“Data now stream from daily life: from phones and credit cards and televisions and computers; from the infra-struc-<t><tt>ture of cities; from sensor-equipped buildings, trains, buses, planes, bridges, and factories. The data flow so fast that the total accumulation of the past two years—a zettabyte—dwarfs the prior record of human civilization. There is a big data revolution.”

Harvard Political Science Professor Gary King
Harvard Magazine, March-April 2014

Recent developments in the compilation and analysis of massive amounts of data across diverse fields have transformed researchers’ ability to learn about the world around us. With the rise of technology and increasingly easy access to digital records of human actions – the text of political speeches, online media, news events databases, public opinion data, and online repositories of social and political activities – the social sciences will be reshaped by the ability to study human behavior in ways that were impossible even just a few years ago. In 2012, the University of Iowa launched the Informatics Initiative, with twenty new faculty lines dedicated to enhance our expertise in computing, engineering, and graphics with data applications in health, climate, humanities, business, and the social sciences. The Political Science department is involved in this big data revolution through our research projects, our innovations in course offerings and technology in the classroom, and by providing leadership in the creation of a new certificate in Social Science Data Analytics. We hope to hire a faculty member in the Informatics Cluster to enhance our research and teaching in this important field.

Professor Caroline Tolbert has been studying the digital divide to see how inequalities in internet access and usage influence political participation and behavior. Only 7 in 10 Americans have home broadband access and these numbers drop to 1 in 2 in 10 for African Americans or Latinos. Professor Tolbert has generated estimates of the actual percentage of the population online across urban areas in the United States. These geographic data expose inequalities in internet use, including barriers to access based on affordability and cost. They provide policymakers opportunities
to target geographic areas of need, a very useful tool in states like Iowa where Governor Branstad has identified a goal of providing internet access to all Iowa citizens.

Big data is also playing an important role in campaigns. The analysis of up to 150 variables for 160 million American voters contributed to President Obama’s successful 2012 reelection campaign. Bayesian statistics and big data were also used by political scientists and pollsters to aggregate thousands of public opinion polls conducted in each of the fifty states to accurately predict the winner of the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. These same tools of Bayesian statistics and big data can be leveraged to improve predictions of financial crises, natural disasters, outbreaks of the flu, and international violence.

Advanced statistics and big data have helped political scientists understand dissent and protest in authoritarian countries. Professor Bob Boynton and undergraduate students in his UI courses have collected massive streams of online Twitter data covering the Egyptian democratic protests, Iraq and Afghanistan wars, U.S. presidential primaries, and general elections. In analyzing millions of Twitter feeds, his research shows that tweets about politics are distinctive from overall Twitter messages; they are three times more likely to include a URL linking to another page and they are more likely to be retweeted or include a hashtag. Scholars are also analyzing big data to predict the occurrence of hate crimes, intrastate violence, military battles, and torture. Machine learning and coding of thousands of events using international newspapers and textual coding of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reports have improved our predictions of violence and torture cross-nationally. New software applications provide up to the minute world maps of U.S. drone attacks based on text analysis of international newspapers and geocoding of events.

Two of our Alumni Advisory Board Members, Larry Grisolano and Matt Wise, are teaching a one week course on “Politics and Big Data” in the spring semester to help our students learn more about big data strategies in campaigns and elections. We are also hosting a public forum on this topic on April 30th involving several Board Members and UI Faculty.

The question that drives my research is whether women who are elected to public office represent women’s interests in the legislature, the governor’s office, or even the presidency (maybe in 2016)! From other researchers and interactions with state legislators, we know that many women legislators claim to represent women by sharing their experiences as women in the legislature, suggesting new items to the legislative agenda, and blocking legislation that they deem detrimental to women’s interests. One problem with these assertions for my research, however, is how political parties shape the ways in which women legislators engage in these activities meant to represent women.

Recently, I traveled to Phoenix, Arizona, to conduct interviews with women state legislators in the Arizona House of Representatives. Through these interviews, I learned that Republican and Democratic women view different issues as “women’s issues.” Women state legislators also have different opportunities to express and promote their versions of women’s issues when their party is in the majority in the chamber. Interestingly, we know less about how Republican women relate to women’s issues, which are often defined as issues associated with the Democratic Party. At a recent conference on “Women, Gender, and Conservative Parties in the 21st Century” at Case Western Reserve University, the participants noted that our understanding of women in conservative parties is lacking in many countries across the world. Women legislators are less frequently elected from conservative parties in most countries, and conservative parties themselves struggle in many places to integrate women’s interests to their party platforms. As I move to collecting more interview data with legislators in Iowa, Washington, and Arkansas, I hope to uncover more about women in the Republican party, especially as it varies from state to state.

How Do (Partisan) Women Legislate?

by Tracy Osborn
Over the past thirty years, income inequality has risen dramatically in the United States, nearly all of the world's advanced democracies, and much of the developing world. The ongoing world financial crisis has only highlighted the extent to which richer people have pulled away from their fellow citizens and sparked both protest movements and renewed academic interest.

Hosted by the Department of Political Science, the Public Policy Center, and the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, this one day conference brought together faculty from a number of UI departments, including several faculty members and students from Political Science, and guest presenters from Northwestern, ISU, and the University of Tennessee to discuss their ongoing research on economic inequality and other public policy disparities. Professors Frederick Solt and Julianna Pacheco described their work towards measuring income, educational, and health inequalities across the U.S. states, building on Solt's previous work providing comparable measures of income inequality across countries and Pacheco's work on health disparities. Professor Caroline Tolbert and Political Science Ph.D. candidate Christopher Anderson presented on how the “digital divide” works to reinforce other aspects of economic inequality.

Political Science graduate students also presented research that sheds new light on the relationships between inequality and politics. Christine Bricker discussed findings from the Hawkeye Poll that two-thirds of Iowans consider inequality in wealth to be a major problem in this country. Shuai Jin revealed how the rapid rise of inequality in China over the past decade has shaped Chinese political attitudes. Chris Eubanks mapped how land inequalities in Kenya triggered violence in that country’s last elections. Michael Ritter discussed his research on how higher levels of income inequality result in lower levels of campaign participation in the United States. All participants agreed that the conference was a great success. UI Political Science will continue to contribute to our understanding of this and other vitally important political problems facing the nation and the world.

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Inequality, Politics, and Policy Conference

by Frederick Solt

The University of Iowa and the Herbert Hoover Presidential Foundation sponsored the second annual Institute for Civic Engagement. The Institute provided nineteen secondary school teachers with academic material and practical, first-hand advice to help them incorporate public service content into their courses and involve their students in civic activities outside the classroom. Structured as a two-semester hour graduate course, teachers completed online activities prior to the Institute, and then came to UI for three days of panels and presentations by UI faculty and other secondary teachers who have experience creating and conducting their own lesson plans and civic engagement projects. Each presentation was followed by a “break-out” session for the teachers to share their own ideas with one another and with the presenters. The teachers also visited the Hoover Presidential Library where they learned about Hoover’s career in public service and the Library’s many resources.
Mentoring Activities
by Fred Boehmke, Kelly Kadera, Wenfang Tang & Martha Kirby

At the Graduate level, we organized our first ever pre-job market graduate student exchange in September. In cooperation with the Director of Graduate Studies at the University of Illinois, our DGS, Fred Boehmke, coordinated trips from three of their students to Iowa City, followed a week later by a visit from three of our graduate students to Urbana-Champaign. The exchange provided an opportunity for students to prepare for the rigors of academic job interviews by presenting their research to faculty and students followed by one-on-one interviews with faculty and a casual happy hour before returning home.

The three Iowa students, Dongkyu Kim, Rebecca Kreitzer, and Emily Schilling, visited the University of Illinois on Friday, September 12 and were accompanied by UI faculty member, Kelly Kadera, Illinois alumnae, and devoted Murphy’s fan. The three Illinois graduate students who visited Iowa were Evangeline Reynolds, Gina Martinez, and Ashly Townsen. By all reports, the visits were a great success for the students involved, but also for everyone else who had a chance to learn about research by students at another university.

At the Undergraduate level, our goal is to prepare undergraduate students for an increasingly competitive job market and graduate school admission. Students hone their research skills through mentored research projects with departmental faculty, some resulting in co-authored publications and conference presentations. The department regularly offers career development workshops focused on law school, international careers, local government, and a general professional development workshop conducted by the Political Science Advisory Board members in conjunction with their annual meeting.

We encourage our undergraduate students to develop their professional skills through internships, leadership in student organizations, and relevant part-time employment. Students may earn elective credit for part-time internships with political campaigns, government offices, and non-profit policy and diplomacy organizations or choose a full time internship semester through the department’s Des Moines Internship Program, the Washington Center Internship Program, and the U.S. Department of State. The addition of a full time academic advisor has strengthened the department’s efforts to help students develop and connect their academic and professional goals.
Message from the Chair

Sara M. Mitchell
Professor & Chair

Thank you for reading the 2014 Poligram newsletter! As in past years, this issue is full of good news about our students, faculty, and alumni. Our front cover story highlights the increasing importance of big data in campaigns and politics more broadly. The newsletter also describes interesting research projects that our faculty members are working on focusing on women legislators (Tracy Osborn), international law and territorial disputes (Alyssa Prorok), civic engagement (Cary Covington), and voter ID laws (Rene Rocha). The newsletter describes several conferences that the Department hosted this past year, including conferences on inequality and civil wars. Three of our graduate students gave practice job talks at the University of Illinois and we hosted three of their students at UI in this productive exchange. We have continued our initiatives to engage our alumni through the Advisory Board and our career workshop series. We are also launching a new fundraising campaign to provide financial support for student internships. Please take a few moments to learn more about what is happening in the Department in this year's Poligram. We are grateful to our alumni who provide generous support for these initiatives and programs!

Warm regards,

Sara

Faculty News:

Professor Tom Rice, who served as the Associate Provost for Faculty for four and a half years, recently accepted a newly created position as Faculty Director of the University of Iowa's John and Mary Pappajohn Educational Center in Des Moines. In his new role, Tom will facilitate relationships between UI academic deans, their faculty, and Des Moines area education, business, and non-profit leaders, with the dual goal of expanding Des Moines-based UI educational programming and enhancing outreach assistance to central Iowa. He will also assist the Office of Admissions with recruitment of students in the Des Moines area. Tom has relocated to Des Moines and looks forward to connecting with political science alumni in the area. He can be reached at tom-rice@uiowa.edu.

Books & Articles:

Rene Rocha published “The Politics of Race and Voter ID Laws in the States” in Political Research Quarterly. The study asked whether the use of voter ID regulations affects turnout across racial groups. The findings suggest that minority turnout is not uniquely affected by voter ID regulations. This conclusion should lessen some of the normative fears associated with such regulations.

Alyssa Prorok’s article, “International Law and the Consolidation of Peace following Territorial Change,” will be published in the Journal of Politics. Coauthored with Paul Huth from the University of Maryland, this study examines whether international law can facilitate the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes between countries. Results suggest that legal considerations do, under certain conditions, promote peaceful interstate relations.

Former U.S. Rep. and Advisory Board member, David Bonior, released his memoir, “Eastside Kid” on November 11. David describes the book as his early memories of growing up in Detroit. It is about an American town where he took his first step, said his first word, and learned the fundamental life lessons that made him the legislator he was and the person he will always be.

Grants:

Sara Mitchell is Senior Personnel on a recently funded National Science Foundation (NSF) Grant Award of $599,383 to the University of Iowa entitled “Decision Processes, Climate Change, and Water Resources in the Agricultural Midwest.” The grant involves UI faculty in Engineering, Geoscience, Geography, Communication Studies, and Urban and Regional Planning. The grant seeks to understand how land management activities by farmers in Iowa affects water sustainability, especially in the context of changing climate conditions.

Douglas Dion is part of the Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM) summer institute board as the co-Principal Investigator. The NSF awarded $165,000 to the University of Houston’s Hobby Center for Public Policy (HCPP) in support of a two-week program that teaches the three-step EITM framework. The purpose of this framework is to establish a transparent relationship between theory and empirical testing and lead to cumulation of knowledge. The grant will help students with the expenses of attending the conference, as well as with facilitating the workshops. Professor Dion will mentor students in the program.

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Jeffrey Ding was awarded a Udall Memorial Scholarship honorable mention (the 100 scholarships and honorable mentions are given to college students who have demonstrated commitment to careers related to the environment) and the Stanley Undergraduate Award for International Research. He will work with Professor Wenfang Tang to analyze the effect of environmental issues and protests in China on the degree of political trust and government legitimacy.

Kelly Daniels was awarded the Rhodes Dunlap and James D. Robertson scholarships by the Honors Program last spring. She recently accepted membership into Phi Beta Kappa and is pursuing a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations (Conflict and Policy).

Emily Schilling Ballard Seashore Award

The University of Iowa selected one of our graduate students, Emily Schilling, as the recipient of the highly competitive Ballard Seashore Award for the 2014-2015 academic year. Emily’s dissertation focuses on the dependence that exists between legislators. Decades of congressional research emphasizes how legislators’ decisions are conditional on those made by their colleagues. Extant empirical methods struggle to capture the resulting interdependent nature of legislators’ actions. This project seeks to address this gap through the use of new statistical techniques that provide a more appropriate way to detect theoretically predicted forms of interdependence. Specifically, Emily uses spatial regression techniques to model and estimate the presence of interdependence between legislators.
Professor Emeritus Joel D. Barkan, a member of the Department for over four decades, died suddenly on January 10th. He was at work on a comparative study of 17 sub-Saharan African legislatures, the crowning achievement of his life-long study of the role of legislatures on that continent.

Barkan visited Kenya for the first time before his senior year in college as a participant in Crossroads Africa, a forerunner of the Peace Corps. He received his undergraduate education at Cornell University and his Ph.D. from UCLA. In 1972 he was appointed at Iowa to strengthen teaching and research on the role of legislatures in developing countries. That was the field in which he became a pre-eminent expert, the subject of his teaching and of his publications in five books and over 50 articles.

Barkan was department chair from 1985 to 1987. His interests crossed disciplines, he was devoted to international studies, and he had a life-long commitment to relating his research to problems of democratization both in Africa and in rural societies throughout the world. He was the founding Director of the University of Iowa’s Center for International and Comparative Studies and was twice chair of its African Studies Program. To honor Barkan’s vision and contributions in the creation of what is now International Programs, the University has created the Joel Barkan Memorial Lecture as a spotlight event within the annual Provost’s Global Forum.

After Barkan retired from teaching in 2005, he moved to Washington D.C. to devote full time to consulting and the continuation of research. He held a series of advisory appointments at the World Bank, the National Democratic Institute, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. At the time of his death he was Senior Associate at that Center.

Joel Barkan’s wife, Sandra, has had a career that paralleled his own. As Associate Dean of the Graduate College, she was a leader in promoting international studies and attracting foreign students and scholars to Iowa.

Memorial contributions in Joel’s name may be made to the Joel D. and Sandra Barkan Scholarship for Study Abroad at the University of Iowa Foundation, or to the Crossroad Springs Institute School and AIDS Orphan Care Center in Hamisi, Kenya (P.O. Box 242, East Aurora, NY 14052).

The political science community recently mourned the loss of Dr. Jewel Prestage. Dr. Prestage completed her Ph.D. at the University of Iowa in 1954. She graduated at the age of 22, a fact I often mention to our current graduate students. She also was the first African-American woman to earn a Ph.D. in political science in the U.S.

After leaving Iowa, she spent most of her career at Southern University. During her time at Southern, she served as chair of the Department of Political Science and as Dean of the School of Public Policy & Urban Affairs. She finished her career at Prairie View A&M University, where she was Dean of the Benjamin Banneker Honors College.

Dr. Prestage’s contributions were many. She mentored over forty students who entered the field and formed the early core of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. Today, NCOBPS plays an important role in mentoring African-American scholars and promoting their research.

Dr. Prestage received numerous awards and her research helped to shape our understanding of African-American politics and the intersection of gender and race.

In 2001, the Southwest Political Science Association established the Jewel L. Prestage prize for the best paper presented at its annual conference on gender, race, ethnicity and political behavior.

I last met Jewel Prestage when she visited the University of Iowa a few years ago. She spoke glowingly about her experiences with our department and the university. And she had some eye-opening stories about life as an African-American woman in Iowa City during the 1950s.

Dr. Prestage has been remembered in numerous publications since her passing. In almost all of them, one word appears: trailblazer. I cannot think of a better one.
University of Iowa students have had valuable internship experiences at a number of sites in Des Moines.

To learn more about supporting internships, contact the department at polisci@uiowa.edu.

ALUMS -- Let us know what you are up to. Email us with your updates at polisci@uiowa.edu.

STAY IN TOUCH!
Send us your updates, accomplishments and news.