

**APRIL 2011 POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER
PENN STATE ERIE, THE BEHREND COLLEGE**

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1. GRADUATING SENIORS AND THEIR PLANS

If they complete all degree requirements next month, 18 political science majors will be graduating from Penn State Behrend at the commencement ceremony on May 14. This is the most political science majors to graduate from Behrend in one semester in the College's history.

These 18 majors include Miranda Abu-Farha, Jacob Bowen, Cody Brown, Michael Gillespie, Troy Guthrie, Dan Hido, Maya Hoffman, Will Keller, Evan Koser, Alexandra Ley, Matt Milbert, Adrienne Morris, Joe Rodrigues, Connor Sattely, Amanda Schifko, Chris Sinclair, Marla Whitney, and Michael Wright. In addition, if they complete all degree requirements next month, 5 political science minors will be graduating from Penn State Behrend - they are Harmilee Cousin, Michael Fultz, Dan Hood, Greg Mancini, and Danielle Young.

Some graduating seniors have specific plans of where they plan to go or what they plan to do when they graduate. Others are currently exploring options, which is normal - many of your faculty members did not decide that they wanted to be college professors until taking some time off from school for a while. Here are some of the plans of our graduating political science majors:

Miranda Abu-Farha plans to get a master's degree in student affairs/counseling and hopes to become a university program coordinator who designs programs that promote diversity, equality, and international awareness. In the longer term, she hopes to pursue a PhD and possibly obtain a job with the United Nations.

Jacob Bowen plans to attend graduate school and is currently exploring programs.

Cody Brown will be attending Edinboro University to obtain teacher certification and a master's degree in education.

Michael Gillespie, who is in the National Guard, has been deployed to Spain in support of the US and NATO mission in Libya.

Dan Hido will be attending Cornell University Law School.

Maya Hoffman will be taking the foreign service exam in June and may move to Washington DC and seek work with a NGO there.

Will Keller has completed Officer Candidate School and will be commissioned as an officer in the US Marine Corps as a second lieutenant.

Evan Koser will be attending Duquesne University Law School.

Matt Milbert will be pursuing a career in criminal justice, preferably in parole or probation, at the county or state level.

Connor Sattely will be pursuing a master's degree at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. The Graduate Institute is a bilingual institution (English and French) where the majority of students are European and over a hundred nationalities are represented.

Amanda Schiffko is seeking employment and may seek a PhD in history in the future.

Chris Sinclair plans to work for a year and then pursue a PhD degree in an area in which he can explore his interests in the history of ideas.

Marla Whitney will be attending the University of Pittsburgh to obtain social studies teaching certification and a master's degree in education.

Michael Wright is current exploring graduate school and government employment options.

All of us on the political science faculty wish our future alumni the best with their plans and careers and congratulate the graduating seniors on their academic achievements.

2. STUDENT GROUPS ORGANIZE PROTEST RALLY ON APRIL 21 ABOUT PROPOSED PSU BUDGET CUTS

On Thursday, April 21, at Noon, several political science majors and student groups are organizing a protest rally about Governor Corbett's proposed budget cuts for Penn State. The rally will take place in the outdoor area between the Reed Building (near the Bruno's entrance) and Perry Hall. State Representative Pat Harkins is expected to speak in support of the students, and SGA leaders are expected to speak as well. There will likely be significant local media coverage.

3. STUDENT GROUPS ORGANIZE TOWN HALL MEETING WITH STATE LEGISLATORS ON APRIL 29 TO DISCUSS PROPOSED PSU BUDGET CUTS

On Friday, April 29, at 2 PM in the McGarvey Commons of the Reed Building, several political science majors and student groups are organizing a town hall meeting to give students, faculty members, and concerned community members the opportunity to make comments and ask questions to local state legislators about Governor Corbett's proposed budget cuts for Penn State. State Senator Jane Earll, and State Representatives Curt Sonney, Pat Harkins, and Flo Fabrizio have all confirmed their attendance to speak to their constituents about the issue. Dr. Robert Speel, associate professor of political science, will serve as moderator.

4. POLITICAL SCIENCE DINNER AT OLIVE GARDEN ON THURSDAY, APRIL 21

Our annual dinner will take place at The Olive Garden on Peach Street on Thursday, April 21, at 7:30 PM. Most political science faculty will be in attendance.

All students are invited, including political science majors, political science minors, and any friends or significant others. We use the regular menu, and each person present pays for his or her own meal (except graduating seniors). A good time is generally had by all each year.

If you would like to attend and have not already sent a RSVP, please RSVP immediately to Dr. Speel so that he can reserve the right number of tables at the restaurant on Thursday evening.

5. BEHREND POLITICAL SCIENCE ALUMNA WINS UNIVERSITY AWARD

North East native Melissa Hayes Shirey, a 1997 alumna of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, is a recipient of the 2011 Penn State Alumni Achievement Award presented by the University's Alumni Association. Shirey is an attorney and founding member at The Family Law Group, LLC, in Erie, which focuses on adoptions, surrogacy matters, guardianships and other family law matters.

Established in 2005, the Alumni Achievement Award recognizes Penn State alumni 35 years of age and younger for their extraordinary accomplishments. These young alumni demonstrate to students that Penn State alumni succeed in exceptional fashion at an early age.

Shirey has successfully litigated cases at both the Pennsylvania trial court level and before the Pennsylvania Superior Court.

Notably, one of Shirey's cases received national media attention and established Pennsylvania law regarding the custody rights of a biological parent versus a surrogate. She represented the biological father and successfully restored custody of triplets to him after the surrogate assumed custody after their birth. Shirey also worked to establish a procedure in Erie County to allow birth certificates to immediately reflect the intended parents' names in surrogacy births.

"Melissa is a shining example of a young alumna who has succeeded professionally and dedicated herself to her clients, causes and community," said Dr. Steven Hicks, director of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. "She leads by example with her volunteer efforts, and shows how alumni can stay connected to Penn State Behrend after graduation."

Shirey serves on the board of New Blossoms, New Life Foundation, a non-profit that provides childless families with access to reproductive technology, and on the Erie County Bar Association's Board of Directors. She is an adjunct lecturer in political science at Penn State Behrend and sits on the college's Political Science Advisory Board and H&SS Community Advisory Board.

She earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Penn State Behrend, a master's degree in public administration from Gannon University and a J.D. from Ohio State University.

Shirey and her husband, Michael '94, '98 M.B.A, live in North East, and have twin boys, Grant and Gavin.

Shirey was one of 12 Penn State alumni who were presented with the 2011 Alumni Achievement Award. Each was honored in a ceremony on April 8, at the Nittany Lion Inn on the University Park campus, and received a commemorative medal designed by Jeanne Stevens-Sollman '72g, an internationally recognized artist in the field of medallic sculpture and a 2007 Penn State Alumni Fellow.

6. PL SC 020 ADDED TO FALL 2011 SCHEDULE

PL SC 020, Comparative Politics of Western Europe, has been added to the Fall 2011 schedule since the last newsletter. The course, to be taught by Dr. Zachary Irwin on MWF 2:30-3:20 PM, fulfills GS and IL general education requirements and the comparative politics requirement within the political science major.

7. FIRST PI SIGMA ALPHA INDUCTION CEREMONY ON APRIL 26

On the evening of April 26 at the Metzgar Center, Penn State Behrend will hold its first induction ceremony for its new chapter of the Pi Sigma Alpha national political science honor society. Eight students and four faculty members will be inducted that evening as charter members of Behrend's new chapter. The eight students include Miranda Abu-Farha, Amanda Schiffko, Marla Whitney, Adam Fracassi, David Kazimierczak, Connor Sattely, Evan Koser, and Will Keller. Dr. John Gamble, Dr. Zachary Irwin, Dr. Robert Speel, and Dr. Celise Schneider-Rickrode will also be inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha during the ceremony. Dr. Robert Roecklein, lecturer in English, has a PhD in political science from Rutgers University and was a member of Pi Sigma Alpha as an undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame, and he will preside over the Behrend induction ceremony. Representatives of the Pi Sigma Alpha chapter at Mercyhurst College will also be present.

8. STUDENT GROUP NEWS

All political student groups on campus are in the process of choosing new leaders for next year.

College Democrats will be holding elections for new leaders later this week, tentatively on late Thursday afternoon. For details, contact current president Samantha Wilcox at skw5062@psu.edu.

David Kazimierczak will be the new president of **College Republicans** next year. Sal Messina will be vice president, and Amy Wagner will be Treasurer. The group still needs to fill two other officer positions - if you are interested contact David at dak5183@psu.edu.

Adam Fracassi has been reelected as president of the **Political Science Society**. Natalie Dombkowski will be treasurer, and Adam Gracy will be Secretary. The group is looking for a vice president - to express interest, contact Adam at als5589@psu.edu.

David Kazimierczak will be president and Adam Fracassi will be vice president of the Behrend chapter of **Pi Sigma Alpha** political science honor society in the chapter's first year.

9. STUDENTS IN THE NEWS

Four political science majors won awards at last Sunday's Honors and Awards Convocation on the Penn State Behrend campus.

Adam Fracassi was named as Outstanding Student Organization Officer and won the T. Reed Ferguson Award. The Ferguson Award recognizes a junior who has demonstrated scholarship, leadership, and citizenship that has impacted fellow students through his or her academic and out-of-class involvement and gives promise of further achievement in the senior year.

Cody Brown was named as Outstanding Student Organization President and won the Rose Cologne Keystone Citizen Award and the Christopher M. Geitner Award. The Keystone Citizen award is given to a student who has made valuable contributions in the areas of service and volunteerism to the Penn State community and its surrounding areas. The Geitner Award is presented to a Penn State Behrend student who demonstrates extraordinary characteristics of leadership and civility.

Connor Sattely won the Amber K. Heeter Memorial Award and the John W. Oswald Award and was named for Outstanding Achievement in Communication (Connor is a double major in communication). The Heeter Award recognizes a student majoring or minoring in political science who plans to attend graduate or professional school and has contributed to community or public service efforts in the past year. The Oswald Award recognizes a graduating senior who has provided outstanding leadership in at least one of several areas of student leadership activity at Penn State University.

Dan Hido was named Outstanding Political Science Major.

Congratulations to all political science majors who won awards!

10. FACULTY IN THE NEWS

Dr. John Gamble gave an invited lecture on April 4 at the Penn State Dickinson School of Law campus in Carlisle, PA. The lecture was transmitted via teleconference to Penn State Dickinson law students at the University Park campus.

Dr. Robert Speel was interviewed for three articles that appeared in the *Erie Times-News* over the past three weeks, an article about the possibility of former Representative Kathy Dahlkemper running for Congress again, an article about Representative Mike Kelly's first hundred days in Congress, and an article about the reentry into politics of former Erie Mayor Rick Filippi.

11. FINAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR

The next Penn State Behrend political science newsletter will be sent out in September 2011.

We wish everyone the best of luck with final exams and final papers. For those who will not return to campus in the Fall, we will miss you and wish you the best for your future. For those who will return in the Fall, have a good Summer, and we look forward to seeing you again in late August.