

PROVIDENCE
COLLEGE

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

Kira Pop-
lowski, Class
of 1991 1

New Faculty: 2
Dr. Julia Jordan-Zachery

Laura 3
Francis, Class
of 1982

Alumni Up- 3
dates: Class
of 2004

Department 4
Presentations

Political Science

Alumni Newsletter

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GREETINGS!

We are happy to send you the Fall 2008 edition of the Providence College Political Science Alumni Newsletter. As you might expect, the past months have been an exciting time for PSC faculty and students as we have focused on the election. You can read about some of the election-related events we have sponsored on campus on the last page of the **Newsletter**. Many of our former students are heavily engaged in politics in a variety of ways—many have run for office and many of those have been elected and served with distinction. Among those who have run

successful campaigns in Rhode Island this past year are Teresa Paiva-Weed '81, who is a state senator and presently Majority leader, and Scott Avedisian '87 who was reelected as mayor of Warwick. Paiva-Weed is likely to be elevated to President of the State Senate in January.

In this issue we also profile the newest member of the PSC faculty, Dr. Julia Jordan-Zachery. She comes to us from Howard University in Washington, DC and will serve as Director of the Black Studies Program. Two alumni, Kira Poplowski '91 and Laura Foley Francis '82 are profiled

and we provide updates of some members of the Class of 2004. Be sure to check out the PSC website for the present and past "Alums of the Month." November's Alum of the Month is Susan Ricci '91. As always we welcome updates of your activities and love to have you visit us on campus.

--James Carlson,
Keeper of the
Flame

--Shannon Hulst '10,
Co-editor



Kira Poplowski, Class of 1991

After graduating from PC in 1991 Ms. Poplowski moved to California to pursue a PhD at the University of California at Santa Barbara. She completed her doctorate in 1998 and accepted a position as assistant director of studies at the Pacific Council on



International Policy, a partner of the Council on Foreign Relations. She then moved to northern California and edited two business-to-business international trade web sites. In 2001 she joined the Norman Lear Center at the Annenberg School at USC where she was director of special projects and publications. The Lear Center studies the effects of

entertainment television. In 2004, Ms. Poplowski took a position at Loyola Law School where she was executive director of communications and marketing. Since September she has served as vice president for public relations and marketing at Pitzer College. She presently resides in Santa Monica, California.

Dr. Jordan-Zachery has four objectives: to foster and encourage critical thinking; to encourage an activist student; to improve and enhance the student's communication skills, particularly writing and oral; and to hone the problem-solving skills of students.

New Faculty: Dr. Julia Jordan-Zachery

This fall Providence College welcomes a new faculty member to the Political Science Department: Dr. Julia Jordan-Zachery. Joining us from the Political Science Department of Howard University, Dr. Jordan-Zachery will serve as a professor in the Department as well as the new Director of the Black Studies program. She received her Bachelors degree in Economics from Brooklyn College, her masters in the same field from the University of Connecticut, and her doctorate in Political Science also from the University of Connecticut.

Her research interests focus on the functioning of racialized and gendered images and symbols in the policy making process. Concentrating on the early stages of the process (the definition stage), she works to understand the relationship between this process and race, class and gender. This concentration allows for an analysis of the role that values play in influencing the decision making process. The foundation of

her argument is that “the creation of meaning, in defining policy issues and groups, via the use of cultural images and symbols, is central in determining what policy actions are taken”. Her interest in the interconnectedness of race, gender, inequality and policy decision-making was sparked as an undergraduate student in an economics class dealing with the relationship between drugs and welfare.

Dr. Jordan-Zachery's teaching philosophy is centered around encouraging students to “challenge existing

structures, practices, and definitions of knowledge”. She sees herself as a facilitator of students' pursuit of knowledge rather than an imparter of that knowledge. She teaches students to reach to the depths of their knowledge bases, so that they can understand why and how they know what they do. She has four objectives: to foster and encourage critical thinking; to encourage an activist student; to improve and enhance the student's communication skills, particularly writing and oral; and to hone the problem-solving skills of students.



Laura (Foley) Francis, Class of 1982

After graduation from PC Laura married and moved to Germany for three years with her Army LT. Husband Robert. While in Germany, she worked for Boston University Overseas Programs as Assistant Personnel Manager.

Laura began a municipal government career when she was appointed Assistant Town Clerk in her then new hometown of Durham, CT. She served for five years, and when the Town Clerk passed away in office she was appointed to fill the vacancy. She went on to serve 5 elected terms, acting as only the 25th clerk in a 308-year-old town.

The town clerk role has changed dramatically over the last fifteen years. She is proud to say that she was an active participant in increasing the role of technology, serving as instructor, speaker and advocate at all levels. She served as webmaster and Director of the board for the New England Association of City and Town Clerks. She became active in the Connecticut Town Clerk's Association, serving as Executive Vice President on the Board of Directors for nine years. In 2004 she was named Connecticut Town Clerk of the year.

In 2005 she was appointed to a Charter Revision Commission, where one of the changes made

was to increase the length of term for a number of offices, among them First Selectman, from two-year terms to four-year terms. She later risked her relative security of Town Clerk and ran for the Office of First Selectman. She ran against the incumbent and won by 400 votes!

She has found her new job challenging and just as rewarding. Handling a whole new gamut of town governance has energized her at a crucial part of her life. She has two grown children, and now that they are independent she has more time to devote to her career and town.



Updates From The Class of 2004

Matthew P. O'Connor graduated from Suffolk University Law School. This past year, he clerked for the Justices of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. That clerkship ended recently, and in late October he joined the Boston office of the worldwide firm K&L Gates LLP.

Paul P. Sullivan attended New England School of Law and graduated in 2007. Since August of 2007, he has been working as an Assistant District Attorney for the Norfolk District Attorney's Office.

Erin Wells has been living in Boston since graduating from PC. She earned her JD from Northeastern Law in the spring of 2008. In October, she started working at the law firm Goodwin Procter in Boston.

Adam Schilke, Jonathan Sobin, Erik Camp and Matthew Dunn (PC Psychology '04). The three friends have supported Erik in the development of a bike company aimed at creating sustainable transportation solutions for colleges and universities. The company, *The Collegiate Bicycle Company*, is a bicycle design and consulting company specializing in the production of officially licensed college and university bicycles.

Kate McElligott spent a year in Changsha, China through Harvard Center for International Development's WorldTeach Program. She is now serving as the Director of Development for the Microcredit Summit Campaign in Washington, DC, an international nonprofit network, advocating for the use of microfinance to alleviate global poverty.

Jeff Haddad is working with EF Foundation for Foreign Study as a Regional Director. The organization runs a high school exchange program, where they recruit/manage volunteer host families and local coordinators. It is a nonprofit affiliated with EF Education First, a Swedish language/cultural tourism company.

Department Presentations

Constitution Day Discussion

On September 22, the Political Science Department co-sponsored a Constitution Day event with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The evening started with brief presentations by Drs. Carlson and Hudson regarding the Constitution of the United States, followed by presentations by Drs. McCarthy and Ben-Artzi regarding constitutions of non-democratic states, namely China and Iran. The evening then moved into an open discussion, where students asked questions and shared their ideas.



A Visit from Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

On October 9, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse came to Providence College to speak about his experiences as a freshman U.S.

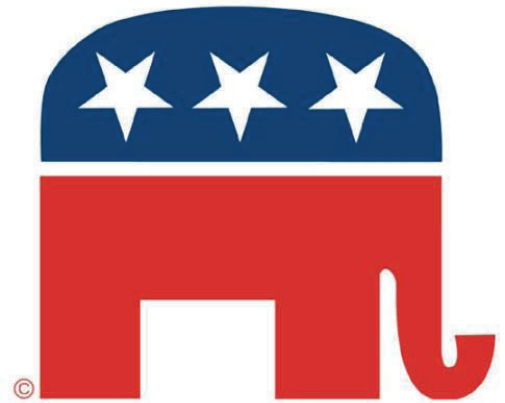
Senator from Rhode Island. He spoke about current issues such as the economy, the environment, the importance of the 2008 election, and the significance of the youth vote. An interactive question and answer period followed his presentation.

Debate Watch

On October 15, the department hosted a debate watch for the third Presidential debate between Senators McCain and Obama. The evening began with brief introductions from Drs. Carlson and Cammarano, and from two student discussants. The debate was then broadcast on the big screen in McPhails, followed by a student-led discussion.

College Debate: Election 2008

On October 27, the Political Science Department, along with four other campus groups, hosted a debate between the College Republicans and the College Democrats. The student representatives debated issues relevant to the 2008 election and made arguments for which candidate, Senator McCain or Senator Obama, is most qualified to hold the office of the President.



A Visit from State Senator Ben Downing

On October 30, state Senator Benjamin Downing '03 visited campus to discuss his life in politics and how Providence College helped his career.

After Obama: Conversations on Race and Gender

On November 19, the Political Science Department co-sponsored a panel discussion on race and gender with the Black Studies Program and three other campus groups. Panelists will include Providence College's own Dr. Tony Affigne, Dr. Nikol Alexander-Floyd of Rutgers University, and Dr. Marion Orr of Brown University.

Visit us on the web!
www.providence.edu/polisci