

University of North Texas Department of Political Science

Fall 2020 Newsletter



Message from the Chair

Dr. Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha

The Department of Political Science at the University of North Texas remains an engaging place for faculty, students, and alumni. Although we face unprecedented challenges during the pandemic of 2020, we have been working hard to persevere and overcome these difficulties. We continue to serve our students--both graduate and undergraduate--and look for creative ways to provide to them the world-class education you enjoyed at UNT--and that they also deserve to receive.

To our cherished Alumni: Please take a moment to read through this newsletter for highlights of some of our students, alumni, and faculty... and keep in touch.

Department News

It's been a wild year! COVID-19 means that the Department of Political Science has been busy adapting to our new normal.

During Spring Break--and faced with rising cases--the University of North Texas transitioned to deliver the rest of the semester's instruction remotely. Our faculty did an amazing job at finding new ways to teach our students. Our students adjusted very well, too!

The Fall semester brings more remote instruction, social distancing, and masks in our face to face

classes, limited faculty travel, and few other visitors to campus. Thus, this year's Constitution Day celebration--to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the ratification

of the 19th Amendment--will be held remotely. We also had to cancel planned events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of our PhD program!

We welcome our newest faculty member, **Dr. Leslie Finger** (Harvard PhD), who studies interest groups, power, and state politics, asking who influences policy, especially as it concerns education policy. She will teach research methods for us in the fall.

Although they remain in the

department, three of our faculty members work in other positions.

Bethany Blackstone is now Associate Dean of

the Honors College. Jim Meernik has begun a four-year term as chair of the Department of Technical Communication, and **Lee Walker** is returning to the National Science Foundation for one year.

1

Political Science

Faculty Travel

Professor Jim Meernik's travel plans to Colombia were abruptly canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As Director of the Castleberry Peace Institute, he had intended to, among other things, begin a project on longer term community peace building in the Middle Magdalena region among the former warring parties. Once international travel safely resumes, Jim Meernik looks forward to continuing this important work.



Gloria Cox



John Ishiyama receives the Eminent Faculty Award

Faculty News

The department's successful run on UNT awards continued during the 2020 academic year! Although the Faculty Excellence Awards reception was canceled due to COVID-19, our faculty were still recognized for their impressive accomplishments.

First, **John Ishiyama** was this year's recipient of the UNT Foundation's Eminent Faculty Award. This is UNT's highest honor bestowed upon a member of the faculty, and it couldn't be more deserved.

Second, **Gloria Cox** was named a University Distinguished Teaching Professor, a fitting honor for one of the University's best instructors.

The department has honored its faculty with departmental awards for the third straight year.



Our winners this year are **Paul Hensel**, for his research on international conflict, **Ko Maeda**, for his excellence in undergraduate teaching, **Dave Mason**, for his dedication to graduate education, and **Jackie DeMeritt**, for her outstanding service to the department.

Despite COVID-19, we look forward to recognizing our colleagues this year for all of their impressive accomplishments. Finally, congratulations to Rafe Major, who also teaches political science in the Honors College. He was promoted to the rank of Principal lecturer in May.

Connect with UNT Political Science!



Student Spotlight

Cat Clopton and Bora Jeong named most outstanding undergraduate and graduate students for 2019-2020

Cat Clopton graduated summa cum laude with a perfect 4.0 GPA in May 2020 from UNT's Honor College. Ms. Clopton earned a B.A. degree in Political Science, a B.S. degree in Sociology, and minored in LGBT Studies. While at UNT, she was a member of both the Political Science honor society Pi Sigma Alpha and the Sociology honor society Alpha Kappa Delta. In addition, Ms. Clopton has an unwavering commitment to inclusiveness and diversity. She served as a volunteer for the PRIDE Alliance and championed the representation of LGBTQ people on and off the UNT campus.

Bora Jeong is a fourth-year doctoral student who intends to complete her PhD next summer. Her research interests include civil conflicts, conflict management, peace studies, and international political economy. Her dissertation concerns the impact of foreign direct investment on peace during and after civil conflict. She has presented her research at several professional conferences, and she has begun teaching her own classes, particularly in the area of International Relations. Ms. Jeong holds a master's degree in Political Science from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, South Korea.

Scholarship Winners

Domingo Garcia Scholarship
Eunice Hernandez and
Helen Vidrine

Steven C. Poe Scholarship
Kennedy Montgomery,
Allison Quisenberry,
Andrew Rogers, and Metti
Grima Temesgen

Frank Feigert Scholarship
Mason Cantrell, Lauren
Putnam, Hillary Shah, and
Cassidy Wray



Cat Clopton

Student Awards

**Ralph Yarborough Award
for Best Undergraduate
Paper**

Joshua Ell

Research Assistant Award
Stephanie Wise

Teaching Fellow Award
Sebastian Graham

Support Political Science

Please consider giving to one of the following funds to help students and our research.

* **Steven C. Poe Scholarship:** Honors the late Steve Poe former professor at UNT, and provides scholarships to students interested in human rights.

* **Domingo Garcia Scholarship:** A fund to honor Domingo Garcia and provide scholarships to students of political science.



Alumni Spotlight

Stacia Haynie (PhD, 1990) shows how a political scientist became an influential leader in higher education

Professor Stacia Haynie is currently Executive Vice President & Provost at Louisiana State University. Before transitioning to administration, Professor Haynie established a record as an outstanding teacher. She taught courses in Judicial Politics, American Constitutional Law, Comparative Judicial Politics and American Public Law. Professor Haynie has been awarded the Arts & Sciences Professor's Award for Distinguished Scholarship, the LSU University Alumni Association Faculty Excellence Award and the LSU College of Arts & Sciences Advisory Council Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. While at UNT, Professor Haynie was a student of Professor C. Neal Tate with whom she collaborated on research and data collection that greatly enriched the field of comparative judicial politics. She has particular expertise in the legal systems of South Africa, the Philippines, and India. Her studies also include civil trial court decisions in U.S. state courts, and has published widely in this area.

Donor Spotlight

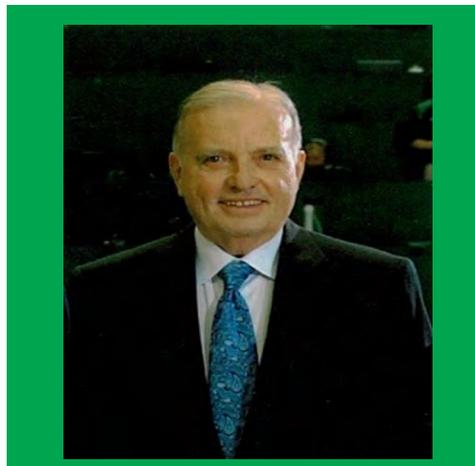
Ernie Kuehne's generous donation begins our Kuehne Fellows program

The Political Science department is deeply grateful to department alum, Ernie Kuehne, whose generous donation allows us to further support our outstanding graduate students.

Shared with the Department of History, Mr. Kuehne's donation will help fund our top graduate student recruits by allowing us to compete with top political science programs in the United States.

Mr. Kuehne graduated with his BA at North Texas State University in 1966 while on a track scholarship. He earned his law degree three years later at Baylor. He is currently president and board chairman of Kuehne Oil Company and owns Kuehne Racing.

Having also won numerous awards for his contributions to UNT and his community, Mr. Kuehne has donated and helped to raise millions of dollars for UNT students. The Department of Political Science is grateful that Mr. Kuehne is one of our alums!



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
& SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of
Political Science

University of North Texas Department of Political Science 1155 Union
Circle #305340 Denton, TX 76203
Phone: (940) 565-2276 politicalscience.unt.edu