

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SKIDMORE COLLEGE
Government Department

Fall 2006

Letter From Department Chair

Beau Breslin

Dear Government Majors, Minors & Alumni:

Once again, it gives me great pleasure to write about the happenings in and around the Government Department. Because I am surrounded by such a talented group of faculty, staff, and students, it is often difficult to decide which initiatives and accomplishments to highlight. To be sure, the faculty on the third floor of Ladd Hall is moving the intellectual dialogue on political matters in new and interesting directions through their various pedagogical and scholarly projects. Similarly, students are finding innovative ways to combine traditional modes of learning with more experiential opportunities, all while remaining faithful to the first principles of a liberal arts education. Finally, Barbara McDonough, the Department's Administrative Assistant, has been a model of efficiency and good humor. She makes the job of chairing the Department so much easier, and so much more fun. It is certainly an understatement to say that I am blessed by my surroundings.

In this letter, however, I think I should focus on just three major accomplishments. First, in the next several months the Department will celebrate the publication of two important books authored by our very own professors Roy H. Ginsberg and Natalie Taylor. Professor Ginsberg's work is entitled *Demystifying the European Union: The Enduring Logic of Regional Integration*. The volume, drawn primarily from his

lectures over the years, represents more than two decades of teaching courses on the European Union, economic and political integration in the region, and transnational organizations.

Not to be outdone, Professor Natalie Taylor has also managed to complete a book manuscript this year. Her volume, *The Rights of Women as Chimera: The Political Philosophy of Mary Wollstonecraft*, originated as a doctoral dissertation but has been impressively shaped and crafted to appeal to a much wider audience. Routledge Press will publish the book immediately after the New Year. If you see Professors Ginsberg and Taylor, be sure to congratulate them on their most impressive accomplishments.

The second achievement that seems worthy of special mention happened late this summer: Visiting Assistant Professor of Government Flagg Taylor successfully completed, and then defended, his doctoral dissertation at Fordham University. The dissertation, *The Politics of Mores and the Tasks of Liberal Statesmanship*, originally started out as a work on Montesquieu and Tocqueville, but once Professor Taylor realized that to do justice to the political philosophy of both French thinkers he would need multiple volumes, he scaled the project back to its current size. He, too, deserves our congratulations.

Lastly, readers of this Newsletter will no doubt see that there is a particular thread that runs through many of the articles. No less than four entries below refer to the 2006 midterm elections, and, more specifically, to our students' involvement in the various campaigns and related internships. It is no coincidence that so much is happening in this area. In just the

past few years, Professor Bob Turner has injected new life into the department's internship program. He has managed to place students in some of the most interesting and exciting offices around the Capital District. Because Professor Turner believes that a student's overall education is enhanced by active involvement in the political process, he has embraced one of the principal values of the Skidmore experience—the integration of “mind and hand.” And our students are much better for it.

In the end, though, perhaps the greatest accomplishment will happen in the next several weeks when Professor Kate Graney gives birth to her second child. I could talk endlessly about how our professional accomplishments are impressive, and how members of the faculty are on the cutting edge of political science. But all of that pales in comparison to the joy of having another child running around the halls of the Department. I know I speak for all when I say, good luck Kate!

Faculty News

Heather Vickery '07

Government Majors have a lot to look forward to this semester and in the coming year. **Professor Kate Graney** spent the summer finishing up revisions and updates to a book manuscript entitled *Of Khans and Kremlins: Tatarstan and the Future of Federalism in Russia*, which is currently under review at Penn State Press. While she had hoped to finish the manuscript earlier, this fall marks the 10-year anniversary of her year long research trip to Russia which forms the basis of the book, so this project has a nice feeling of coming full circle. She is currently finishing up a project of a different kind, as she and her family are expecting the arrival of their second child anytime now! Given the political climate in Russia right now and the arrival of the new baby, Professor Graney will spend the upcoming summer working in Saratoga on a long-standing project about views of Europe in Russia, particularly in Tatarstan, which has positioned itself in the post-Soviet period as the home of what its leaders like to call "Euro-Islam".

Professor Beau Breslin and Molly Appel '07, a self determined major and Professor Breslin's peer mentor in his Scribner Seminar, spent this summer working on a collaborative research project which involved writing an article for a special volume, *Studies in Law, Politics and Society*, (edited by Austin Sarat). The article examines the historical evolution of capital punishment's stated justifications: deterrence and retribution. Molly's responsibility to the project was to research and write a section of the article on retribution. She had to theoretically define retribution, and then examine if and how it has

historically evolved as justification. She “came to the conclusion that, while the understanding of and societal need for retribution has not changed, the proportional weight of the methods through which retribution is enacted has changed”. This should show majors and non-majors alike that if you come to the project with the right attitude you can do anything, as Molly came into this project with no prior knowledge about the subject, nor had she ever taken a course in the government department. Her evaluation of the experience: “The experience of objectively researching a topic in-depth, and of being treated as a colleague rather than a student who needs her hand held through something, was truly invaluable. I now feel very capable of meaningfully contributing to our Scribner Seminar (I am his peer mentor) on capital punishment.”

This spring we have the Kuroda Seminar to look forward to. Gordon Wood, a respected scholar on the early American Republic will be speaking on April 20, 2007 and then will discuss student submitted papers the next day. **Professor Natalie Taylor** is coordinating this event, so if you are interested in submitting a paper for consideration or otherwise being involved, please contact Professor Taylor. Professor Taylor has also been busy working on her book, *The Rights of Woman as Chimera: the Political Philosophy of Mary Wollstonecraft*, which will be published early in 2007. The book is a study of Wollstonecraft's most well known treatise, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, with special attention to her intellectual relationship to Rousseau, Locke, and Aristotle.

Professor Roy Ginsberg is currently in the final stages of having his new book on the European Union published. **Professor Ron Seyb** is on a year long sabbatical; however, you might run into him in the library since he works in one of the carrels everyday. Also, we would like to congratulate **Professor Flagg Taylor** for completing all of the requirements to earn his Ph.D.

Constitution Day Speakers Series

Benjamin Stickney '07

In recognition of Constitution Day (17 September), and in preparation for the annual Fiscus Lecture, the Skidmore Department of Government sponsored a series of three discussions on the Constitution of the United States which were open to the community.

The first lecturer was Skidmore alumnus Professor Daniel DiSalvo, of Amherst College. He spoke on political parties, a topic on which the Constitution is remarkably silent. DiSalvo's lecture presented a perspective on parties only infrequently heard. While they are oft considered divisive and

corrupting institutions which the Founders sought to avoid, he presented the case that parties and party primaries are a vital means of preventing a surfeit of candidates from overwhelming the field, making elections impossible and factions even more likely. When the Constitution's own mechanism for selecting candidates proved inadequate after the election of 1800, the two-party system became a necessary part of the remedy.

The second lecture in the series was delivered by Professor George Thomas, of Williams College. Professor Thomas laid a very theoretical topic before his audience, to wit: should the courts be the ultimate constitutional authority, or should the ability to interpret the document be shared among the branches and the people? This rather complex question drew out fierce defenders of judicial supremacy who were hiding among the attendees, and a lively and involved discussion ensued, as Professor Thomas defended his Madisonian vision from its challengers. While the issue at hand was an abstract one, it was readily engaged by speaker and audience alike.

The final lecture in the series, delivered by the department's own Professor Flagg Taylor, proved to be particularly current. The president, under the auspices of a five-year state of national emergency, has been accruing powers to his office in a highly controversial fashion. Supporters of the administration argue that such a gathering of power is necessary for the president to adequately protect the nation, while its detractors claim that the constitutional limits on executive power are being overstepped. Professor Taylor's lecture provided an historical perspective on this very debate. Bringing such esteemed executives as Jefferson and Lincoln into the arena, Taylor highlighted the arguments in favor of such broad uses of executive power as the Louisiana Purchase, and the suspension of habeus corpus during the Civil War. As was to be expected, this led to a spirited debate on the benefits and dangers of executive leeway, as well as the intra- and extra-constitutional justifications for same.

It is the opinion of this writer that the Constitution Day series was an eminent success, drawing favorable attendance and participation from both faculty and students. While discussion of the Constitution should not be unusual in a government department, it is nonetheless relieving to see the subject addressed with vigor and enthusiasm without the classroom as well as within.

Ronald J. Fiscus Lecture

Lily Gedney '07

When Akhil Reed Amar, Southmayd Professor of Law at Yale Law School, asked the audience at the annual Ronald J. Fiscus lecture on Friday, October 13 who had read the Constitution, he seemed a bit surprised when the majority of people in a close-to-full Gannett auditorium raised their hands. Yet, despite this fact, there was still something left for the students, professors, and parents attending the lecture to learn. Amar was there to offer a new perspective on the Constitution—the New York perspective. Some of his points were familiar, but he addressed the fact that we, for the most part, know the Constitution from the Philadelphia perspective. He joked that if he had been giving this lecture in Philadelphia, he would have stuck to that traditional view, but when in New York, why not highlight its important role?

In general studies of the Constitution, mostly what is taught in the pre-college years, we learn about it as a "parchment," he said. On Friday, he emphasized that he was there to speak about the "process." He talked about the Constitution being more democratic and slavocratic than we probably think. As far as democracy is concerned, he focused on the first line of the Constitution's preamble, "We, the people." Those who have read his book *America's Constitution: A Biography*, as students in Professor Natalie Taylor's American Political Thought course currently are, know Amar's attachment to this phrase as he uses it in the opening lines of his book as well. From there he discussed that despite what we have often been taught, the Constitution was not the work of a few self-interested rich men, but went through a very democratic process of ratification. New York, where all free adult male citizens could vote, was the eleventh and last state to ratify. As Amar joked, "World history pivoted on Poughkeepsie."

He also discussed the issue of slavery, surprising many with the fact that in 1787, New York was still considered a slave state. Its role as a slave state, in fact, was so strong that New York's decision to vote with the Southerners in the presidential election of 1800 was the reason Adams lost.

New York's role in the Constitution didn't end in the period of the Founding. Amar reminded us that the Bill of Rights was first proposed there, and that several amendments had ties to New York as well. He concluded his lecture with a discussion of the present day, focusing on September 11, the last event in New York that has shined a light, but a much different one, on our Constitution today. The Constitution in the first centuries of its existence was a document for a new world removed from the old world, Amar said. September 11 changed all of that. Should our Constitution then see some sort of change, too? Amar clearly thought yes, and told the students in the audience

that this was our generation's duty: a tough, but necessary one.

Overall, the audience seemed interested in Amar's fresh perspective on the Constitution and was kept further engaged by his lively lecture style and several witty remarks. He proved to be an appropriate choice for this year's Fiscus lecture.

Researching French Military History

Julianna Orgel '07

Professor Steven Hoffmann recently spent two weeks in France for professional as well as personal reasons. Bringing back a more enlightened view of French history to the classroom, enjoying French food and visiting his step-son were some of the key highlights of Professor Hoffmann's travels.

The Loire Valley was one of the first stops on Professor Hoffmann's journey. The Loire Valley, being one spot of allied advance during World War II, is a historical treasure. The museum in Loire Valley has the biggest collection of tanks anywhere. "You get to see them up close," Professor Hoffman explained. "There are also tanks from the Cold War, and the World War I era. It was very useful for me in some of what I teach."

Professor Hoffmann also took the time to visit the South of France where there is a Naval museum in Toulon, the location of a current French operating Naval base. Both museums helped clarify his image of the French position, especially the role of the French resistance movement during World War II.

The most valuable aspect of trips such as these is the wealth of knowledge professors are able to bring back to the classroom. Professor Hoffmann learned about French attitudes toward France's defeat by the Germans in 1940, by viewing images portrayed on the walls of the museum. He described how different it was to hear about these events, and then see a representation of one of them on a museum wall designed to be seen primarily by French people. He had read that the American Sherman Tank didn't hold up in comparison to the German tanks. It was another thing to see that difference in person.

Professor Hoffmann also gained insight about the German takeover of France by being in Toulon. Germany took over part of the country in 1940 and the rest, including Toulon, in 1942. "I didn't realize what happened in Toulon. The French sunk their own ships so that they wouldn't fall into German

hands. I thought that was an honorable thing to do. You can see that they thoroughly did the right thing."

Although Professor Hoffmann had visited France before, he wanted to spend more time on this trip in a major military museum in Paris near the Tomb of Napoleon, where nearly half the day was spent gathering fascinating facts on the French Resistance.

Traveling abroad can be an extremely eye-opening experience. On this trip Professor Hoffmann realized that the French Navy was a big part of the resistance to the Germans. On earlier trips he was also able to visit battle sites and pick up pieces of information that one cannot get just from a textbook. "There are things you can't get from just reading a map," Professor Hoffman explained. "When I visited, I was able to learn how long it takes to get from place to place and how timing can make a tremendous difference. I could also learn about defense positions on a particular hill, for example. You don't get a sense of height or slopes or who was doing what, where unless you're physically there."

Returning from the trip, maps made much more sense and had more meaning for Professor Hoffmann. Now looking at roads he could understand their military significance because he himself had driven on them. Another aspect of this and similar trips was a chance to find out what local people remember and how what people recall oftentimes is different from what's in the history books.

Perhaps one of the most intense aspects of Professor Hoffman's trips is visiting World War II cemeteries. "You get a better sense of what all of this cost," he elaborated. "This isn't ancient history. You find out that there are people who lost loved ones and are still coming back, often with children and grandchildren, sixty years later to visit."

Looking to the future, Professor Hoffmann's next excursion may be to Ben Gurion University in the South of Israel. Over winter break he would like to discover more about current Israeli politics and the military campaign of last summer. He is also interested in where Israel is headed in international affairs.

59th Annual United Nations NGO Conference

Kelli Lasky '07

The young and educated are of incredible importance in initiating change in the world This was discussed during the

59th annual United Nations Non Governmental Organization (NGO) conference in the beginning of September. The purpose of this conference was to bring NGOs from around the world together to discuss issues that presently consume the world and those that will effect our future. While the conference's official theme dealt with the partnerships that NGOs have with civil society in general; the *youth* of society (30 and under) was recognized as a a silent yet equally important group that was significantly honored, discussed and encouraged.

Speakers such as Secretary-General of the UN, Koffi Annan; Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, Hans Blix; and UN-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Sashi Tharoor; presented on various subjects which included: AIDS/HIV, genocide, economic reforms, global warming, environmental deterioration, gender inequities, globalization, micro credit finance programs, nuclear warfare, and weapons of mass destruction. These topics have a huge impact on the future. While few people under the age of thirty attended the conference, time and time again it was stressed that the partnership between NGOs and civil society must be conveyed to the younger and educated population because they will be responsible to continue to deal with the issues in the future. For this reason students were not second-guessed or underestimated at this conference rather they were encouraged to participate. This further exemplified the dynamic between the young and old. All ages were respected by one another, and smoothly worked together. This generational collaboration was necessary to obtain viewpoints from men, women, different cultures and various ages so as to come to a well-rounded consensus.

The United Nations is certainly a place that brings not only nations and leaders together, but also individuals from the civil society that might not otherwise have an opportunity to meet. A variety of opinions filled the conference because of the diversity of the participants. This diversity caused many unlikely yet poignant interactions and fascinating conversations that allowed for genuine passion and energy to seep through the United Nation building. Whether young or old, all had one thing in common: a desire to work together today in order to make positive changes for tomorrow. Our youth are necessary in formulating the future, however there is a lesson to be learned from the experiences of those who came before us. It is not only the future that can change the world; it is the collaboration between the past, present and future that will make the ultimate difference.

Washington Semester Program

Taylor Leake '07

Are you interested in American Politics? How about civil service or non-profit work? Want to see what our nation's capital is like? If so, you should consider the Washington Semester program at American University. It combines a two day a week internship experience with a unique seminar on a variety of topics that utilizes the unique city of D.C. as a classroom. Far from sitting in the class room listening to lectures the other three days a week, you will go on site visits, hear from government employees, heads of corporations and embassies, and much more. The choice of programs is also impressive: American Politics, Foreign Affairs, US History, Transforming Communities (nonprofit work and urban social change), International Environment & Development, Public Law, Justice and many more.

I spent last semester at this program studying Transforming Communities, and interning with Food & Water Watch, a nonprofit dedicated to healthy and sustainable food and water. It was a great experience just to be in D.C. and experience all that it has to offer, from monuments to the hill to restaurants and unique and diverse neighborhoods that make up the historic city. It was also enjoyable to break away from the typical class routine. In D.C. you get to experience a 9-5 workday on a limited scale while still taking classes to enhance your career. It was also a great way to meet people from around the country; a change from Skidmore, where most students are from the North East (or "right outside Boston" to be most specific). Additionally, because you mainly take 1 seminar, you spend a large chunk of time three days a week with a small group of people (I had 15 in my class) and make close and lasting friends.

If you are interested in the Washington Semester program, and want to hear more from a student who has been through it, feel free to e-mail me at t_leake@skidmore.edu.

Appreciating Home: A Study Abroad Lesson Lincoln Brody '08

I have been back in the U.S. for four months, and although I had a wonderful time this past year living and studying in Madrid, I am really happy to be here. I have gained an incredible amount of insight into the mentality of not only the Spanish, but also of the people in every city and town I visited in Europe. Although I cannot say that my impressions of every aspect of these mentalities were always positive, I have at the very least taken away a much more sophisticated understanding about the oft romanticized European lifestyle. It is indeed beautiful in countless ways, but it was important for me to come to terms with some of the more common problems that I encountered abroad before I could truthfully evaluate my experience. That being said, I would love return to Spain, but next time around I intend to succumb to the

allure of one of the many other beautiful destinations that I only had the pleasure of visiting last year.

Now acquainted with a diverse selection of Iberian cities, there are several which have managed to engrain themselves firmly in my fond travel memories, and whose prospect as “home” I cannot feasibly disregard at this moment in my life. San Sebastián would be extremely hard to pass up, with its spectacular Playa la Concha (Seashell Beach) and delicious pintxos (the Basque version of tapas). The cosmopolitan and youthful Barcelona is saturated with culture and life, seemingly gravitating the more fascinating people of the world into its streets. In the south, Andalucía’s blissful, laid back cities such as Córdoba and Sevilla are quintessentially Spanish, and I would surely have little to complain about passing my days down there.

While learning to appreciate the value of some amazing locations such as these, I did, however, also develop a heightened appreciation of both of my homes stateside –with my family and here at Skidmore. I believe that this will be the most enduring transformation that I have experienced over the course of the past year. Although I don’t agree with everything that goes on in this country, I have certainly come to be grateful for everything that is right here. Nothing makes you realize the significance of having access to your network of friends and family more than spending eight months across an ocean from them. Not to mention, that the quality of education in Spain pales in comparison to what most American colleges such as Skidmore have to offer, and when you order a vegetarian dish here, it tends not to come loaded with pork. In other words, what I have here is very special to me, and I am thankful that I have learned how to appropriately value the important aspects of my life.

Academic Council

Heather Vickery ‘07

Academic Council has gone through some major changes this year. Among other changes, the appointment of department representatives is now in the hands of the Appointments Subcommittee of Academic Council which consists of 6 delegates and 1 senator, instead of the faculty of each department. As the chair of this committee, my main goal for this year is to set up a set of procedures for the appointment of delegates that not only ensures that they are intelligent students active and interested in the colleges academic well being, but also that they fit well with their specific department. Although some would prefer if the students were the only voice in appointing delegates, I think that would be a big mistake. Part of a delegates responsibilities, is to be an intermediary between their department and Academic Council and so they have to attend faculty meetings. To

disregard the opinion of the faculty that representatives have to work with is to disregard that aspect of “the job” which would make the council just as problematic as it has been in the past.

We, as a council, have a busy year coming up. We have already looked at the new proposal for the writing requirement and are drafting a set of recommendations concerning it that we will submit to CEPP. We will also soon be looking at the potential pros and cons of interdisciplinary tenure lines for faculty. If either of these issues interests you, Academic Council meets at 7:30 every Wednesday, and we set aside time for non council members to address the issues we have talked about. Also, remember, next year we are going to need 2 new government department representatives so apply when the time comes!!

A is for Activism

Taylor Leake ‘07

If you were like me, one of the main things you looked for when you were visiting colleges was how politically engaged the student body was. Roaming around campus as a pre-frosh I looked at posters, the events section of the newspaper, and for any other sign of activism and because of this Skidmore became one of my top choices. With campaign posters everywhere, this was a year before the 2004 election, I could hardly turn around without finding something political.

After coming to Skidmore however, I realized that there was a lot more to student activism on this campus than political campaigns. Social activism makes up a sizable number of Skidmore’s clubs and organizations. These clubs, pushing the campus to evaluate and question their actions and views, play an important role in teaching students about civic engagement. For government majors especially, these clubs allow us to practice what we learn. Below is a sampling of some of these clubs on campus and what they are up to this semester. I am quite sure they would all love new members, so feel free to e-mail their presidents and get involved!

United Students Against Sweatshops, USAS, chartered last year, has dedicated itself to protecting the rights of laborers here and abroad. The group works with the Skidmore Shop, dining services, and the purchasing director at Skidmore to ensure that the products we buy at Skidmore are produced fairly, and help benefit those trying to make a living. To this end the group is working on a Designated Suppliers Campaign, where the school would only purchase Skidmore Logo clothing from specific factories that treat their workers fairly, and pay them a living wage. It is also attempting to end our contract with Coca-Cola, protesting the companies’

complicity in nine murders of labor organizers in Columbia, and other anti-union activity. The club has also been active in trying to protect our own Skidmore union workers. The college is attempting to eliminate the transportation department and USAS is working with the union to find a solution for those who will have to switch jobs.

The Feminist Action Network, FAN, is another group dedicated to social activism. They are dedicated to protecting women's rights not only to live free from violence, but also reproductive rights and otherwise. This semester they have a number of events in the works. They are thinking of hosting a concert to benefit Dress for Success, a nonprofit organization that provides business clothing for women previously on welfare, as well as a candlelight vigil for victims of abuse. They also plan to sponsor a movie that focuses on rape and dating violence, run the Vagina Monologues, and plan Women's History Month.

These two groups are simply representative of the plethora of other clubs and organizations on campus. Environmental Action Club, currently fighting against our paper supplier for their clear cutting of tropical forests, Amnesty International, the Progressives, Students on the Fence, and VOX are others, and the list could go on since new clubs spring up constantly. Political involvement on the local (Skidmore) level should be an important part of any Government Major's education, whether it is through SGA, electoral politics, or activism.

The 20th Congressional District Race

The Gillibrand Campaign Leslie Rosenberg '07

Under the guidance of Government Professor Bob Turner, I, along with fellow Government majors Adam Eckstein '07, Nina Glatt '07, Eli Turkel '08, and Julia Bienstock '09 have been lucky enough to participate in a for-credit internship with the Kirsten Gillibrand for Congress campaign this semester. As part of our work with the campaign, the five of us were given the chance to aid in the organization of a *Take Back the House Rally* in the Spa on Monday, October 9. The guest of honor was our boss, Kirsten Gillibrand, who was joined in support by Saratoga Springs Mayor Valerie Keehn, Democratic Whip Congressman Steny Hoyer (MD-5), and Congressman Rush Holt (NJ-12).

Gillibrand is currently the democratic congressional candidate for our own 20th district of New York in what is

being called one of the nation's "hottest races." For the first time since he took office in 1999, incumbent Republican John Sweeney is in the fight of his career, with only a one-point lead over Gillibrand according to the latest polls. In what was once considered a solidly Republican district, Gillibrand's popularity has soared in recent months. Because this is such a high-profile race for everyone involved, we interns have been able to feel the effects of everything we do, as the race tightens each week. Our internship has had us performing a variety of campaign tasks such as calling voters, entering data, training volunteers, posterizing campus with information on the election, planning for election day, running errands for campaign employees, and "dorm storming" every residence hall and Skidmore apartment registering students to vote in Saratoga. However, the chance to help coordinate a campus rally with Democrats as famous as the House Whip was the biggest thrill so far.

One might think that to attract names as big as Steny Hoyer's, a deal must have been struck between the campaign and Hoyer's staff. In fact, it was the idea of Hoyer and Holt to come to this part of New York to help stump for Kirsten, given the high stakes of the race. Of course, the Gillibrand campaign, and by extension, the Skidmore Democrats jumped at the chance to sponsor the event. In planning the event, our responsibilities included arranging as much publicity as possible, meeting with members of the Skidmore and Saratoga communities, and even the United States secret service! In the end, the spa was jam-packed with students, professors, and local Saratogians, and the speakers were each greeted with cheers and applause. After the Congressmen and Mayor spoke, the spotlight focused on Gillibrand, who spent the final portion of the program answering questions from members of the audience. She spoke with the poised confidence of a veteran politician – quite impressive given her recent entry into politics. Since completing work on the rally and registering hundreds of Skidmore students to vote before the October 13 deadline, the next major project of the Gillibrand interns is to make sure that every registered voter on this campus follows through by making it to the polls on November 7!

The Sweeney Campaign

Tom Qualtere '08, President, SYRA

Working for Congressman Sweeney has been nothing short of fantastic. Having grown up on Saratoga Lake, I've felt an especially close connection to this campaign since John Sweeney has represented my family in the House since 1998. I've met him on several occasions before this year, and spoke with him at length one day at the race track this summer. Among other things, I remember him telling me, "Your school's not like the rest of Saratoga- it takes a lot of courage

to be doing what you're doing up there." True, but representing the conservative agenda on campus is something myself and my club feel is essential, and love doing all year round. We're all just as excited to be volunteering every weekend to ensure that Sweeney keeps his deserved spot in Congress this fall.

Despite what various polls say about the mood of the nation as a whole, President Bush still has many staunch supporters in Saratoga County and they're just as supportive of the Congressman. The massive and energetic crowd at our annual County Fest a couple weeks ago (with an all-time record attendance) in my mind confirms this. Whether it's from going door-to-door or making phone calls, hearing Republicans, Independents, Conservatives, and even some Democrats rave about John Sweeney has been refreshing to say the least. So now our job between now and election day is simple: make sure they all leave their houses to vote on November 7th. We know the support is there—the polls show it—but as we saw in last year's election, actions speak a lot louder than words.

Live and Learn: An Internship Opportunity

Geannan Camponeschi

I am a firm believer that having professional experience is an integral part of being a well-rounded undergraduate student. I have attempted to participate in multiple internships in different aspects of government in order to be exposed to diverse careers that would hopefully aid my career pursuits upon graduation. While abroad in London I received an e-mail from both Career Services and Professor Bob Turner about an internship at the New York State Division of the Budget (DOB) which I applied for and was accepted into.

DOB is an executive agency that is concerned with budgeting issues for every New York State department and agency. It is separated into multiple units, each having responsibility over certain policy areas; examples of units include Health and Mental Hygiene and Economics and Revenue. Units are responsible for tasks such as expenditure forecasting, analyzing agency budget requests, monitoring agency spending and recommending fiscal and programmatic enhancements and much, much more.

The unit I was assigned to was EPU, the Economic Development, Energy, Public Authorities, Transportation and the Environment Unit. For my first project I researched local assistance programs, compiled a spreadsheet and then created a searchable database. The data I researched included program descriptions, goals and objectives, contact information, and historical funding. This document will be used during the transition to a new administration in January.

My second project involved researching and compiling data and figures on banking, insurance and tax departments, agencies and programs. The data I researched in this project was more quantitative and included expenditure and revenue features in addition to general information about the agencies and programs. In addition to my projects I participated in meetings with other units and with outside agencies such as the Department of Economic Development, Empire State Development Corporation and with legislative liaisons on specific policy issues.

The internship was a structured program with interns from a variety of Capital Region institutions. In addition to working in our respective units four days a week, every Friday interns participated in professional development training. This included everything from full Microsoft Office training to budgeting seminars to field trips around the Capital Region. One of the more interesting field trips was when the interns were invited to Peebles Island State Park where we learned about the environment, art restoration, and took a barge ride through locks on the Hudson River.

This internship provided me with a lot of networking opportunities and insight into professional work environments. I learned a great deal about state government and its operations and the New York State budgeting process. Overall the experience was extremely worthwhile—not only did I learn a great deal but I was paid and provided housing!

Where Are They Now?

For those of you like myself that are missing the familiar faces of newly graduated Government Majors I share with you details of what life after Skidmore has to offer.

Kevin Riley '05

After graduation I returned to India (where I studied abroad) to continue my study of Hindi and also begin to study Urdu. I spent 4 months there, half of which was spent at a language school in Northern India and the other half was spent in Varanasi with a private tutor. When I returned home I began to work for a family in Princeton, NJ a few days a week and on weekends, taking care of their daughter who has a fairly severe case of autism. I've continued to do this on and off since November, whenever I'm home.

At the end of January 2006 I began an internship with the U.S. State Department in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs in the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy that lasted just over 3 months. From there I headed to New Orleans to volunteer with Common Ground Relief on their post-Katrina efforts. I spent about 3 months there helping to both gut out

houses and deciding on which houses were a priority for us to gut out and making sure they were structurally safe enough to do so. After a brief stint back in

New Jersey, I left in late September for Cairo, Egypt where I am currently studying Modern Standard and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic at the Kalimat Language Institute.

Emily Martin, '06

Indeed, a degree in government offers a broad range of experience, which makes it difficult to pinpoint exactly what one may do with such a degree after graduation. When I graduated this past May, I decided not to go the route of joining up with a current political campaign, as did many of my government friends. I had spent a year writing my senior thesis on the 2004 presidential election, and I just needed a break from the back breaking world of American political campaigns. Instead, I decided to go down the path less traveled, and looked into working for a non-profit organization. After interviewing for a few AmeriCorps



position, I found myself at Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Mass. I really had no prior experience in special education other than my father being blind, but I decided that I wanted a position that would offer me hands on experience without the boring desk job.

My job really forces me to call upon all aspects of my liberal arts education. As a Program Aide at Perkins, I work in the only all female dorm which

houses 15 blind, visually impaired, and multiply handicapped women. I do everything from cooking to cleaning and mentoring to chaperoning trips into the community. Mainly, I am there to assist in helping these girls gain independent living skills as well as working on socializing and education. I am a mentor, a teacher, a mother, a friend, and a staff. I won't lie. This job is not glamorous, but it is a lot of fun. As I told Prof. Seyb after my first month at Perkins, I never expected to be working in this field, but now I cannot imagine doing anything else.

Julianna Koch '06

I'm working In Washington D.C. for the Urban Institute in the Tax Policy Center, which is a joint project between the Urban Institute and Brookings Institution. I provide research assistance on various topics in tax policy such as the

interaction of minimum wage and tax credits for the director of the center and other senior researchers. Some of my longer term projects are developing a tax encyclopedia and a new tax legislation web page that summarizes major enacted tax legislation since 1980 for our website. I also had the opportunity to work on some testimony on dynamic analysis



that was presented to the House Budget Committee last month. Lastly, I am responsible for maintaining the website and listserv newsletter and for some general management of the center, particularly proposals and reporting to our funders. The center is generally focused on economics, but the work certainly relates to government and politics since elected officials are the ones who make tax policy and taxes are how we pay for government.

Ben Kaufman '06

This summer I worked at Alex Smith's ('06) mother Susan Smith's ('70) summer camp/farm in Newport, Pennsylvania for the month of July and then immediately after drove down to DC to start working for Senator Jim Jeffords (Indp:VT).

I mostly write constituent letters and archive the office's many documents before the Senator retires in January. It is only a 6-month gig, but it's a good time and I will be down here for at least a year, with a 12-month lease in an apartment in Columbia Heights, DC. And I'm currently on the lookout for a new job if anyone's got any suggestions...



Laura Renz '06

I spent the summer after graduation as a full time intern at the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, a libertarian non-profit focused on free-market philanthropy. I am currently working as a Legislative Assistant in the Federal Government Relations group of a law firm in Washington, DC, Buchanan Ingersoll and Rooney. Additionally, I am pursuing a Masters in Public Policy at George Mason University in Arlington, Va.

As a legislative assistant, I am the support and research person for two of the practice groups attorneys. During September when Congress was in session, my daily routine could consist of attending hearings on Capitol Hill, helping to organize campaign fundraising events for the firm, and sometimes general research and administrative work. My job depends on the needs of the two attorneys I work for; for one attorney I do much more research, for the other I help her with her tasks such as recruiting for the firm, fundraisers and work on our PAC. I was also lucky enough to attend several congressional fundraisers and meet a host of very interesting people.

When Congress is out of session, my work slows down significantly. Buchanan is a bipartisan group, so a significant amount of our time currently is spent in heated discussions over current political issues and the outcome of the midterm elections. I've only been here since August so I'm still learning what some of my responsibilities are, but so far it's been a really wonderful experience!

Michael Milazzo '06

I'm working in Albany as an Investigator for the Department of Labor under the Employment Standards Administration and will be upholding the Fair Labor Standards Act along with the Family Medical Leave Act. Once fully trained, I'll be out in the field, investigating firms to make sure they are following other things following federal laws regarding the set minimum wage and proper overtime.

Alumni Updates

Our Government Department faculty members continue to be in contact with government majors long after they graduate and we are happy to share their successes here as well.

Nadivah Greenberg '82

This past August Nadivah successfully defended her doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania and anticipates earning her Ph.D. in Political Science in December 2006. Her article, "Shop Right: American Conservatism, Consumption and the Environment" was recently published in *Global Environmental Politics* (MIT Press, May 2006). Nadivah is now attempting to have her book manuscript published.

This fall Nadivah is a recipient of a Gentle Foundation grant at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research and teaching experience include global environmental politics, the politics of consumption, international relations and American conservative thought. She has taught the "The Politics of the Global Environment" and presently teaches an upper level undergraduate course on "American Conservatism and the

Environment" at the University of Pennsylvania.

Nadivah writes that she is indebted to many of her Skidmore professors and is particularly grateful to Steven Hoffmann, (her professor for three classes and Government advisor: "You don't *really* want to go to law school, do you?") and Robert Van Meter, (she managed to survive the formidable challenge of his "American Foreign Policy" course). The memory of their inspiring courses and enduring encouragement and advice provided invaluable support.

Jeff Ryder '95

Is an aerospace and defense strategy consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton. After graduating from Skidmore, Jeff spent two years in the Peace Corps in Uzbekistan before receiving a MALD from the Fletcher School, Tufts University and a MBA from Georgetown University. He is married and lives in Arlington, VA.

Greg Thall '02

Has completed his law degree at Villanova, and is in charge of the Rendell for Governor campaign for Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Ken Hardy '01

Was selected to give the student speech at the commencement ceremony of Boston University Law School this past May. Ken is completing Maine and Mass Bar applications and making preparations to move to Maine where he will take the Bar Review Course.

Scott Minkoff '04

Is starting a Ph.D. program in political science at the University of Colorado-Boulder.

Dave Thayer '04

Is working for The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City in Boston.

Political Cartoons: Food For Thought

Political cartoons have always been an acceptable and entertaining method of criticizing and satirizing current events. It is astounding the variety of angles and perceptions that cartoons can illustrate.

What few readers do is compare alternative ways that cartoons portray the same event or issue. The four cartoons reprinted here depict the issue of troop withdrawals from Iraq. What do you think?



Spring 2007 will see the return of Professor Pat Ferraioli to Skidmore's campus. Much beloved, and evidenced as such when the student body selected her to be the 1998 Faculty Commencement Speaker.

Professor Ferraioli is an expert in the area of American Indian Politics, Public Policy, Women and the Law, and Gender. She will teach GO 353: Sex and Power on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. The course description is as follows:

GO 353 examines changing patterns in the regulation of sex, sexuality, and representations of sex and sexuality under constitutional and statute law in the United States. Attention will be focused on how these regulations support or challenge power relationships. Students will participate in a moot court.

Spring 2007 Registration

Registration begins on November 6th. Professor Tim Burns and Professor Flagg Taylor will each offer a topics course in the Spring.

GO 351A: The French Liberal Tradition 3 credits Professor Flagg Taylor

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30p.m. - 3:50p.m.

Prerequisite: GO 103; 303 and 304 recommended but not necessary

After the elaboration of the foundations of liberal democracy in the 17th century by thinkers such as Hobbes and Locke, there would seem to be two dominant paths in political philosophy. On one hand, thinkers like Voltaire or Adam Smith appear committed to the furthering of these principles. On the other, thinkers like Rousseau and Nietzsche undertake thorough-going critiques of liberal democratic life. Less noticed is a train of thinkers including Montesquieu, Benjamin Constant, and Tocqueville, who, while remaining sympathetic to ideas like constitutional democracy, also bring out some problematic elements of modern political life. This is a truly unique strain of thought in 19th century France, where the dominant intellectual forces were two: those promoting a more radical, proto-socialist agenda, and those seeking a restoration of the ancient regime. In addition to the well-known triad of Montesquieu, Constant, and Tocqueville, we will examine three contemporary French thinkers who kept this tradition of friendly critique alive in an atmosphere dominated by Marxism and post modernism: Bertrand de Jouvenel, Raymond Aron, and Pierre Manent.

GO 351 B: The Political Thought of Thucydides 4 credits

Professor Tim Burns

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Recommended Preparation: GO 303 or 304

This course is your chance to read one of the most important works in Western thought, Thucydides' *War Between The Peloponnesians and The Athenians*. The work is an account of a war that took place over the course of twenty-seven years (432-404 B.C), a war in which democratic Athens very nearly defeated oligarchic Sparta in a bid to become rulers of the known world. Thucydides intended this work to serve as a guide for future ages, or to be, in his famous words, "something

useful...a possession for all time." For this reason, we are not reading the work out of mere antiquarian interest. Instead, we'll carefully examine the deeds and speeches of the war as narrated by Thucydides in order to find solid guidance in the face of permanent problems and issues of political life.

Thucydides could not have provided us with this kind of guidance if his work were a naively edifying, heroically inspiring, or merely cautionary tale. He presents us with the deliberations of statesmen engaged in actual political life at a time when that life happened to be most revealing of itself. As we read his work, we see the deeds of outstanding statesmen who are engaged in a struggle over the objects of their longing, freedom and empire. We hear their speeches as they attempt to move others to pursue their goals, in accordance with their opinions of what is advantageous and what is just or noble. Thucydides writes in such a way that we become more than vicariously engaged with these participants. He orders and presents the participants' speeches and deeds so that we are deeply moved by them. We become receptive to the participants' deliberations, instructed by their victories and their defeats, their glory and their shame. By examining the careers of outstanding political leaders, and discovering what those careers have to teach us about the greatness and the limits of political life, we are forced to reflect on ourselves and our own lives.

Some of the other permanent issues and concerns that Thucydides' work will help us examine are the following: What are the causes of war and the conditions of peace? What are the causes of imperialism? What are the arguments for and against it? Is capital punishment justified? What (if any) is the proper place of anger in political deliberation? What praise do citizens of democracy and of oligarchy give to these two different political regimes? How do their praises compare to what the book--the course of the war--reveals about those two regimes? Thucydides presents us with statesmen whose belief in or doubt of divine intervention in human affairs decisively affects their actions; what role does religion play in political life? What forms of religion should wise statesmen encourage or discourage in healthy political life?

Visit the Department of Government's Photo Gallery online to view more photos at <http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/gov/department>



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Breslin, Beau - x5244, Rm. 309

Classes: GO
213 Comparative Constitutional Systems TU/TH 12:40 - 2:00

Burns, Tim - x5247, Rm. 316

Classes: GO
303 Classical Political Thought TU/TH 3:40 - 5:30
GO
351 Thucydides TU/TH 9:10 - 11:00

Hoffmann, Steven - X5246, RM. 311

Classes: GO
103 Critical Issues in World Politics M/W/F 1:25 - 2:20
GO
239 Nationalism and Politics in the Middle East M/W 4:00 - 5:20
GO
319 What the US Does Wrong M/W/F 11:15 - 12:10

Taylor, Flagg - xTBA, RM 310

Classes: GO
103 Critical Issues in World Politics TU/TH 11:10 - 12:30
GO
311 Constitutional Law TU/TH 3:40 - 5:00
GO
351 French Liberal Tradition M/W 2:30 - 3:50

Taylor, Natalie - x5243, Rm. 306B

Classes: GO
101 Introduction to American Government TU/TH 2:10 - 3:30
GO
332 American Pol Development: The Party System TU/TH 9:10 - 11:00

Turner, Bob - x5251, Room 315

Classes: GO
222 State and Local Government M/W/F 10:10 - 11:05
GO
231 Environmental Politics and Policy M/W/F 1:25 - 2:20

Trela, Heather - x TBA, Room TBA

Classes: GO
101 Intro to American Government M/W/F 10:10 - 11:05

Vacs, Aldo x5249, Rm. 319

Classes: GO
103 Critical Issues in World Politics M/W/F 9:05 - 10:00
GO
209 The Latin American Puzzle M/W/F 12:20 - 1:15
GO
228 US Foreign Policy M/W 2:30 - 3:50

Ferraioli, Pat

Classes: GO 353 Sex and Power TU 6:30pm - 9:30pm

Sabbaticals: Kate Graney, Roy Ginsberg, Ron Seyb

