

4-1-2010

Political Spin: The Department of Political Science

Political Science Department

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POLITICAL SPIN

THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Department welcomes new colleagues
- Students active in internships, foreign seminars, and organizations
- Kruszewski Remembrance Dinner scheduled for March
- Alum, Students, Friends, and Family Honor Joe Graves

We wish to extend a warm welcome to two new members of the faculty who began in June 2009. Both add important expertise to the department's research and teaching as well as bringing a renewed excitement.

Dr. Cigdem V. Sirin earned her Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. Her major research areas are ethnic conflict,



political psychology, military interventions, and foreign policy decision making. Her dissertation examined

how political information and the stages of intervention help us explain why citizens would support military interventions. One of the highlights of her work is use of psychological experimentation, which is not often use in our discipline. Her work was supported by a Dissertation Research Award in 2007 from Texas A&M College of Liberal Arts.

Dr. Sirin believes that critical thinking flourishes from an interest in the subject. To help foster such interest, she encourages the use of debates and simulations in the classroom. She believes in teaching the value of tolerance and diversity and in customizing classroom work to accommodate different learning styles in accordance with the students' educa-

tional backgrounds and needs. She values the importance of mentorship and therefore provides guidance on students' academic progress as well as their professional development and placement.

During her off-time, she likes to sing and play music with her husband. Her musical interests encompass jazz, classical, and folk music and playing the *Baglama* (a Turkish instrument). During her time in College Station, she was the lead-singer of a Turkish folk music band that produced an album entitled *Uzak* (Turkish for "far away"). She also enjoys traveling around the world, especially to Turkey where she loves to spend time with her family.

Dr. José D. Villalobos also earned his Ph.D. from Texas A&M. His research areas include many aspects of the US presidency, mass media, studies on immigration policy, and Latino/a politics. His dissertation examined the successful adoption of policy in Congress by eleven presidential administrations from 1949-2007. He argues that their success was due to employing bureaucratic agency input in order to balance presidential managerial and information needs. His work was chosen for the American Political Science Association's 2009 Presidency Research Group Dissertation Award. Among his

many professional responsibilities, he is currently serving as president of the Midwest Latino/a Caucus.

Dr. Villalobos believes in a strong foundation of trust, respect, and professionalism between professors and students in order for the exchange



of ideas to be effective. Active engagement with students, he believes, is a reminder that the teacher-student relationship is a two-way street. He emphasizes that assigned readings and texts often demand thoughtful interpretation, and students learn best how to do this through interactive discussions and writing exercises.

On a personal note, he likes to play guitar and experiment with recipes. He is a big fan of road trips and other travel adventures. Most recently, he was able to visit the city of Troy in Turkey, see Niagara Falls, and explore the Smithsonian museums in D.C. Occasionally, he likes to unwind with his wife by renting DVDs of their favorite television shows and watching a few episodes while eating stuffed crust supreme pizza and ice cream.

CHAIR'S MESSAGE BY GREG SCHMIDT

This newsletter shows some of the highlights in the Political Science Department over the past year. In addition to the event honoring Dr. Joseph Graves (see article in this issue), UTEP recognized Dr. Kathleen Staudt and Mr. Richard Gutierrez for 30 and 20 years of outstanding service, respectively. These and other veteran faculty members continue to serve the department, UTEP, and the Paso del Norte community with distinction.

We also continue to make progress in improving the undergraduate and M.A. programs. We are hopeful that our new Ph.D. program will be approved soon. Thanks to Dr. Villalobos, the department has been able to improve its webpage. Of special significance are a ticker and a new section, "Award and Job Opportunities" for students. More improvements are in the works. We encourage you to visit us by going to the UTEP homepage (<http://www.utep.edu/>) and entering "Political Science" in the search engine in the lower right hand corner.

IN MEMORIAM

We report with great sadness the passing of Jean Graves, the beloved wife of Professor Joseph Graves, on October 21, 2009. She was an adored mother of four daughters and a darling of six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

She was an avid reader, animal lover and fan of UTEP basketball. Her family remembers her as an independent and spirited woman. She will be missed by all who loved her.

AN EXPERIENCE WITH LABOR BY PAMELA CRUZ

During the summer semester of 2009, I had the good fortune to intern with the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) Procurement Division at the United States Department of Labor. I applied through the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). This program allows students to gain professional working skills and a fantastic opportunity to acquire knowledgeable insight within the federal government and private corporations.

It was an honor to work at the federal

Labor, and unforgettable memories pertaining to my work and non-work experience in Washington D.C.

In the Procurement Division, I was in charge of logging in all Acquisi-

I also had the opportunity to attend Lockheed Martin Professional Development STARS workshops, the State Department's Annual Intern Summit with Hillary Clinton as the key-

note speaker, and to meet the Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solís.

I am in truly indebted to HACU, individuals who work in



Pamela Cruz with US Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solís

"Moreover, being in Washington D.C gave me the ability to attend interesting Senate hearings, such as the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing of the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court."

level. I gained valuable insight on possible career options, knowledge on the inner workings of an office within the Department of

tion Screening and Review Forms, update a directory for SDVOSB (Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses) of those interested in doing business with the Department, present weekly reports, attend staff and division meetings, and assist OSBP staff in daily functions. Moreover, being in Washington D.C gave me the ability to attend interesting Senate hearings, such as the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing of the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court. Other Senate hearings included the Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee nomination hearing for Aaron Williams, the next Peace Corps director.

the Office of Small Business Programs and everyone who supported me along the way. I was given advice on my career, encouraged to keep learning and made my stay at the Department of Labor full of laughter and great memories. HACU really does stand by its motto, "opening the doors of opportunity." The internship was a true learning experience and certain to help my career development in the field of political science.



UTEP'S ACTIVE POLITICAL SCIENCE HONOR STUDENTS

BY LISA HAIRSTON

First things first, Happy New Year from Pi Sigma Alpha, Epsilon Epsilon Chapter. Fall of 2009 was especially busy for the chapter with events that ranged from tailgating to hosting our first annual debate. The chapter attended the Pete Domenici Public Administration conference at New Mexico State University and snapped photos with Secretary of Defense Janet Napolitano. PSA attended the El Paso Chamber of Commerce Gala and got a chance to talk briefly with Governor Perry and Mayor Cook. We inducted seven members into the national organization and hosted our first



Students and Faculty at the 2009 Pi Sigma Alpha Induction Ceremony

ever debate featuring other politically affiliated groups around campus. But do not think we were all work and no play; we tailgated

for homecoming 2009 and celebrated all of our hard work with a bash at the end of the semester. The chapter had a wonderful fall and we are looking forward to making Spring 2010 even better.

Students interested in joining Pi Sigma Alpha or just sitting in on a meeting or two to find out what we are all about, contact Lisa Hairston at lhairston@miners.utep.edu, or Dr. Taeko Hiroi at thi-roi@utep.edu. You can also stop on Tuesdays at 3pm in Benedict Hall Room 205 for our weekly meetings. Go Miners!

MY EXPERIENCE AT THE DANISH ATLANTIC YOUTH SEMINAR, 2009

BY NICHOLAS KOMOROWSKI

I recently had the great opportunity to attend the 2009 Danish Atlantic Youth Seminar (DAYS) hosted by the Youth Atlantic Treaty Association in Aalborg,

Denmark. Running from July 6th to July 12th, the seminar was

held at a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) airbase and covered the future of NATO-Russian relations. Guest speakers included academic and professional experts on NATO, Russia, and the Caucasus region. Not only did DAYS involve lectures, but also guided workgroups where students discussed pertinent topics and developed concepts and strategies for addressing current and perceived future issues.

Students who attended the seminar hailed from a diverse range of

countries and backgrounds. In order to attend, students travelled from Northern Europe, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azer-

Georgia, and the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. There was also extensive exposure to the points of view of students from within those areas and more closely affected by events.

As a result, I am able to bring this experience, as well as a developed understanding of the



baijan. I was one of four American students out of a total of forty which speaks to the diversity of the attendees.

Through this seminar, I was able to gain a greater awareness of the issues faced by NATO with respect to recent energy supply crises, the Russian invasion of

issues being dealt with by NATO, to my studies and research. I will also be able to spread this knowledge to my peers and colleagues.

Overall, the experiences I gained at DAYS have been extremely rewarding and will benefit my studies and UTEP.

"I was able to gain a greater awareness of the issues faced by NATO with respect to recent energy supply crises, the Russian invasion of Georgia, and the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan."

REMEMBERING WITH TONY KRUSZEWSKI

Professor Z. Anthony Kruszewski's life, one can easily conclude, has been extraordinary. This spring alum, students, and faculty will gather to remember with him episodes of history that were a mixture of the worst and best of humanity.

He will be the keynote speaker for a dinner to be held on March 24, 2009 at The El Paso Holocaust Museum. His presentation, "The Hidden Aspects of WW II History," will focus on the eastern European campaigns with a focus on the anti-Nazi Polish resistance.

For Prof. Kruszewski, these events are not purely academic. As a personal eyewitness and participant in the efforts to fight extreme intolerance, he knows too well the horror and heroics that many of us can only imag-



ine from reading textbooks or viewing black and white footage. His participation began at the very start of the German invasion, 1939, in the Fire Spotter Alert Units during the Siege of Warsaw. In the spring of 1943, at the age of 15, he joined the Polish Home Army Scouting Units. During this time he participated in anti-Nazi sabotage activities and spying on troop movements. This early work earned him his own command in the summer of 1944 when he was also given his code name, "Jupiter."

In this capacity, he participated in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. He and his comrades were tasked to destroy enemy tanks. The only

weapon available to them—simple Molotov Cocktails! He also volunteered to carry coded messages across occupied territory using 3 miles of sewage tunnels. It was during one mission that he was caught and scheduled to be executed. It was only through the courage of an anti-Nazi German soldier that he managed to escape the prison camp and his sentence.



We hope that you will be able to attend the Kruszewski remembrance dinner and hear more about the events during those pivotal times. Proceeds will help fund a student scholarship fund that will bare his name. We will be sending out invitations in the coming days, so please save the date!

GENERATIONS COME TO HONOR JOE GRAVES



A packed room turned out to honor Professor Joseph B. Graves' 45 years of service at the Stateline Restaurant.

Alum, colleagues, students, and family exchanged fabulous stories, all of which centered on how

they were positively impacted by his work at UTEP (see Spring 2009 newsletter).

The Honorable J. Manuel

Bañales, Presiding Judge of the Fifth Administrative Judicial Region of Texas, traveled from Corpus Christi with his wife Peggy to share his gratitude for Prof. Graves' contribution to his success. Many joined him by voicing

their personal appreciation.

Colleagues, past and present, also provided some lighthearted, fond memories. Associate Professor Emeritus Tom Price gave us a peak into the department's early days with his "Now That's a Fire!" story.

Thanks to everyone a successful event and for your contributions to the Joseph Graves Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in contributing, please see the last page for details. Please be sure to note the name of the fund when you contribute.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Gold Contributors

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Mr. Richard S. Gutierrez

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Mr. Greg D. Lewis

Maj. & Mrs. Anthony Rankins

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UTEP-POLITICAL SCIENCE HOMECOMING 2009



We had a great turnout for last year's homecoming celebration. Alum came by to reacquaint with their former professors and learn more about the changes in the department.

We also awarded graduate student Irene Mendoza with the Thomas Cook Award and undergraduate student Adrian Acosta with the Joseph Ray Award.



Thank you to all those that came out. We look forward to seeing more faces at Homecoming 2010!



POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY ACTIVITY

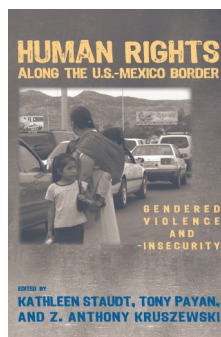
As usual, the faculty have been maintaining a high level of productivity by contributing to scholarship in many ways.

Dr. Taeko Hiroi published a coauthored article, "Perils of Parliamentarism? Political Systems and the Stability of Democracy Revisited," in the journal *Democratization*. She also authored "Exchange Rate Regime, Central Bank Independence, and Political Business Cycles in Brazil" in the journal *Studies in Comparative International Development*. Dr.

Hiroi recently won UTEP's University Research Institute Research Grant to study political corruption.

Dr. Greg Schmidt published "The Election of Women in List PR Systems: Testing the Conventional Wisdom" in *Electoral Studies*. He also undertook research in Peru on political parties, the re-election of women, and vote fraud.

Drs. Kathleen Staudt, Tony Payan, and Tony Kruszewski edited a book titled *Human Rights along the U.S.-Mexico Border: Gendered*



& Noble on Sunland Park Dr. on Feb 14 at 2 pm.

Drs. Staudt and Payan also brought together experts for *The*

Violence and Insecurity (University of Arizona Press). They will have a presentation and singing at the Barnes

Global Public Policy Forum on the War on Drugs on Sept 21-22 to discuss the 40 year anniversary of the U.S. War on Drugs. The conference was covered by San Diego, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas newspapers, as well as the Economist and Cato Institute.

Dr. José Villalobos published four coauthored articles in the following journals: *Review of Policy Research*, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Administration & Society*, and *Political Research Quarterly*.



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Supporting your alma mater has always been very critical to us. Over the years, we've deeply appreciated your financial assistance.

UTEP's Political Science Department is attracting diverse and outstanding scholars to an already respected faculty. We have dynamic students, with enormous potential. Everything we do is geared to developing high quality students, enriching our campus intellectually, and increasing the understanding of local and global events through our research. In short, we are doing our part to make UTEP a

nationally recognized institution of higher learning. Exciting things are happening in the department and your gift helps make them happen.

Consider giving at the \$50, \$100, or \$500 levels. Whatever your level of contribution, your generosity is deeply appreciated and will be wisely used. There will be a special recognition of donors at our annual homecoming celebration and in the newsletter.

On behalf of faculty and staff, our sincere thanks and best wishes to you.

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