Undergraduate News

Starting Strong!

With over 1250 students across the eight Political Science majors, and over 30,000 undergraduate students at UC San Diego, it is no surprise that students look for ways to start the quarter on the right foot!

The Department of Political Science hosted our annual Department Orientations - two for transfer students and one for freshmen students - for incoming Political Science students prior to the start of the Fall 2019 quarter.

In total, over 100 students attended the orientations and learned about how to be successful as a Political Science major and UCSD student! Incoming freshman (see picture, above) also participated in an activity that allowed them to meet and learn more about their fellow peers. Photo Credit: Natalie Ikker
Fall 2019 Undergraduate Professional Development Workshop Series

Multiple workshops and events aimed at the professional development of Political Science students were held in the Fall quarter, facilitated by the Department’s Undergraduate Advisor, Natalie Ikker, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Maureen Feeley.

UCDC Application and Planning

In mid-October, many Political Science students attended a workshop focused on how to integrate the UCDC program in their academic plan. Led by Jennifer Homrich, UCDC and UCCS Coordinator for the UCSD campus, students listened to a presentation that gave an overview of the UCDC program, information on how to academically prepare for the program, tips to make the most out of your experience interning in Washington D.C., and the application process for interning during a future quarter. From the Undergraduate Advisor for Political Science, Natalie Ikker, students learned about which courses from the UCDC program can be allocated to their Political Science major requirements.

More information about the UCDC Program can be found on the program’s official website and under the Academic Internship Program’s webpage for UCDC. Thinking of applying? Attend an information session and sign up for their mailing list.

Studying Abroad as a Political Science Major

A new academic year means new study abroad adventures! Political Science students interested in different studying abroad programs heard from Study Abroad Advisor, Andra Jacques, on how to get started with study abroad, specific programs for Political Science majors, and lots of financial aid opportunities to fund their travels. The Undergraduate Advisor for Political Science, Natalie Ikker, informed students on how many courses can be used from study abroad to fulfill major requirements, petitioning courses from abroad, and the general timeline students should keep in mind when considering study abroad.

Interested in studying abroad? If so, don’t wait; the Study Abroad Office can be reached by phone, email, the Virtual Advising Center, appointments, and walk-ins! In the meantime, you can also review the Department of Political Science’s web page for studying abroad.
Obtaining an Internship as a Political Science Major

Internships can be an important component of students’ personal and career development. In October, students attended the workshop, hosted by Mike Stromayer, Associate Director for Social Sciences at UCSD’s Career Services Center, which focused on how to obtain valuable internship experiences toward their political science career goals, graduate school, and other personal and professional goals. The workshop covered specific topics such as on campus opportunities, job searching and application consideration, networking, what to do when you don’t get an internship, and internships available for political science majors. Future workshops with the Career Center are planned for the future, but in the meantime, students will find internship opportunities posted on the Department’s web page for internships, Facebook page, Law and Politics Initiative site, and via Handshake.

Capital Fellows Program

With a balance of humor and professional insight, Dang Do and Zaire Bailey, both of whom are current Ph.D. graduates students and alumni of the prestigious Capital Fellows Program, shared their application tips, personal experiences in the program, and benefits of participating in the program with interested Political Science students. Photo Credit: Natalie Ikker

From the website, the Capital Fellows Programs, “are nationally recognized public policy fellowships which offer unique experiences in policy-making and development in each branch of government. Capital Fellows are placed at some of the highest levels of California state government and assist state legislators, senior-level executive staff, and court administrators with a broad range of public policy issues and projects and are typically given assignments with a significant amount of responsibility and challenges.”

Those who are selected and participate in one of the areas of the Capital Fellows Programs receive the following:

- Monthly stipend of $2,794, as well as medical, dental and vision benefits;
- Fully-paid enrollment and earn six graduate units;
- Student loan deferment; and
- Graduate Certificate in Applied Policy and Government.

Applications for the 2020-21 Capital Fellows Programs are now open and the application deadline is Monday, February 3, 2020 at 5:00pm. Apply HERE today!
Welcome New Graduate Students!

This year, the Political Science Ph.D. program received 307 applications, and the joint PhD program with Political Science and the School of Global Policy received 69 applications, for a total of 376 applications. The admission rate was 13%. We are pleased to welcome 16 new graduate students, 14 of whom are in the Political Science Ph.D. program, and 2 who are in the joint Ph.D. program. Two of our students are also recipients of prestigious Graduate Division fellowships - the San Diego Fellowship and the STARS Program Fellowship.

The primary field interests are:

- 4 American Politics
- 6 Comparative Politics
- 6 International Relations

The new students will be choosing secondary field interests as they get further along in their studies.

Our students represent the top political science Ph.D. candidates in the nation, and we are proud to welcome our new additions!

2019 - 2020 Political Science Graduate Council

For the upcoming academic year, the Political Science Graduate Council includes:

- President: Marco Alcocer
- VP Faculty Liaison: Dang Do
- VP Social Programming: Rachel Skillman & Nick Smith
- Treasurer: Alexandra Lange
- VP Recruitment: Mac Lockhart, Greg Phillips, Kevin Rossillon
- VP Orientation: Thomas Flaherty & Mariana Carvalho-Barbosa
- GSA Representative: Matt Draper & Anthony Anderson

Job Market - Hire a Ph.D. Student!

As our graduate students complete and defend their dissertations, they are quickly being scouted by some of the top universities in the nation and internationally. Ph.D. placement candidates can be found on the Department’s web page dedicated to those eligible for postdoctoral opportunities.
Undergraduate and Graduate Student Accomplishments

Yin Yuan’s Experience at the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR) Nominee

Yin Yuan, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, was nominated to attend the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR) summer program. The institute seeks to enable participants to create and critique methodologically sophisticated qualitative research designs, including case studies, tests of necessity or sufficiency, and narrative or interpretive work.

Yin Yuan shares, “IQMR had been a wonderful experience for me. It provided a comprehensive toolkit of qualitative methods like multi-method research, process tracing, ethnography, interpretive method, elite interview, etc. Whether you want to dabble in different methods just to explore how they can potentially help your dissertation or if you already know what method you want to use and want to get intensive training, you can benefit from IQMR course modules. Some modules run for days and provide ample opportunities to get hands-on experience tailored to your own research (for example, for the ethnography module they actually ask participants to go to a local mall to conduct ordinary language interviews). Apart from the courses, you have the opportunity to present your prospectus and get detailed feedback from IQMR faculty and other participants. Moreover, students often organize informal group lunches and dinners among themselves who share similar research interests. I had interesting conversations with people I met at IQMR which led us to organize a conference panel.”

Study Abroad Spotlight: Airin Wu Interns in the Scottish Parliament!

Airin Wu, a Political Science major and transfer student, will be heading to Scotland in early 2020 to participate in the UCEAP Intern: Scotland program! Students spend at least 25 hours per week at an internship-sponsoring organization and also participate in three courses organized by the UC Center in Edinburgh.

Airin shares, “I wanted to study abroad because I’ve always enjoyed traveling and learning about cultures other than my own. I decided to intern for the Scottish Parliament because their various policies regarding climate change, refugee resettlement and social welfare inspired me as I plan on pursuing a career in public policy or law in the future. Even though studying abroad can be expensive, there are many scholarships available to offset the cost so I highly recommend applying to as many scholarships as possible!”

Airin earned the following scholarships: Fund for Education, UCEAP Promise Award, the ERC Jane Hett Study Abroad scholarship, and a scholarship from the UCSD Study Abroad Office.
Faculty News

Ann Craig awarded UC San Diego's Highest Honor: The Revelle Medal

Associate Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Ann L. Craig, has been awarded one of UC San Diego's highest honor, the Revelle Medal. The Revelle Medal recognizes current and former faculty members for sustained, distinguished and extraordinary service to UC San Diego.

Ann L. Craig received her doctorate in comparative politics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and went on to join the UC San Diego Political Science department faculty in 1979. Craig’s research and publication has focused on social movements and public policy in Mexico. At UC San Diego, she served as provost of Eleanor Roosevelt College and was instrumental in integrating global education and service within the campus. Following her retirement, Craig contributed to the institution with roles including: Interim Provost at Revelle and Sixth Colleges; president of the Emeriti Association; chair of the Academic Senate Committee on International Education; and member of the University Committee on International Education. Craig is also active in the Chancellor's Scholars Mentor Program and has been honored with a Dickson Emeriti Award.

In the words of Professor and Department Chair, Thad Kousser, “In addition to her distinguished research and teaching career in our department, Ann's commitment to serving the university and its students in a panoply of vital leadership positions - including running two Colleges - has left an enormous mark on our institution. Political Science could not be prouder, and we are thrilled that the university will celebrate her this year.”

Contracts and Grants News

While there are not currently any new contracts or grants earned by faculty and graduate students in the Department this quarter, for those planning on submitting future grants through the Department, please contact Vanessa Medina at vomedina@ucsd.edu for assistance.
The Krinsk-Houston Law and Politics Initiative at Work

Law School Application Forum Event

The Initiative hosted an event in the Fall Quarter: “Law School Application Forum” on Wednesday, October 16th with over 90 attendees. Directed by Dr. Matthew Bergman, the Initiative creates a premier pre-law experience for UCSD students through public law courses that bring law school faculty, practicing attorneys, and judges into the classroom, rich community engagement, financial scholarships for law-related opportunities, and local internships for talented students.

The event welcomed a variety of panelists and keynote speaker, Dan Rozansky, Partner at Stubbs Alderton & Markiles LLP, to share their stories and insights with students by means of a Q&A panel and informal networking. In our feedback survey, students shared their thoughts of the event and noted that the event served as a great learning opportunity for gaining more insight on the legal field; one student shared, “The entire event was extremely refreshing. As someone who is completely clueless about the process of becoming a lawyer, I felt a burst of confidence and motivation at the end of the event since it helped reassure I’m on the path I’m taking. Listening to the different stories and experiences was very useful as well since they helped address concerns I had over law school.”

Learn more about how you can be part of the Krinsk-Houston Law and Politics Initiative by checking out the Department’s page for the Initiative. Students interested in attending these events should be on the lookout for announcement emails from the Department’s Undergraduate Advisor, Natalie Ikker, at nbikker@ucsd.edu. These events are also broadcasted on the Department’s Facebook page. Photo Credit: Natalie Ikker

Chapman University's Dale E. Fowler School Of Law - Open House

On November 19th, interested Political Science students attended an Open House event at Chapman University's Dale E. Fowler School Of Law, thanks to the university’s generosity in providing transportation and a meal to our student attendees. Students took part in a campus tour and were provided information on: Admission, Scholarships, Financial Aid, Bar Prep Program, and Career Support. In addition to the academic support offered to Chapman University law students, the school also has a First Generation Scholars Program and a Pre-Law Winter Institute for interested pre-law undergraduate students.
Live-Stream of the Fifth Democratic Presidential Primary Debate

The Department of Political Science hosted a live-stream watch party of the Fifth Democratic Presidential Primary Debate on Wednesday, November 20th. Over 90 students took time out of their busy schedules to watch politics in action and learn more about diverse perspectives of potential Democratic candidates for the 2020 Presidential Election.

Dr. Matthew Bergman, Director of the Krinsk-Houston Law & Politics Initiative, was in attendance and engaged students in short discussions about what the debate candidates and questions focused on throughout the event. The November Debate included the following candidates:

- Former Vice President Joe Biden
- Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren
- Vermont Independent Senator Bernie Sanders
- California Senator Kamala Harris
- Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar
- Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana
- New Jersey Senator Cory Booker
- Entrepreneur Andrew Yang
- Billionaire Tom Steyer
- Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard

In our feedback survey, students shared their appreciation of the event and noted that the event served as a great learning opportunity; one student shared, “I was better apprised of relevant debate topics, the relative positions of candidates, and specific arguments for various policy approaches to solving contemporary issues.” Many students enjoyed watching the debate with their friends and peers and included great feedback for similar events in the future, such as having discussions about the candidates prior to watching a debate and hosting a panel of graduate students and professors familiar with the topics.

To learn more about the Krinsk-Houston Law and Politics Initiative, please check out the Department’s page for the Initiative. Photo Credit: Natalie Ikker
Staff Corner

John, our Financial Manager, recently spent some time in the beautiful countries of Thailand and Indonesia.

He shares, “I had the adventure of a lifetime with a large group of great friends traveling to Thailand and Bali. The food was delicious, the people were very friendly and smiling all the time, and all of the sights and sounds out there were truly breathtaking. Our favorite experience hands down was the elephant sanctuary, Into the Wild Elephant Camp in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It was an exciting day of learning about these beautiful majestic animals, feeding them, walking the trails alongside them and then bathing them. A truly powerful experience. I highly recommend it!”

THANK YOU

The Department of Political Science staff would like to thank graduate students, Rachel Skillman and Nicholas Smith, for hosting a Staff Appreciation Luncheon, as well as the rest of the Department’s graduate students and faculty for attending and sharing their words of appreciation for the efforts put forth by our team every day. We look forward to another great year in 2020!