

Political Science Newsletter

Number 44: June 10, 2016

First, let me offer a quick...well, let's call it an epistle, titled "Food for Thought (and vice versa)" – Ten years ago, in 2006, the USDA created a new measure related to hunger. That term "food insecurity" is defined as *limited or uncertain access to the food needed for an active, healthy life*. In places like the United States this definition more often makes sense than a literal definition of the word hunger (though that too exists), and means that using it as a measure greatly increases the percentage of people affected. One can talk about high food insecurity (which gets us much closer to "hunger"), but either way the definition wisely ignores questions of cause, blame, and the so-called deservedness or lack thereof of the men, women, and (mostly) children who often experience lack of access to adequate food. It does though nicely feed into conversations about nutrition (or as I say, food deserts and desserts), thus hinting at the specter of hunger amid abundance. So, generally, I am a fan of the term. But a recent commentary I read pointed out that the change in terminology seems to shift the narrative and perhaps reduce the human response of compassion generated by the word hunger. (Compassion, as you may know, means to be "with passion", that is, to be with victims, to feel and empathize deeply.) As someone whose research primarily utilizes narrative (story) analysis, I thought this commentary on food – and language – was worthy of thought and sharing. It gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "comfort food" too. Anyway, something to chew on...

Second, and much more importantly than my musings, the entire department wants to offer our heartfelt congratulations to each of this year's 28 new alumni (11 majors and 17 minors).

Adam Anderson (Minor)	Ben Kowalewski (Major)
Spencer Bacon (Minor)	Joseph Ledwin (Major)
Jennifer Beckman (Major)	Quentin Malloy (Minor)
Alison Bilak (Minor)	Andrew Mayo (Minor)
Dalma Bordon (Double Major)	Ian Mills (Double Major)
Jonny DiPrinzio (Major)	Mary Muha (Minor)
Devon Firestone (Minor)	Michael Murphy (Minor)
Violeta Flores (Major)	Caleb Ohmer (Double Major)
Joseph Gargano (Minor)	Dylan Radtke (Minor)
Matt Hatfield (Triple Major)	Jenna Rizzonelli (Minor)
Jordan Jaskiewicz (Minor)	Alessandra Sorto (Major)
Carly Jones (Major)	Nick Thorn (Minor)
Cory Juliano (Minor)	Tom Turk (Minor)
Harrison Kieffer (Minor)	Michael Wydro (Minor)

Their life stories are not even close to being completely told, yet as all the alumni know, it does mark an important accomplishment and a turning point toward "opportunities" that will please, challenge, reward, vex, surprise, and ultimately change them. Alumni updates, including those included here, are testimony to the fact that like those before them they are surely ready to move on, ready to enter into new worlds, and ready to seize the day. Carpe Diem! Third, before moving on to the alumni and faculty updates, department news, summer reading list, and such, there are three quick points to make.

One, **homecoming** next fall will be the weekend of **September 23-25**, with the poli sci gathering, alumni tent, football game, etc., on **Saturday the 24th**. We are hoping to see a big gathering at our

event including, perhaps, a cohort of the 2011 and 2006 majors and minors looking at 5th and 10th year reunions? Thanks much to all the alumni who were able to visit last fall too. It's a great opportunity for our current students!

Two, the annual beatdown of “underclassmenandwomen” ☺ by the faculty-senior volleyball squad did not happen this year as bad weather meant that there was no volleyball this year at the year-end beach party (no beach either and it was even too windy for Can-Jam). But, Dr. Morris still showed off his barbecuing skills, a little hoops was played on the campus court near the pavilion, and our seniors, other majors and minors, faculty, and even a few children braved the February weather (in May).

Three, we are pleased to note that **Caleb Ohmer** (Double Major – Political Science and English) won the *Carpe Diem Award* (still deemed the top award given at graduation – and you can watch his graduation speech here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uMYIj9_99Y&feature=youtu.be) Moreover, **Matt Hatfield** won the award as the top Honors student, the *Mother Borgia Egan Honors Award*. [Perhaps completing a triple major (Poli Sci, Psych, and Religious Studies) and the honors program curriculum with a 4.0 had something to do with his selection.]

Consequently I have updated and attached to the end of this email, our website document titled “The Award Winning Department” which documents the department’s unparalleled success in terms of such recognition for our students (as well as some for the faculty). But, as I noted last year, *“anyone reading these newsletters over the years knows that the department believes it is the proverbial tip of the iceberg in terms of the story that needs to be told about the accomplishments of our students, and even less so telling in terms of the quality lives led by our alumni, as you continue to contribute to your communities and families, excel in your careers and subsequent education opportunities, and model the values of a quality, liberal arts, Mercyhurst education. Our majors and minors receive an education that requires hard work, sacrifice, dedication, and – in the end – that is the only type of education that is worth getting. And, the proof that you got that at Mercyhurst from this department is – as I often tell the parents of prospective students – the alumni updates that you continue to send in and allow us to share. Thanks again!”* So, let’s get to it:

WHO’S DOING WHAT: ALUMNI UPDATES

Jason Sabol (Major '07) – The big news is that Brandy and I had our first child on July 27, 2016. His name is Harrison Roth Sabol, and he is quite the mover and shaker. He is a lot of fun and a ton of work. The past 10 months has certainly been enlightening and difficult and fun and trying and wonderful and TIRING. Being a parent is a whole new world and it does give you a fresh, if slightly blurry-eyed, perspective on things. Also, he's pretty damn cute (see attached picture). Professionally, things are going well. I'm still the Solicitor for the City of York so I'm keeping the City out of trouble, fighting blight, and trying to get businesses to pay their taxes. I argued a case in front of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in November, which was pretty exciting, and what is even more exciting is that the Supreme Court ruled unanimously in my favor. Here is a link to the decision for those of you who are interested in the Public Utility Exception to the Mercantile and Business Privilege Tax. Spoiler alert: if a corporation's rates of service aren't fixed by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, the corporation has to pay business privilege taxes now. It's kind of a big deal, because prior to this decision, corporations that had been deregulated, were still considered tax exempt public utilities. <http://www.pacourts.us/assets/opinions/Supreme/out/J-9-2016mo%20-%201026733967156974.pdf?cb=1> I'm also continuing my quest to eat all the best things, which I document in annoying detail on my Instagram at "esquireeats." If you also like to eat things that are good, you will probably like it and should add me. I look forward to hearing what's new in everybody's life and hope to one day make it to Homecoming. Small goals.

Nina Aamodt (Major '15) – I am finishing my first year at GWU in Sustainable Urban Planning on the Climate Change Policy track. Shortly after moving to Fairfax, Va, last summer I secured a federal Pathways internship in the Inspector General's office of the Department of Justice. I work in the audit division HQ, which is a block away from the White House where I take a stroll during my lunch break, and my job consists of general administrative work for both the Office of Policy and Planning and the Office of Operations. It pays reasonably well and has good benefits, and the best part is it turns into a full-time position once I have earned my degree. Although my degree is not directly related to any specific operation within the office, the Assistant Inspector General is highly encouraging of my staying and has also kindly offered to help me in any way if I find an area of interest outside of the department. I feel incredibly lucky as my supervisors are kind, supportive, and relaxed in a way. They appreciate the effort and energy that working and going to school takes, and I am afforded time to do school work while there. There are other reasons that make my work experience so great and lead me to seriously consider working for the department once I've earned my degree. The main element that I think you will appreciate especially is the leadership of Inspector General Michael Horowitz and his emphasis of organizational inclusiveness; feedback and input is encouraged and almost insisted upon from all ranks. Also, work-life balance is heavily stressed as there is an appreciation for employee contentment and hard work is frequently recognized and acknowledged throughout the organization. This quality of leadership trickles down to my division boss, the Assistant Inspector General, and to my immediate supervisor, the Director of the Office of Policy and Planning. I frequently think back to your political leadership class and get to see some of the best attributes of inclusive leadership in action. The audit division also does some great investigative work. You may have read about the DEA's \$86M plane that hasn't flown or the BOP's failure to account for armory munitions and storage of unauthorized chemical agents. Those reports and investigations were conducted by my division. For me, oversight and accountability are critical components in the maintenance of government responsibility. Certainly, ending up as an auditor is not a shabby gig, but it does require a lot of work and travel. Things could be worse. ☺ I must say, I believe my degree helped me get the job. The regional manager for the Washington office, whom I first interviewed with before the HQ office, received his undergrad in Political Science, as well as one of the interns in his office who had looked at Mercyhurst for our program but ended up staying in Virginia.

Ariel Flores (Major '14) – Since we last saw each other, I started working for the National Party of Honduras (Party of the current president and majority in Congress) I am in the Communications and Marketing Department. I manage and create strategies for social media campaigns, In addition we cover different events (social work, conferences and other activities). Furthermore I create press releases, news briefings and conduct media analysis (fact checking, analysing the impact of international news). I have had the opportunity to attend and organize, different conferences here by different US organizations such as the NDI, Heritage foundation and Leadership Institute. I also had the opportunity to attend a Political marketing and Communications summit in Miami representing the National party's Youth. I also started a NGO with my brother and friends dedicated to educating people about the impact of climate change in Honduras. We are also holding a rally were we are going to plant trees in areas which have been affected by deforestation. Climate change has affected Honduras greatly the last two years, and we want to give something back, and it is also a good opportunity for me to grow in an area other than government.

Rich Wagner (Major '96) – No exciting updates. Still alive and well. Two girls (twins) that are 6.5 going on 13. Still live just outside the beltway, still operate my own business. Same 'ol stuff. [Ed. Note: Same 'ol stuff = Rich is in year eight of the consulting business, has over 70 clients across more than 30 countries, to include Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, and much of northern Africa, works on Federal, State, and municipal government contracts (CONUS) and operations with the UN, EU, OAS, and various NATO initiatives (facility management, operations, and program support).]

Kathryn Loops (Double Major '15) – I am beginning to enter my second year of a masters program at GSPIA, where I will graduate from in 2017. My major is International Affairs/Human Security. I have been focusing classes on conflict prevention/resolution issues and refugee issues. I have been re-hired as a graduate assistant in the Russian and East European Studies center here at Pitt, and once I graduate, I will need to be replaced (Next year's seniors interested in REES + PITT I'm talking to you!). I am also visiting Russia this summer to continue my Russian language education in an intensive program that spends five weeks in Moscow. Thanks to recommendations from Dr. Federici and Fr. Simon, I got partial funding for this trip. I also was awarded the Donald Goldstein Scholarship from GSPIA. Thank you for making this possible! As an interim summer job, I will likely be a trivia host in local PGH restaurants/bars, so if you're heading my way, let me know! Mercyhurst Political Science put me on the right track for developing critical thinking skills. This task is a continuous effort and learning process, but no one jump-started this the way Dr. LSH, Dr. Ripley, Dr. Clemons, and Dr. Federici did. I found myself well-prepared for graduate classes dealing with theoretical discussions as other classmates dreaded them. As some other classmates answered questions with definitive opinions, I found myself being devil's advocate, or looking at all sides of an issue. I am eternally grateful for what the department gave me, both academically and personally. Many of the faculty supported me through difficult times and inspired me with their knowledge. If I donate to Mercyhurst, it will certainly be directly to the Political Science Department and there alone. If I could summarize what I learned in one sentence, it is that everything is more complex than common sense would have you think, and that a blend of theory and practice is best! [Ed. Note: Ya'll can indeed donate and earmark your donations to the department. Essentially we use that fund, which faculty have also donated to, for student events/trips/needs, and the vast bulk of it goes to support the relatively recently created **Political Science Faculty & Alumni Book Scholarships** which help three to five political science students a year with the cost of textbooks.]

Kristen Hudak (Major '05) – I should have sent this update before Dr. Federici's Red Sox climbed past us into first place in the AL East. My second season with the Orioles is off to a great start. It's a terrific organization and fast becoming "my family" given all the hours we put in together. I couldn't be happier. Every day brings a new challenge – often ones that I can draw on my political science studies and Mercyhurst education to figure out. I'll be traveling to Toronto, San Diego, Seattle, Los Angeles, Tampa, NYC, Boston, and Detroit with the team this year (in case anyone wants to say hello!) I also took an amazing trip to the Dominican Republic last winter where (in between lazy days on beautiful beaches), we experienced a Winter League playoff game and visited the Orioles' Baseball Academy for young Dominican prospects. I also made a quick stop in Austin to visit the Lyndon Johnson library and attend Tim Krysiak ('05)'s wedding, which was so much fun. Come to think of it, I also made it to the Harry Truman library in Independence on our recent trip to Kansas City, so I guess there's plenty of political science still in my life. Six down – eight to go. Best wishes to all – especially the class of 2016! Books – these are by no means sophisticated choices but I recently (ah, who am I kidding – in the offseason) loved Jason Gay's "Little Victories" and learned a lot from Charles Duhigg's "The Power of Habit." [Ed. Note: O's are back in first by 2.0 games currently.]

Ian Ansel (Major '14) – This being my first time participating in the alumni newsletter, I will attempt a two year recap of my endeavors since leaving the Hurst. Upon graduating I moved back home to Columbus, OH and was in search of an opportunity to play pro hockey in Europe. Long story short that goal did not come to fruition. I remained home my first year as a graduate and had a nice assortment of life experiences. First, after beginning as a volunteer during the summer of 2014 with a Libertarian campaign for state representative, I was hired as a full-time staffer until the election that November. We lost the election but I gained valuable experience and insights, especially reading sitting politicians' emails obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, and such as the extent of the gerrymandering problem, that lobbyists write all the bills, and the legal lengths the party in power will go to in order to

keep third parties off the ballot, but I digress. After the campaign I took a non-paying job with the minor league professional hockey team Cincinnati Cyclones as the coach's video assistant. This opportunity fortunately led to me realizing my dream of signing a professional hockey contract when I signed with Cincinnati a few times whenever the team was in need of an emergency back-up goalie. Check that off the bucket list. I also helped coach a local high school varsity and JV hockey team during the season as well as had the extremely fun experience of working for NBC during the NHL All-Star week which was being hosted in Columbus. Next, now sitting in the spring of 2015 and pondering my future, I decided to take a hobby I picked up that past winter, speedskating, and move to Milwaukee, WI to train at an Olympic Training Site with an Olympic development team. I have been living in Milwaukee for almost a year now and things could not be going better. Along with training full-time as a speedskater, I met my girlfriend Melanie here and we have been dating for almost 10 months. I have been working as a Zamboni driver at the facility I train at for my main employment. I do part-time fit modeling for the fashion retail company Bon Ton Stores, Inc. Most significantly, just this month I began a trial run as a research associate/journalist for the political advocacy non-profit Milwaukee Works, Inc. I feel complete now that I can continue to build upon my intellectual field of study while also continuing in athletic pursuits. I am also looking into the possibility of taking a graduate class at Marquette or an online course to qualify myself for a chance to skate for the United States at the 2017 University Games in Kazakhstan this January. Well that's about it for now, if you want to read anything I have or may write, the Milwaukee Works website is mkework.com. Final thoughts to leave you with; defend your liberty and natural rights, think for yourself, do not vote for the lesser of two evils, try to practice ethical consumption, and taxation is theft ☺ Take care!

Kristen (Brown) Cassidy (Contract Major '03) – What's new? I can't remember if I shared that we welcomed Maxwell Brown Cassidy on Black Friday. We, unfortunately, did not get a free tv with the deal. He's a great little ginger kid who smiles all the time. I read recently that we gingers make up 2% of the world's population so we are basically majestic unicorns. At least he's keeping the population from going extinct. Two days after I had him I got offered a new job. So, I went back to Railpower two weeks after I had him and spent a month transitioning. I'm now at Erie Insurance in the Customer Experience team of the Strategic Marketing Department. It's been a whirlwind since I got there - learning a new product, new processes, new players, etc, all while feeding "Brother" in the middle of the night. I can't express how tired I feel. But, it all goes so fast. I will blink and he will be leaving me for a great institution like Mercyhurst. So as tired as I feel, I'm trying not to wish it away. Books...Ha! I read one for work that I absolutely love...“Scrum: The Art of Doing Twice the Work In Half the Time.” It can be applied beyond business project management. There are chapters in the back about applying the model to third world issues (I think it was vaccinations but my mind doesn't work as clearly these days, haha) and to education. Worth the read. I started reading Predictably Irrational, and it is fascinating so far, but I have to put toothpicks in my eyelids to get one page read at night so it is slow going. All about decision making framework that can be applied to consumer behavior but also to other moments in life. I don't know what possessed me to do this, but I agreed to teach two classes at the gym Saturday mornings starting at 7:10. I regret it weekly when my alarm goes off, but it's a part of my life I just wasn't quite ready to give up. I just took Viv to Sesame Street Live and it made me think of Casey Kilroy. Hope she's doing well! I am still trying to wrap my mind around the primaries. I don't think I know anyone who supports Trump for his ideas and not because they feel forced because they are Republicans. I am not sure how we got to this point, but here we are and it feels terrifying to me.

Stefani Baughman (Double Major '15) – To anyone who will listen, I always credit the Political Science faculty for my most engaging and positive academic experiences at Mercyhurst. I look forward to hearing about the department's resilience and continued success. After completing my year as an AmeriCorps VISTA, I am looking forward to attending Georgia Tech in the Fall to pursue a Master's in International Affairs. As for a book recommendation, I recently enjoyed reading about

Armenian and Turkish identity politics in “There Was and There Was Not” by the openly subjective Meline Toumani.

Nicole Kubit (Contract Major '07) – I got married last June and I switched jobs at PPG in December. I'm now a data auditor at PPG Architectural Coatings in Cranberry Twp., PA. Auditing sounds boring to anyone who doesn't like to audit, but I love it! We had a delayed honeymoon because we didn't want to go somewhere warm when it was warm here, so we went to Universal Orlando in April and I had the chance to geek out for three days at the Wizarding World of Harry Potter! Still house hunting and hoping the market drops again soon. Had a health scare with one of our fur-babies (Baxter) last month. Turns out dogs can have hypothyroidism! I just got back from Minneapolis on Monday. Spent the holiday with my cousin and his family. The airports weren't as terrible as everyone was saying they'd be! I'm not as involved with politics and international affairs as I used to be, but it seems I'm never really that removed from it. My aunt was at the Brussels airport the day of the bombing and was right next to the blast. She's fine physically, but no one is sure when she's going to be ready to get on a plane again. Really puts things in perspective when it hits that close to home. I got the chance to finally meet my little cousin's girlfriend this weekend. She's Ukranian-Russian, or maybe Russian-Ukranian, not sure how that works, but regardless, had the chance to use some of my terrible Russian skills! She's going to take her citizenship test soon, so she made us all feel terrible that she knows more about our country's history than we do! Well, that's about all I've got. Please enjoy some pictures of our fur-babies (Baxter & Daisy) and the wedding!

Emily Francis (Minor '15) – I am interning between two organizations this summer founded by a mother and daughter... in Uganda!!! For Bright Kids Uganda, founded in 2000 by Victoria Nalongo Namusisi to support orphaned and street children due to HIV/AIDS, LRA violence, or poverty, I am working in the offices with their contact person who oversees income generation ventures including microloans. For Noah's Ark Hands on Training Center, founded by Victoria's daughter Angella Nakato last September as a school and home for orphaned children with disabilities, I am writing grants, working on income generation, and developing a business plan as the organization expands. It's all very exciting and I have been here for approximately 2.5 weeks and will remain until July 18th. In general, outside of office hours, I explore Entebbe and the area surrounding Lake Victoria (it's absolutely beautiful). Over the upcoming weekends I plan to raft in the Nile, go on a safari in Northern Uganda, do yoga with an African guru, and road trip in Western Uganda to see the tea country. Woo! I feel that Mercyhurst opened me to the world of development, making my choice of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, and therefore this internship, possible. I am currently pursuing a Masters of International Development focusing on Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society. Dr. Ripley's Global Issues course, opened my eyes to real problems globally as they affect their local populations. Geopolitics and Political Theory with yourself and Dr. Federici were particularly formative for my conception of world order and influences and I realized that I long to have a career where I can identify and serve marginalized populations. My favorite courses at GSPIA have been courses studying philanthropy, civil society and human security. Oh! I lost my 4.0, but in my defense I take above a full course load every semester and am the Masters of International Development representative to GSPIA Student Cabinet, while being involved in various other organizations. However, I don't regret spreading myself a little thin because I had 4 years to earn 2 Bachelor's degree with a minor at Mercyhurst. I have 2 years to make the most of a Masters degree and land a job. (No pressure) I still enjoy running and have stayed in contact with my wonderful cross country coaches from Mercyhurst, Kathy Noble-Fraley and Mike Fraley, and the runners as well. I also enjoy the company of my fellow Mercyhurst Graduates in Pittsburgh, specifically Katie Loops, also of the Political Science Department, because we're still roommates! :) Thank you for sending your email asking for an update. It's been nice to reflect on all that's happened in the past year and to look forward again to life after Uganda. I can't wait to read the newsletter!

Reed Garetto (Major '13) – I graduated law school 2 weeks ago (Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University) and I am currently taking my bar prep course for the NY state bar exam in July (not a fun summer). I am living on the Upper East Side and will be working at UBS Asset Management as an Associate Director in the Compliance and Operational Risk Control Department starting this August. Life is great but I will admit I miss our political science department very much. I am not married yet and have no babies :)

Zack Yost (Major '15) – I have been doing very well. After graduation, I moved to the Washington D.C. area where I started working at the Charles Koch Institute as a student outreach associate on the external relations team as part of my participation in the Koch Associate Program. I recently graduated from the program and have now been working for about two months on the CKI policy team as a research assistant helping our two foreign policy analysts. It is very funny how things have worked out. When I left Mercyhurst, I was a bit saddened when I reflected on how I would likely never use all the knowledge I gained from the numerous IR classes I took while at Mercyhurst, but life can be a funny thing and I somehow ended up on the policy team where all that information proved to be quite helpful. I am still learning the ropes of being on a policy team, but the political science department laid a very strong foundation upon which I have been building my skills. I am loving life in the D.C. area and even had the opportunity to have dinner with John Mearsheimer when he spoke at a conference CKI was sponsoring (I included some pictures).

Carrie Gambino (Minor '13) – A lot has happened since I last checked in with everyone at MU. From June 2015-Nov 2015 I managed a County Court race. I did everything from driving the candidate to events to planning the commercial shoot. My candidate was successful in the Primary Election but was defeated in the General. It was a crazy experience and taught me that local politics is tough and not my cup of tea. I started in the beginning of March 2016 working for Erie County (NY) Senior Services Dept as an outreach aide. I am still getting settled in but so far so good! I'm happy to be a part of an organization that prides itself on improving the lives of others. I also moved into an apartment in the city of Buffalo which, according to every online article, is becoming the coolest city in America. <http://www.travelandleisure.com/americas-favorite-places/cities#buffalo-new-york>

Jessica Hilburn (Double Major '15) – I'm in the history graduate program at Edinboro working on my Masters Degree. I also work at Benson Memorial Library in Titusville on everything from summer reading to managing our social media presence to doing local history and advocacy work. Recently, I wrote an editorial for the local paper advocating for historical preservation and have thenceforth become (reluctantly?) involved in town council and historical advisement. I am receiving an award for my work on the 21st of May (Oil Region Young Preservationist Award). I presented the first chapter of my masters thesis at Louisiana State University in March at their graduate history conference and took Juliet with me. We had some good Cajun food, which was very fun. We also figured out I have much better directional skills than young Julio. I'm currently applying to present at two more conferences (one in Atlantic City another at Jekyll Island). I will also be doing primary source research at the Wisconsin History Society Archives in June. Things are generally going quite well. School is difficult. What else is new? ☺ The political science (and history) department prepared me extremely well for life, thus far. I am top of my class in graduate school and have received excellent feedback at work. I know how to research and you and Dr. Federici in particular improved my writing skills immensely. Some good books I've read off the top of my head (I'm counting this as hobbies) include *Missoula* by Jon Krakauer (I may have mentioned this before, but it's really great) and *Bad Feminist* by Roxane Gay. Due to my thesis topic, I've read many books about the Vietnam antiwar movement, so I would also recommend *The People Make the Peace* by Karin San Juan-Aguilar and Frank Joyce (2015) as well. Maybe one day I can recommend my own book about the Vietnam antiwar movement. We shall see.

Tony D'Abruzzo (Major '03) – Still working in the Office of the City Controller in Pittsburgh. My notable accomplishment for the year has been the release of our mobile App, PGHWatchdog (Available in the App Store and Google Play Store). Allows citizens to report fraud, waste, and abuse from their mobile devices to our office. Also allows people to access our transparency tools to look at city financial data, campaign finance information, and city contracts. Who here doesn't love government transparency!?! Other than that, not much else has changed. Over the past year, I tore a calf muscle and my rotator cuff, resulting in a year of pain medicine and physical therapy. Was healthy enough to run my 8th marathon (6th time doing Pittsburgh) and helped raise \$2500 for charity. Sure, I had to wear a wedding dress (donations were tied to voting on costumes), but it was for a good cause. [Ed. Note: I saw pictures, the bouquet was lovely and the dress was strapless.]

Jaslyne Halter (Minor '15) – I recently accepted a promotion at Erie Insurance, working as a Contact Center Analyst in their Center of Excellence. This came with making a huge decision to decline a previous offer from a contractor in D.C., and it ultimately came down to whether I wanted the opportunity to make true impact to the organization or not...and I knew that working at Erie Insurance would provide a greater opportunity to really make a difference, unlike the position in Washington. Honestly, out of any decision I've had to make this far in life, this one was the hardest; I truly felt like a "real adult," because it wasn't a decision just for myself and my career, but I had to consider my fiancé (do you remember Pj Dolak?), his career, and where we saw ourselves in 3-5 years. So I'll continue to call Erie home for now, whether for a few years or many. Time can only tell! On an academic front, I started a Master of Science in Cybersecurity through Southern New Hampshire University and I'm loving this program. I'm honestly surprised that I love an online program, especially after the family-like and hands-on campus at the Hurst. I always credit Mercyhurst when I can, and I certainly wouldn't have any of these opportunities in life without the foundations and education that came from within the gates of campus. And when I feel overwhelmed and unsure, I look back on my experience in Political Theory with Dr. Federici, and realize I can do anything.

Brian Maurelli (Minor '05) – At the end of September I graduated and received my PhD in Leadership for Higher Education from Capella University. I am glad to once again be able to read for enjoyment and about whatever I feel like reading about at the moment. So I will say my few recommended reading now; by Stephen King: "The Shining, 11/22/63, and Finder's Keepers." Along a more Political Science line "Mortal Error: The Shot That Killed JFK" by Bonar Menninger (talks from a ballistic viewpoint of the assassination). This past December I got engaged to my wonderful girlfriend and we are planning "her" wedding (for those who ever went through this stage of their life I am told it is normal for it to be called this). I am still exiting aircraft at 1000 feet at my Army unit at Fort Bragg, North Carolina (center of the universe for those who did not know).

Lilly Gehres (Minor '05) – The temperatures are uncharacteristically hot, hot, hot in Portland, but Costco had an exceptional deal on river tubes that provided hours of refreshing floating down the Sandy. In addition to river recreating, my days are kept busy with teaching at Portland State and working for the Portland Water Bureau on the Water Quality team. I am looking forward to wrapping up my third successful academic year after final exams June 6 & 9. But there will be no rest for me as Portland is dealing with its own lead in water problem. It is not even close to the terrible situation in Flint, but concern and anger is high all the same. Our drinking water comes from a pristine surface water source in the protected Bull Run Watershed 26 miles outside of downtown. The water is of such high quality that Portland does not filter it, but does treat it with chlorine and then ammonia (chloramination) to disinfect the water of any potential natural contaminants, and adjusts the pH with the addition of sodium hydroxide to reduce its corrosivity. There are no lead service lines or connections in the distribution system, and water quality meets or exceeds all state and federal drinking

water standards. However, older lead containing materials used for some home and building plumbing leach lead into the water while it sits unused for extended time in pipes - most notably in Portland Public Schools. The consequences of years of deferred maintenance and a disinterest in adequate testing are coming to light. This summer is going to include a great deal of lead testing for schools, day cares, and public buildings and the Water Bureau will process hundreds of home lead in water tests (offered for free to PWB customers). This lead problem comes on the heels of the discovery of air pollution hot spots in town from artistic glass manufacturers. High levels of cadmium, hexavalent chromium, and arsenic were found earlier this year in Southeast and North Portland, and neighborhood residents have been told not to eat produce they grow. While I am enjoying my 10th year in this city, there are some serious issues going on.

Jon Saucier (Double Major '15) – I have finished my first year of graduate school. I am attending the University of Pittsburgh and studying Public and International Affairs. Right now I am at an internship with the Michigan State Police Intelligence Operations Center, and currently loving it. I know that my resume, which heavily reflected projects and classes taken at Mercyhurst, was instrumental in getting my current position. The manager told me that it was impressive- especially for someone who is only 23. So I would like to thank you and the staff at Mercyhurst for helping me attain this position.

Dana (Hyland) Krishland (Major '05) – Sorry for the last-minute response! I was on a road trip last week from Portland to northern California for a wedding so a bit out of contact with reality, in the best way possible. It was a great trip where we saw and did a lot, including Crater Lake and the redwoods! Not too much else new with me since I last wrote in. Just lots of personal travel. Bart and I went to SE Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia) around New Years to see many of his aunts, uncles, cousins, and his mom who live there. It was my first visit and we had a brilliant time! Although we still haven't made it through the thousands of pictures we took...It was also really interesting learning more about the governments of the countries we visited by talking to Bart's family that lives there - brought me back to Comparative Politics of Asia! I'm still working on climate change adaptation at the USEPA and, as always, am happy to talk to any current students or alums who are interested in the field of environmental policy (or science, I actually work in a group that specializes in climate science). Please send my best to everyone at the 'Hurst. I look forward to reading everyone's updates in the newsletter!

Sara Fox (Contract Major '15) – Thank you very much for your e-mail. I continue to be grateful for all of the knowledge, support, guidance, and wisdom the Political Science Department has given me and, while extremely saddened by the loss of two exemplary professors, I was glad to hear of their new opportunities. As for me, I am nearing the end of my year of service with AmeriCorps VISTA at United Way of Erie County. I was coordinating several Early Childhood Literacy initiatives had am grateful for the opportunity to work with a wonderful group of people who are passionate about improving the Erie community. While it was a wonderful experience, I am really looking forward to beginning my graduate career in Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh in the fall.

Ashley (Herrmann) Johnson (Minor '07) – My husband, Nate, and I will be celebrating four years of marriage in June as we also celebrate one year of home ownership in our very small town of Leetonia, OH. In July, we anticipate welcoming our first child into the world. This spring marks my 8th year of teaching middle school students the finer points of writing and literature. In the fall I will be staying home with our little one, but hope to return to teaching again in the future. While the primaries and political debates always awaken my love of political science, it has been a recent local zoning issue that has caused me to recall State and Local Politics. Sitting at our very small, local council meeting, I was thrilled to be in the thick of it again. I am confident that Mercyhurst will continue to offer the world-class education that I received. I look back on my Mercyhurst days with great fondness.

Tim Krysiak (Minor '05) – In November 2015, Allison and I were married at the Red Corral Ranch in Wimberley, a sleepy little town in the Texas Hill Country. We were delighted to have Mercyhurst Lakers Kristen Hudak, Mike Foglio, Jason Staley, Dan Oberdorf and Mike Wozniak in attendance! We had a fantastic honeymoon in Thailand, travelling to Phuket, Chiang Mai and Bangkok, before returning home to Houston for the holidays. 2016 has been a busy year for us so far. In March, we traveled to Isla Mujeres off the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula for spring vacation. Last month we purchased our first home in the Houston Heights, just north of downtown. Most of my work at Statoil this year has been focused on Mexico. The country has launched an ambitious energy reform program, creating many new opportunities for companies interested in investing in oil, gas, power and renewable projects. I've been leading one of our business development projects focused on the deep water acreage auction, which will take place in December. This project has been a great opportunity to travel to Mexico City and learn about Mexican history, politics and economics. I've even taken some Spanish language lessons at Rice University in the evenings. My first summer book is Joshua Cooper Ramo's *The Seventh Sense*. I heard him speak at the World Affairs Council of Houston last week and was intrigued. Hopefully, the book will live up to expectations!

Mike Walter (Major '15) – The last 16 months here in D.C. has been exciting. I moved down after J-term 2015 for a position on Rep. Mike Kelly's staff, and then left his office last August for a position at Concerned Veterans for America. I am very excited to announce that I have accepted an offer to return to Capitol Hill for a Correspondence Specialist position in Senator Jim Risch's office, and will be starting graduate school at George Washington University for a master's in Political Management. I am extremely grateful to the faculty in the Political Science department for preparing me for graduate school and a career on Capitol Hill. The writing and critical thinking skills that I acquired as a Political Science major at Mercyhurst have been invaluable for me. I would not be on Capitol Hill without the skills and hands on experience I received in the Political Science department. Also, if any current students are looking for internships or advice on how to get on the Hill, here's my e-mail: waltermike92@gmail.com.

Joe Delgado (Major '04) – Last October I left Drexel after 7 years and took a job at Rowan University as the Senior Director of Development for the College of Business. Rowan is a regional public university with around 16,000 students in southern New Jersey. Things are going well so far. Also, my wife and I are expecting our second child this October!

Caitlin Handerhan (Major '13) – I have moved back to Erie and am wearing multiple professional hats at the moment. I am working in the Erie County Executive's office as the Communications Administrator which entails coordinating the media relations for county government, generating press releases, writing speeches and talking points, and coordinating social media for both the County Executive and the departments. In addition to my day job, I have started a consulting firm in Erie called Cali Group Consulting. Specializing in political consulting, media relations, and communication management, Cali Group currently focuses on clients in the public sector. Any spare time I can find is generally spent running at Presque Isle, subverting the patriarchy, battling #BernieBros on twitter or enjoying an adult beverage at a local establishment. For the summer reading list, a wise old professor once recommended the David Sedaris classic [Squirrel Seeks Chipmunk](#), and I can't say it was a half bad recommendation. [Ed. Note: I'm 100% confident that Caitlin and other MEOWites were among those celebrating a historic moment Tuesday night when HRC became the first woman to claim the top of the ticket for a major political party in the US.]

Caitlin English (Minor '15) – It's hard to believe a year has already gone by since graduating from Mercyhurst! Since graduating, I returned to Frederick, MD, and I have been working full time at the Frederick Police Department as a crime analyst. I work in the Criminal Investigation Division and I

analyze mostly violent crime. My first week there I learned that FPD hired two Mercyhurst grads as analysts a few years ago! In fact, both MU grads are now officers at FPD. In addition, I attended a work meeting and ended up running into a 2014 MU grad. Small world! Mercyhurst has fully prepared me for my career. The classes I took really helped me to be successful. So far each product I've prepared has had positive feedback. My Political Science and Intelligence classes, including the intense projects and tests, are the reason I feel I am on the best track to having a long successful career. As for my personal life, I recently (January 1st) got engaged! I am now in the process of planning a wedding. I never imagined how much work (and money!) went into weddings. I also never realized how challenging the visa process was! My fiancée is Australian and we are trying to figure out what visa will be best for us. As for the wedding, we have chosen a date: June 17, 2017. I hope all has been well! I look forward to seeing what books are on the reading list!

Jule (Gardner) Banville (Major '95) – First, I just want to say that it's clear the department is losing talented, dedicated professors and I'm so sorry to hear it. Having graduated when it was a two-person department and being so thankful for the amazing education I received, I know the students will still get their money's worth. But now that I'm a full-time academic, I know a bit about how it all works and feels and it's clear that the changes bring loss. I send so much good juju for the continued distinguished careers of Drs. Peterson and Surzhko-Harned. This message also causes me to think about my time there and to do some math. Turns out my graduation was 21 years ago, time enough for my post-graduate nonperson to legally drink those beers I brought to a memorable exit interview with Doc. I couldn't be more grateful to still have the person I majored in still in my life. What a gift! I'm in my fourth year full-time professoring (not a word) at the University of Montana School of Journalism in Missoula. We are also facing cuts and I haven't yet been tenured, so it looked dicey. But there was a hard push and a reaction from the administration and I'm safe for now. I was even promoted during all of that, which is kinda funny. So now I am an Associate Professor of Journalism. So weird! I continue to teach all levels of audio storytelling, advanced feature writing, and classes in the fundamentals, including punctuation, which is one of my passions in life. I've written a few articles, chaired several successful graduate defenses and become a member of UM's faculty senate. But what I love to do is actually make things I teach. I launched a podcast last summer featuring unexpected stories about Montanans. It's called [Last Best Stories](#). My day job got in the way of expanding it much during the academic year, but my summer will be dedicated to invigorating and funding this project, which is currently at six episodes. Would love to know what anyone thinks about it! It's at [lastbeststories.org](#) and on iTunes. My husband, Lee, is also a faculty member at the Journalism School and our daughters, Kate and Maggie, are 6 and 4 and *real* pistols. Book Recs: Have been loving Elizabeth Strout, who writes complicated women honestly. "Olive Kitteridge" is the one turned into an HBO mini-series with Frances McDormand. It was great. Book is better! But her new sparse and tiny novel, "My Name is Lucy Barton," is unforgettable. [Ed. Note: I've listed to all of the Podcasts and enjoyed all of them.]

Casey (CJ) Kilroy (Double Major '03) – I'm still enjoying my unpaid job of being a Mom to Saylor (2.5) and Millicent "Millie" (11 months). Last fall I was asked to take over a youth Community Service Organization that I was a part of in High School. The Penn-Trafford Leo Club, which is part of Lions International - is based in my hometown and I've enjoyed working with the kids this past school year (all were born when I was IN High School...sigh...) the club was in danger of extinction due to low membership numbers, and I was proud to bring them back up to an active club again. I received recognition from the International President of Lions International (serving from Japan this year) which is one of the highest awards in the organization.

Brad Rybczynski (Major '97) – My situation continues to roller coaster. I am doing consulting work for a group formed to implement a statewide effort to reduce inpatient admissions. My part involves

creating the means to help those affected by the changes to gain training and education to meet the anticipated employment needs in health care. Not exactly the most exciting of news, but I am enjoying the work and the freedom it offers. My twins are off to high school this fall, Walt to my alma mater, St. Francis High School and Madeline to Nardin Academy. The two both send a decent number of students to Mercyhurst and are well regarded. My younger two are doing well also. It is hard to believe I have kids this age.

Alethea Gaarden (Double Major '14) – I graduated from OU this spring. For the rest of the summer and probably well into the fall, I'll be an apprentice on the *Niagara*. I'm constantly tired, bruised, and busy, but I'm also disgustingly happy, and I'm learning a lot. I've also re-discovered the art of reading for pleasure, which I lost almost entirely in grad school.

Zach Smith (Minor '05) – I'm wrapping up my first year with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet). By the time the newsletter goes out we will be in the midst of reviewing proposals to build the next generation of communications technology for public safety. This project is like nothing the federal government has tried before and, if all goes according to plan, will implement the final outstanding recommendation from the 9/11 commission report for nation-wide inter-operable communications for first responders. We are preparing to form a public-private partnership in order to build and deploy the network across all 56 states and territories to provide first responders the data communications they largely lack today while simultaneously providing spectrum capacity to our private partner for their use. Hopefully in as little as 2-3 years our firefighters, EMTs, and police officers will begin to reap the benefits of communication technology we largely take for granted as private citizens today. You can find out more at www.firstnet.gov. I'm still volunteering as a firefighter/EMT with Fairfax County and Kara is still at Deloitte working on various cyber security efforts for federal and non-profit clients. Our son Carson is now just over 2 years old, and fully capable of informing his parents when his opinion differs from ours. Hope all is well for you and all of my fellow alumni.

Ariel Dodick (Major '13) – I am currently working on my masters of public administration at Gannon, set to graduate next May. I just started an internship with Erie DAWN which is a local non-profit for women and children that focusing on helping homeless women and victims of violence get back on their feet over the course of a two year period. The organization is affiliated with the Sisters of Mercy. I am helping with organizing the major summer fundraiser which is a golf tournament as well as assisting with the submission of two grants.

Jill Curry (Major '04) – I'm still living in Salt Lake City. I'm no longer at the University of Utah though. My position there ended and I took a job starting last August working as a fiscal analyst for the Utah State Legislature. I staff two appropriations subcommittees (higher education and public education) and perform a variety of tasks like analyzing bills for fiscal impact, fulfilling research requests from legislators, and conducting financial oversight of education agencies. I really am enjoying my job although it's been a steep learning curve since most of the tasks I do are not ones I've done before. It's really been a good opportunity to put all of the skills I learned at Mercyhurst to test in learning this new job and so far it's going well. Not much else is new here. It's hard to believe my kids will be 2 and 4 years old this summer. I do have a book recommendation. It's Smarter Faster Better: The Secrets of Being Productive in Life and Business (Duhigg). Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of what makes people productive in life and at work. It's research-based, but also filled with pretty entertaining and illustrative stories. I found it to be good, quick read.

Danielle Vaccaro (Major '13) – After wrapping up two years of AmeriCorps VISTA in Buffalo last summer, I moved back to Erie and am currently an admissions counselor here at Mercyhurst. Just this week I began my first class for a graduate certificate program in Business Analytics and Intelligence and will hopefully begin the OL program here at Mercyhurst around this time next year. Other than that, enjoying the down time from travel and my first full summer in Erie!

Sean Fedorko (Double Major '12) – One year ago I cofounded Radius CoWork and am happy to report that we'll be having our 1yr Anniversary Event on June 10th (all Mercyhurst alum are welcome! Details on Facebook & our website). We were not sure the market existed in Erie for this kind of business incubator, but we're thrilled at the local response and the accomplishments of coworking members. Some of those accomplishments have been from Mercyhurst alum AND students. Ellie McDougal (2016 'Hurst Grad!) served as our business intelligence intern and produced exceptional work. Jenna Tobin (class of 2017) came in as an intern to our member and marketing startup Apex Drop and performed so admirably she has been hired before graduating. Our most recent member is Corey Sayles, also class of 2017 but already running a small web development company from Radius. Special thanks go to Colin Hurley and Kris Wheaton who regularly make appearances in our conference rooms. My political science and public policy background have been indispensable in helping me to coordinate our strategies with local political leaders and economic development organizations. I hadn't expected to be an entrepreneur while at Mercyhurst, but I am enjoying the experience of building a company that includes community impact as a measure of success. As for me personally, well, in recognition of Dr. Peterson's immense contributions to the department, all I can say is that The Dude Abides. Alums & Students can connect with me on twitter: @SeanFedorko @RadiusCoWork – See you at the Homecoming!

[Ed. Note: Speaking of homecoming, thanks again to all those who attended this year. Other alums have also stopped by for a visit, sent emails, sent LinkedIn notes, asked us to write letters of reference, etc. For example, **Emilio Colaiacovo (Minor '98)** –visited us late this spring and because of the visit we know that he won his race and now serves on the NYS Supreme Court. Supreme Court is the trial level court in NYS. The district includes the 8 counties of western New York. Along the same line, we know that **Lindsey Gotkin (Major '05)** just finished her 2L year at DePaul, I had a nice chat on the phone last fall with **Jamal Turner (Major '12)**, and we saw **Chris Kelly (Major '12)** on campus even though he is back working at the University of Delaware (where he earned his Masters) and, in fact, we set up a potential summer internship there next year for Mercyhurst students who will be juniors this year. That was created because Chris's stellar work made them think highly of the Mercyhurst Political Science Department. Many more stories and unofficial updates too, thanks for staying in touch!]

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT NEWS

NEWS: The Mercyhurst Model International Organizations Team, directed by Dr. Surzhko-Harned, not only competes (e.g., placing 2nd in 2015 at a national competition and being part of a league), but also now gets experience organizing and running competitions. On April 30th they hosted their Sixth Annual High School Model U.N. Conference. It attracted high school students from Collegiate Academy, General McLane, Girard, Gilmour Academy (out of Cleveland), McDowell, Mercyhurst Preparatory School, and North East. The students simulated the work of the U.N. Human Rights Council and the European Council, and focused on the issue of refugees created by the war in Syria. Collegiate Academy and Gilmour Academy received top school awards. Tom Russell, a junior at Mercyhurst Prep, received an Upperclassman Excellence Award and a \$5,000 scholarship to Mercyhurst for his outstanding performance. Dayana Moncada, a junior political science and fashion merchandising major, served as Secretary General.

(continued)

We are very pleased that though she will be teaching at the University of Pittsburgh next year. Dr. Surzhko-Harned has agreed to continue her excellent directorship of the organization next year. This is great news for students who participate in learning about organizations such as NATO, the EU, the Arab League, the UN, and the diverse set of global issues they face, as well as working on skills such as negotiation, oral presentation, persuasion, advocacy, debate, writing, research, utilization of rules, team work, etc.

Dr. Michael Federici – facilitated an ISI (Intercollegiate Studies Institute)/ Liberty Fund conference for outstanding college students, “Liberty and the Declaration of Independence,” held in Philadelphia November 5-8 and participated in a Liberty Fund conference in New Orleans, LA on “Walker Percy on Alienation, Liberty, and the Modern World” December 3-6. Dr. Federici peer-reviewed a book manuscript for University Press of Kansas: Alexander Hamilton and the Development of American Law by Kate Brown and an article manuscript on Hamilton for *Presidential Studies Quarterly*. He gave a presentation on Alexander Hamilton and American Foreign Policy at Roanoke College March 23. He gave the Pi Sigma Alpha Induction Address at Grove City College April 13 and organized and gave a presentation at a conference on American foreign policy for undergraduate and graduate students in Washington, D.C. held at Catholic University and sponsored by the National Humanities Institute April 22-23. Dr. Federici has been busy providing local media with political analysis. He has done more than forty interviews since January. He published a brief monograph, *The Political Principles of the American Constitution* with Kendall Hunt in May. The book is designed for classroom use and is only available as an e-book until next year when it will be published in paper.

Dr. Joe Morris – Dr. Morris spent spring semester immersed in the work of the Mercyhurst Center for Applied Politics (MCAP), which he continues to direct. Working with more than 100 students representing nearly every major on campus, Dr. Morris conducted a statewide poll that focused on the 2016 presidential election and an Erie County poll that addressed a number of local issues. The statewide poll addressing the 2016 presidential election was reported by nearly every major news organization in Pennsylvania and by Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sblVenkSiDY>). This summer Dr. Morris will be spending a week in Pittsburgh and another in Southern California with his family, riding his bicycle as much as possible, and preparing to “teach” a short course on applied politics curricula at the American Political Science Association’s conference in September. Most importantly, he will be enjoying time with his wife Leanne Roberts, who was recently appointed Dean of the Hafenmaier College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Mercyhurst; daughter Gracie, who is beginning high school at Mercyhurst Preparatory School in the fall; and son Logan, who is beginning first grade in the fall despite the fact that he believes it will interfere with his training for the NHL.

Dr. Brian Ripley – continues to enjoy teaching and working with Mercyhurst students. Recently he was part of a panel discussion at the Erie Art Museum, under the auspices of the Northwest PA Film Society, discussing “The True Cost”...a film about the fashion industry, sweatshop labor, global supply chains, and efforts to improve working conditions in the industry. (If ever the “fashion police” were needed, this is literally the case!) He looks forward to a summer of reading, course preps, and nice Erie weather.

Dr. Randy S. Clemons – is happy his coauthored article “Priming Assad: An Experiment of Ethnic Priming and Attitudes toward Military Action in Syria” written with Dr. Peterson (and Dr.

Palmer from Illinois State University) was finally published by *Foreign Policy Analysis*. That this ongoing human tragedy of massive dimensions would still be essentially unaddressed, and Assad's ability to survive in office, were both in doubt when we wrote. A link to it is here: http://fpa.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/orw012?_ikey=igUoAabtNNQTVNf&keytype=ref He is even happier that in July the third edition of his coauthored public policy textbook (with Dr. Mark McBeth) will appear. http://www.amazon.com/Public-Policy-Praxis-Approach-Understanding/dp/1138641669/ref=pd_rhf_ee_p_img_2?ie=UTF8&refRID=1RSQANMGE1XGPBMWEZMG (**Public Policy Praxis: A Case Approach for Understanding Policy and Analysis**). The third edition will once again feature a case study coauthored by one of his former student research assistants, Elise Yablonsky '07, and also a new case coauthored by his 2015-16 student research assistant, Juliet Hilburn '18. This past year saw him become the Associate Dean of the Ridge College of Intelligence Studies and Applied Sciences as part of the Mercyhurst reorganization and he will continue in that role next year. Along with prepping classes this summer for fall (and the new calendar and course length changes alone means we all have to make some significant adjustments), he has a couple of different ongoing research projects, including another paper (examining public opinion and Islamophobia, once again working with Drs. Peterson and Palmer), that will be presented at the APSA conference in early September. Finally, as promised, you will find next the text of The Award Winning Department document, and please find (attached) the always anticipated, **Summer Reading List**. Two alumni also sent pictures (attached) referenced in their updates.

The Award Winning Department: Political Science

The picture above was taken at the 2015 graduation awards dinner, and documented the continuation of a most impressive history as four more of our students won top graduation awards. Hallie McDonald (Major) won the President's Award for Excellence for the School of Social Sciences (graduating with a 4.0); Nina Aamodt (Major) won the Catherine McAuley Award given to the top Adult student on campus; Stefani Baughman (Double Major – Political Science and Intel) won the Award as the top Honors student, the Mother Borgia Egan Honors Award, (and she was the university's Fulbright nominee), and Emily Francis (Minor) won the Bishop's Award for Excellence (also with a 4.0). Additionally, 23 graduated with Latin Honors (including 9 of the 25 students university-wide who completed the Honors Program requirements as well. Pretty impressive in a department known for its rigor!

But, you ask, what about 2016? Well, in 2016 Caleb Ohmer (Double Major – Political Science and English) won the Carpe Diem Award (– you can watch his graduation speech here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uMYIj9_99Y&feature=youtu.be) and Matt Hatfield (Triple Major) won the award as the top Honors student, the Mother Borgia Egan Honors Award. Perhaps completing that triple major (Poli, Psych, and Religious Studies) and the honors program curriculum with a 4.0 had something to do with his selection ☺.

Also, the year prior to 2015 (2013-14) we had several students selected for individual awards. Alethea Gaarden, Double Major (Political Science and English) won the Bishop's Award for Academic Excellence (basically the equivalence of Valedictorian, but she had to also have the record to edge out a number of other 4.0 students). Another 4.0 Double Major (Political Science and Business Intelligence) Mary Mancuso won the President's Award for Excellence for the School of Social Sciences (encompassing Political Science, Intelligence Studies, History, Sociology/Social Work, and Criminal Justice). Additionally, Steven Messina (Double Major, Political Science and Intel.) was Mercyhurst's nominee for the Marshall Scholarship, and a total of

twelve of ours graduated with Latin Honors (including two who completed the honors program requirements as well).

But, impressive as this is, it is not a new story, as an analysis of the last 17 years (2000-2016) will show. For this analysis, we looked only at the “graduation” awards. Thus students who were the Mercyhurst University Prestigious Award Nominees such as Steve Messina ‘14, or even if they won at the national level (e.g., Joe Delgado ‘04 or Tim Krysiak ‘05) are not included for this honor count. Nor does it keep track of how many students graduated with Latin honors. Starting in 2000 also eliminates a number of award winning students that we can rattle off without doing any research including Randy Hilliard and Bill Melville, both ‘99, Emilio Collovacio ‘98, Amy Kovach ‘97, Jule (Gardner) Banville ‘95, and Neal Hammil ‘93. Our apologies to any and all other pre-2000 award winners, but the list below represents only the following awards: *The top two graduation awards, the Carpe Diem and the Bishop’s Award for Academic Excellence; the President’s Awards for Excellence given by each school and to one adult student each year on a campus-wide basis; the Alumni Recognition awards, the Leadership award (now called the Frank Barry Award), the Catherine McAuley Award to the top Adult student, and the Mother Borgia Egan Honors Award given to the top student in the honors program.*

So, in the last 17 years Political Science department students have won how many of these top awards? The answer is 43. Below are the years, names, and awards won.

Five Bishop Award winners: Emily Francis ‘15, Alethea Gaarden ‘14, Jill (Gloekler) Curry ‘04, Chris Roos ‘02, and Amber (White) Vance ‘01.

Five Carpe Diem Award winners: Caleb Ohmer ‘16, Dinorah Sanchez ‘10, Tim Krysiak ‘05, Casey Kilroy ‘03, and Billy Byrnes ‘02. (Note that we swept the top two in ‘02)

Sixteen won President’s Awards for Excellence for their schools (three in other schools): Hallie McDonald ‘15, Mary Mancuso ‘14, Brian Lombardo ‘13, Melissa Kirwin ‘11, Meghan Raynor ‘10, Sarah Rudawitz ‘09, Elise Yablonsky and Dina Bastianni ‘07, J.J. Mikulec and Valerie Nezhich ‘05, Pat Collins ‘04, Kristen Brown and Danielle Aloschen ‘03, Jay Starliper ‘02, Mike Jones ‘01, and Andrea Ellison ‘00.

Eight won Alumni Recognition or Leadership awards: Paige Thomas and Spencer Vuksic ‘13, Rachel Brown ‘12, Ian Michalski ‘10, Lindsey Kole ‘06, Mike Foglio ‘05, Perry Wood ‘01, and Scott Koskoski ‘00.

Five won the award for the top Honors student (this award only started in 2005). Matt Hatfield ‘16, Stefani Baughman ‘15, Liz Eidner ‘12, Ashley Herman ‘07, and Kristen Hudak ‘05.

Four won either of the two top awards for non-traditional students. Nina Aamodt ‘15, Bill Demauri ‘12, Sean Fedorko ‘11, and Kathy Antus ‘03.

That’s 43 political science students (31 majors, 12 minors) honored in the last 17 years, just within the categories listed. And, it ignores so many great alumni, year after year who were not singled out for these distinctions. Add in the our unparalleled record of faculty winning teaching awards (three in the last decade – more than any other department at Mercyhurst), and it’s easy to see why calling the Political Science Department “The Award Winning Department” makes complete sense.