-one of the 85 students plan to work in the year after graduation. Yet, of those planning to work, 42 (70%) have alternative plans for the following year. Specifically, 22 students hope to attend graduate school and 18 plan to attend law school. Whether for personal or financial reasons, many graduating seniors take a year ‘off’ from academic plans to work.

2008-2009 Grant and Scholarship Awards

This past semester we made special awards to both exceptional undergraduate and graduate students to aid them in research and experiential learning.

**Michael & Charlotte Baer Scholarship**

The Baer Scholarship Fund was established in 1994 by then-Provost Michael Baer to provide support for undergraduate students engaged in study or work abroad. In the spring, a total of $2,500 was distributed to thirteen students who sought support for their study or work abroad activities.

**Graduate Student Scholarship Fund**

Each spring, the Department awards a small number of PhD or Masters level students with grants of up to $2,500 to assist them in expenses related to research for their dissertations or thesis work. This year, awards were made to three PhD students: Kevin Donnelly, who is conducting a public opinion poll on health care reform; Kristen Hudak, who is doing her dissertation fieldwork on the development of micro-finance policies in Sri Lanka and Nepal; and Marketa Valencia, who is studying foreign aid policies in Central and Eastern Europe.

Please see page 7 for information on how you can help us continue to offer these types of opportunities to our students.

My Internship with the UNA of Greater Boston

On May 15 and 16, Northeastern University hosted the United Nations Association of Greater Boston’s (UNA-GB) 2009 Regional Model United Nations (MUN) Conference, attended by nearly four hundred high school students from across New England. The students used their skills in diplomacy and knowledge of world events to debate and find solutions to global issues such as regional terrorism in Latin America, climate change, malnutrition and food aid, child soldiers, micro-financing, and the changing age structures of populations.

As an international student, it was a great opportunity for me to see American students discussing world issues through the perspective of other countries. Since international politics has an influential role in the interaction and reconciliation of people of different cultures, nations and countries, it is very important to learn at a young age that international communication is a key to future world peace. Throughout the debates, the students observed the significance of the United Nations in highlighting the need to have a better understanding of the world and its people.

Interning in the Global Classrooms Program of UNA-GB this past semester allowed me to teach current international issues to children and prepare them to participate in the MUN conferences. I collaborated with teachers and middle and high school students in the Boston area, particularly with Boston Public Schools, and coached students on research, writing, and public speaking skills prior to the Conference. As a vice chair of a committee in the UNA-GB Regional MUN Conference, I moderated the debate to ensure that students were following the debate rules and providing useful recommendations.

I was glad to witness the high school students’ eagerness and enthusiasm for politics. I am also proud of how the Northeastern administration responds, supports and allocates its resources to the UNA-GB’s annual MUN conferences in order to promote youth development.

-Cansu Uysalel (MA Student)
Running for Town Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

attended the League of Women Voters Candidates Night at the Brookline Town Hall, the League of Women Voters Candidates Afternoon at the Brookline Senior Center, the Salisbury Road-Corey Farm Neighborhood Association Candidates’ event, and the Historic Chestnut Hill Neighborhood Association Candidates forum. I spent mornings standing outside the elementary schools in my precinct reminding parents and other adults to vote on May 5th. I walked around town (giving me lots of exercise), made many new friends, and most importantly, I was able to hear the thoughts and opinions of residents and neighbors on the various issues confronting Brookline.

Finally, election day came, but brought with it lots of cold, wind, and rain. I was determined to follow Dukakis’s advice to stand in front of the polling place all day. I dressed in layers and was armed with my polling cards and an umbrella. In 13 hours, I only left the poll twice, once to vote and once to change my water logged pants. Thankfully, my friends and interns also came out to help me at the polls and to hold “Vote Chris” signs.

When other candidates asked when I would leave the polls for food, I responded that I wasn’t planning to do so. In the end, it proved important that I was able to stand at the polls all day and that I went door to door, as I firmly believe that this made all the difference. I tied for 3rd place and those who lost did so by only a handful of votes.

With this new responsibility as Town Meeting member, I hope to be thoughtful in my evaluation of proposals before Town Meeting and I believe that I will bring a different perspective because of my public health, political science, and education background. In looking back on my campaign, I realize that regardless of winning or losing, it was a great experience for the first-hand knowledge of campaigning that I have gained and the many friendships that I have made.

-Chris Chanyasukit (PhD Candidate)

Graduate Alumni Survey

This past spring, the Department conducted an online survey of alumni from its three graduate programs. Out of approximately 300 alumni for whom we had e-mails, we had 120 respondents: 78 MPA alumni, 42 alumni from our MA program, and four PhD alumni. Graduation dates for these respondents ranged from the late 1960s through this past year. Additionally, much like our programs today, there was a relatively even split of full and part-time students.

We were also very glad to learn over 90 percent of respondents were working full-time, part-time by choice, or were retired. Seventeen percent of respondents currently work with or for the federal government; however, state government, education, and self-employment were also well-represented.

Finally, the majority of our graduate alumni have worked for their current employers for more than five years, with over a third having worked for their current employers for at least ten years.

We want to encourage all alumni of the Department, graduate and undergraduate, to remain connected with us and Northeastern. Please view the contact information on the right and visit our website often for upcoming events and news.

Help Support Political Science

Your gift will help continue and expand many of the activities that are featured in this newsletter.

Please send contributions to:

The Northeastern Fund
461 Columbus Place
Northeastern University
360 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02115

or on-line at northeastern.edu/giveonline.

You may designate your contribution for a particular purpose, or you may leave a discretionary gift to the Department by selecting other and typing in the Department of Political Science. Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law.

If you would like to discuss giving opportunities in more detail, contact Evan Gallivan, Development Officer at 617.373.6066 or e.gallivan@neu.edu.

Alumni News


Joel Gagne (BS 1996) has been involved in political campaigns for over 20 years and has worked in more than 30 states as part of his political work. This includes co-op work with the Irish Parliament, US Congress, and the White House Office of Presidential Scheduling and Advance. It also includes serving as an elected School Board Member from Hull, MA. After graduating from Northeastern, Joel attended Harvard University for graduate studies.

Jeff Pearlman (MA 1973) recently retired after teaching in public schools for 36 years. However, he continues to teach on a part-time basis at Salem State College and Bunker Hill Community College. He also lectures on cruise ships about the culture, history, and governments of the ports of call. As he notes, “Northeastern has prepared me well for the gathering of research and presentation skills.” He also notes “great memories of classes taken with Professor Bob Cord.”

• Alumni -- Keep in Touch!

Send us your news by e-mail to polisci@neu.edu and for more information on the activities and updates from our alumni, visit us online at www.polisci.neu.edu/alumni.
Open Classroom Series Continues in Fall 2009

The 21st Century City: Opportunities and Challenges Facing Urban Communities

This series is free to the public and will be held on Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 PM throughout the coming semester. For more information or to reserve a spot for any night please visit:

www.policyschool.neu.edu/education/graduate/seminar_series/

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