“Living through a snowy cold winter on the mountains of Armenia, the villagers of Akhpradzor are isolated for six months every year. They have no roads, no transportation, no market, and no doctors.” This bleak assessment of conditions in a remote mountain village was the basis for a unique senior honors project for political science major Nanor Balabanian.

Nanor’s awareness of the village and its needs began with her longtime mentor, Professor Anahid Yeremian, physicist at Stanford’s SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory and founder of Act for Armenia (a Stanford student-based organization that helps six remote villages in Armenia). Professor Yeremian paid for Nanor’s airfare to Armenia during the summer of her sophomore year so that she could participate in the summer internship program of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). Professor Yeremian came to Armenia later in the summer and offered to take her to one of the remote villages (Akhpradzor). Nanor took advantage of the opportunity to film the villagers and record their stories. During the process, she developed a deep attachment to them and genuine concern for the problems such isolated villages face.

Akhpradzor is strategically located on the edge of Armenia’s largest lake, eight miles from the border with Azerbaijan, but the only road in and out of this high mountain region is in poor condition and completely shuts down during the winter months. This isolation compounds the villagers’ struggle to meet their daily needs through animal husbandry and limited agriculture. Obviously, they need a better road, but Nanor knew she could not raise enough money to fix the physical road. Instead, she came up with the innovative idea of providing the village with a “virtual road”—a connection to the Internet that would give the villagers access to outside communication and resources, and a means to advocate for a better road and other needs. Her senior honors thesis would be written about obstacles to implementation and the effects of this project on the villagers. But in order to study the obstacles and effects, she first had to make the Internet connection happen. That required fundraising.

Nanor’s principal support for the project came as a $10,000 grant from the Donald A. Strauss Public Service Scholarship Foundation to establish the connection and train local students and teachers how to use it. She also created a website to solicit additional support from other sources and detail the progress of the project, which she calls “The Hidden Road Initiative” (http://www.hiddenroadinitiative.com/). Donations from the UCSB Chancellor’s Office, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Community Affairs Board, Armenian Student Association of UCSB, the Wojicki family, and AGBU completed the necessary funding.

During the summer of 2011, a team of students recruited from UCSB, Palo Alto High School, Yerevan State University, and Stanford University went to Akhpradzor to set up a computer lab in the school. Nanor credits the entire team in Yerevan and especially Yerevan University student Artashes Avagyan for the lab setup and the initial computer camp that trained teachers and students how to use the Internet. Because there is no Internet cable or microwave dish in the village, the connection was established via USB modems made by BEELINE that capture the signal from the nearest antenna for a monthly fee (funded by The Hidden Road Initiative).

With the departure of the setup team at the end of the summer, the computer science students at Yerevan University and other team members in Armenia continue to maintain the system. When the road

IN THIS ISSUE:

| Senior Thesis Project in Armenia | p. 1 |
| Careers in Political Science | p. 3 |
| Gordon Murchie ’56 | p. 3 |
| Faculty Books | p. 4 |
| Digital Media Effects on Organizations | p. 4 |
| Changes in Village Scene in Germany | p. 5 |
| New Faculty Member | p. 5 |
| Emeriti Notes | p. 6 |
| Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award | p. 6 |
| From the Chair | p. 7 |

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)
reopened at the end of winter, the village teacher who took the most
time to learn how to use the Internet received additional training at
Yerevan University and is now back in the village teaching others.
Akhpradzor is scheduled to receive a permanent microwave dish in
September 2012 as part of a project sponsored by the National
Center of Educational Technologies (known in Armenia as KTAK).
This dish will provide a better Internet signal than the USB modems.

In terms of whether or not the initiative fulfilled its goals,
the results are mixed. The computer lab and Internet connection
have been completed, but so far are used primarily by students
and one teacher. Most of the teachers and village leaders have not
yet taken advantage of the opportunity to learn how to use the
Internet for advocacy as Nanor had hoped.

“At first I was disappointed by lack of interest from adults,
but I eventually realized it was o.k. for the village to take its time
and learn basic functions before taking this knowledge to a higher
level.” In addition, the Internet connection has made it possible
for The Hidden Road Initiative to do a better job of soliciting to
meet other needs of the village. Some recently completed projects
include providing warm winter coats and sturdy shoes for
the 77 children in the village (“with the Internet connection,
we could determine the correct sizes”),
while a current pen pal project seeks
to link the village students to other
students around the world.

From a research standpoint, the mixed results of the Hidden
Road Initiative gave Nanor an opportunity to analyze some of the
theories in the literature about obstacles to rural development
project success and determine whether or not they applied in
this case. Obstacles cited in the literature include: 1) lack of focus
on real needs, 2) lack of project sustainability, 3) insufficient
infrastructure, 4) market forces, 5) lack of access, 6) corruption,
7) cultural non-acceptance, 8) language problems, and 9) illit-
eracy and non-user friendly technology.

Nanor believes that none of these obstacles completely
explains the results in Akhpradzor. The village culture highly values
education and social connectivity in spite of its isolation, and
the leaders were very supportive of the project. Instead, Nanor’s
preliminary findings indicate that the following factors were far
more in play:

1) Life is hard in Akhpradzor. The villagers have many tasks to
perform every day just to meet their basic day-to-day needs. Most
of the adults simply do not have the time to invest in learning and
developing computer skills.

2) The villagers recognize that there is a long-term benefit to
computer technology, but they do not understand how the benefit
can help meet the urgency of their basic needs.

3) The villagers inaccurately conceptualize computer technology
as being “for the children” or as a status symbol rather than an eco-

onic or educational tool. A few village homes have a computer sitting
in a place of honor, but no one knows how to use it. Nanor calls this the
“piano in the parlor syndrome,” comparing it to the pianos that were
considered necessary furniture around the
turn of the last century,
whether or not anyone
know how to play one.

If these pre-
liminary conclusions stand up, Nanor’s re-
search project will not only have con-
tributed to the future welfare of the village, but also will have added to
the literature on rural development projects. Not much can be
done about the difficulties of daily life that put such strains on the
villagers’ time, but she believes that inaccurate perceptions of the role
of technology could be overcome more quickly through the presence
of a “cultural entrepreneur”—someone locally who could convince
villagers on their own terms about what technology can do for them.

Nanor has been awarded a graduate fellowship from the
Woodrow Wilson-Rockefeller Brothers Fund Fellowships for Aspiring
Teachers of Color (WW-RBF), which she will use to attend Stanford
University’s graduate school of education next year. She plans to
obtain both a Master’s Degree in Education and a secondary teaching
credential in social science education. Meantime, The Hidden Road
Initiative will continue to provide support and advocacy for the people
of Akhpradzor. Nanor is extremely grateful for her UCSB education
and the political science major, which she says, “developed my interest
in international relations and showed me how different government
systems around the world work.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 Honors Theses Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nanor Balabanian</strong>: The Perils of Isolation: Barriers of Technology in Rural Armenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eric Lopez</strong>: Revolution in Cairo: News Media and Its Different Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ross Miletich</strong>: A Line in the Sand: Race, Redistricting, and Representation in Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew Peralta</strong>: Killed by the Heavens: Assessing the Effectiveness of Israel’s Policy of Targeted Killing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joseph Sterphone</strong>: Wer sind wir? The Efficacy of Party Appeals to a Shifting “Germanness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tyler Wilken</strong>: Which Way Forward? A Comparative Case Study on Labor Union Organizing Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adam Yefet</strong>: The Function of Religion and Religious Institutions in the Life and Literature of Niccolo Machiavelli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A political science degree can be useful in many careers, as we have seen in our ongoing series, “What can you do with a degree in political science?” In this issue, we present a profile of an alum who put his degree to excellent use during a distinguished career in the Foreign Service and a post-retirement career in the wine industry. He also offers some good advice to students or recent graduates who might be interested in pursuing business or government careers in international affairs.

GORDON MURCHIE ’56: From Foreign Service Officer to Wine Industry Executive

Gordon Murchie states that being part of the Foreign Service was his career goal even as a teenager, “though I’m not sure where that came from—no one in my family was involved in foreign affairs.” After high school, he took a semester in Mexico to perfect his Spanish; then entered UCSB in 1952, starting on the old Riviera campus and graduating from the newly-established Goleta campus of UCSB in 1956. Murchie majored in political science because he felt it would provide the best foundation for understanding different cultures, societies, and political organizations.

After he completed his ROTC obligation, Murchie entered the graduate program in political science and international relations at USC but was recruited for a job with the U.S. Information Agency before he finished his Master’s thesis. In 1958, Murchie and his wife Anita, whom he met and married during his last semester at UCSB, departed for his first overseas posting in the Philippines, followed by other postings in Indonesia and Thailand. During that time, he was assigned to different positions in cultural and media affairs, field and remote area operations, counter-insurgency programming, and consular affairs.

In 1970, Murchie returned to the United States and completed the Masters Degree program in political science and international law at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy, then was assigned to USIA headquarters in Washington D.C. In 1976, he was posted to Costa Rica with travel throughout Central and South America. He returned to Washington D.C. in 1980, where he was assigned to the Office of the Inspector General, evaluating the effectiveness of USIA programs in several countries. From 1985 until his retirement from the Foreign Service in 1993, Murchie was Senior Advisor for International Public Diplomacy and Chief of the International Development Communications Office of the Agency for International Development, a division of the U.S. State Department. His duties again involved evaluating the effectiveness of U.S. programs, particularly those informing local communities about what the United States was doing to help their country’s growth and development.

In all his postings, Murchie was accompanied by his wife Anita, whom he states “was a full member of the team,” even though at that time in the Foreign Service, spouses were not permitted to hold posts or accept employment. Anita was one of those who successfully advocated for a change in this policy so that today, both spouses can hold appointments and receive a salary for the work they do in the Service.

Murchie’s interest in wine started when he was assigned to the Inspection Corps, which involved considerable travel to the “Eastern Bloc” countries behind the iron curtain. One of the goals of USIA is to connect with local cultures, and these countries had a long history of wine-making. Murchie therefore began reading and studying wine-making as a means of making cultural connections with the Eastern Bloc. He states: “While in the Foreign Service, I found that wine is a form of international communication that transcends political, cultural, and religious differences. I could get beyond many barriers when talking about wine.”

Murchie conducted many U.S. Embassy wine tastings as sales promotion events abroad during his more than 30-year career in the Foreign Service. A colleague in Virginia got him involved with the Vinifera Wine Growers Association, and in 1989 he was elected its President, a position he held until 2008. On his retirement from the Foreign Service, he immediately entered a second career with the American wine industry as Executive Director of the National Wine Coalition office in Washington D.C. from 1993-1996, and subsequently served on many other task forces and councils representing east coast wine growers. Murchie is currently President Emeritus of the Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association and has been recognized many times for his efforts on behalf of the wine industry. In March 2012, he received the Award of Merit from the American Wine Society.

Murchie believes that the study of political science and international relations is an excellent foundation for many careers. For current students, he also recommends knowledge of a foreign language (“a necessity in the Service”), courses in domestic or international economics, a basic course in business management, and courses in general or international law (“I wish I’d taken more law courses!”). He feels this will provide students with a good portfolio for jobs in government, the Foreign Service, or international business. He also recommends that if possible, students should do graduate degree work. “The higher level of education will improve your entry level into these careers and provide more opportunities to make contacts with recruiters, as well as learn what is available in your particular area of interest.”

New Facebook Group for Honors Alumni

Facebook group has been created for political science alumni who completed a senior honors thesis while they were at UCSB. Participants can use the group to stay in touch with friends from the Honors seminar, find other participants, plan get-togethers, and make professional connections across class years. All who completed the department’s Honors program are welcome to join. In Facebook, search on “UCSB Political Science Honors Alumni” or go to https://www.facebook.com/groups/353807581324946/.
Bimber's Book Explores Effects of New Digital Media on Organizations

With the increasing use of online groups via Facebook, Twitter, and other digital media platforms to mobilize citizens for protests and other forms of political activities, conventional wisdom suggests that role of formal political and civic organizations should be declining. However, in *Collective Action in Organizations: Interaction and Engagement in an Era of Technological Change* (Cambridge University Press 2012), Professor Bimber and his co-authors Professors Andrew Flanagin and Cynthia Stohl of UCSB’s Department of Communication inform us that membership in formal organizations has in many cases actually increased during the age of digital media, along with a growth in the number of new formal organizations. The authors argue that “formal organizations are thriving in the age of digital media, alongside new organizational forms and self-organized groups.”

Using this observation as a starting point, the authors conducted extensive interviews and surveys with members of three distinctly different American organizations, founded roughly 50 years apart: The American Legion, AARP, and MoveOn. In spite of their political and structural differences, the authors find that all three groups offer similar options for people to engage with the organization and interact with other members. This disagrees with a lot of previous theory about how organizational structure determines the roles members play. Instead, the authors discovered that the use of digital media actually expands and enhances the ability of members to participate on their own terms within these organizational contexts. In other words, digital media permit members to choose how to interact interpersonally (or not at all) with others in the organization, and also how much “to act entrepreneurially with respect to the organization's goals and activities.” These two dimensions of involvement create what the authors call “the Collective Action Space.”

Using the Collective Action Space as their analytical framework, the authors found that “membership, organizational identification, and organizational boundaries are not determined by the organization itself; rather, [members] interact with organizations to define membership and participatory styles on their own terms to a degree that has not been recognized before.” From their analysis, they have developed empirical profiles for four participatory membership styles, which they call Enthusiasts, Minimalists, Individualists, and Traditionalists. Enthusiasts are the most social and the most connected to the direction and goals of their organization; Minimalists are the least social and only nominally connected to the organization; Individualists are not particularly social but are generally positively connected to the organization's goals; and Traditionalists are both civic and social within the organization, but not particularly involved in setting its goals or directions.

Because the authors included in their surveys questions assessing people’s Internet skills, experience, and time spent online, they were also able to provide data about whether or not Internet use increases political activity in general. Their data indicates that level of Internet use is not a good predictor of collective action. People who were actively involved in the organization did use the Internet regularly; however, high Internet users were not found to be particularly active or involved in political and civic organizations. Instead of simply making people more involved, which other researchers have argued is the case, the Internet changed how people could be involved, giving them more discretion and autonomy to act or not, in the styles that best suited them.

Past theories of collective action and organization tend to take a top-down approach, emphasizing how political and social organizations define membership and roles for people. The theory of Collective Action Space challenges theories about what constitutes a formal interest group and the roles of formal structure and resources in shaping group membership. Bimber, Flanagin, and Stohl show that in the digital media age, formal organizations should be viewed as providing context in which people can construct their own roles and express their own participatory styles. The authors note: “Theories attempting to model all citizens with the same concepts . . . . miss a considerable degree of subtlety and variation. Instead of influencing all people to act similarly, digital media allow for more variation in how people act.”

Merkl Chronicles Changes in Small Town and Village Scene in Germany

The year 2012 will be a milestone year for Emeritus Professor Peter Merkl in two ways. He celebrated his 80th birthday in January, and late this spring he will see the publication of what he says will be his “last scholarly book,” Small Town and Village in Bavaria: The Passing of a Way of Life (Berghahn Publishers 2012).

The book has actually been in the works for many years. Merkl says that he received a research grant for it from the VW Foundation in the 1980s to be published as a co-authored project, but one thing and then another prevented the collaboration from taking place. Finally, the co-authors decided to publish separately, and the result is this volume.

The focus of the book is on the modernization efforts that took place in the West German state of Bavaria during the 1970s and 1980s. The goal of the modernization project was to reform smaller units of government by abolishing all autonomous local governments serving populations of less than 3,000 people. The state government decreed these changes in order to give equality of opportunity to small town dwellers, modernize their bureaucratic services, and support overall economic growth. The result in Bavaria was the reduction of local government units from more than 7,000 to less than 2,000. The smallest units did not simply disappear but were forced into “administrative unions” or neighboring larger towns. They are now partial communities within the larger units. County governments and the state remain the overarching authorities.

Merkl’s research is based on interviews, surveys, and statistics from 15 different communities in Bavaria, covering the period from post-war 1945 to the present. He chronicles the challenges, developments, and social changes the villages faced as local governments were phased out. The book goes deeply into the social changes, especially in agriculture, that underlay the government reforms, and sketches the historical antecedents back to Napoleon. Although small medieval towns continue to struggle to survive in a contemporary world, the publisher notes, “Despite a modern desire for comprehensive and well-integrated services, there remains a seemingly perennial appeal of small town and village life.”

Peter H. Merkl has published extensively on comparative German government and politics, continuing well after becoming Professor Emeritus in 1993. He also edited a series of five-year volumes entitled The Federal Republic of Germany, now continuing under the editorship of James Sperling. The series volume, The Federal Republic of Germany at 55, was published as a “festschrift” in honor of Professor Merkl in 2004, and included contributions by many of his former UCSB Ph.D. students. A complete list of Professor Merkl’s books can be found on his website, http://www.peterhmerkl.com.

International Relations Scholar Joins Political Science Faculty

The Department of Political Science is pleased to announce the appointment of Neil Narang as Assistant Professor, effective July 1, 2012. Dr. Narang was selected from a pool of more than 200 applicants, from which four excellent finalists were interviewed.

Narang graduated from UC Berkeley in 2004 and received his Ph.D. in political science from UC San Diego in 2011. His graduate research was supported by fellowships and grants from the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC), National Science Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory. He currently holds a post-doctoral fellowship at the Christopher Browne Center for International Politics, University of Pennsylvania.

Narang’s research focuses on international security, cooperation, civil war, and post-conflict reconstruction. His first research project is based on his dissertation, which investigates the causes and consequences of humanitarian assistance as a peace-building strategy in conflict and post-conflict states. He is also pursuing a second line of research on how international reputation matters in alliance politics. Narang currently has four papers under review at major journals.

“Neil Narang is exceptionally well-qualified,” notes Department Chair John Woolley. “His research is sophisticated both in terms of theory and methods. It is also impressive that his work speaks to policy makers about the design of humanitarian assistance.”

Narang says he can’t wait to get back to the west coast and is thrilled to be joining the UCSB faculty. Among the projects he is planning for his first year is a speaker series featuring noted scholars in international relations.
ROGER DAVIDSON is co-editor of Understanding the Presidency, which appears this year in its 7th edition. He remains senior author of a work he began in Santa Barbara and first published in 1981: Congress and Its Members. With its 14th edition in preparation, awaiting the 2012 election results, this book is the leading text in its field, having been read by hundreds of thousands of students in its 30-plus years in circulation.

HARU FUKUI reports that following his return to the United States in 2005, he has taught PS 135 (Government and Politics of Japan) several times on an as-needed basis. He has also contributed Japan-related chapters and articles to textbooks such as Introduction to Comparative Politics, (6th ed. Wadsworth/Cengage, 2012) and social science reference works, including Encyclopedia of Global Studies (Sage, 2012) and The Oxford Companion to Comparative Politics (Oxford University Press, forthcoming). He has been working on a book on the evolution of Japanese government and politics in regional and global comparative perspective and hopes to bring it to completion by the end of 2013.

In order to stay as well as he can be “at his advancing age,” Fukui reports that he sticks to daily 10-minute stretch exercise and thrice-a-week 75-minute workout routines, doing both in company with his wife, June.

ALAN LIU continues to paint, noting: “If I want to leave the world with some genuine enjoyment of life, I must devote myself to art.”

AL WYNER is recovering from serious surgery last fall. He reports that he is making good progress and is very thankful for that.

Stuart Gray Receives Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award for 2011-12

Each year, the UCSB Academic Senate recognizes a select few teaching assistants for the “vital role they play in enhancing the teaching mission of the University” and their “contributions to the teaching and learning process of UC Santa Barbara.” One of the recipients of this year’s awards is Stuart Gray, Ph.D. candidate in political theory. The Senate honored the 2012 recipients at a special meeting of the Faculty Legislature on April 26.

Gray was nominated for his extraordinary ability to keep students interested and involved throughout a series of very difficult and demanding courses in political philosophy. His professors note that as the result of his efforts, “the students improved dramatically in both their writing and the quality of their analysis and argumentation.” At the same time, the students themselves fully share their appreciation for Gray’s talent and hard work. His course evaluations consistently praise his enthusiasm, his mastery of the material, his skill and patience in answering their questions, and his ability to prod them on to further insights of their own.

Gray is one of a series of political science teaching assistants who have received this award. Others so honored in the last 10 years include: Mario Guerrero, 2008-09; Jessica Timpany, 2005-06; and Colin Young, 2003-2004.

Gifts to the Department

Gifts of support in any amount for the department of Political Science are deeply appreciated, and we have included a clip-out form for that purpose. Online giving via credit card is also available through the following secure website: https://www.giveucsb.com/polsci.htm. Just complete the information required on the various screens.

There are many giving possibilities. Currently, we are seeking support for undergraduate research projects and internships, graduate student fellowships, endowed chairs and professorships, and our speaker series. We are also seeking to increase the endowment for the Larry Adams Scholarship in Public Policy, which supports undergraduate internships in local government offices. General gifts to the department are used wherever the need is greatest.

If you would like more information about making a specific gift or about planned giving, please contact Ann Hagan, Director of Development, Division of Social Sciences, at (805) 893-2774, or ann.hagan@ia.ucsb.edu.

Tax-Deductible Donation Form

To make a contribution to the Department of Political Science, you may contribute online or mail this form and your tax-deductible donation to:

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT #9420
Ellison Hall 3834
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106–9420

Name:__________________________
Address:__________________________

E-mail Address:__________________________
Phone/Fax:__________________________
Gift Designation:__________________________

Please make your check payable to the UCSB Foundation.
From the Chair  

John T. Woolley

The academic year 2011-2012 has been one of transition for the political science department. We have seen major turnover in staff with the retirement of a valued long-time co-worker—Graduate Program Assistant Linda James. She has made priceless contributions to our program over the years, and we join in wishing her joy and contentment in retirement. Recruitment for replacement staff is under way.

A new faculty member, Neil Narang, will join us in the fall. Neil has a Ph.D. from UCSD and has been appointed for the past year as a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania. His work focuses on the unanticipated consequences of humanitarian intervention and the role of state “reputation” in international diplomacy. We are excited to have him join us.

Our faculty continue to excel. Bruce Bimber’s new co-authored book, Collective Action in Organizations, was released in early 2012 by Cambridge University Press. Lorelei Moosbrugger’s The Vulnerability Thesis (Yale University Press) and Andrew Norris’s co-edited book, Truth and Democracy (University of Pennsylvania Press) came out in 2012. Our current lecturer and recent Ph.D. alum, Dean Chen, also published U.S. Taiwan Strait Policy: The Origins of Strategic Ambiguity (Lynne Rienner) this year. New scholarly articles have been published by just about everybody else on the faculty. Pei-te Lien won a fellowship for research from the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Amit Ahuja received a research fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies.

Among our graduate students, Stuart Gray recently received the UCSB Academic Senate’s Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. This highly competitive award has now been won four times in the last eight years by political science TAs. Gray has also been awarded a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University. Dean Chen has been appointed to a tenure track job at Ramapo State College in New Jersey, and Mario Guerrero has obtained a tenure-track position at Cal Poly Pomona. Richard Huizar will be a post-doctoral fellow at Hamilton College in New York. A number of recent Ph.Ds. and advanced graduate students have taught for us or will teach for us this summer, including Heather Arnold Conolley, Pavel Oleinikov, Dean Chen, Kathleen Cole, Thomas Hughes, and Gerhard Peters. Current grad student Galen Stocking has continued to provide direction to the UCSB Model United Nations Team. I recently calculated that nearly 1/3 of our graduate students gave papers at recent professional conferences. This is an important part of professional preparation, and in part is supported by gifts to the department, for which we are very grateful.

We have nearly 1000 undergraduate majors, including not only academic high-achievers but also many campus student leaders. Among their many accomplishments, our students play a key role in Model United Nations, Model Arab League, and Mock Trial. Our departmental Honors program continues to attract a talented group of students who prepare extensive honors theses under faculty supervision. One of the honors group, Nanor Balabanian, has received support from the Strauss Foundation to extend internet access to a village in Armenia—an unusual and ambitious project that you have read about in this issue of the newsletter. We have been able to provide support to students for these various activities because of generous gifts to the department.

In the near future, I will wrap up my term as department Chair. Starting in July 2012, Eric Smith will take over as Chair and stepping in as Vice-Chair (and Undergraduate Director) will be Paige Digeser. Eric has been Vice-Chair for the past year and is tremendously experienced in departmental and campus affairs. The same is true of Paige. We are in very good hands.

It has been a great privilege for me to serve as Chair for the past seven years and to work cooperatively with so many talented staff and faculty colleagues. We have made some important changes in recent years that should benefit our students and help strengthen the faculty. We have agreed to build faculty research foci involving the politics of identity and the politics of the environment—both of which echo very deep campus strengths. We have modified the graduate program to give somewhat more flexibility to students in pursuing their research goals. We have restructured the undergraduate program to better match student course needs and smooth the progress for majors.

And finally: Every year we point out how important your financial contributions are to us. In the past decade, we have easily doubled the annual dollar volume of contributions to the department, and much of that gain has come from relatively small donations. In a time when our budgets continue to be under stress, these gifts make it possible for us confidently to make commitments to fund opportunities for our students. They provide some of the margin to sustain the scholarly activities that define us as a major research university. We need and very much appreciate your continuing support.

IN MEMORIAM:  

Anton Vonk, MA ’05

The political science department’s alumnus, friend, and donor, Anton Vonk, passed away in early January following a heart attack. We will remember him gratefully for years to come by virtue of his generous gift, together with his wife, Diane Boss, of the Vonk Chair in Environmental Politics.

Anthonius Vonk, known to his friends as “Ton,” was born in Rotterdam, The Netherlands in 1940 and served as an officer in the Dutch army for five years after completing his education. He then worked for Vitol SA for 27 years, helping to develop it into one of the world’s largest oil trading and marketing companies, and ultimately serving as its president and chairman. The Vonks moved to Santa Barbara in 2000 to retire. Ton entered the graduate program in the Political Science Department at UCSB and graduated in 2005, receiving an M.A. upon completion of his thesis, “The Politics of Energy Resources and Pipelines in the Caspian Sea Region.”
Contact the Department

Website: http://www.polsi.ucsb.edu

Mail: Political Science Department #9420
3834 Ellison Hall
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106–9420

Telephone: (805) 893-3432
Fax: (805) 893-3309

DEPARTMENT CHAIR  VICE CHAIR
John T. Woolley    Eric Smith
woolley@polsci.ucsb.edu    smith@polsci.ucsb.edu
(805) 893-7772    (805) 308-0004

UNDERGRADUATE COORDINATOR
Stephen Wiener
wiener@polsci.ucsb.edu
(805) 893-3433

GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSISTANT
(currently in recruitment)
(805) 893-3626

NEWSLETTER EDITOR & FACULTY ASSISTANT
Florence Sanchez
publications@polsci.ucsb.edu
(805) 893-3740

Please notify the UCSB Alumni Association of any change of address.
http://www.ucsbalum.com/membership