The First Honors Seminar

The year 1974 was a time of change, upheaval, and innovation on the UCSB campus. One innovation was the launching of the political science honors program—still vigorous 36 years later. For a group of political science students in the spring quarter of their junior year, the new honors seminar, taught by the late Professor Stanley Anderson, was an experience that had a profound effect on their personal lives. Several of these students recently shared their memories about that seminar: Craig Bestwick, Tom Laube, Alan Lefebvre, Michele Micheletti, and Naomi Norwood, all class of 1975. They recall their seminar was a diverse group that included Phil White, the late Gordon Fink, “a woman named Sharon who was very bright and intense and probably became a professor,” and an older student, a Vietnam veteran “with more to offer than we realized” (Laube).

Most of the students remember being invited to participate by one of their professors. Norwood was actually a physics major at the time, “but political science classes were so fascinating that doing the work was never work. When I was invited to join the political science honors program, I was afraid that I'd be found out and have to leave.”

All the students recalled Professor Anderson with great admiration and respect. Norwood says that “the work was quite sophisticated. Dr. Anderson conducted the seminar Socratically; he modeled language precision and careful, rational argumentation, and we all rose to meet his high expectations.” Laube adds that “Anderson treated the students as adults. We got lots of attention. The views of all were treated with respect but everyone got the opportunity to be heard.” Bestwick refers to Professor Anderson simply as “the finest guy I met in college or law school,” and other students also indicated what a profound experience his character had on their lives and subsequent career choices.

After the seminar, students had to complete a formal research project during their senior year, just as they do today. In regard to writing her thesis on “An Evolving Constitutional Right for Environmental Objects,” Micheletti notes: “The classes included fewer students; it felt like graduate school. [The thesis] took loads of time and I had close contact with my two advisors.” Lefebvre's thesis analyzing Kenneth Phillip's book on the resurgence of the Republican Party required drawing on a background of statistics and economics. He felt the honors program thus “opened up the whole faculty to us.” Bestwick wrote his thesis on privacy and computerized criminal records, and found the experience “taught me about how to do significant research, collate it, and present it.” Though Norwood’s thesis on the California Supreme Court’s decision in the Bakke case took an extra year to finish, she sees it in hindsight as a fabulous experience. “My deep thinking and conversations with Dr. Anderson about equal protection and reverse discrimination were enormously valuable.”

The seminar was a very close-knit group and many friendships came out of it. For Laube, Lefebvre, and Norwood, their friendship was heightened as a result of being appointed to the Press Council, a new non-partisan entity that would have publishing authority over the then highly-politicized Nexus. Anderson urged his honors students to apply and the three of them were selected. A very intense year followed. “We had meetings where people came in and yelled at us a lot,” Lefebvre recalls, “but the experience prepared me for the role of litigator—where every day, my role is to resolve a dispute of some type.”

Micheletti recalls that most of the students in that first seminar were pre-law and Bestwick thought the shared experience of a law career has kept many of them in touch. Laube and Bestwick went to UC Davis Law School together and eventually had careers in litigation. Laube continues in private civil practice in the San Diego area. After 13 years in litigation, Bestwick now is an administrative law judge with the State of California Unemployment Insurance Benefits Board, where he “adjudicates and resolves disputes instead of advocating for just one side.”

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Lefebvre also went to law school and is in private practice in Las Vegas. In addition, for nine years he served on the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline in part because he thought it might be a good opportunity to put Anderson’s teachings about service into practice. Gordon Fink also went to law school, but did not have a conventional practice. He worked for a Nevada senator and also taught at UNLV while returning to his pre-college career as a sportscaster. He passed away unexpectedly at the age of 40.

Norwood attended UCLA Law School and eventually ended up as a partner in a small firm specializing in sophisticated business litigation. Starting in 2004, she phased out of her practice to join the staff at a private school in Brentwood. There she fulfilled the legacy of “the extraordinary teachers I had at UCSB, especially Drs. Anderson, Baker, and Pritchett” by teaching a year-long senior seminar on ethics while serving as an administrator and in-house counsel until her retirement in 2008.

Micheletti went on to a full academic career and credits Professor Anderson with getting her started. She suggested that she apply for a graduate program at Stockholm University, where she was eventually accepted into their doctoral program in political science and finished her Ph.D. She progressed through a series of competitive appointments to a full professorship at a smaller Swedish university, and has now returned to the University of Stockholm as the holder of an endowed chair in political science. “I have now studied political science in each and every decade.”

The students from our first honors seminar offer some words of wisdom for today’s students. Micheletti found that studying political science was “an empowering experience for a young woman” and she recommends it highly for those who want to learn more about the workings of politics and society in general. Bestwick and Lefebvre encourage students to “take good classes from good professors and learn as much as you can from them.” Laube advises today’s students that in choosing a career, “remember that something that interests you is the thing that you will be good at.” Norwood echoes this: “Pursue what interests you, without being governed or limited unduly by practical considerations.” All strongly advise: “If you have the opportunity to participate in the honors seminar, take it!”

As part of our ongoing series, “What can you do with a degree in political science?” we present the career stories of two of our alums whose duties put them at the intersection between government and the community. One analyzes complex issues affecting higher education in the state of California, while the other represents UCSB to local and state government agencies. Both of these alums use their political science background daily as they evaluate and balance the interests of different groups in an effort to reach consensus on key issues. Each describes the process as sometimes “messy,” but both recognize that they play a valuable role in democratic discourse and problem resolution.

Steve Boilard ’84, Ph.D. ’92: Analyst for California’s higher education issues

Steve Boilard entered De Anza Community college as an engineering major, but a summer internship convinced him that he was on the wrong track. A general education class in political science got him interested in the subject matter and pointed him in a new direction. Near the end of his two years at De Anza, he visited a friend who was already at UCSB and sat in on one of Herman Pritchett’s lectures on constitutional law. He found these kinds of classes “very engaging,” so he came to UCSB as a declared political science major. He selected the public service option within the major and did his required internship in Sacramento. He returned there after graduation to take a position with the Department of Housing while obtaining his M.A. in Government at Sacramento State University. He found he still wanted more depth in international relations, so he returned to UCSB for his Ph.D.

Boilard’s research area was Soviet foreign policy, a subject that, with the end of the Cold War, changed drastically just as he finished his degree. Nevertheless, he took a teaching position at Western Kentucky University and for five years taught classes on Soviet politics and foreign policy. Declining student interest in the subjects finally led him to “reinvent my career” and investigate other options. He returned to California in 1998 and took a job in the Legislative Analyst’s Office, where he has been ever since.

The California Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) provides nonpartisan fiscal and policy analysis for the state legislature. Boilard is Director of the Higher Education Section of LAO. He has four analysts working under him who provide data and analysis for all legislative and budget matters affecting the University of California, California State Universities, the California community colleges, and student financial aid programs. This includes topics such as fee increases, enrollment growth, and transfer mechanisms, to name just a few of the many subject areas that fall within this jurisdiction. Some of LAO’s research projects investigate matters requested by the legislature. In other cases, analysts may identify and perform independent analysis on matters of concern in higher education that should be on the public agenda. Boilard says, “This requires getting out to campuses on regular basis in order to stay in touch with real issues.”
Boilard finds his position not only makes good use of the analytical skills he learned in his political science studies, it also demonstrates on a daily basis some of the lessons he learned in more than one political science class. One of the lessons is: “Systems don’t always work in real life as they do on paper. There is no substitute for witnessing the real world.” Another is: “There is not always one ideal policy solution. Government requires balancing the interests of different groups and values, and sometimes it’s a messy process.” Even in his office, in spite of all the data-gathering and analysis, often there is not one clear answer.

When asked for career advice for undergraduates, Boilard offers this encouraging recommendation. “Studying any of the social sciences is training of the mind. You learn a core set of skills that are not linked to specific careers.” Data analysis, writing, and making recommendations or arguments are abilities that are valued in many fields. Therefore he recommends that students pick a subject area that interests them without worrying if it will limit their career options.

For graduate students, Boilard acknowledges that advanced study narrows options to fields more closely related to political science, but it doesn’t limit them to academia, government work, or even to the subject area of their dissertation. “The process of the Ph.D. education refines your skills on working with information, and those skills are highly transferrable. In addition, the Ph.D. program requires initiative. You have to learn to be self-starting and discipline yourself to manage time and set priorities. These skills are valuable in many careers.”

Kirsten Zimmer Deshler ’87: UCSB’s interface with government and the community

As UCSB’s Director of Governmental Relations, Kirsten Deshler represents the campus to all levels of government—local, state, and federal—including coordinating the strategic plans and projects of the campus, and cultivating relations with elected and appointed officials, public agencies, and community groups. This seems like a perfect fit for a political science major, and Deshler is excited and enthusiastic about her position.

Deshler started out at UCSB as a biological sciences major. “However, when I took my first political science class, I just got hooked on the subject matter.” She loved learning about the interrelations between institutions and the public, and how people are represented in the decision-making process. While her initial focus was international relations, it was congressional politics that most fascinated her, especially after writing her senior thesis on the process of passing the Tax Reform Act of 1986. She was also active in campus politics and worked on several presidential election campaigns. When she graduated, it seemed there was only one logical thing to do: “I sold my car and headed for Washington, DC.”

When Deshler got there, she spent some time walking the halls and handing out resumes, eventually obtaining a position with the House Education and Labor Subcommittee for one year. Next, she moved to the office of California Congressman Rick Lehman, where she spent the next four years as his legislative assistant and enjoyed being closer to local constituents and working on issues that affected them directly. After that, she took the position of legislative director in the Washington, DC office of the governor of Puerto Rico. Her principal duties were to inform Congress about issues that impacted Puerto Rico, represent the governor before the National and Democratic Governors’ associations, and train other staff how best to promote key Puerto Rican interests in both the legislative and executive branches. She then was promoted to Deputy Director for Policy and Legislative Affairs, with the responsibility for developing political and legislative strategies for the governor and his administration.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the heightened security measures in Washington made it a less pleasant place to live. Now married with three children, Deshler and her husband wanted a different environment, so they returned to Santa Barbara where she was a stay-at-home mom for six years. She returned to work for the City of Goleta as a management analyst and then as its Public Information Officer before taking the position of Director of Governmental Relations at UCSB in January 2010.

In her position, Deshler constantly interfaces between university and other interests, not just politicians. She has found that her background in political science has helped her understand the relationships between different entities that have different objectives, and also between people and power. “I have found that people want to agree more than they want to disagree. No one benefits from being completely oppositional. Political science has taught me that even though ‘democracy is messy,’ you have to trust the process. In spite of dissent, we do have the tools to find commonality.”

Deshler has set two goals that she would like to accomplish: (1) create an advocacy network of supporters to advance the university’s interests at the local, state, and federal level; and (2) create more opportunities for meaningful civic engagement on issues of importance to the University and within our local community.

Though Deshler’s career started on Capitol Hill, she advises political science students and recent grads that the degree can be used in many areas, not just in politics. “Because it teaches you how to understand power, relationships, negotiation, and building community, it broadens your world so that you can step into almost any area that requires knowledge of these principles. They are present and valued in almost every sphere of work.”
Eric Smith’s research focuses on environmental politics, public opinion, and elections within the subfield of American politics. He examines public opinion toward offshore oil development, nuclear power, wind power, energy crises, and climate change. He has published several articles (many with UCSB graduate students and Ph.D.s) on these and related environmental topics. Smith recently finished a book about public opinion on energy and environmental issues, *Energy, the Environment, and Public Opinion* (Roman and Littlefield, 2002). In one current research project, he is finishing a new book on the implications of the eventual decline of world oil production (so-called “peak oil”) for U.S. energy policy and climate change policy.

Smith states that he has been interested in environmental issues since he was a child. As a political scientist, his research focus has been on public opinion: that is, what people demand of politicians. Extending this focus into environmental politics, he has looked mainly at two areas: (1) the reasons why people do or do not accept the conclusions of scientific studies on environmental matters; and (2) the “NIMBY” syndrome—why people object to certain solutions and a major reason why progress on environmental issues is slow. “Natural scientists and engineers can develop technical solutions to environmental problems, but it takes political will to implement them.” He notes that public opinion is often market-driven, rather than science-driven. For example, “Support for offshore oil drilling goes up or down depending on the price of oil.” Nevertheless, public opinion on high profile issues influences what Congress does more than science.

Smith believes that the study of environmental politics is an important pursuit for political scientists. It affords great opportunities for active research on public opinion and policy making in all subfields. Interest in this area cooled after the initial surge of the environmental movement of the 1960s-70s, but because of climate change and future energy concerns, there is again great interest in environmental issues. “Governments must respond to these problems because they affect not only our generation but will also significantly affect our children’s generation.”

The politics of public policy is one of the department’s three focus areas of research. Environmental politics is a particular strength within this focus, especially issues of human-environment interactions in climate change and energy. Research on environmental issues is interdisciplinary in nature, and at UCSB it is pursued in several academic departments. UCSB has broad strengths in environmental policy and science, so there are many points of reinforcement and collaboration for both students and faculty.

The political science department chose to emphasize environmental politics for several reasons. First, there is no question that environmental issues will be prominent for some time to come. Second, the design of environmental policy always involves solving challenging political problems. Third, environmental problems raise very interesting theoretical issues about the conditions for cooperative behavior within and across political systems. These theoretical issues have wide application beyond environmental politics. Finally, environmental issues cross the traditional boundaries of political science subfields and yield opportunities for productive collaboration and integration in the much the same way as they provide opportunities for collaboration across traditional academic disciplines.

In the articles that follow, we discuss the work of two of our faculty who have made environmental politics one of their research topics (Eric Smith and Lorelei Moosbrugger), and the work of two political scientists from the Bren School of Environmental Management who are affiliated with our department (Sarah Anderson and Oran Young). Other department faculty touch on environmental politics to some extent. In addition, several of our current graduate students and recent Ph.D.s have concentrated on environmental politics within the traditional subfields of American politics and international relations. Planning is under way for an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program that would connect such diverse departments as geography, political science, economics, environmental studies, psychology, engineering, and the Bren School.

At this time, very few political science departments across the country have made environmental politics a research priority. Very few of them have an institutional setting as hospitable to the study as UCSB offers. By focusing on this area of research, the department is in a unique position to do important work from a scholarly and practical perspective, and build a distinctive profile in the process.
Lorelei Moosbrugger's primary research agenda concerns how the structure of political institutions affects the quality of democracy. Put differently, how politicians are elected affects how they act on policy issues. She states that she has always been interested and active in environment-related issues, even before graduate school. Political science provided a way to link her environmental interests with research on policy questions involving “public goods”—those issues that affect large groups of people. She thus compares government policy choices in countries with different electoral systems and the effects of these choices on a variety of environmental concerns.

Moosbrugger believes that the study of environmental politics is important, not only for political scientists, but also for other disciplines. This is especially relevant at UCSB where environmental topics pervade many disciplines. As a result, “We get a lot of good students who know and care about the environment.” Scholars in other disciplines turn to political science to learn how and why policies that affect the environment are or are not enacted. “Political science can teach them about the institutions of government and how they work so that they may better understand the politics of environmental issues and how to effect change.” A healthy environment is a special public good that affects not only the current generation, but also future generations. It takes a special kind of policy-maker to enact policies for long-term public good, rather than for short-term reasons such as the next election or their own career because it may cost them votes in the short term.

Within political science, Moosbrugger believes that the importance of the study of environmental politics is not fully recognized. “It tends to be compartmentalized or relegated to a minor role.” She notes that the public and policy-makers have a false sense that science will solve environmental problems, but she believes that these problems can't be addressed through science alone. Major policy changes are required, which is why more emphasis on environmental politics is needed in political science. That may not happen until a deteriorating environment affects a government’s ability to provide infrastructure and basic services. “In that case, the environmental politics of the future may actually be security politics.”

Sarah Anderson joined the Bren School faculty in 2007, and is also affiliated with the political science department. Her research concentrates on political structures and dynamics, both of which profoundly influence environmental policy. In a current project, she is working to quantify the impact of environmentally-concerned constituents on congressional voting and determining the degree to which environmental voting reflects more general voting patterns in Congress. In a related project, she is examining federal budget data on fire prevention to determine how parties make decisions on budget allocations. Are these decisions determined by actual needs or by pressures from committee members’ particular districts?

Anderson notes that she was interested in environmental matters before attending graduate school, and traces that back to having grown up in Montana where public lands issues are hot topics. In addition, before attending graduate school, she worked as a U.S. congressman’s legislative assistant and briefed members of the House National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee. Like Moosbrugger, she believes that the environment is a big public goods problem and thus provides many research opportunities for political scientists. “Private problems can be resolved outside of government, but big problems, like who controls the oceans or how to manage public lands must be handled by governments. Political science analyzes how governments deal with these kinds of problems, and also how the structure of the institutions of government shapes the eventual policy outcomes.” Anderson believes that environmental issues will continue to present big policy and public goods problems in the future.

Anderson also believes that policy research can help produce changes in institutions that lead to better resolution of big policy problems, not just in environmental politics. “In learning about one policy area, such as environmental politics, you also learn about the dynamics of public policy in general.” In addition, studying several policy areas can teach us more about the communalities that join various policy areas. “Lessons learned from policy research can be then generalized to broader subject areas within the discipline, such as social movements.”

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ran Young joined the Bren School faculty in 2003 as professor of environmental science and management, and is also an affiliated professor in the political science department. He is a renowned Arctic expert whose research focuses on collective choice and social institutions, with particular application to issues pertaining to international environmental governance and the Arctic. Among the more than 20 books he has authored are *The Institutional Dimensions of Environmental Change* (MIT Press, 2002) and *Governance in World Affairs* (Cornell University Press, 1989).

Young’s interest in environmental politics began in the 1960-70s. At that time, he was working within the subfield of international relations on matters of public choice, especially the role of institutions in the forces that determine outcomes. He found a lot of potential empirical applications of theory in topics involving the environment and natural resources. Emerging environmental issues, frequently addressed by treaties, conventions, UN meetings and councils, also caught the attention of Young and other international relations scholars who were working on governance and regime studies (also called international cooperative agreements). Therefore, interest in environmental politics actually began to crystallize at the international level in political science before it did at the national level. “The burst of environmental legislation in the 1970’s didn’t create the same level of interest in American politics as it did in international relations.”

Young believes the study of environmental politics is important for several reasons. “From a purely theoretical perspective, it is a vehicle for exploring innovative thinking about governance. Environmental politics is an important lens for viewing and thinking about large issues, such as the policy process, and we can draw broad insights from it. More importantly, our planet is a human dominated system and what happens to it is in large part the result of human influence. Humans in turn are influenced by the political process and collective human behavior; therefore it’s important to understand the political processes that affect environmental outcomes.”

Like Anderson and Moosbrugger, Young thinks that environmental politics deserves more prominence in political science. “In many other disciplines, environmental subfields are highly developed (i.e., environmental history, environmental economics, environmental law), but this has not happened yet in political science, at least not in America. The traditional subfields still dominate.” That is not the case in Europe, where lots of research and analysis is being done by political scientists.

At UCSB, the potential for environmental politics remains good because the campus administration supports the environmental emphasis in a variety of disciplines. That support means mutual interaction between the disciplines that is of great benefit to students.
From the Chair  

**John T. Woolley**

With this issue of our newsletter, we contemplate major changes as a result of the budget crisis that has engulfed the University of California. Our newsletter, *Political Science at UCSB*, was launched many years ago by then-Chair Lorraine McDonnell, and it has come to be viewed throughout the University as a model of success. It is engaging, current and professional.

While we think a paper-based newsletter is preferable in many respects, we can save thousands of dollars in printing and mailing costs if we switch to electronic distribution. We would welcome a donor’s contribution to keep the newsletter going, and would even name it in your honor! Otherwise, starting a year from now, we will almost certainly be contacting our readers through the Alumni Association to invite you to view an online newsletter. We will emphasize the creative opportunities that come with an electronic product. Who knows, maybe we can sell advertising!

Continuing on the topic of the budget cuts: In the middle of a surprisingly gray and rainy fall quarter, I received a very happy surprise. A former student who had never made a gift to the department sent a check for $1000. Accompanying the check was a note that said “this seemed like a good time for me to give back.” That gift, and several other generous gifts we have received make a huge difference in our ability to continue supporting students and providing a stimulating educational environment.

At the same time, we have continued to seek ways to economize. We made mandated cuts in instructional budgets while preserving seats in core classes. Nonetheless, we reduced the variety of courses offered and in some cases highly experienced (and more costly) instructors have been replaced by rookies. We have found additional savings on many fronts including phones, printing, staffing, and simply deferring expenses.

Faculty, staff, and graduate students have all joined in to help address the budget crisis. We continue to benefit from the careful fiscal management of past department leaders. But it now seems likely that budget stress will be a fact of life for the next few years. Please consider whether this is a time when you, like our surprise donor mentioned above, can “give back.” Even small gifts add up to amounts that let us improve students’ experiences at UCSB.

Meanwhile it has been a busy year! Our undergraduate courses enrolled more students than we have in years and our number of majors swelled. Our students continue to impress us with their commitment and creativity. Our political science majors include leaders of campus Democrats and Republicans and dozens of other campus organizations. As in the past, our students played major roles in Model United Nations and Model Arab League. Political science majors are heavily represented in internship programs like UCDC and in the Education Abroad Program. And as always, we have happily advanced cohorts of majors to graduate training especially in law, public policy, and political science.

Our graduate students have also been a source of pride. Fifteen (or over 1/4 of current students in residence) presented papers at professional conferences in the last year. Mario Guerrero received a 2010 Excellence in Teaching Award from the UCSB Graduate Students Association. At least seven others (including recent graduate coauthors with faculty) have seen their scholarly work come to press.

The faculty have also continued to be very active scholars. Lorraine McDonnell was appointed Fellow of the American Educational Research Association, one of only 67 scholars so honored. Amit Ahuja was named to the inaugural class of National Asia Research Fellows. Ten faculty have published journal articles in the past year, and three quarters of our faculty made presentations at one or more scholarly conferences. There have been many other contributions to edited volumes, op-ed pieces, online-commentaries, and reports.

Finally, as noted elsewhere in this newsletter, our longtime colleague Gayle Binion officially retired from UCSB this spring. This does not mean she has disappeared, however, for she will still be teaching for the department for at least three years and is continuing to be active in the Academic Senate. We expect to honor her with a reception in the future. Please let us know if you would like to be invited!

Our warm thanks to all who contributed to the department in memory of Professor Emeritus Stanley Anderson. The Anderson family decided to dedicate a bench on the campus in Stan’s memory. They note that Stan was always proud to be a part of UCSB, and that he loved to walk around the campus and appreciated a nice place to sit and enjoy its beauty. A spectacular location for the bench has been selected on a bluff near the Marine Biology Laboratory. This spot affords a 270-degree view of the Channel Islands, Goleta Bay, and the Santa Ynez mountains.

Any funds remaining from Anderson donations after the installation of the bench will be transferred to the Memorial Fund for Excellence, a new fund that will make annual awards to outstanding graduate and undergraduate students. As we announced in the 2009 newsletter, awards will be named in honor of specific individuals whenever gifts to the fund in their name exceed $5000.

**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 Division of Social Sciences secure website: https://secure.my-websites.org/supporter/donatenow.do;in=Fs@5Cs&dfbid=1104299. Click on the dropdown menu of giving fund options under “Specific Gift Area of Interest” and select “Political Science”; then 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. 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 Michael Miller, Director of Development, Division of Social Sciences, at (805) 893-3922, or michael.miller@ia.ucsb.edu.