Department of Political Science

Spring 2019 Newsletter

Reid Gift Funds New Initiative on Resilient Philanthropy and Public Policy

“The J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences has launched a new initiative focused on resilient philanthropy and public policy. The initiative will be aimed at complementing the existing Master of Public Administration and Nonprofit Studies program offerings, while providing the opportunity for students to delve deeper and identify management approaches that promote accountability, high-quality governance, innovative fund development, as well as support for projects for interdisciplinary collaboration in the public and nonprofit sector, both on and off campus.” Dr. Margaret Reid made a generous $25,000 gift to supplement existing funds for the initiative.

"Beijing is counting on its massive Belt and Road Initiative. But are Chinese firms on board?"

Dr. Ka Zeng, PLSC Professor and Director of Asian Studies, wrote an article for The Washington Post on her research on China’s second Belt and Road Forum and its effects on long-term sustainability.

PLSC Departmental Research Finds That Majority of
Dr. Angie Maxwell
Included in New PBS Documentary

Dr. Angie Maxwell, Diane D. Blair Chair of Southern Studies, is one of the experts included in a new PBS documentary presented by Henry Louis Gates Jr. The documentary, "Our measurement approach — which we contend is a more valid gauge of voters’ knowledge about such proposals — asked voters themselves to identify the measures purportedly motivating them," the researchers explained. "Most failed. We suspect that when asked by past researchers if they had ‘read or heard about Proposition X,’ most voters said ‘yes’ not because a robust policy discussion brought the matter to their attention, but because affectively ‘yes’ is the correct answer.”

The researchers found that around half of the people surveyed in 2014 and 2016 expected to see issues on upcoming ballots, and even fewer could recall one or more specific measures. The researchers also found that respondents with higher levels of education, political interest and knowledge of national politics were the most likely to claim they knew of ballot measures without being able to name any specific measures.

Diane D. Blair to be Inducted into Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame

The Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame has announced that it will be inducting seven women and one organization in a special ceremony at the Statehouse Convention Center. One of two historical inductees, Diane D. Blair...
Reconstruction: America After the Civil War, explores the transformative years following the American Civil War, when the nation struggled to rebuild itself in the face of profound loss, massive destruction and revolutionary social change. "I'm honored to be a part of this much-needed series about one of the most important and consequential chapters in American history," Maxwell said. "The Reconstruction period is often among the most overlooked, misunderstood, and misrepresented times in our nation's history. This documentary explores the real story of Reconstruction, and how more than 150 years later the social changes that happened then are still shaping all of our lives today."

Janine Parry Featured in Short Talks From the Hill Podcast

An edition of Short Talks From the Hill from October 2018 features Janine Parry, professor of political science. Parry discusses the trends and shifts in public opinion she's observed over two decades as director of the Arkansas Poll. "The most significant change ... is the one that we've seen in partisan identification," Dr. Parry explained. "In 2010, completely in sync with the change in our election outcomes after more than a century of patterns, we saw [respondents who identified as independent] take a hard right turn. ... Suddenly about half of the sample said 'Well, I'm leaning Republican.'"

A. Burcu Bayram One of Twelve Fulbright Faculty Members Selected as 2019 Connor Faculty Fellows

Dr. Bayram was chosen, along with eleven other faculty members, as a 2019 Connor Faculty Fellow. "Robert and Sandra Connor of Little Rock established the Connor Endowed Faculty Fellowship in 2004 to provide essential faculty development opportunities to rising academic experts in the college. Annually, a college committee including the dean recognizes faculty who have made excellent contributions to the college and their departments."
The $5,000 award is used to facilitate travel, expand research initiatives and support classroom activities.”

Angie Maxwell One of Four U of A Administrators to Participate in Leadership Development Program

Four University of Arkansas administrators received an in-depth look at the inner workings of the U of A and Southeastern Conference when they participated in this year's SEC Academic Leadership Development Program. The goal of the program is to identify, prepare and advance academic leaders for roles within SEC institutions and beyond. It has two components: a university-level development program designed by each institution for its own fellows and two SEC-wide workshops held on specified campuses for all program participants.

Undergraduate Spotlight

Jordan Farris has been selected by the American Political Science Association to attend the 2019 Ralph Bunche Summer Institute at Duke University. Farris is a junior PLSC major, a Walmart Endowed and Camden and Sue Greene Scholar. He has been recognized on the Fulbright College Dean’s List (2017-2018) and Chancellor’s List (2018).

"Jordan is an outstanding student who has a passion for the communities he desires to impact with his future scholarship. The Bunche Program is designed for students like Jordan. These students have great potential and their trajectory will be broadened by engaging with others who have similar goals and faculty who believe in their future," said Farris' mentor, Pearl K. Dowe, associate professor and chair of political science. "I'm confident he is well on his way to an outstanding career in political science and
Graduate Spotlight

Alejandra Campos (MA) was awarded a $500 scholarship to attend the ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research 2019 Summer Workshops at the Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston. Alejandra also presented her research for her masters thesis at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference.

Alumni Spotlight

Alumnus Joe Hurst was elected mayor of Van Buren, Arkansas in November of 2018. Hurst received a bachelor's in political science from Ouachita Baptist University and a master's degree in public administration from the U of A in 2005. Hurst spent the intervening years working as the city planner for El Dorado and then Van Buren.

Samantha Tafoya (Honors political science, journalism and African-American studies), a 2018 University of Arkansas graduate, has been awarded a Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship following a highly competitive nationwide contest. The Fellowship supports extraordinary individuals who want to pursue a career in the U.S. Foreign Service. It is funded by the U.S. Department of State and managed by the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University.

Fulbright advisor and PLSC alumnus Tyler Garrett was accepted into the PhD program in Political Science at the
University of Colorado recently. When asked about his plans Tyler said “I would like to study American politics, particularly judicial politics. I am primarily interested in conducting research regarding policymaking and rulemaking within federal appellate courts and federal administrative courts. Also, I am interested in intercircuit conflict, judicial hierarchy, oversight, and the use of en banc hearings as oversight.