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## UNI Political Science Newsletter, v12n1, June 2017

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# UNI POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

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## A YEAR OF ENGAGEMENT

I'm pleased to offer you another annual installment of the Department of Political Science's newsletter. We hope you will enjoy this update of the activities and accomplishments of our students and faculty. This year, we sought to increase opportunities for student engagement at UNI. While we always have students involved in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, this year we wanted to expand the engagement opportunities available to our students through the Department. In the fall semester, five students were involved with EMBARC (Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center), where each student individually mentored a refugee who was preparing to take the U.S. naturalization test for citizenship. Several students were involved helping lowans through Iowa Legal Aid. A number of students were able to take advantage of our membership in the USSTRATCOM Academic Alliance. Our Model United Nations competition team was particularly successful this year, and we brought former members of Congress to campus to talk about the importance of public service. We had numerous talks and events centered around the 2016 elections, including a debate watch, an analysis from faculty after the election, and a Post-election Reconciliation Chili Cook-Off, put on by two of our student groups. And, as you will read from our profile of 2017 graduate Erik Veliz, being an engaged student was a key aspect of Erik's success at UNI.



As an alum, we hope you will engage with us at the Department of Political Science at UNI. I encourage you to let us know your latest achievements, accomplishments, and happenings; we are always interested in where our alumni are and what they are doing. Feel free to send along an update to me at [donna.hoffman@uni.edu](mailto:donna.hoffman@uni.edu). Or, connect with us through Facebook at Department of Political Science, University of Northern Iowa; follow us on Twitter @unipolisci; and connect with us on LinkedIn through UNI Political Science Majors & Alums.

Donna Hoffman  
Professor and Department Head



## FACULTY UPDATES



### RAMONA MCNEAL | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

It has been another busy year for scholarship. I had three co-authored book chapters, and one co-authored journal article published. In addition, I have one co-authored book chapter and one co-authored encyclopedia entry forthcoming and one co-authored encyclopedia entry under review. This year, my research focused on three main topics. The first was the 2016 presidential election with publications focusing on the influence of telecommunication technology (including Twitter, and smartphones) on the campaign. The second area was government health care policy with an emphasis on programs that impact the elderly, and the third area was cybercrime. Currently, I am working on a co-authored

book, *Cyber Harassment and Policy Reform in the Digital Age: Emerging Research and Opportunities*. The book looks at the evolution of U.S. policies to address forms of Internet aggression (including cyber stalking, cyber harassment, cyberbullying, revenge porn and sexting).



### EVAN RENFRO | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

As my research remains focused on international security, and the Middle East, I published two journal articles and two encyclopedia entries this year dealing with that subject matter. One article analyzes the recruiting of intelligence assets, and the other looks at the role of the keffiyeh (Arab scarf) at the intersection of culture and politics in the Middle East and beyond. *The Encyclopedia of the American Presidency* entries explained one, the Middle East; and two, the Islamic State. I enjoyed teaching international relations, and an upper division course on international security; I also took over the military history course after the death of the esteemed Professor Shepardson in the history department. I remain UNI's coordinator

for our partnership with US Strategic Command, with the objective of developing scholarly talent in order to solve complex national security puzzles. I was able to send three of our majors to the USAF Academy's prestigious conference on Cyber Security, and three of our majors to STRATCOM's conference on nuclear deterrence. I also attended the Western Political Science Association's annual conference in Vancouver, where I presented a paper on the importance of perception in international security. Furthermore, I developed a study abroad course for next summer in Brussels, Belgium that will allow students to gain first-hand experience seeing how NATO, and the EU operate to enhance global stability and security. This summer I will be conducting research for my ongoing book project analyzing why the US decides to go to war.



**JILL WITTRICK** | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

My second year at UNI has been spent expanding my grant portfolio at the Center for Social and Behavior Research (CSBR) as well as settling in as a faculty member in Political Science. In my capacity as Assistant Director of the CSBR, I was co-author of six technical reports on a range of projects in education and public health. I also led the effort to create a single, searchable website for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) resources and programs in Iowa. The National Science Foundation provided UNI with funding to develop the website as

part of a Research, Evaluation and Technical Assistance grant. The grant is a collaborative effort of researchers at UNI, Iowa State University and the University of Iowa that aims to provide a national “best practices” model for evaluating the changes that occur as a result of long-term statewide STEM initiatives.

In terms of research, I had an article published at the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* with colleagues from the University of Michigan and Qatar University. I also have several papers at various stages of development in the area of cross-cultural survey methods and comparative survey design. On the teaching side, I taught Comparative Politics both semesters this last academic year and thoroughly enjoyed getting to know more of the students in the Department.



**JAYME NEIMAN** | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

It is always a little sad and a lot happy to successfully finish out any academic year, and this, my third year is no exception. It was a busy and successful year, with classes and research taking up the majority of my time. I was excited to add a new service-learning component into the Introduction to Public Administration classes and am delighted to report back on how well the students performed. In the fall, the students performed analyses on capital improvement projects for the city of Cedar Falls and in the spring, groups of students developed marketing materials for a local non-profit organization.

I published two new articles, one on legislator communication responsiveness and one on female legislators and education attainment. Additionally, I presented papers at two conferences, one in Des Moines on cognitive linguistics and environmental policy, and one at a teaching conference in Long Beach.

I am looking forward to spending the summer finishing up some papers and beginning work on a state and local politics textbook. We are also planning on doing a lot of grilling, dart playing, and traveling (starting with a trip to Amsterdam!).



## **BRIAN WARBY** | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

The 2016-17 school year was another exciting year for me. After spring semester ended in 2016 I led a group of 16 students from across the university on a short-term capstone abroad to Rio de Janeiro. The title of the class is Globalization, Cultural Pluralism and International Security. We went to historical and art museums, learned about Samba and learned to dance, toured some of Rio's oldest and most famous cathedrals, and, of course, visited key tourist spots like the Christ the Redeemer statue. We also visited with a women's co-op that strips fibers from banana trees and uses them with recycled materials to make bags, mats, pillow covers and more.

Students learned about social businesses and non-traditional business models. We also spent a couple of days working with a non-profit organization that runs an after-school program for kids from the slums of Rio. We helped with maintenance and played with the kids. The whole trip was a very positive experience for myself and for the students.

I spent much of the rest of the summer working on research and preparing to teach the Senior Seminar for my first time. The theme of the class was "The Politics and Ideology of Wealth." We read and discussed the writing of thinkers like Henry Payne, Milton Friedman, Keynes and many others. We covered topics from trade policy to tax policy and welfare programs. It was a really fun and thought provoking semester for all who were involved. I enjoyed getting to know the graduating seniors. In addition to teaching, I continue to work on a couple of projects. One looks at how governments respond differently to foreign direct investment, depending on which sector the investment is in, and another looks at what kinds of governments are likely to adopt a relatively new, and I think very clever, type of poverty alleviation program called conditional cash transfer.

This school year I took over as the faculty advisor for our Model United Nations competition team. It was an honor to work with the group's excellent student leaders, and it was inspiring to see how passionate the members of the group are. They dedicate a lot of time and energy to preparing for conferences, by studying the issues, writing position papers, gathering research and learning parliamentary procedure. The group is growing and has begun working on big plans to increase our funding so that we can go to more conferences. Please read the write about the group in this newsletter.



## **JUSTIN HOLMES** | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

In the fall of 2016 I taught a course on Campaigns and Elections. The unexpected results shifted the theme a bit to examine whether what political science knows about elections and voters still holds true (for the most part, it still does). In April, I presented a paper, authored with Prof. McNeal, examining the impact of social media use on various forms of political participation. We found that social media can contribute to various forms of political participation (voting, talking politics, etc.), but only for people who were already interested in politics in the first place. This summer, I am finishing up a book on the internet and agenda setting which should be out this fall.

## CHRIS LARIMER | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



My research remains focused on state politics/policy and voting behavior. On public policy, the third edition of my co-authored book, *The Public Policy Theory Primer*, was published in 2017. Also, Rebecca Hannagan and I have a co-authored book chapter coming out later this year on the effects of Iowa's gender balance law on local boards and commissions. On Iowa politics, Donna Hoffman and I co-authored a book chapter on Iowa's First Congressional District which will be published later this year in the edited volume, *The Roads to Congress 2016*. We also have two working book chapters on the religious right in Iowa and 2016 caucus politics. I also had a co-authored article published in *American Politics*

Research in 2016 based on findings from a voter mobilization field experiment conducted in Iowa prior to the 2012 primary election. Finally, this past October I was elected to a three year term on the executive council of the Association for Politics and the Life Sciences (APLS), an interdisciplinary organization combining insight from the social and natural sciences.

## SCOTT PETERS | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



Several years of work will culminate with the release this August of my book *Regulating Judicial Elections: Assessing State Codes of Judicial Conduct*, published by Routledge. The book investigates the effectiveness of state rules that restrict how candidates in judicial elections can campaign. I find that certain regulations aimed at preventing candidates from forming partnerships with interest groups and political parties are effective at reducing advertising, but that they also make it tougher for these elections to fulfill their purpose, making it more difficult for voters to hold incumbents accountable. Overall, I find that the various regulations states have enacted to try

to regulate judicial elections do little to achieve their intended purpose, but that they do impose additional costs on the effectiveness of elections as accountability mechanisms. I hope the book will contribute to ongoing normative debates about judicial elections and how states should attempt to protect judicial independence when they have chosen these means of judicial accountability.

## AWARD WINNING FACULTY

The Department's tradition of award winning faculty continues. Assistant Professor Jayme Neiman won the University Book & Supply Outstanding Teaching Award. This award was given to only five pretenure faculty across campus. Nominations are made by faculty, staff, and students. Associate Professor Ana Kogl was awarded the Vajpeyi Political Science Fellowship for her work with former UNI student Blake Loomis on a paper that was presented at the Western Political Science Association's annual meeting.



# USSTRATCOM DETERRENCE AND ASSURANCE ACADEMIC ALLIANCE

The Department is actively engaged in the Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance (DAAA) through the U.S. Strategic Command. Two academic members were recently added (Harvard University and Columbia University) to the more than twenty-five current members of the Alliance. UNI has been a member of since 2015. This year, we were able to send students to several Alliance events.

Among our majors who went to STRATCOM events were Jess Birch, Jacob Harberts, and Noelle Troutman. They attended the 2017 Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance Conference and Workshops at Creighton University. Of the experience Jess said, "My favorite part of the conference was the table top exercise that featured a rising conflict between China and Japan. I learned first-hand how communication is one of the most vital parts in international conflicts. During the workshop, I spoke with representatives from across the country including Boeing and a variety of different universities. I received advice on my future

career and suggestions that aided me in deciding where I want to go in life." Jacob, who is also a reservist in the U.S. Marine Corps said, "We got a tour of the underground facilities, all the way down to the top secret room where President Bush went during 9/11. Meeting a variety of senior military officers, as well as student peers from across the country was a great experience." Noelle said, "I learned the importance of effective communication among allies to deter security threats. Deterrence communications increasingly play a larger role in US foreign policy, and are unique to each adversary. The conference allowed me to sit in on workshops led by experts in areas I find most interesting including international law and deterrence communications."

In addition, Jacob Harberts presented a paper in May 2017 to USSTRATCOM professionals and Department of Defense policymakers. His paper, "Integrated Deterrence Strategy of the Advancing Battlefield" is available on the DAAA webpage ([www.stratcom.mil/daaa](http://www.stratcom.mil/daaa)).



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## CONGRESS TO CAMPUS PROGRAM

During the fall semester, the Department of Political Science participated in the Congress to Campus program, made possible through the United States Association of Former Members of Congress. The program sends a bipartisan pair of former members of Congress to campus across the U.S. and internationally to educate audiences on Congress, as well as to encourage civic literacy and participation.

We were fortunate to host former representatives Berkely Bedell (D-IA, 1975-1987) and Tom Ewing (R-IL, 1991-2001). During their visit, the former members talked with classes at UNI, ROTC and student veterans, as well as students at Holmes Junior High and Cedar Falls High School.

# STUDENTS ATTEND ACADEMY ASSEMBLY



Three majors of the Department were selected to attend the US Air Force Academy's 58th Academy Assembly. The Assembly's topic was "U.S. Cyber Policy: Inside the Wire" and was held in Colorado Springs on the campus of the U.S. Air Force Academy in March 2017. Sarah Hofmeyer, Erik Veliz, and Alisha Thompson attended the event. In reflecting on the event, Sarah said, "I learned about the history and future of cyber warfare through group simulations, speakers, and conversations with experts. I got to meet people from around the country with unique perspectives and opinions on cyber security, leading to engaging conversations. Overall, I had a wonderful, enriching time!" Alisha Thompson said that the

conference, "provided great insight as to how various conflicts are managed within the US government. As a member of the simulation's National Security Council team, I learned a lot about why certain positions belong in the council and how the government would likely approach cyber conflict." Erik Veliz, heading to law school at Texas Tech (and specializing in national security law) said, "I learned a lot about Stellarwind, the N.S.A., and General Hayden because his top attorney was at the conference. I learned about the infrastructure and importance of cyber security and the critical role that it plays concerning international security. We also learned how vulnerable and exposed the U.S. is to cyber attacks from other countries and entities." The conference was designed to give undergraduates an opportunity to discuss topics of contemporary significance and also included prominent scholars, business leaders, government officials, and military officers as speakers and roundtable leaders.

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## PARTNERING WITH IOWA LEGAL AID

This spring, two political science majors, Ben Dzaboff and Ella Daft, participated in a pilot "mini-internship" program with Iowa Legal Aid in Black Hawk County. Earning one hour of credit, they each volunteered with Iowa Legal Aid's pro se clinic for about 3 hours a week. After receiving training, they worked with Iowa Legal Aid attorneys and staff to help clients fill out the forms necessary to represent themselves in court. In reflections about their experience, both Ella and Ben described a personally meaningful experience that also helped them advance their career interests. As Ben said, "After each session at Iowa Legal Aid, I felt really good about what I was doing. It reinforced the idea of going to law school and practicing law in the future.... To see the look on peoples' faces when you helped them out in an area where they do not know how to help themselves is really a fulfilling moment. I hope this feeling and experience is what my future in law is like. [T]his internship has opened my eyes and has been one of the best experiences in my life." Ella reported similar feelings about her experience: "At the end of my experience, I have gained a new confidence in myself and a renewed interest in family law... My time at Iowa Legal Aid gave me a close up as to why people need these services, but it also gave me skills and knowledge that will benefit me in the future. I learned a lot about researching and how to fill out paperwork, but what I will really take away from this internship is this feeling that I can be useful."

# MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The Model United Nations Competition Team (MUNC) is an organization on campus with the purpose of promoting the education of international relations, world issues, and United Nations procedures. Through the understanding of team cooperation and the use of diplomatic debate skills, the MUNC chooses a country and role plays as its diplomatic delegation during conferences around the nation.

Over the last few years, the organization has involved more and more students and represented several countries; Israel, Burkina Faso, Bulgaria, France, Peru, Belize, and Botswana, to name a few. In the Fall of 2016, the group, growing in notoriety, welcomed a new faculty advisor from the department of Political Science, Professor Brian Warby. Professor Warby teaches international politics at UNI and was able to help the group succeed by offering insights on global diplomatic relations and domestic policies and issues of the assigned countries. This last academic year, the group attended one conference each semester: the American Model United Nations conference in Chicago during Thanksgiving break, and the Midwest Model United Nation conference in Saint Louis in February. During both conferences, the members have shown great diplomatic abilities by proposing and passing resolutions; indeed, Jack Ave, a junior at UNI has been awarded Best Delegate for two years in a row at the Chicago conference, and the delegation of Botswana has received Honorable Mention in the Economic and Social Council, represented by Isaak Espersen and Noelle Troutman, at the Saint Louis conference this spring.

The organization, which started as a small group of students organized independently, currently counts on 15 active members and plans on recruiting more through promotional activities on campus and professors and students' word-of-mouth. The current

leaders are working on the expansion and promotion of the group, with the hope to grow in members and gain the financial means to attend more than one conference each semester. The 2017 Fall Semester will see the MUNC representing China at the Chicago conference, with the ability to bring up to 24 students by sitting in 12 of the 14 existing committees, including the three simulations of the Security Council. The group is also hoping to find the financial support necessary to bring a delegation of students, selected on seniority and other criteria, to the National Model United Nations competition in New York, one of the most prestigious competition in the country which sees the participation of Ivy-League schools and notable institutions from all over the world. The group aims at expansion on campus and hopes to interest more students in pressing global issues and the United Nations' ability to solve them.



Sam Plank and Talee Mabe attend American MUN in Chicago.

## ALUM EMILY SCHNURR WINS TEACHING AWARD



Emily Schnurr, who graduated in 2011 with a double-major in political science and psychology, was recently awarded a teaching award at Northern Arizona University. Schnurr was awarded one of four campus-wide awards for "Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant." Schnurr is currently completing her dissertation as she earns a Ph.D. in political science.

# ELECT HER

In what is becoming an annual event, the Department hosted the third annual “Elect Her” Conference on January 21, 2017. Elect Her encourages college students to consider running for positions in student government and offers training and resources through Running Start. Approximately 25 students, nominated by faculty and staff at UNI, gathered to hear from a variety of speakers, including the Department’s own Jayme Neiman and Donna Hoffman. Political science and public administration major Maggie Miller was instrumental in organizing the 2017 Elect Her event along with faculty member Jayme Neiman.



From left to right, Miah Betz, Kailee Martens, Natalie Dean, Donna Hoffman, Amelia Miller, and Alisha Thompson. These students took Professor Hoffman’s Legislative Politics class in the fall and attended Elect Her in the spring.

## STUDENTS VISIT GOVERNOR BRANSTAD AND STATE CAPITOL

Two groups of students from Professor Chris Larimer’s Iowa Politics course visited the state capital in March. While in Des Moines, they were able to observe legislative debate, meet with area legislators, and visit with Governor Terry Branstad.



## SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

**Sarah Rudy,**

Purple and Old Gold (PA), and Servant Leader Award

**Melissa Johnson,**

Purple and Old Gold (PS)

**Marcus Weymiller,**

Glaser Political Science Scholarship

**Ashley Madsen,**

Black Hawk County Bar Association Scholarship

**Hannah Gregor,**

Charles Ray and Ada May Hoxie Scholarship

**Sarah Hofmeyer,**

Women in Politics Scholarship

**Gabriella Ruggiero,**

Women in Politics Scholarship

**Parker Bennett,**

Vajpeyi Scholarship

**Courtney Klein,**

Dennis Jensen Scholarship

# CONGRATULATIONS 2016-17 GRADUATES

## **BA, POLITICAL SCIENCE**

Yena Balekyani  
Jacob Bartlett  
Cole Beirnes  
Kelly Bembenek  
Samantha Blatt  
Collin Brecher  
Emily Cox  
Gabriella Daft  
Robert Fleming  
Jonathan Fossum  
Abigail Greenwood  
Trevor Heimbaugh  
Brycen Henry  
Melissa Johnson  
Zachary Johnston  
Nicole Lalor  
Cooper Moore  
Cecilia Ojeda  
Mallory Petsche  
Robert Phillips  
Aaron Ridgely  
Trey Roosa

Matthew Ruiz  
Ethan Seidenkranz  
Brandi Smith  
Stephanie Stumma  
Alisha Thompson  
Erik Veliz  
Jamison Whiting  
Jules Worthington

## **BA, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Jason Aarhus  
Cameron Draude  
Abigail Greenwood  
Trevor Hanson  
Trevor Heimbaugh  
Rylan Johson  
Sarah Rudy  
Marcy Weinzell

## **BA, POLITICAL COMMUNICATION**

Kayleen Berg  
Sarah Smith



Political science grads gather in the Dome for the spring 2017 commencement ceremony.



From left to right, Jules Worthington, Trevor Heimbaugh, Jamison Whiting, Alisha Thompson, Emily Cox, and Erik Veliz at our annual reception honoring our graduates and award winners

## IN REMEMBRANCE OF JOY COLE CORNING (1932-2017)



Linda Neuman (left), first woman appointed to the Iowa Supreme Court, and Joy Corning (right) at the 2016 Bipartisan Women in Politics Scholarship

It is with sadness that we note the passing of UNI Alum, former state legislator and former lieutenant governor Joy Cole Corning. For a number of years, UNI's Department of Political Science has been able to award a Women in Politics Scholarship to one or two promising students who are interested in careers in public service. Joy, along with former state representative Doris Kelly, have served as co-chairs of what has now become an annual tradition - the Bipartisan Women in Politics Scholarship Benefit - held every fall, which raises funds for the scholarship. In addition, Joy was instrumental in the establishment of "50-50 in 2020," a statewide effort to encourage more women to run for public office. UNI was the first campus to establish a chapter of "50-50 in 2020." Joy was an inspiration for our students and will be missed by the UNI Department

# RECENT ALUMNI PROFILE

## 2017 GRADUATE ERIK VELIZ



I really enjoyed my time with the political science department at UNI. I chose political science as a major because I knew that understanding how government functions would better prepare me for law school.

However, I wanted the skills that this degree enhances such as thinking independently and the ability to gather and analyze information. I choose this major because of its versatility. There are so many sub-genres of political science that are interesting such as political theory, international and American politics. Lastly, I chose this major because I wanted to understand the people around me, around the world and learn what truly makes the world go round. The politics and law minor also helped me to develop a fundamental understanding on how law works and its sphere of influence, which has certainly helped prepare me for law school.

One thing I really enjoyed about UNI was its size. The small class sizes were similar to what I was used to and allowed me to create a personal connection with my professors. Yet, it was big enough to allow diverse, distinct and at times conflicting opinions to emerge, which helped create an engaging and active classroom.

I have found success at UNI but I would not have been able to do so without the help of my professors and the political science department as a whole. I humbly thank and appreciate everything the department has done for me. Sabin Hall, the professors and the students in political science, and Katrinka Carpenter, the political science department secretary, all rank as my favorite things about UNI.

I urge all students to take the time to develop a personal relationship with their professors. Professors hold the key to opportunity. A former professor from my community college, Dr. Wortham, introduced me to the opportunity of going to UNI. Additionally, I would strongly recommend for students to be active in the classroom by participating with helpful, thoughtful and interesting ideas, questions and answers (participating is a part of the grade in many courses I took). A truly engaged student can obtain and realize a bountiful amount of information and knowledge.

This summer after graduation I will be interning with the Bexar County Courthouse in San Antonio, assisting the Special Victims Unit of the 437th District Court. In the fall, I will be implementing the skills and knowledge I have obtained by attending Texas Tech University School of Law to obtain a Juris Doctor degree. I will also have a role at the Center for Military Law and Policy where I will learn the skills required to become a Judge Advocate General for the U.S. Army.

## THE POST-ELECTION RECONCILIATION CHILI COOK-OFF

Students from the Political Science Society and the Public Administration Student Society hosted a chili cook-off in the aftermath of the 2016 election. Faculty of the Department contributed the entries (which had to be politically themed). Professor Donna Hoffman made LBJ's chili con carne, Professor Jayme Neiman made Sandra Day O'Connor's green chili, Professor Scott Peters made Senator Humphrey's beef soup, and Professor Evan Renfro made Obama's chili. The winner was Sandra Day O'Connor's green chili made by Professor Neiman. We also had Hillary Clinton's

chocolate chip cookies and Watergate cake (with cover-up icing) for dessert! A fun and reconciling time was had by all!



Students enjoy the politically themed offerings at the Post-Election party.

Political Science at the University of Northern Iowa offers undergraduate degrees in political science, public administration, and political communication, as well as the graduate Master in Public Policy. We emphasize student-focused education with small class sizes, research opportunities, engagement opportunities, and internships. Our award-winning faculty turn excellence in research into excellence in the classroom. Visit us on the UNI campus in Sabin Hall or at [csbs.uni.edu/polisci](http://csbs.uni.edu/polisci).



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