



SEMESTER NEWS

from the
Department of Political Science

Spring 2017

Visit the Department of Political Science webpage at www.shepherd.edu/political-science!

Welcome to the Department of Political Science's inaugural edition of our departmental newsletter!

This newsletter provides us with an opportunity to recognize our students' and faculty members' accomplishments and endeavors while also showcasing our alumni.

The newsletter is written by a handful of enthusiastic Political Science and Global Studies majors—Marisha Carpenter, Daniela Powers, and Michelle Reid—and we are grateful for their efforts with this project!

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

We are proud to announce a change in departmental name, effective as of July 1, 2017, as approved by the Shepherd University Board of Governors to the **Department of Political Science and Global Studies!**

STUDENT NEWS



ALYSON HEHR is an economics and political science double-major at Shepherd. As an active student on campus, Alyson participates in various extracurricular activities, including the Pre-Law Society, the Catholic Campus Ministries, the Anti-

Human Trafficking Task Force, and more. Alyson is also a member of some of the academic organizations on campus, such as Pi Sigma Alpha (the Political Science Honor Society) and Phi Beta Delta (the International Scholars Honor Society).

In addition to participating in a multitude of clubs and organizations on campus, Alyson has done something particularly special: she started her own nonprofit organization. The nonprofit is called "Alyson's Angels," and was officially founded in 2009. The organization aims to help families in West Virginia who have babies in the NICU in Morgantown, the intensive care unit for newborns.

For Alyson, the cause is personal. When she was born, she was immediately sent to the NICU in Morgantown where she spent six days. Having heard about the time she spent in the NICU as an infant her whole life, Alyson eventually decided she wanted to give back and help West Virginia families who are going through the same hardship.

"It's important to be emotionally and physically present with your baby during that time, and parents aren't thinking about eating, personal hygiene, etc. So to help families who have a baby in the NICU, we send them care packages. The packages include shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, snacks, and gas cards so the family members can get to the hospital."

Alyson's humanitarian spirit that compelled her to start a nonprofit is closely tied to her decision to study political science. According to Alyson, she chose political science because she wanted to earn a degree that would help her lead a life of service to others. Upon graduating this May, Alyson will be heading to law school to study international human rights law. With her enthusiasm for education and her caring personality, Alyson will undoubtedly help many others in the future as a human rights lawyer.



WILL WHEATLEY is a senior political science student here at Shepherd. He is a member of the Shepherd Debate and Forensics Team in addition to Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science Honors Society. Will participated in a multitude of conferences over the course of his senior year, including various debate conferences and his first Pi Sigma Alpha

conference. At the Pi Sigma Alpha conference, Will had the opportunity to present a research paper for the first time in front of other panelists.

"The conference was a really great learning opportunity. It was interesting to watch graduate students present their research because it really helped me see the direction I could go in with my academic career," Will said.

In addition to participating in extracurricular activities on campus, last summer Will interned for the Canadian Parliament. He interned for five weeks at a member of parliament's office in Ottawa, where he did daily administrative tasks in addition to more meaningful intern work. Will says the internship taught him a great deal about the political and diplomatic relationship between Canada and the U.S., and gave him a better understanding of how parliamentary governments operate.

When asked how he thought the internship benefitted him as an individual, Will said, "The internship with the Canadian Parliament helped me grow as an individual... To be on my own and work in a government office in another country really resulted in a fun learning experience."

Although Will has plans to eventually attend graduate school, he says that he wants to take some time to gain some work experience and travel before getting his master's degree. The Shepherd University Political Science Department looks forward to seeing what Will accomplishes in the future.

FACULTY NEWS

While our political science students have had an impressive year, the political science faculty have been particularly active as well, publishing original works and participating in conferences.

- Dr. Max Guirguis presented his paper "The Trump Phenomenon and the Resurgence of Populism in the United States" at Robert Morris University (Moon Township, PA) as part of the Pennsylvania Political Science Association's Annual Meeting in March 2017.
- Dr. Stephanie Slocum-Schaffer also participated in a conference, traveling to the American Political Science Association's (APSA) annual Teaching and Learning Conference in Long Beach, California. At APSA, Dr. Slocum-Schaffer presented her paper titled "Who, When, and How: Strategies for Assessing Civic Knowledge, Critical Reasoning, and Oral Communications in the Political Science Classroom," a topic particularly appropriate for the current political climate.
- D. Joseph Robbins, Chair of the Department of Political Science, presented his work at the Georgia Political Science Association's (GPSA) and the East Coast Colleges Social Science Association's (ECCSSA) conferences, where he presented his collaborative research project that examines how Shepherd's Red Flag campaign raises awareness of and offers solutions for intimate partner violence (IPV). Last but not least, the head of the Global Studies, Dr. Aart Holtslag (ISA-South President), organized and hosted the ISA-South's regional conference here at Shepherd University last fall.

It is clear that the political science professors here at Shepherd University have had an active year for the 2016-2017 school year. The Shepherd University

ALUMNI NEWS

Emily (Skinnell) Cole '12



Emily is an alumna of the Shepherd University Political Science Department. She is from Herndon, Virginia, and graduated from Herndon High School

prior to attending Shepherd. When asked why she chose to attend Shepherd, Emily says that she was impressed with all of the opportunities available and the value of the education provided that she saw during her interview for the Shepherd Honors Program.

"I loved the possibilities in terms of minoring and/or double majoring. I always wanted to pursue political science, but hadn't yet decided on anything secondary. There were so many choices that I knew I'd find what would be the perfect fit."

Since graduating from Shepherd, Emily has been busy furthering herself in her career. Right after graduating she attended The Ohio State University John Glenn College of Public Affairs to attain her Master's of Public Administration degree. While working toward her master's degree, Emily also worked as a research assistant for the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO). After graduating from OSU, Emily accepted a position with the Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center (GRC), where she worked as a project coordinator. Since then she has moved on to work for Transformative Consulting, LLC where she works as an independent consultant providing consulting services to community health centers and other health organizations. Her work includes services such as program development, grant writing, grant management, and community engagement.

Emily states that her time in the Political Science Program at Shepherd prepared her for her career, and life, in many ways.

"My time with Shepherd prepared me to seize opportunities and make the most of them, and not limit my skill set to one field. Through the Political Science Program, I was able to develop a wide variety of skills that I put to use everyday through my work as a consultant."

Department of Political Science looks forward to seeing what both the political science students and their professors participate in and achieve during the upcoming school year.

More information on our faculty's ongoing research is available [HERE](#).

Emily's advice to current, and aspiring, Shepherd students is to never underestimate an opportunity, never overestimate your importance, and to network!

"I cannot stress this enough--Network! It is uncomfortable and challenging at first, but you'd be surprised by the level of interest experienced professionals will put into your career. Don't hesitate to find mentors, and always continue to learn and grow wherever you end up."

SPECIAL EVENTS



On March 29 the Department of Political Science held a teach-in on the topic of information in the aftermath of the 2016 campaign. The panelists included Dr. Aart Holtslag, Dr. James Lewin, and Dr. Stephanie Slocum-Schaffer. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Joseph Robbins. The panelists addressed issue-framing, accuracy within polling, and credibility.

Dr. Holtslag, director of Global Studies and professor of political science, was the first panelist and discussed how perception is altered by the way issues are framed. Dr. Holtslag noted that deflection is also widely used today and can mislead people by taking attention away from important issues. He also stated that paying more attention to certain facts than others alters perception as well.

The second panelist was professor of political science, Dr. Slocum-Schaffer. Dr. Slocum-Schaffer has had a great deal of experience with poll taking and noted some of the major concerns with this practice. Dr. Slocum-Schaffer stated that some of the main issues include the way margins of error are reported, the effect of question wording, the effect of question order, and a low response rate from those being polled.

Dr. James Lewin, English professor and journalism expert, was the third panelist. Dr. Lewin emphasized that credibility of sources has been another major issue that needs to be addressed when interpreting information. Dr. Lewin also discussed how the roles and responsibilities of journalists have evolved over time. He noted how advocacy journalism was prevalent in the 1970s and how we're reverting to that.

All of the panelists agreed that today it is extremely important to be skeptical of the information presented to you and to always interpret information with a critical eye.

We also would encourage you to share any story ideas you have with Dr. Robbins (jrobbins@shepherd.edu) for future newsletters.

Our next newsletter will be released during the fall 2017 semester.

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PO Box 5000, Shepherdstown, WV 25443-5000