

Department of Political Science

Newsletter

Congratulations, Angelee Hammond!

Angelee Hammond received the Outstanding Performance Award at the 2016 Opening Day Convocation. The award recognizes exemplary members of the University Staff whose activities, accomplishments, and services are most deserving of acknowledgement.

Angelee Hammond is described as a model employee—the “right hand” to every member of the Political Science Department. Hammond also serves in a summer role with the History Department. She is described as “indispensable” by both departments. Hammond believes it is her job to guide, support and problem-solve—all tasks she takes seriously. To both departments, Hammond uses good judgment and is dependable, a good listener and a positive force when working with other staff, faculty and students.

On campus, Hammond is involved with the Administrative Support Team, the Awards and Recognition Committee, the Global Scholar Committee, and the Academic Computing Users Group Committee. Hammond was a 2012 recipient of the University’s STAR Award and received the College of Letters and Science Service Recognition Award in 2007 and 2011. She also was involved in the Bayeux Tapestry Team and has served on many other committees and groups during her 20 years at UW Oshkosh. In addition to service activities, Hammond is an advocate for the LGBTQ community, and has participated in fundraisers to help the LGBTQ Resource Center. Congratulations, Angelee!

**Source: opening day remarks*



Siemers Writes Book on Sabbatical



Professor David Siemers was awarded a sabbatical this year to write a book on the relative powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the US government. The book had its start when Siemers realized that today we talk about these institutions in ways that no one did years ago. “These days you often hear that the

three branches are ‘coequal’ in power, but no one who was around when the Constitution was written ever thought that,” said Siemers. So the book will attempt to answer some important questions: What inspired the founders to place power where they did? Who changed the way we talk about the Constitution’s distribution of powers and why? Are the results of the changes good or bad? Answering research questions like these is what political science aims to do. Siemers is finding that “coequality” is often used as an excuse to produce a government of inaction, where the preferences of one institution cancel out the preferences of another. “It was never the intent of the founders to produce a government that did not work, but people have changed it into that.” Siemers’ book is scheduled to be published by the University of Missouri Press.

Inside this issue

Thomas Award	2
ADP Interns.....	2
Congrats Seniors	2
Alum Spotlight	3
Alum Quotes	3
Study Abroad	4
Future Courses.....	4



Thomas Wins Awards

At the annual political science awards banquet last spring, Dr. Jerry Thomas received the Willard Smith Distinguished Teaching award, which is determined by political science students. This is the fourth time Dr. Thomas has received this award. Additionally, Dr. Thomas was nominated for the Spotlight Individual of the Year Award by the National Residence Hall Honorary. In her nomination statement, Political Science major, Charlotte Kanyuh said, "I first encountered Dr. Thomas in my third semester when I was a shy and reserved student. During that semester, he continually asked me to discuss difficult topics and to move beyond one-sentence responses. By the end of the course, I was active in the class and I know it helped me to achieve." Dr. Thomas said it is an honor to be recognized for simply doing what you love and that it is humbling to receive this award when you are surrounded by other faculty in the department who are equally committed to student learning and pedagogical innovation.

American Democracy Project Student Interns

Our Department, in partnership with the American Democracy Project, is sponsoring 6 election interns this semester! The students, including PS majors Sami Duehring and Adam Zastrow, and minor Meghan Owens, are registering voters, creating election-themed events, and working at the polls on Election Day. Asked why she chose the internship, Communication Studies major, and PS student employee, Melissa Belmontes, said: "This internship has allowed me to be proactive on campus and, simultaneously, raise awareness about the benefits of registering voters prior to Election Day." Asked about how she sees the internship making a difference, she continued: "It's awesome that five minutes of filling out the voter registration form can save voters at least an hour that they would have spent waiting at the polls. I love being thanked for helping students get this done now so that they don't have to worry about it come Election Day."



Although voter registration on campus ended October 18th, students can still register at the polls on Election Day. More information on what you'll need to register and vote, and how to find your polling place can be found at: http://www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/city_clerk/elections.asp.

Political Science Graduating Seniors

Join us in congratulating our Spring 2016 and Summer 2016 Political Science graduating seniors:

Leavon Anderson, Tracey Bolinger, Grayson Bourke, Hannah Christiansen, William Fath, Ashley Foster, Jordan Hansen, Jade Johnson, Braden Lohr, Samuel Maier, Nicholas Martin, Stevan Mazibrada, Melinda Medrow, Yansheelue Moua, Joe Riewer, Susan Ritchie, Jordan Schettle, Graham Sparks, Emily Wagner, Monica Williams, and Eric Wolfe!



Alum Spotlight: Matt Swenson

When Matt Swenson first walked into the department in 2009, his plans for his future were clear: law school, preferably at Duke. Matt, a motivated student with a deep reservoir of intellectual talent and energy, was sure to attain that goal. He'd worked hard to earn a high GPA in all of his courses, but particularly those within his majors, Political Science and Philosophy. But as the time approached to take the LSAT, Matt began to have second thoughts.

Indeed, Matt came up with an entirely new plan: apply for a position with Teach for America (TFA), the highly-selective organization that places new college graduates in under-resourced schools across the country. Because of Matt's exceptional credentials in college, he was accepted and assigned to his new post at Cross County High School (CCHS) in Cherry Valley, Arkansas. He moved there shortly after graduation with his wife, Karlee, in 2012.

To say that the TFA experience has changed Matt's trajectory is an understatement. Matt was first assigned to teach English at CCHS. He noticed that his students had weak writing skills and decided to do something about it. "I started the first high school peer writing center in the state," Matt writes. "The CCHS Writing Center trains tutors to provide peer feedback throughout the writing process." After his first two-year commitment with TFA was through, he signed on for another two years. "In 2014, after seeing our college-bound and college graduation data, I led a district initiative to start a college and career access program. This program focuses on ensuring that students are prepared, eligible, and aware of their options." This summer, the CCHS College and Career Access (C³) program was awarded the Chad P. Wick Award for Social Justice.

After serving out his TFA contract and finishing a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, Matt was offered a position as Assistant Principal at CCHS where he puts his relentless energy and signature optimism into everything he does. "Being an administrator in a high school is crazy but rewarding work. What makes the work pretty amazing is that you never know what a day is going to look like. While you deal with some not-so-fun situations, the good completely outweighs the bad," Matt writes. "On a daily basis, I get to work with students, teachers, parents, and community members as we drive towards something awesome together."

Matt's work at CCHS embodies the type of education he believes is necessary in an increasingly complex world. "[At CCHS], we want students who can kick butt in the classroom, find their passions, and drive towards them," he notes. "We want students who can collaborate, effectively speak and write, use technology responsibly, think critically, and be self-advocates. As a New Tech School, we believe that high schools need a complete redesign and my work as a school administrator is to work with our faculty, staff, and community to build a system that works for students of this century and beyond."

This department couldn't be prouder of the work Matt is doing to change education in Arkansas, teaching one student at a time the value of becoming intellectually curious, lifelong learners and setting them on a path to higher education. Keep watching: who knows what amazing thing Matt will do next?



Alum Quotes

"I love this department. I love its people. I love the education that I received. Although the current narrative says differently, a college education is so much less about learning about one thing, as it is learning how to learn to do almost anything. I can think of no better major, or set of majors, to train your mind in this way." - Alum, *Matthew Swenson, B.S., 2012 (Political Science & Philosophy)*

"I heard so many people say, 'What are you going to do with that major? Run for President?' Of course not. I'm going to understand the importance of ideas, systems, and relationships. I'm going to be an informed citizen. I'm going to solve problems. And I will do that in all sorts of ways that have nothing to do with being president." - Alum, *Amelia Antrim Crouse, B.A., 2010 (Political Science)*

