



The Department of Political Science

ALUMNI NEWSWIRE

2024

MOAS/MUN

Model student governments have another successful year.

Discourse in Democracy

Panel events, guest speakers, and student engagement.

Alumni Report

Check in with some of our distinguished graduates.

TXST
POLI
2023
2024

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ALUMNI NEWSWIRE

Annual magazine for the Texas State
Political Science program.

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MOAS MUN

ESMOAS 2023

Texas State University students participated in the 27th Annual Eugene Scassa Mock Organization of American States (ESMOAS) competition at Baylor University, November 10–12. 120 students from throughout the area competed, including Baylor University, Angelo State University, St. Mary's University, and the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Representing the nations of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia, Texas State fielded a twenty-three-member delegation that competed in ESMOAS's Summit of Americas competition.

- Madison Buchanan, Simon Kinski, Jose Rios, and Reme Okasheh represented **Team Bolivia**.
- Cadi Powers, Braiden Touchette, Lillian Martinez, Blaire Curley, and Amber Gulamhusein represented **Team Peru**.
- Gabbie Lindsay, Juliet Cano, Justin Williams, Ethan Guinn, Jorge Tamayo, and Alliyah Valera represented **Team Ecuador**.
- Sandra Trujillo, Emily Morgan, Matthew Koi, Austin White, and Tommey Morris represented **Team Columbia**.

Tay Williams, Ornella Fantoni, and Austin Mata were part of the student officer group for the ESMOAS competition.

Debating a host of topics, ranging from producing plans for sustainable cities to creating plans for confronting cybercrimes, Texas State students were able to gain skills and experiences that will benefit their future endeavors. Capping the overall experience, junior Political Science major, Gabbie Lindsay said, "I'm glad I was able to return to Waco for the Summit of the Americas. I had such an amazing time competing and debating and can't wait for next year."

Continuing its ongoing tradition, Texas State students won numerous awards. Highlights included Team Ecuador winning Distinguished Delegation; Ornella Fantoni winning the Outstanding Chair Award; Ethan Guinn winning the special Stegall & Frederick Diplomacy Award; Austin Mata winning the Award for Parliamentary Master; and Cadi Powers being elected Secretary General for the 28th ESMOAS competition next fall.



Of her election, Powers, a sophomore Political Science major and president of Texas State's Model Organization of American States student group, commented that "competing at the ESMOAS Summit of the Americas offered our team the opportunity to enhance our political communication skills, while networking with students from other universities. I'm excited for the upcoming year serving as the ESMOAS Secretary General."

TXST STUDENT HONORS & AWARDS:

AUSTIN WHITE Selected to the Student Advisory Committee	JUSTIN WILLIAMS Distinguished Delegate, Secretariat for Multidimensional Security
TAY WILLIAMS Served as President of the 27th ESMOAS & Chair of the General Committee	JULIET CANO Outstanding Delegate, Committee on Juridicial and Political Affairs
ORNELA FANTONI Served as Chair of the Exec. Secretariat for Integral Development	GABBIE LINDSAY Outstanding Delegate, General Committee
AUSTIN MATA Served as Assistant Secretary General	MADISON BUCHANAN Distinguished Delegate, General Committee
AUSTIN MATA Served as Rapporteur of the Exec. Secretariat for Integral Development	ORNELLA FANTONI Outstanding Chair
REME OKASHEH Distinguished Resolution, Secretariat for Multidimensional Security.	AUSTIN MATA Award for Parliamentary Mastery
SIMON KINSKI Recognized Resolution, Exec. Secretariat for Integral Development	ETHAN GUINN Stegall & Frederick Diplomacy Award
	TOMMEY MORRIS Distinguished Delegate, Exec. Secretariat for Integral Development
TEAM ECUADOR Distinguished Delegation	

MOAS & MUN MEET WITH PRESIDENT DAMPHOUSSE

Texas State President Kelly Damphousse visited the department on January 22nd to meet with the Model United Nations (MUN) and Model Organization of American States (MOAS) students. After a discussion of the awards won by the respective teams and individual students at competitions in 2023, the conversation explored the benefits that students can receive from participating (such as the development of diplomatic and leadership skills). President Damphousse thanked the students and spoke about how activities like this contribute to the overall success of the university.

The following students attended the meeting with President Damphousse: Sarah Benitz, Madison Buchanan, Isabel Durate, Zack Estrada, Maddie Gau, Mike Grubbs, Ethan Guinn, Emily Hanna, Sofia Hernandez, Simon Kinski, Robert Mancha, Lillian Martinez, Reme Okasheh, Cadi Powers, Thiago Rocha Leite, Nolan Ruhland, Isabella Snyder, Jorge Tamayo, Braiden Touchette, Sandra Trujillo, Justin Williams, and Austin Wright.

SRMUN 2024

More than two dozen Texas State students participated in the Southern Regional Model United Nations (SRMUN) competition held March 20–24 in Charlotte, NC. At the SRMUN competition, students debated numerous global topics ranging from combating the illicit trade of cultural artifacts and property to ensuring the accessibility and sustainability of urban transportation.



Approximately 600 students, comprising 85 delegations from 45 universities competed in the SRMUN competition. Participating universities included the University of Kentucky, Auburn University, North Carolina State University, Georgia Tech, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Appalachian State University. Texas State students represented the nations of the Italian Republic, the Republic of Peru, the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, and the Republic of Bulgaria at SRMUN. Representing **Italy** were Cadi Powers, Madison Buchanan, Reme Okasheh, Simon Kinski, Ethan Guinn, Gabbie Lindsay, and Sofia Hernandez. **Peru** was represented by Mike Grubbs, Robet Mancha, Sarah Benitz, Jorge Tamayo, Isabella Snyder, Emily Hanna, and Justin Williams. Meanwhile, Sandra Trujillo, Zoe Williams, Amber Gulamhusein, Thiago Rocha Leite, and Isabel Durate represented **Bulgaria**. Finally, Maddie Gau, Preston Love, Austin Wright, Nolan Ruhland, Braiden Touchette, Lillian Martinez, and Zack Estrada represented **Bangladesh**.

Texas State students, once again, performed extremely well at SRMUN. Highlighting our students’ accomplishments, the delegation representing Team Italy won Outstanding Delegation (1st Place Overall). This marks the seventh SRMUN competition in a row that Texas State has had at least one delegation placing in the top three, with Texas State delegations finishing in first place in five of the last seven SRMUN competitions. Capping off her experience



at SRMUN, Lillian Martinez, Texas State political science sophomore, said, “The SRMUN competition was a fantastic opportunity that helped me gain more exposure to the diplomatic process and pushed me to come up with speeches faster in the committees, ultimately making me gain more confidence in writing and speaking to persuade others.” Another political science sophomore, Braiden Touchette, commented that “SRMUN emphasized the importance of collaboration to cultivate unconventional and comprehensive solutions. It showed me how to lead a room towards innovative solutions, enhancing my confidence in delivering timely persuasive and provocative speeches.”

TXST STUDENT HONORS & AWARDS:

GABBIE LINDSAY & SOFIA HERNANDEZ Best Delegate, Commission on Narcotic Drugs
ETHAN GUINN & SIMON KINSKI Best Delegate, UN Habitat Assembly Outstanding Position Paper, UN Habitat Assembly
TEAM ITALY: GABBIE LINDSAY, SOFIA HERNANDEZ, CADI POWERS, REME OKASHEH, ETHAN GUINN, SIMON KINSKI, & MADISON BUCHANAN Outstanding Delegation

The Model United Nations (MUN) is an academic organization through which students learn how the United Nations operates by competing in student debate competitions, such as the Harvard National Model United Nations. In MUN, students study parliamentary debate, diplomacy, and current global issues.

DISCOURSE IN DEMOCRACY

FACULTY PANEL

On October 3, more than 70 students, faculty, and staff attended a faculty panel sponsored by Discourse in Democracy on “International Security and U.S. Foreign Policy: Challenges and Opportunities in a Campaign Year.” The event featured five political science professors — Drs. Ionut Popescu, Edward Mihalkanin, Thomas Doyle, Franziska Newell, and Suzanne Sternthal.

The speakers addressed a wide range of topics. Dr. Popescu argued that the next President must adopt a realist foreign policy laser-focused on containing China’s efforts to remake the world order and to dethrone the United States from its superpower status. Dr. Doyle’s remarks emphasized the continuities of U.S. foreign policy on matters of international security from the Obama administration through the Trump administration and into the first Biden term. Dr. Boehme-Newell spoke about polarization among American elites and the public and how this now manifests itself also in foreign policy.

Dr. Sternthal’s comments focused on the war in Ukraine, arguing that Putin’s war is not about countering NATO expansion, but about preventing Slavic Ukraine from joining the EU, which would provide a prosperous and democratic alternative to his regime. Dr. Mihalkanin spoke about three major challenges facing U.S. foreign policy: Hyper-partisanship, the radicalization of some Congressional Republicans, and climate change.

The event concluded with a lively question-and-answer session, where the students and faculty in the audience asked for the experts’ views on other topics, including national security, the Ukraine-Russia war, and the possibilities of a nuclear exchange.





JUDGE RAMOS

On April 4th, more than 80 students attended a talk by a distinguished alumna of Texas State: United States District Court Judge for the Southern District of Texas, Nelva Gonzalez Ramos. Born in Port Lavaca, Texas, Judge Ramos attended Texas State as an undergraduate and went on to graduate from the university's Legal Studies Program before attending law school at the University of Texas at Austin. Titled "From TXST to the Federal Judiciary," Ramos' presentation dealt with her undergraduate experiences at Texas State and her later experiences at law school, her work as an attorney and as a judge at the state and local level, and experiences as federal district court judge.

The floor was then opened for students to ask questions. Judge Ramos answered several questions ranging across personal experiences, the election process, interesting cases, her adjustment from state to federal court, methods to judge cases, the process of writing an opinion, and the Texas State classes that helped prepare for her career.

The event was followed by a dinner attended by fifteen students and faculty. This dinner provided an opportunity for students to talk with Judge Ramos individually and ask her further questions.

Zoie Sanders, an undergraduate political science major who attended the event, said that Judge Ramos was, "an inspiring, informative example of a successful woman in the federal judicial system. I enjoyed hearing about the election process as well as the stories she shared regarding her work-life balance and her time at Texas State."



PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PANEL

On Wednesday, March 5th, the Department of Political Science organized a faculty panel to discuss the results of Super Tuesday — the day on which several U.S. states hold their primary elections, and their implications for the upcoming presidential election. Over 50 students attended to hear Drs. Michael Faber, Hyun Yun, and Vance McMahan explore and elucidate the election results.

Each panelist weighed in on different aspects of the Super Tuesday vote. Dr. Hyun Yun offered an analysis of each party's political messaging strategy. She commented on the efficacy of each strategy and highlighted specific focus areas for students to monitor in the upcoming months. One focus area she highlighted was the exit of Trump's primary opponent Nikki Haley. She suggested that Haley's appeal as a more moderate candidate may influence her supporters to cast their vote for another party's candidate, thereby frustrating Trump's reelection bid.

Dr. Vance McMahan commented on the political tension and infighting that manifested itself in Texas' Republican primary. McMahan suggested the results showed the



commitment of the Republican leadership to fund and support insurgent candidates who will strictly adhere to the party line on key conservative issues such as school choice and illegal immigration.

Dr. Michael Faber explained the origins of Super Tuesday and how it was initially coordinated by southern states to give them a competitive edge as a geographic voting block in the nomination process. Dr. Faber also fielded questions from students regarding the nomination process. One student asked about the potential benefits of having a "national primary" or a system where all states hold their primaries on the same day. Dr. Faber argued that system would be detrimental because it would give a huge advantage to better-known and better-funded candidates since they would be the only ones with enough resources to "get out the vote" before the election.

After the conclusion of the event, several students met with the panelists one-on-one to ask additional questions about the political ramifications of this year's Super Tuesday vote.



ROTTINGHAUS LECTURE

On March 27th, more than 400 students and faculty attended a lecture sponsored by Discourse in Democracy, featuring Dr. Brandon Rottinghaus of the University of Houston. Entitled "Do Presidential Scandals (Still) Matter? White House Scandals and Accountability in a Partisan Era," Dr. Rottinghaus spoke about the various presidential scandals that have happened over the course of American history, how to differentiate a scandal from misunderstandings or misinformation, and how scandals could potentially shape future presidencies.

Brandon Bain, a graduate student who attended the event, said that "the lecture was insightful and interesting. Dr. Rottinghaus shared a lot of data about scandals and what era of American history housed the most, as well as the



projected trajectory of presidential scandals. He was very knowledgeable on the subject, and I enjoyed the Q&A session after the presentation as well."

In addition to the lecture, Dr. Rottinghaus hosted a seminar for around 20 undergraduate and graduate students. The seminar was dedicated to ongoing research being conducted by Dr. Rottinghaus and two of his colleagues about the geographic politics of congressional district office locations.

Dr. Rottinghaus holds a Ph.D. in political science from Northwestern University. His books include *The Dual Executive: Unilateral Orders in a Separated and Shared Power System* (Stanford University Press), *The Institutional Effects of Executive Scandals* (Cambridge University Press), and *The Provisional Pulpit: Modern Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion* (Texas A&M University Press). He is also the co-founding designer of the Presidential Proclamations Project at the University of Houston, an online resource documenting presidential use of unilateral powers through executive proclamation. He has provided commentary on national and Texas politics in hundreds of media outlets including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Politico*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Dallas Morning News*, and *Texas Tribune*.





WILLIAMS LECTURE

On September 13, more than 400 students and faculty attended Discourse in Democracy's annual Constitution Day Lecture. This year's lecture was delivered by Dr. David Williams, of DePaul University in Chicago. In his talk, "The Forgotten Role of Republican Virtue in the American Constitution," Dr. Williams spoke about the tension between economic inequality and republican virtue.

In addition to the lecture, Dr. Williams hosted a seminar for around 20 undergraduate and graduate students. The seminar explored the theme of economic inequality in the Western intellectual tradition.

Caden Douglass, a graduate student who attended the event, said that "the lecture pointed out a troubling flaw in our republic, using classical figures in political thought such as Aristotle to identify potential problems that can arise... like the issue of income inequality."

Dr. Williams is the author of *Rousseau's Platonic Enlightenment*, *Rousseau's 'Social Contract': An Introduction*, and *"The Greatest of All Plagues": Economic Inequality in Western Political Thought*. Dr. Williams's articles connecting the history of political thought to contemporary political concerns have appeared in various outlets including *The Washington Post*, *The Hill*, and Bloomberg News.



Discourse in Democracy provides opportunities for students to become more deeply involved in their Texas State community by offering lectures and seminars by keynote speakers, chances to collaborate with professors, other students, and prominent professionals in the field at the federal, state, and local levels. We will tackle issues that matter most to students, and you can be a part of the solution by participating in our lecture series. The Department of Political Science invites all students to join in the discussion as we work to understand and solve our country's greatest challenges.

NEW FACULTY



MATTHEW CANTARINO

In the fall of 2024, Dr. Matthew Cantarino joined the department's faculty. Cantarino attended Georgetown University and received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Catholic University of America. Before coming to Texas State, he was a faculty member at Assumption University in Massachusetts. His dissertation focused on the thought of Henry Adams. The grandson of John Quincy Adams and the great grandson of John Adams, Henry Adams was an historian whose books included a nine-volume history of the Jefferson and Madison administrations, *The Education of Henry Adams*, and *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, as well as several novels. His research interests include America's constitutional and republican traditions. He is currently working on two articles: One about *The Federalist Papers* and the other about the idea of American exceptionalism. He enjoys traveling to new places and skiing (and traveling to ski).



THOMAS CLOUD

In the fall of 2024, Thomas Cloud joined the department's faculty. Before coming to Texas State, Thomas worked part time as an instructor at Louisiana State University while pursuing his PhD. While there, he taught for both the political science department and LSU's Odgen Honors College. He has a B.A. from the University of Washington in economics and history and is currently ABD at Louisiana State University. Thomas also has experience as a journalist. In addition to working as a student columnist for *The Daily* at the University of Washington, he interned for both his hometown paper the *Peninsula Gateway*, and for CNSNews.com in Washington, D.C. At CNSNews.com he was routinely required to find and ask members of the U.S. Congress and U.S. Senate questions about contemporary policy issues. He even attended a White House press briefing. He and his wife Christine have two children: Vivienne (3) and Nathan (6 months). He enjoys teaching undergraduates, and he is also a big fan of the Washington Huskies and Seattle Seahawks.

GET TO KNOW ALL OF
OUR FACULTY & STAFF:



PI SIGMA ALPHA

Founded in 1920, Pi Sigma Alpha is the national honors society for political science. The Texas State chapter, Rho Eta, was established in 1988 and over the last thirty years has hosted a variety of lectures and community-service projects.

BOWLING SOCIAL

On Thursday, March 21st, SWIPS (Supporting Women in Political Science) and Pi Sigma Alpha hosted a bowling social event. Around 20 students attended, and the organizations were thrilled with the high turnout. The social event offered a relaxed atmosphere for members to connect through competitive bowling games and delicious food. Officers brainstormed various ideas to further engage members in upcoming projects, and members expressed a strong interest in continuing to participate in future political science events.

Zoie Sanders, a member of SWIPS, said that the event was, “super-fun and a great opportunity to connect with fellow organizations and members. I had an amazing time and am looking forward to attending future social events and meetings with SWIPS.



INDUCTION CEREMONY

On Saturday evening, April 27th, Pi Sigma Alpha held its annual induction ceremony for new members. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Vance McMahan, a professor of practice in the department. Before joining the department's faculty, at various points in his career, McMahan had worked in the governor's office, the White House, the Department of Education, and the United Nations (where he served as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations' Economic and Social Council).

Brandon Bain, a graduate student who attended the event, said that “Professor McMahan's provided valuable insights into politics and governance, and emphasized the importance of public service.”

2023/24 INDUCTEES:

BRANDON BAIN
LAUREN GARCIA
OLIVIA CARRANZA
MATTHEW KOI
ELIANA MASCORRO
VANEJA JONES

KENTON TUDYK
BRAIDEN TOUCHETTE
LILLIAN MARTINEZ
SOFIA HERNANDEZ
JEFFREY TROTT
OLIVIA ALEXANDER

2023/34 OFFICERS:

SOFIA HERNANDEZ
PRESIDENT

KENLEY YOUNG
VICE PRESIDENT



Following the speech, members were able to connect with one another and discuss their shared passion for political science over dinner. In addition to inducting new members, Pi Sigma Alpha leadership also acknowledged and commended existing members who secured internships in the Texas capital and jobs working in public policy.



PUBLIC DEFENDER

On November 2nd, the Texas State chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha sponsored a talk by Maureen Scott Franco, a Federal Public Defender for the Western District of Texas. She has been a Federal Public Defender since 2013, and she served as a Deputy Federal Public Defender from 2007–2013 as well as a Supervisory Assistant Federal Public Defender from 2004–2007. Ms. Franco graduated with honors from UT-Austin in 1986 with a degree in government, and then graduated from Baylor Law School in 1989. She was licensed in Texas that same year and joined the Federal Public Defender in July 1993.

Ms. Franco talked about the process of law school, what she would've done differently, managing student debt, AI and how it may play a role in the future of law practice, and her role as a federal public defender. Topics discussed during the

question-and-answer period included her most memorable cases, working on a case that made it to SCOTUS, and managing a home/life balance in a stressful job.

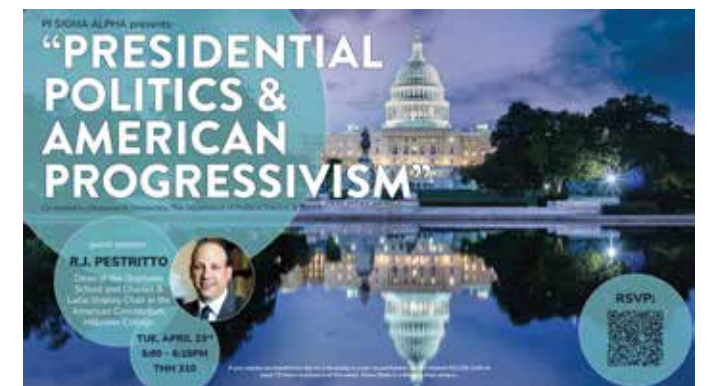
Grace Schlafer, a Pi Sigma Alpha member, described the event as “extremely informative,” adding that it “was especially useful for those thinking about going to law school or wanting to have a better understanding of our federal judiciary.”



RJ PESTRITTO

On Tuesday, April 23rd, Pi Sigma Alpha hosted Dr. R.J. Pestritto, the Dean of the Graduate School and Charles & Lucia Shipley Chair in the American Constitution at Hillsdale College. Speaking on “Presidential Politics & American Progressivism,” Dr. Pestritto discussed the influence of the early progressive movement on American political thought and institutions. He particularly noted that our understanding of the presidency is shaped by progressive leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

Francisco Valdovinos, the current president of Pi Sigma Alpha, noted that “it was a great event. Students were very interested and asked excellent questions during the question-and-answer portion of the presentation.”



SWIPS

Supporting Women in Political Science

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

SWIPS (Supporting Women in Political Science) successfully hosted its 2nd Annual Women's Leadership Summit on Friday, April 26th. The event featured a series of thought-provoking panels featuring distinguished female leaders.

The summit commenced with a keynote address by Teresa Carbajal Ravet, former president of the League of Women Voters of Hays County. Ms. Ravet addressed emerging trends for women in nonprofit leadership and the importance of fostering civic engagement from a young age. She provided valuable insights into the skills required for success in the non-profit sector and offered guidance on translating individual strengths into impactful contributions.

The following panel featured government officials Andrea Villalobos and Alicia Key, who shared their experiences in public administration. The discussion explored how community engagement and local policy decisions affect everyday lives. Ms. Villalobos detailed how her passion for design and problem-solving led to a fulfilling career in city planning, while Ms. Key offered a unique perspective as former Deputy Attorney General, highlighting the intricacies of the role and strategies for maintaining a healthy work-life balance.



The concluding panel brought together Senator Sarah Eckhardt, Mayor Jane Hughson, and City Councilwoman Alyssa Garza. The session delved into the changing landscape of women in politics, exploring challenges and opportunities for greater representation. The panelists addressed the realities of pursuing a career in government, from local levels to the state senate, while highlighting available resources and support systems.

Overall, the leadership of SWIPS believed the Women's Political Science Leadership Summit provided a valuable platform for attendees to gain insights from accomplished female leaders across various sectors. With diverse perspectives and practical advice, the event empowered participants to pursue their leadership aspirations.



SWIPS is a nonpartisan women's organization at Texas State University. They are a professional education and development organization centered around aiding political science majors and other students with exploring all facets of political science so they may discover their professional and academic interests. SWIPS meets every other Tuesday at 6:30pm. If you'd like to learn more information about this organization, you can contact SWIPS President Myleen Gamez at mlg@txstate.edu.

RESUMÉ BUILDING

On April 11th, SWIPS (Supporting Women in Political Science) hosted a resume workshop featuring two members of Career Services as well as Dr. Lauren Rowlands, a member of the poli sci faculty. The meeting was accompanied by pizza, snacks, and drinks provided by the department.

Career Services had a pre-prepared PowerPoint presentation detailing the "dos and don'ts" of resumé crafting. They also provided a worksheet for students that included steps on how to craft a resumé tailored to the student's skills and interests. After that they set up two stations to personally work with students on their resúmes and let them know where improvements could be made.

Madelyn Byers, the Vice President of SWIPS, said that the group "was thrilled to see so many people engaged with building their resumé, considering how tedious and stressful the process can be. This is a testament to the power of orgs on campus to help get students the resources needed for success."

DR. ROWLANDS

On February 22nd, Supporting Women in Political Science (SWIPS) hosted their second meeting of the semester, which hosted Dr. Lauren Rowlands as a guest speaker. Dr. Rowlands, a lecturer who joined the department in the fall of 2022, spoke to the group about what kind of jobs are available after obtaining a Political Science/Public Administration degree. She also discussed internships and many other opportunities that members could seek in the field of political science.

Following the discussion, the vice president of SWIPS shared information about the upcoming election and discussed future department events. Students and attendees were then able to enjoy the provided food and drink while planning their next meeting.

This meeting ended with a series of questions, and officers encouraged members to attend a workshop day designed for members to get a better feel for what they would like to pursue in the future.



INTERNS



TRAVION SELLS

I interned for a state representative at the Texas Capitol during the Fall 2023 semester during the 88th Legislative Session.

My responsibilities included clerical tasks such as answering the phone, responding to emails, and greeting visitors to the office. I also handled constituent concerns, where I would document correspondence from constituents and come up with effective ways to solve their case.

The most important thing I've learned through this internship is that there is always room to grow. Going into the internship, I was unsure about my performance, but I quickly learned that if you apply yourself then that is all that matters.

The advice I would give students looking for an internship is to consistently check the Texas Politics Project website — there are always new listings being posted on there.



XAVIER MILLAN

I began my internship in October 2023 during the 3rd Special Session. I am currently still interning with the Speaker's Policy Office, preparing for the regular session starting in January.

My responsibilities include answering phones, greeting individuals meeting with the advisors, conducting basic policy research, and assisting the advisors in various tasks.

The most important thing I've learned is the tremendous effort and manpower required to advance bills. It involves hearing concerns from constituents or lobbyists, devising effective solutions, presenting the bill in committee hearings, listening to testimonies, and finally, debating the bill on the House floor. From there, it's up to the representatives to vote.

My advice is to not hesitate to put yourself out there. Send those emails, shake those hands, and be proactive in pursuing your goals. With persistence, your efforts will pay off, and you'll be proud of your accomplishments. "Poco a poco se va más lejos"

GRAD HOUSE

FRANCISCO VALDOVINOS

Francisco Valdovinos, a student and graduate instructional assistant in the Department of Political Science, was recently appointed to be the Leader of the Graduate House of Representatives. Valdovinos noted that "as the Graduate House leader, my role, along with the support of other Graduate House Representatives, encompasses a wide range of responsibilities aimed at enhancing the graduate student experience on campus. We are committed to efforts in university committees, supporting graduate students, and organizing events. In addition to these activities, we will be focusing on supporting and listening to graduate students' thoughts and concerns about their experience. Our future efforts will also concentrate on strengthening relations with other branches of student government and elevating the visibility and reputation of the Grad House."

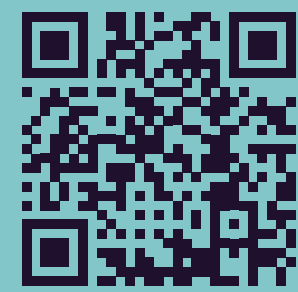


THE TXST GRADUATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Graduate House of Representatives is a body of student government that represents the graduate students at Texas State, consisting of two representatives from each academic college. Representatives are nominated by the deans of their college, and they strive "to serve as the primary student government advocate for all graduate students at Texas State University by listening and acting transparently as a liaison between the students, the university, and surrounding communities." Initiatives spurred by Grad House representatives have ranged from increasing lighting on parts of campus to passing Title IX legislation. Moreover, representatives take on leadership roles in a variety of recurring initiatives, including Graduate Student Appreciation Week and the annual Lunch with the Deans.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT STUDENT GOVERNMENT AT TXST?

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TO EXPLORE:**



ALUMNI REPORT

ALUMNI

REPORT



ALEXANDRA HUTCHISSON

I received my Master's in Political Science and my Minor in Public Administration in May 2011.

After completing my undergraduate degree at Texas A&M University (College Station), I moved to Austin and immediately began working as the Legislative Director for a State Representative. This experience was what led me to initially want to work in politics, although things turned out very differently. I received my Master's in Political Science (with a Minor in Public Administration) from what was then Southwest Texas State University in May 2011.

I enjoyed most of my classes at Texas State, but my favorite professor, hands-down, was Dr. Grasso. His classes challenged me to expand my thinking and consider other perspectives. When I was a student, participation in class was 10% of your grade. That meant it was probably best for you to complete any assigned reading in order to offer decent comments in class. Well, there was one class where I had not done the reading but was still asking a lot of questions in class—which I'm guessing made it very obvious that I was ill-prepared. When class was dismissed, I went up to Dr. Grasso and apologized for slacking. He said that there was no need to apologize because "my job is to get the knowledge of the material to you, no matter how that happens." I will never forget that exchange, and it reminds me to be patient with others as we were all learning something for the first time at some point or another.

Since graduation, I have been working as an environmental consultant who specializes in regulatory compliance and

permitting. I would like to see the implementation of a conservation strategy that allows for mitigation funds to be directed towards farmers and ranchers. These individuals are usually implementing land management practices that often result in preserving our natural resources and habitat for wildlife, including at-risk species. Since it is sometimes easier for entities with impacts to the environment to pay fees in lieu of securing their own offsets, it would be amazing to see those funds used to create another revenue stream for farmers and ranchers, as agriculture in and of itself is not always financially rewarding; it is a profession you do because you love it, not because you want to get rich fast. Land is the one thing we can't get more of, and I think it's important that we prioritize conserving the areas we have left by rewarding those who are already doing so. I would love to be involved in the development, approval, and implementation of a conservation strategy that accomplishes this goal.

My advice to current students would be to not limit yourself by labels and don't get boxed in by what people assume you should do with your degree. My educational background is unique for the industry I work in, as most people assume I would have a degree in Environmental Science or Wildlife Biology (I have neither). However, the skills I gained during my time at Texas State greatly expanded my analytical thinking and writing abilities. These skills will always be in high demand, no matter what career path you choose. You are the only one that should put limits on the profession you choose, especially with a degree in Political Science. There are so many different things you can do —don't let others define what those things are.

ALUMNI



REPORT

BREANTA BOSS

I graduated in 2016 with my Bachelor's in Political Science and in 2018 with my Master's in Political Science from Texas State University. My high school, Lakeview Centennial in Garland, Texas, had a law magnet program. I took political science courses while completing the law magnet program. I was exposed to Aristotle, Plato, Machiavelli, and Aquinas and fell in love with the reflections that they offered about political theory, society, and ethics.

At Texas State, I first encountered the Socratic method style of learning. This really helped smooth the transition to law school because it closely mimics the way classes in law school are structured. Some other things that helped prepare me for law school were the heavy reading load and discussions in my Texas State classes. I also participated in many eye-opening discussions with my cohort while in graduate school at Texas State. This taught me that there is value in having different viewpoints represented when discussing governance and power.

The professors who helped me the most at Texas State were Dr. Cecilia Castillo and Dr. Kenneth Grasso. They encouraged me to never be afraid of asking questions. Looking back, the Texas State classes that I enjoyed the most were Constitutional Law, International Law, Ancient and Medieval Political Thought, American Political Culture, Religion and American Life, and International Conflict and Security.

Since graduation, I received my juris doctorate from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. I am

currently a civil rights attorney based in Addison, Texas. I also serve as a board member with the National Police Accountability Project. NPAP is a non-profit that holds law enforcement accountable for misconduct in communities. It offers training, resources, networking, and legal support for legal workers. Professionally, I am interested in civil rights and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Post-graduation, I have published several articles including:

"The Implications of Covid-19 for Incarcerated Individuals Seeking Legal Redress," *Federal Lawyer* Volume 69, Issue 1 (Feb 2022).

"Penance and Punishment: Seeking Reparations from Truth Commissions and Trials," *State Bar of Texas International Newsletter* Volume 2, No. 2. (Summer 2022).

"DEI in the Legal Profession: Identifying the Foundational Factors for Meaningful Change," *Utah Law Review* 785 (2022).

I want to continue practicing law and then teach in a high school law magnet or college political science program. My special research interest is political philosophy, specifically from the ancient to medieval period.

To current students, I would say: Enjoy the college experience and don't take any of the lessons you learn for granted! Always critique and analyze everything!

ALUMNI



REPORT

EMMA HADZI ANTICH

My initial interest was in philosophy. I was concerned with questions about the good life, justice, ethics, and regimes. I soon realized that an education in government with a focus on political philosophy would suit me better than a degree in philosophy. After receiving my B.A. from UT-Austin and deciding I wanted to teach, I applied to the graduate program at Texas State to continue my studies in political science and philosophy and graduated with my M.A. in 2013.

I am currently a professor at Austin Community College where I teach American government. I wouldn't be able to teach there without the education I received at Texas State. I took every course offered by Dr. Grasso and especially enjoyed studying *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville with him. I also took several independent study classes with Dr. Castillo which allowed me to closely study the writings of Xenophon.

I really find teaching fulfilling. My classes are discussion-based, and the conversations I have in the classroom with my students make this a fulfilling career. One thing I particularly love discussing with my students in a serious way is Tocqueville's concept of individualism in the United States. Interest in "radical individualism" has recently captured the attention of popular opinion, and examining this subject in a serious way with my students is one of my favorite parts of the semester. One of my goals is to help one of my community college students become a Jack Kent Cooke Scholar. This

scholarship paid my way through both UT Austin and Texas State, and without it, I would never have been able to attend college. It would complete a full circle if one of my students were supported by this same scholarship.

One thing I would strongly advise current students to do is to take a wide range of classes within the political science department but also explore outside of the discipline. My interests in literature and philosophy influenced my study of political science. My senior thesis was about free will and it focused on the writings of Jane Austen and Aristotle. At Texas State, I continued to study the intersection of political philosophy and literature through my thesis on Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. I still return to these writers on a nearly yearly basis.

As to where I think that education is headed, I think that it (including political science) will become more interdisciplinary. In the broader scheme of things, the pursuit of knowledge has only rather recently been rigorously divided into disciplines. This division has the effect of directing students down a very narrow educational pathway. Colleges and universities are becoming aware of the limitations of this narrow pedagogical approach and are rediscovering the advantages of a liberal arts education.

ALUMNI



REPORT

JEFFREY HERNDON

I received my B.A. from “Southwest” Texas State University in 1989 and my M.A. in 1993. I later entered the Ph.D. program at Louisiana State University, from which I received my doctorate in 2003.

When I started at SWT, I had no idea what it was that I wanted to do. I stumbled into an intro to political theory class taught by Dr. Kenneth L. Grasso. My entire career has been shaped by discovering political theory. Once I decided to major in political science, I foolishly thought that, like many political science majors, I would use the degree to go to law school. However, that was not to be. As I was nearly finished with my degree, I took a required capstone course with Dr. Ted Hindson. As my final project, I wrote a paper and did a presentation on the political thought of David Hume. After I was done, Dr. Hindson wanted to talk with me about joining the graduate program at SWT as the department was looking to reinvigorate that program.

It was during my M.A. program that I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Ellis Sandoz, Herman G. Moyse, Professor of Political Science at LSU. An eminent scholar in the field (whose books include *A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion, and the American Founding*, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, and *The Voegelinian Revolution*), he visited campus to do a talk in the department’s Lecture Series on American Constitutionalism. It turned out that Dr. Sandoz and I got on quite well and we had similar scholarship and intellectual interests, so I went

to LSU. The week that I received my Ph.D. I was hired by the LSU Honors College in a job I took for three years. Now, I have been a professor/teacher for more than 30 years. When I look back at what was then SWT, I see how much the professors and classes I took there helped to shape my life and career. Drs. Grasso, Hindson, Robert Gorman, and the late Dr. Randall Bland became my academic family while I was there. It’s hard to name specific classes that stand out because my entire program of study and the personnel with whom I interacted were just brilliant.

For undergraduate students, I recommend you take the opportunity as an undergraduate to explore. While it is true that our political overseers often see university education as merely career preparation, your time as an undergraduate is one of the best periods in which to gather experiences. You have time to become hyper-focused on some aspects of the discipline—but as an undergraduate it is advisable to learn the interconnectedness of various aspects of political science.

Develop your professional networks, especially if you are planning to go to graduate school. I would never have found my career if not for the opportunity to meet Dr. Sandoz. Finally, be curious and don’t let your education convince you that you know everything. One of the most important lessons of a liberal arts education is the realization that there is a universe of things that you don’t know, and it is that realization that turns you into a life-long learner.

ALUMNI



REPORT

KENLEA BARNES

I graduated from Texas State in 2020. I started out as a business and psychology major and realized how I missed learning about history and the various facets of our political world. After taking Dr. Mora’s 2305 introduction to American Government, I realized that political science was the perfect way to combine my love for reading and learning. It never allows me to be bored, and it continuously grows and improves my understanding of the world.

I am currently a PhD student at Louisiana State University. I study Political Theory and American Politics and have been lucky enough to have wonderful working relationships with many of my professors. The education I received at Texas State prepared me for the rigor that graduate school entails, and I am always bragging to my colleagues about our hidden gem of a university.

My first political science teacher was Dr. Sherri Mora for Political Science 2305. Her love for teaching and politics led me to political science. Following, I took Basic Political Ideas with Dr. Rudy Hernandez, Ancient Political Thought with Dr. Ashleen Bagnulo, and Modern Political Thought with Dr. Kenneth Ward. Also, Dr. Hyun Yun was influential in helping make the transition to graduate school. Every political science professor I had at Texas State had a major impact on both my time there and my current studies.

I am lucky enough to have published a few journal articles and a poetry book. I will take my comprehensive exams this fall and will, then, begin my dissertation. My research

will look at both Aristotle’s and Thomas Jefferson’s views on moral imagination and its importance in one’s education.

My experience at Texas State changed my path in the best way. My time in university has allowed me to grow and appreciate what a true education can provide. I do hope to continue with my research; however, my main goal is to become the best teacher I can be and show others why old books are still needed in our modern world. Whether it is at a university or high school level, I want to show students the importance of education.

My advice to future students is to always try and remember that studying political science is more than preparing for law school or future political careers. Instead, it is about educating yourself to better understand yourself and where we fit in in our world. Considering the growing trends within our discipline, I think turning back to the past is important if we wish to understand how to solve our future.

Political science has become a growing field with the variety of events that have taken place. Though it has been moving towards a strictly quantitative approach, I do hope there will be a shift in the field over the next ten years. I would like to see an innovative approach take place that incorporates our foundation and contemporary studies. History is an important component to our field and, as we have seen, it does tend to repeat itself on occasion. The field has compartmentalized many areas of study, and I think we will see a shift occur in the next few years of attempting to bridge the gaps we have created in our discipline.

ALUMNI NIGHT

ANNUAL ALUMNI NIGHT

On February 21st, Discourse in Democracy hosted the department's annual Alumni Night. A panel of alumni shared their post-graduation experiences with an audience of more than 50 students. The alumni discussed their careers and advised attendees on several topics of professional interest, including developing relationships with faculty members, internships, and curating resumé to their benefit.

The panel consisted of three alumni:

Stephanie Luna (M.A. Legal Studies 2022), a legal assistant for SWBC (Southwest Business Corporation) in San Antonio.

Kate Moriarty (B.A. 2019), a management analyst with the City of Hutto's City Manager's Office.

Larry Gonzales (M.P.A. 2014), former Texas state legislator and current lobbyist.

A question-and-answer session and informal conversations between the students and alumni over refreshments and pizza followed the presentations. Students who attended the event were given department swag which included T-shirts, hats, USB drives, and beanies.

Mackenzie Rothrock, a public administration student who attended the event, said that it was "very insightful to hear from people who have had success in the political science and public administration fields. Being able to chat with the alumni afterward was also a great opportunity to get one-on-one advice about the hiring process and various jobs available upon graduating."



MEET THE PROFESSORS

Discourse in Democracy (DID) hosted the Department of Political Science's annual "Meet the Professors" night. Over 100 students attended the event, giving political science and public administration majors the opportunity to meet and talk with more than two dozen faculty members and learn about the courses they teach, their backgrounds, and their areas of interest.

Students in attendance had a chance to learn about the major, various groups associated with the department including Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society, and SWIPS (Supporting Women in Political Science). Afterwards, students were able to mingle informally with faculty and representatives of the various groups and organizations over pizza and cookies. Students in attendance received a wide variety of departmental swag including T-shirts and baseball caps.



AROUND THE DEPARTMENT



ALUMNI GALA

On October 27th, Texas State's annual "Distinguished Alumni Gala" took place in the LBJ Student Center Grand Ballroom. The Alumni Association and Texas State University hold this event to honor the recipients of the prestigious Distinguished Alumni Award, which recognizes alumni who have made an impact on the lives of others through their professions, accomplishments, affiliations, and service to society and the university. This award was first presented to Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, who later served as the thirty-sixth President of the United States of America.

One of the honorees at the event was Barbara J. Smith, who in 2001 graduated with an M.A. degree from the political science department. Currently the vice president for peace programs at The Carter Center, Barbara oversees more than 70 staff members and the development and implementation of some 30 program initiatives for the nonprofit Carter Center, which former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, founded in 1982. Smith stays connected to the university and has met with President Damphousse, attended alumni events, and mentored students to help them succeed.



BOBCAT DAY

On October 7th, Drs. Roger Abshire, Lauren Rowlands, Miha Vindis, and Michelle Evans represented the political science department at the university's Bobcat Day. The event brings thousands of high school students and parents to campus to learn about Texas State. Our faculty had the opportunity to chat with prospective students during the event and help answer any questions they might have about political science generally and the POSI department in particular. They talked to over 100 high school students and parents about political science, public administration, and pre-law while distributing flyers on majors, degree plans, internships, careers, and courses.



HSI EVENT

On September 13th, the Department of Political Science participated in the 2023 Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Community Day. Over 500 hundred students stopped by the event for a free lunch, Spanish music, and a chance to visit with various departments, programs, and offices from across the university.

Well over 100 students visited the Political Science table to spin the wheel for swag including T-shirts, lanyards, water bottles, decals, ball caps, and to meet with Drs. Mora and Longoria to answer questions about the department and its programs. President Damphousse stopped by the table as did staff members from a variety of other departments.

Francisco Valdovinos, a graduate student who helped at the event, said that it was "energetic and lively. The music was great, and there was lots of enthusiasm. Students won lots of prizes and went home with some free swag."



"LBJ'S AMERICA" PANEL

On November 1st, Texas State University hosted a panel discussion to celebrate the publication of *LBJ's America: The Life and Legacies of Lyndon Baines Johnson*.

The panel was attended by around 200 students from the political science department, and the discussion was led by the editors of "LBJ's America," Mark Atwood Lawrence, director of the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum, and Mark K. Updegrave, president and CEO of the LBJ Foundation.

A landmark collection of essays, *LBJ's America* discusses the ways in which the accomplishments, setbacks, controversies and crises of 1963 to 1969 laid the foundations of contemporary America and set the stage for the modern era of policy debates, political contention, distrust of government and hyper-partisanship. The panel was attended by around 200 students from the political science department.

Texas State is the only college in Texas to have graduated a U.S. president. Johnson began his studies in San Marcos in 1927 and received a Bachelor of Science and a high school teaching certificate in August 1930. Johnson's memory remains alive on campus through the LBJ Student Center, the university's Lyndon Baines Johnson Distinguished Lecture Series, and the LBJ Statue.



OPEN HOUSE: FALL '23

As part of the Student Success Initiative's Bobcat Welcome week, the Department of Political Science held an open house reception for incoming freshmen on August 17th. The event allowed students to make connections with faculty, staff, and fellow students as they began classes. They were able to gather information about the majors in the departments and speak to current political science majors and graduate students.

At the department's largest event attended yet, students were provided with a light lunch, desserts, and cold drinks. Students were able to spin the wheel for departmental swag. Excited students left the event with their political science department T-shirts, hats, USBs, decals and cellphone power chargers in hand. They expressed being more confident about the fall semester after attending the event.

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

OPEN HOUSE: SPRING '24

On Friday, January 19th, the Department of Political Science held an Open House for incoming freshmen and transfer students. The event allowed attendees to learn about the department and to make connections with faculty, staff, and fellow students as they began classes. Around 35 students attended the event, and they were able to get information on degrees offered by Political Science, get advice for degree planning, and spin the wheel for department swag such as T-shirts, lanyards, hats, and water bottles.

David Rodriguez, a political science graduate student who assisted at the event, said that he “met a lot of fascinating new students who are very passionate about their studies, including some who were thinking about switching their major to political science.”



PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR

On October 17th, around 80 students, faculty, and staff members attended a question-and-answer style presentation by Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn. Topics included the application process, the benefits of serving in the Peace Corps, what kind of jobs are available, and much more.

Spahn brings more than 25 years of public and private sector experience and has worked in countries around the world on issues ranging from small business development and infectious disease prevention to women's empowerment. She most recently served as the Peace Corps's chief executive officer and, prior to that, as acting director.

Christopher Fairchild, a current Peace Corps volunteer, also participated in this presentation. Fairchild is a proud Texas State alum who graduated with a degree in economics and a minor in business administration in December 2022. He is currently serving in Colombia. As a volunteer, he is teaching at the SENA (or technical trade school) and coaching baseball and other sports.

After the Q&A, there were snacks and refreshments that attendees enjoyed while having informal conversation with the panelists and other Peace Corps volunteers and recruiters that were in attendance. This event was coordinated by Dr. Helen Lowman, a faculty member in the political science department. The talk was sponsored by the Center for International Studies and the political science department.



POPESCU ACADEMIC PRIZE

Political science professor Ionut Popescu was awarded the 2023 Freedom and Opportunity Academic Prize by the Heritage Foundation, a major Washington, D.C. based think tank. The \$15,000 award rewarded Dr. Popescu's scholarship and teaching for his focus on freedom, opportunity, and traditional American values, particularly in relation to U.S. grand strategy towards China.

Together with several other prize winners from institutions such as Georgetown University and University of Virginia, Dr. Popescu attended a 4-day summer seminar in Washington, D.C. on August 8-11. He had the opportunity to meet with national security experts, Congressional staffers, and the media. Dr. Popescu also participated in seminars exploring how academic scholarship can influence Washington policymaking and national debates.

“I am very honored to be selected for this prestigious prize, and last week was a wonderful opportunity to present my ideas on U.S. foreign policy and national security in front of Washington audiences,” Dr. Popescu said. He is also now able to facilitate more internship and job opportunities in Washington for Texas State political science students through his new affiliation with the Heritage Foundation.

POPESCU & TX FLAG

On October 10, Dr. Ionut Popescu, a member of the department's international relations faculty, was presented with the Texas flag flown over the Texas Capitol in honor of his military service. Dr. Popescu is a Navy Reserve intelligence officer, and he has recently been recalled to active duty to deploy with the U.S. Special Operations Command for nine

months starting this week. Alana Garrett, a political science major, presented Dr. Popescu with the flag after he informed his class that he had to leave on a military deployment. Alana mentioned that she, along with other staffers in the office of Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan, “thought it would be a nice gesture to thank Dr. Popescu for his service and wish him well throughout his tour of duty.” Dr. Popescu was “truly honored and humbled” by this surprise in his last class before his military leave, and he looks forward to “return to Texas State next year and share his stories of his military deployment” with his future students.

Dr. Popescu, received his Ph.D. from Duke in 2013 and joined Texas State's faculty in 2017, was tenured and then promoted to associate professor in 2023. He joined the naval reserve in 2018.

69TH ANNUAL SCONA

From February 15 to 18, 2024, four Texas State students participated in the 69th annual Student Conference on National Affairs (SCONA) at Texas A&M University in College Station.

Two political science majors, Zoe Williams and Matthew Koi, were joined by international studies majors, Antia Fuertes Bueno and Austin White, at this event, which connects delegates from universities across both the nation and the world. Each year, MSC SCONA discusses a different topic of national importance, giving delegates the chance to interact with the nation's highest academic scholars, government officials, and well-known public figures. This year's speakers included Lt. Gen. Dimitri Henry, Director of Intelligence for the Joint Chiefs, Dr. James Peery, Director of Sandia National Labs, and Dr. Peter D. Haynes, Deputy Director of Commander's Action Group, Army Futures Command.

The four Bobcats participated in roundtables on several topics relating to U.S. national security and contributed to policy papers that they later presented. Koi's roundtable, “By the People, For the People: Domestic Electoral Reform,” was the winning roundtable for the American Domestic Policy Concentration and among the four finalists for best presentation/policy paper.

Fuertes Bueno remarked: “It was an amazing experience, the friends I made in my roundtable are friendships that I will cherish and work on for the rest of my life.” White added that “due to SCONA's credibility, scale, and tradition, there is a wide variety of experts from varying backgrounds that help to foster and guide the next generation of leaders.”

LBJ

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

STUDENT LEADER TRIP



Three political science majors — Francisco Valdovinos, Morghan Armenta, and Adriana Montoya — participated in the Division of Student Success's annual Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum Student Leader Trip on Wednesday, November 15, 2023. This trip was scheduled to commemorate the anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Approximately twenty-five student leaders from different departments attended this trip to learn more about the life and legacy of Texas State's most distinguished alumnus.

The students had an opportunity to tour the museum, engage in activities and discussions, and learn from special guest speakers, including Mrs. Luci Baines Johnson, daughter of President Johnson. Mrs. Johnson shared her experiences campaigning throughout the South for her father during the civil rights movement. They were able to meet Mark A. Lawrence, Director of the LBJ Presidential Library and Museum. Lawrence showcased recently digitized federal archives, including audio recordings featuring Martin Luther King Jr. during the civil rights movement.

One student, Francisco Valdovinos, really appreciated Mrs. Johnson's "personal stories about assisting her father during his presidency." Another student in attendance, Morghan Armenta, expressed appreciation for Mrs. Johnson's remarks about the "high regard" in which her father held his alma mater.



INKKLINGS



DR. JOHN KITCH

The department hosted the first Inklings gathering of the fall semester on October 12th. Dr. John Kitch, who joined the faculty this fall, spoke about "Eisenhower and the Empowered Judiciary." This talk explored how Dwight D. Eisenhower shaped the postwar Supreme Court. After the presentation, the faculty and grad students attending could ask questions and talk with Dr. Kitch about his research.

Kyle Turner, one of the graduate students who attended the presentation, described the talk as "insightful," noting that it was "interesting to learn more about the Eisenhower administration's posture towards the civil rights movement."



DR. ED MIHALKANIN

On November 13th, Dr. Ed Mihalkanin, a member of the department's international relations faculty, was featured at an Inklings gathering. Dr. Mihalkanin's presentation, titled "Abkhazians: A National Minority in Their Own Homeland," explored the history of Abkhazia, located near Russia, and the conflicts regarding their international boundaries. After the presentation, Mihalkanin opened the floor for participants to voice their perspectives on the subject. The conversations about his research also involved several questions from students and faculty members.

Francisco Valdovinos, a student who attended the event, said that "the talk on the history of Abkhazians was insightful, and having a guest from a neighboring country, Azerbaijan, really contributed to the conversation."





DR. HELEN LOWMAN

On February 13th, the department's Dr. Helen Lowman delivered the first Inklings talk of the spring semester. Entitled "National Service Models: Exploring Options," the talk explored various forms of national service including the military, the Peace Corps, and AmeriCorps. After the presentation, Dr. Lowman opened the floor for participants to ask questions about her experience in the Peace Corps and national service.

A former Peace Corps volunteer, Dr. Lowman was the organization's Director for Volunteer Recruitment and Selection from August 2013 to October 2015, and as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's associate director for individual and community preparedness from November 2015 to January 2017.

Brandon Bain, a graduate student in the department who attended the event, said that "Dr. Lowman's perspective on National Service provided valuable insight into the different service models and interesting information about potential future career options."



DR. PAUL KENS

At the department's March 27th Inklings gathering, Professor Emeritus Dr. Paul Kens presented his current research and an overview of his forthcoming book titled, *Munn's Warehouse: Warehouse: A Story of How Gilded Age Corporations Tried to Add a Right of Freedom from Regulation to the Constitution – And Failed*. The talk explored the legal and constitutional background to *Munn v. Illinois*, a landmark 1877 Supreme Court decision upholding the right of state governments to regulate business.

Jaquel Gibbs, a graduate student in the department who attended the event, said that "Dr. Kens's ongoing research really casts light on how the state of Illinois understood the role of government and its constitutional powers in the nineteenth century."



DR. SHERIFF FOLARIN

On April 16th, Dr. Sheriff Folarin, a visiting lecturer in the department, delivered a presentation on political clientelism and its impact on Nigerian politics at the department's monthly Inklings meeting. Attended by more than a dozen faculty members and graduate students, his presentation began by exploring the political significance of the Nigerian phrase "Emi lo kan," which translates to "It's my turn." First invoked by Nigerian politician Bola Tinubu to justify his claim to the presidency, the phrase has since become a symbol of clientelism in Nigeria as it represents the complex relationship between wealthy political investors and their indebted clients.

Dr. Folarin explained how these investors use their wealth and social capital to politically elevate their clients in exchange for various acts or services such as securing political appointments, receiving preferential state contracts, or even inheriting political power altogether. Dr. Folarin also provided a historical analysis to explain how clientelism developed in the nation and offered several solutions as a panacea to alleviate the country's clientele woes.

ALPHA CHI



DR. THOMAS MCMAHAN

A faculty member from the Department of Political Science was honored a "Favorite Professors" by Texas State's Alfred H. Noelle Chapter of Alpha Chi National College Honor Society for 2024. Dr. Thomas McMahan was recognized for his outstanding and exemplary teaching.

Alpha Chi is a national honor society which promotes academic excellence and exemplary character among undergraduate college and university students and honors those who achieve such distinction.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

RESEARCH EXPO

Two students from the political science department participated in the College of Liberal Arts's Annual Research Expo. The expo is an online showcase of the research of the college's undergraduate students, including oral presentations and an online poster session. Political science majors Braiden Touchette and Lillian Martinez participated in this event. They presented a poster titled, "Got Propaganda?" which was inspired by the "Got Milk?" campaign launched in the United States. Their research explored the history and variation of propaganda throughout the world.

Regarding their research and presentation, Touchette said, "Researching these topics extensively challenged us to dig deep into the [nuances] of our topic. Often for class, our research can graze the subject, but this research expo challenged us to really pull up our sleeves and dig deep."

Martinez also added that "just having the opportunity to conduct qualitative research on topics that we were passionate about was eye-opening. We are already thinking about ways that we can improve our research and topics that we can potentially research next year."



2024 AWARDS CEREMONY

On Monday, April 22nd, the Department of Political Science held its 2nd Annual Awards Ceremony. Departmental awards and scholarships were presented by Dr. Sherri Mora, chair of the department's scholarship committee, Dr. Lynn Crossett, Director of the Legal Studies Program, and Dr. Kenneth Grasso, chair of the department. Dean Mary Brennan of the College of Liberal Arts distributed College of Liberal Arts Academic Excellence Certificates to juniors and seniors with a GPA of 3.75 or better. Mrs. Katherine Bowers, granddaughter of James McCrocklin, the president of Texas State from 1964–1969, presented the McCrocklin Memorial Scholarship.

POLITICAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT

RYANN CAMPBELL

OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT

ALIYA SEAY

THE JAMES H. MCCROCKLIN MEMORIAL POLITICAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT

GABRIEL MARQUEZ

THE RICHARD B. HENDERSON POLITICAL SCIENCE AWARD

KRYSTEL ALVARADO
RACHEAL ANDREWS
SUZANNE DUNNING
ADRIANA MONTOYA
DYLANN ENGLE

THE BETTYLEE & DANIEL FARLOW ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

JOA BROWN
ANDREA TORO YCHYA

THE BARNEY & LINDA KNIGHT ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FUND

DAPHNE WILLIAMS
BRIANNA KEARNS
KADEN DALE TUCKER

THE HOWARD M. "PROF" GREENE AWARD

KRYSTEL ALVARADO
RACHEAL ANDREWS
SUZANNE DUNNING
ADRIANA MONTOYA
DYLANN ENGLE
JORGE TAMAYO
BROOKLYN MIRAKHORI
JACOB HARGRAVE
IAN BELLARD
DUSTIN WROTEN
JULIA DEGRAAF
EILYN BECERRA SEGUNDO
SIMON KINSKI
ANA MENDIZABAL
ALIYA SEAY
ETHAN ABITBUL
MIA ESCOBEDO
JOA BROWN
TAYLOR MOON
KENLEY WEEKS
JACOB GRAYBILL
EMILY MORGAN

THE WALTER RICHTER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

JOA BROWN



FACULTY UPDATE 2023/24

Roger Abshire delivered a paper on “The Rules of Proceedings Clause: The Mississippi Question, Conventional Wisdom, and American Constitutionalism” at the 2023 Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association in San Antonio.

Ben Arnold coordinated the department’s award-winning Model United Nations and Model Organization of American States programs.

Ashleen Bagnulo was named 2023–2024 Texas Fellow at the Civitas Institute at the University of Texas.

Vince Bagnulo was named the runner-up for the university’s annual Award for Excellence in Online Teaching.

Cecilia Castillo won a 2023 College of Liberal Arts Achievement Award for Excellence in Service.

Emily Cedillo serves as a University Mentor for Texas State’s Undergraduate Research Journal (TXSTUR).

Paul DeHart delivered Eastern New Mexico State University’s annual Constitutional Day Lecture. His talk was entitled “Unearthing the Constitution’s Moral Foundations.”

Bill DeSoto delivered a paper on “Misinformation and the Democracy and Climate Crisis,” at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Los Angeles.

Tom Doyle delivered a paper entitled “Living with Nuclear Weapons (until they are abolished): A Virtue-Ethical Approach to Addressing Nuclear Dilemmas” at the International Studies Association’s Annual Conference in Montreal.

Mike Faber pushed a review of *The Jeffersonians: The Visionary Presidencies of Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe* by Kevin R. C. Gutzman in *The Independent Review* 28, no. 2 (October 2023).

Blake Farrar assists with events and programing at KZSM, a local nonprofit community radio show.

Ken Grasso’s “Two Rival Versions of Religious Freedom” appeared in *The Future of the Catholic Church in the American Public Order*, edited by Kenneth L. Grasso and Thomas F.X. Varacalli (Franciscan University Press, 2023).

John Kitch’s article “A Christian Answer to Secular Humanism” was published in *Law & Liberty* (September 18, 2023).

Army Leder directs the department’s Inklings programming.

Ezekiel Loseke’s “Martin Van Buren, National Parties, and the Return of Working Man’s Guild’s” appeared in the *Catholic Social Science Review* 28 (2023): 81-94.

Vance McMahan spoke at the Clements Legislative Study Program kickoff luncheon on the topic of tips for a successful legislative internship.

Ed Mihalkanin was the keynote speaker at the Texas State chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha’s 2023 Induction Ceremony. His topic was “Citizen Responsibility for Representative Government.”

Sherri Mora serves as the department’s Undergraduate Program Coordinator for Political Science and Public Administration.

Franzi Boehme-Newell delivered papers on “Courts in Crisis: Resilience and Reform at the ICC and ICJ” and “Courts in Crisis: Insights from ICJ Advisory Opinions and the ICC” at the 2023 Meeting of the International Studies Association in Montreal. She also participated in an “Author-meets-Critics Roundtable” on her recent book *State Behavior and the International Criminal Court: Between Cooperation and Resistance* (Routledge 2022).

Ionut Popescu won a 2023 College of Liberal Arts Achievement Award for Excellence in Scholarship and was named the 2023 Faculty Member of the Year by Texas State’s Center for International Studies. His article, “Rare Earths Supply Chains and Confrontation with China,” was published in *The National Interest* (March 21, 2023).

Lauren Rowlands was named as the department’s Assistant Undergraduate Program Coordinator.

Omar Sanchez’s “Unpacking Guatemala’s State Strength” and “Understanding the Level and Fate of Democracy in Guatemala: Actor-Centered Theory” were published in *State-Society Relations in Guatemala: Theory and Practice*, edited by Omar Sanchez-Sibony (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2023).

Eduardo Schmidt Passos’s “Race Ideas and Political Thought: Gilberto Freyre and Oliveira” appeared in *Comparative Political Theory* 3, no. 1 (March 2023): 53-73.

Jordan Villareal assists with the department’s Discourse in Democracy Project.

Ken Ward serves as the university’s official pre-law advisor.

Casey Wheatland published “National Conservatism, Fusionism, and the Legacy of the American Founding” in the *Catholic Social Science Review* 28 (January 2023): 55–63.

Hyun Yun was named an Honorary Professor of International Studies by Texas State’s Center for Internal Studies and published “The Impact of Digital Partisan News Algorithms in the 2022 Midterm Election” in *Media Messages in the 2022 Midterm Election: Division, Deniers, Dobbs, and the Donald* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

IT’S A GREAT DAY TO BE A BOBCAT!

The Department of Political Science at Texas State University is committed to quality teaching and learning, research and scholarship, public service, and responsible citizenship. Building upon the bodies of knowledge in the disciplines of political science, public administration and legal studies, the department seeks to prepare students to read and think critically about the enduring questions of political life, to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens, to engage in community service and to excel in their professional lives.

TEXAS  STATE
POLITICAL SCIENCE



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