

UNI POLITICAL SCIENCE

NEWSLETTER

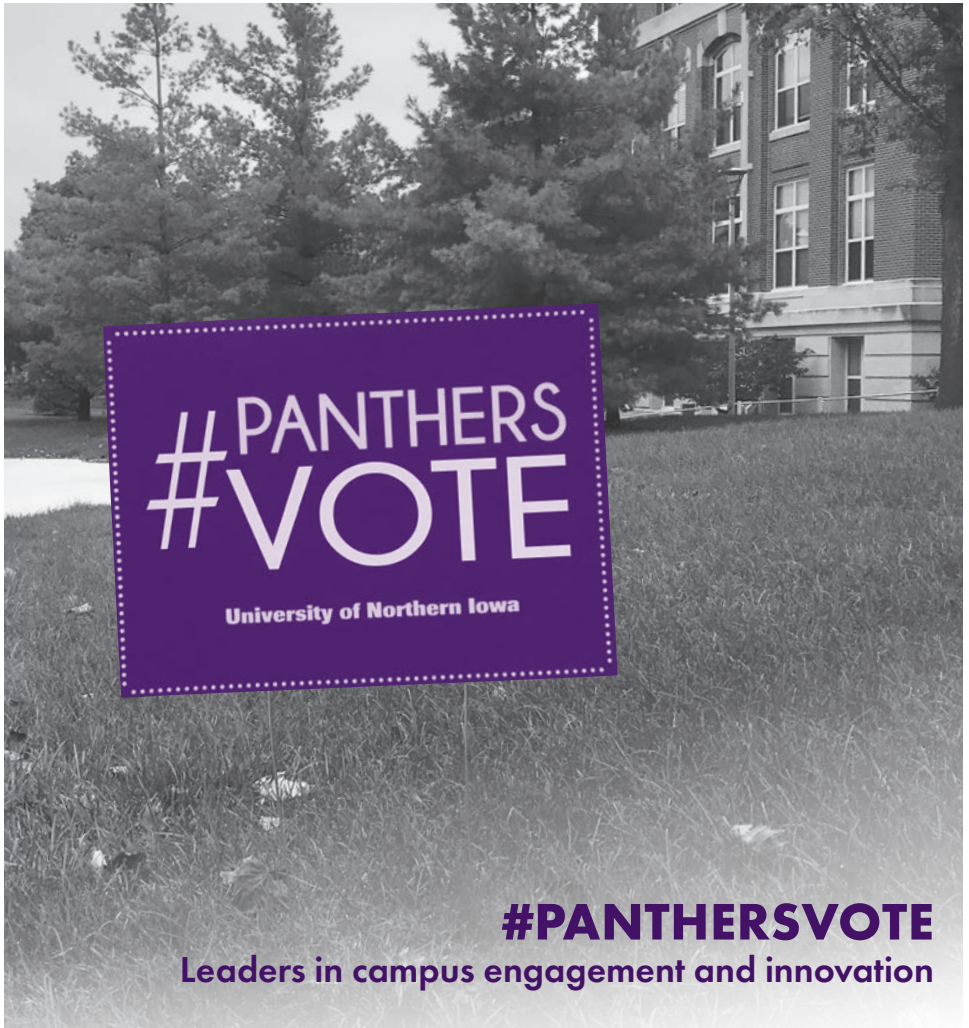
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#PANTHERSVOTE

Leaders in campus engagement and innovation

FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

As I reflect upon my first year as department head, I'm amazed at the breadth of activities our faculty and students undertook during the year. You'll read in this newsletter about our voter engagement activities which have garnered us accolades and press attention (even a shout-out in Teen Vogue, of all places), the world travels of our Model UN competition team, students who have presented their research at conferences, and a faculty member invited to be an international election observer. You'll also read about **Professor Evan Renfro** winning a prestigious teaching award on campus (the third political science professor to receive this award in the past decade) and two other professors being finalists for another teaching awards.



But a newsletter like this only captures the highlights of our department's activities and impact on campus and in the broader community, so I'd like to call attention to a few others.

- Two professors (myself and **Professor Jayme Renfro**) incorporated service-learning projects into our courses. In my Law and Courts class, students observed housing court to help Iowa Legal Aid of Black Hawk County gather information about court proceedings. Professor Renfro's Public Organization students worked with local organizations to write mission statements and develop communication and social media plans.
- Last summer, political science faculty provided much of the content for a two-day civic education workshop for Iowa secondary school teachers, and several of us served as judges in a We the People constitutional education showcase.
- **Professor Brian Warby** planned and carried out a new study abroad course to Uganda.
- Cumulatively, our faculty gave well over a hundred interviews to media outlets from around the country during the year. They did this on top of their normal teaching duties and on top of being active and well-respected scholars.
- Our students continued to serve UNI and their communities. Our students have remained very active within Northern Iowa Student Government, in student political organizations and other student organizations. May graduate **Drew Stensland** completed his term as NISG president, while fellow graduate **Matt Johnson** served as NISG's Director of Government Relations, heading up UNI's student lobbying efforts at the Capitol in Des Moines.

Toward the end of the school year, we began work on a new strategic plan for the Department. It centers on a vision of our graduates living fulfilling lives not only as successful professionals but as informed and engaged citizens. We've long had a culture within the department that values public service and engaged citizenship. In recent years, we've been trying to make that commitment more apparent, holistic, developmental and systematic. There is a growing emphasis at UNI and within higher education on community and civic engagement, and our department is well situated to play a key role in making UNI the leader in the state for students who want such an experience.

Scott Peters

Professor and Department Head

#PANTHERSVOTE

When the Department of Political Science took leadership of the American Democracy Project (ADP) on campus, we discovered that 67.5 percent of UNI students voted in 2016. This is about 17 percentage points higher than the average college campus. In fact, according to ALL IN Campus Democracy Project, a nonpartisan organization that encourages democratic participation and engagement on American campuses, UNI had the second-highest voter turnout rate among college campuses in the country. In recognition of this, the organization gave UNI a Silver Seal Award.

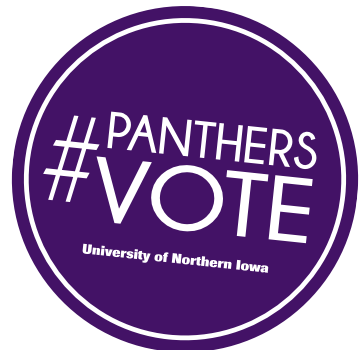
What's particularly amazing about these numbers is that they happened with little-to-no coordination. Northern Iowa Democrats, UNI College Republicans, and various ideological interest groups made concerted individual efforts to register voters and encourage turnout, but they did not coordinate these efforts. Last summer, **Professor Justin Holmes**, who chairs the ADP efforts within the Department, convened student leaders to discuss what voter turnout efforts on campus would look like in 2018. The students decided to set a goal of 40 percent turnout, a major increase over the 2014 election, in which just under 30 percent of UNI students voted.

With support from Iowa Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP), we coordinated efforts on campus and branded them #panthersvote. **Brenna Wolfe** and **Matt Johnson** (both Public Administration seniors) quickly became the leaders in the efforts. They were supported by **Nikia Watson**, a junior Political Science major, who served as a CEEP fellow. They planned and carried out a series of activities to register voters, encourage turnout, and make messaging more coherent and consistent. These included a classroom voter registration drive, activities for National Voter Registration Day, stories in UNI and local media, arranging satellite voting (which led to nearly 1,000 people voting early on campus), and around 300 rides to the polling places near campus on election day.



Their efforts paid off considerably. Although we won't have the final numbers about campus-wide turnout (including absentee ballots) until later this summer, turnout in the two precincts serving campus increased in one precinct from 32.35 % in 2014 to 43.94% in 2018 and more than doubled in the other precinct, from 22.50% to 49.44%.

The #panthersvote effort was recognized by Iowa Campus Compact with a 2019 Engaged Campus Award for Emerging Innovation. We have a great model to use in future elections and are working to formalize some of the partnerships we created in the fall so that we can count on them in the future. We're already planning for #pantherscaucus in the run up to the January 2020 caucuses.





MY #PANTHERSVOTE EXPERIENCE

BY BRENNA WOLFE | PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & SOCIOLOGY, '19

#PanthersVote was a coalition of organizations around campus that led a successful voting campaign. Our goals were to register voters, provide voting information, and increase voter turnout. By building partnerships within our community, we were able to accomplish all those goals! On National Voter Registration Day, around ten organizations tabled in Maucker Union registering people to vote and providing information on the 2018 midterm election. TC and TK joined in the celebration and got more students interested. During Get Out To Vote, #PanthersVote drove students to on-campus polls by golf carts. We know we left students with a great first memory of voting!

#PanthersVote was a great opportunity for me to work with new people and build new relationships. The individuals that I met have taught me so much and have become lifelong contacts. This opportunity has honed my communication skills and made me a better professional. As a bonus, I also now know a lot about voting in Iowa and specifically Black Hawk County!

When people ask me about #PanthersVote, I get to brag about our Department of Political Science and our amazing community for stepping up to increase voter turnout rates.

WOMEN IN POLITICS SCHOLARSHIP DINNER

In October we welcomed alumna **Nancy Powell, '70**, as the keynote speaker at our 9th Annual Women in Politics Bipartisan Scholarship Benefit.

Ambassador Powell retired from the U.S. Foreign Service in 2014 after a 37 year career that included tours in Canada, Nepal, Pakistan, Togo, India, Bangladesh, Uganda, and Ghana. She served as Ambassador to Uganda, Ghana, Pakistan, Nepal, and India, and held several other leadership positions within the State Department, including Senior Coordinator for Avian Influenza and coordinator of the effort to fight an Ebola outbreak in 2014.

She is one of only 52 people who have achieved the rank of Career Ambassador since its creation in 1955. She spoke about her career in public service.



AMERICAN DEMOCRACY PROJECT

This year the Department took stewardship of the American Democracy Project (ADP) on campus. ADP is a network of more than 250 state colleges and universities that is focused on civic engagement among college students.

UNI has been an ADP campus for 15 years. **Professor Justin Holmes** chaired our ADP efforts which included not only #panthersvote, but a series of lectures and activities meant to help students understand and engage with the issues of the day.

We've lived through an extraordinary few years politically, and the question our students often ask us when they try to process current events is, "Is This Normal?" Our series attempted to put current events in proper historical and political contexts in order to help students analyze and understand them.

Activities included a Constitution Day panel about democratic norms and values, a series of on-campus lectures leading up to the fall 2018 election, a panel discussion to analyze the election results, and a budget simulation exercise co-sponsored with the Iowa chapter of the Concord Coalition.

We also had an event centered on civil discussion of difficult issues, featuring former Representative Bob Inglis (R-SC), who was on campus to deliver a lecture about free market approaches to address climate change.

Finally, Kirby Goidel, a political scientist from Texas A&M University delivered a lecture about "What Donald Trump Can Teach Us About Democracy." Plans are already in the works for next year's events, which will revolve around information literacy. Goals for the coming year include expanding ADP events throughout campus, and broadening participation to students across campus.



JOHN DINGER VISIT

Ambassador John Dinger, '74, visited campus in February to talk to students about cybersecurity and 5G technology. In an over-40-year career in the State Department, Dinger served tours in Brazil, Japan, and South Africa and as Ambassador to Mongolia. He also served several tours in key intelligence and political offices with the Department, including as Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism and as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, where he helped found the Office of Cyber Affairs and formulate the basic principles the guide the new field of diplomacy of cyberspace.



MODEL UN

The Model United Nations Competition team had a busy year, competing in Chicago and St. Louis as well as in Israel and in Madrid, Spain.

Model UN is a co-curricular student organization that promotes awareness of international affairs and the United Nations. About 20 students traveled to at least one of the competitions this year.

Special congratulations go to senior political science major **Kelsey Chidley** for winning an award for her work on the International Press Delegation at the American Model United Nations conference in Chicago in November.



STRATCOM

BY JACOB HARBERTS | POLITICAL SCIENCE & GLOBAL STUDIES, '19

Isaak Espersen, Audrey Simpson and I attended the U.S. Strategic Command Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance conference in Omaha. The conference started with a select group of students participating in a roundtable exercise. This exercise is meant to simulate a real-world scenario where tensions are rising among actors that may lead to conflict or unstable relations toward the U.S. or its allies. As students, we were tasked to work in smaller groups representing different departments in the U.S. government and utilize the “tools” at our disposal to avoid conflict while pursuing the foreign policy interest of the United States. Following this event, USSTRATCOM and the University of Nebraska at Omaha put together a “Careers in National Defense” presentation where we heard from various government officials about specific careers in national defense.

The conference included keynote speakers discussing current concerns in strategic deterrence, advancing nuclear technologies, and deterrence in space.

Finally, the conference included student panels comprised of individuals from across the Academic Alliance sharing their research and ideas to challenge current thoughts in strategic deterrence. Isaak, Audrey and I had the honor of representing UNI at this conference and presenting our ideas on the student panels. Each year, the Academic Alliance grows and becomes more sophisticated in its search for unique ideas from students who will someday become the leaders of strategic deterrence policy.



STUDENT RESEARCH

The Department was proud to be able to support a number of students' research efforts throughout the year.

Two political science majors who graduated this May received Donald and Gudrun Fruehling Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships last summer:

Tristan Bernhard: "Measurable Profiles of Innovative States Pertaining to Class Size Policy" (Faculty mentor: Ramona McNeal).

Jacob Harberts: "Predicting Putin through the Philosophy of Judo" (Faculty mentor: Evan Renfro).

Audrey Simpson, a May 2019 graduate, completed a National Science Foundation-funded summer fellowship at the University of North Texas and presented the results of that research at the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) conference in Chicago in April. Her paper was titled "The Impact of Leader Characteristics on Military Alliances." Senior **Natalie Dean** also presented research at the MPSA conference. Natalie's paper, "The Impact of Female Judicial Commissioners on Women Applying to Judicial Vacancies," stemmed from an independent study with **Scott Peters**.

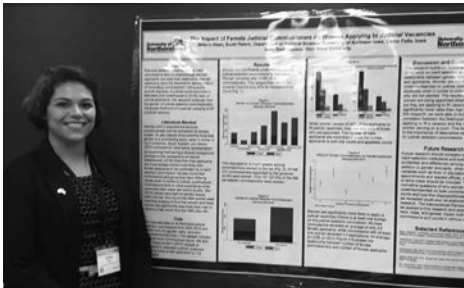
Two students presented their research at the Iowa Human Rights Research Conference at the University of Iowa in April. Sophomore political science major **Zach Zippe** presented "The Wall," and May '19 graduate **Silvia Pellegrino** presented "Can People Survive Carrots and Sticks?: Enhancing Quality of Life Through Financial Tools of Foreign Policy Following Sen's Capabilities Approach."

Finally, as members of the U.S. Strategic Command Academic Alliance, we once again sent students to its Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance conference.

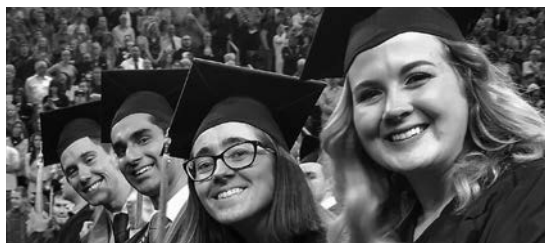
Jacob Harberts: "Deterring Fourth Generation Warfare in the Twenty-First Century through Military, Private and Public Collaboration."

Audrey Simpson: "The Potential for Nuclear Conflict in South Asia: The Imbalance of Conventional Military Power and the Problem of Geography."

Isaak Espersen: "Addressing the Challenges of Rising Revisionist States: Changing Relations between the United States, Russia and China."



CONGRATULATIONS 2018-19 GRADUATES



B.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE

Tristan Bernhard
Timothy Blaser
Josh Dausener
Natalie Dean
Jared Girres
William Grahs
Jacob Harberts
Casey Harm
Sydney Hauer
Matthew Johnson
Collin Lint
Kailee Martens
Jason McCarroll
Andre Milton
Joshua Nichols
Silvia Pellegrino
Sam Plank
Audrey Simpson
Rhiannon Smeby
Logan Stoffer
Emily Van Der Sloom
Jeremy Young

B.A. POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Amayranis Berry
Hannah Gregor
Sydney Lundgren

B.A. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Grace Bandstra
Kyle Cheatham
Brody Groen
Lejla Hodzic
Ahsan Jehangir Khan
Casey Harm
Matthew Johnson
Nicole Leibert-Steines
Caitlin Novak
Victoria Prochaska
Andrew Stensland
Logan Stoffer
Zack Werner
Marcus Weymiller
Brenna Wolfe



MPP PROGRAM

The Master of Public Policy Program seeks to enhance the public service values of emerging and mid-career public service professionals through preparing them to analyze, develop and evaluate public policy. The online program follows a cohort model and is tailored to working professionals. Working in a cohort model, students take one class at a time over the two-year-long program. This year, the Department decided to begin the process of seeking accreditation of the program. This begins a several year process in which we will review the program from top to bottom with an eye toward rigorous assessment and continuous improvement of the program's performance.

Our current cohort of students will complete the program this summer, and we will enroll a new cohort to begin in Fall 2019. Congratulations to all of our upcoming graduates!

FALL 2017 MPP COHORT (DEGREES EXPECTED, AUGUST 2019)

Jacob Bartlett
Austin Brinks
Lesley Buse
Deann Cook
Brent Dunlay
Matthew Gordon
Nathan Gruber
Austin McGuire
Mary Snell
Susanna Streng
Melissa Walljasper Murray
April Wells

STUDENT AWARDS AND RECOGNITION



Marcus Weymiller, a December 2018 graduate, earned accolades in the classroom, in the community and on the football field during his time at UNI. The Department recognized his scholarly achievements with the Purple and Old Gold Award for Meritorious Scholarship in political science. Marcus was also awarded a prestigious NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship. He was named to the 2018 Google Cloud Academic All-America First Team. Finally, the Missouri Valley Conference recognized his good citizenship, sportsmanship and community service with its Good Neighbor Award. Marcus will attend law school in the fall.



From L to R: Brenna Wolfe, Audrey Simpson, Professor Evan Renfro, Micah McCutchan, Danielle Dunne.
Not pictured: William Grahs

PI SIGMA ALPHA

This spring we inducted five students into the Alpha Delta Chi chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society. **Professor Evan Renfro** serves as the advisor to the chapter.

Congratulations to all inductees!

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Tristan Bernhard, Outstanding Student Leader

Jessica Birch, Vajpeyi Scholarship

Shamir Butt, Servant Leader Award

David Degner, Charles Ray and Ada May Hoxie Scholarship

Brady Fisher, Glasener Political Science Scholarship

Caleb Gipple, Servant Leader Award, Greek 360 Award

Hannah Gregor, Purple and Old Gold Award in Political Science

Emily Loomis, Women in Politics Scholarship

Adara Opiola, Black Hawk County Bar Association Scholarship and Dennis Jensen Scholarship

Erin Thomason, Women in Politics Scholarship

Marcus Weymiller, Purple and Old Gold Award in Public Administration

COLLIN BRECHER

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION MANAGER, AMERICAN CHEMISTRY COUNCIL, '14

After graduating, I worked as a Legislative and Regulatory Analyst at the VGM Group in Waterloo before finding my current position. The political science major gave me a strong understanding of the public policy process and the many moving parts that go into conveying an important message and being heard. My junior year at UNI I had the opportunity to be a clerk in the Iowa House, which gave me the real-world experience that I use every day in my job while still earning college credits. That practical experience gave me a big advantage right away in getting a full-time job after college. In my role, I help a diverse group of medical providers navigate the complexities of the state and federal government and advocate on their behalf. I do this by presenting at industry trade shows, drafting position papers, analyzing healthcare data and working with government agencies, elected officials and their staff members on the challenges members face in the many industries our company serves.



DYLAN MULFINGER

CITY ADMINISTRATOR - OELWEIN, IOWA, '12

After earning my B.A. in Public Administration at UNI I completed a Master of Public Administration at the University of Kansas in 2014. As a city administrator, I oversee the operations of the city and implement the goals and initiatives set by city council. I get to work with several departments and have a chance to serve the public everyday. One of my favorite parts of the job is bringing in new ideas and finding a way to make big city ideas work in a small town. My major in public administration prepared me for working as a public servant. Several of the classes focused on how to manage an organization that had to respond to the public and work on community needs. I had a variety of classes that touched on important areas like planning, finance and administration. My major offered a variety of courses, so I was able to choose ones that I was interested in that would help me determine my future in local government.



ALUMNI AWARDS

LINH TA

REPORTER, DES MOINES REGISTER, '15

Des Moines Register reporter **Linh Ta** received the Iowa Newspaper Association's Genevieve Mauck Stoufer Young Iowa Journalist Award. In the past year Linh has reported on several major stories, including presidential primary campaign stops, the November election, the Des Moines retail business scene, and the Mollie Tibbets case.



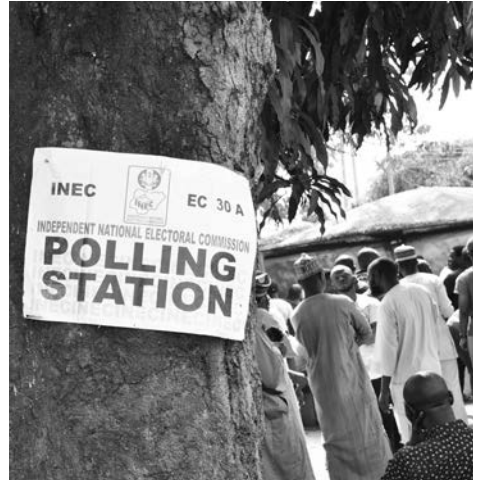
OBSERVING THE 2019 ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

BY PITA OGABA AGBESE | PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

The year 2019 marked the longest period of continuous civilian administrations without military coups and consequent military dictatorships in Nigeria. Since 1999, the country has had four successive civilian governments. The 2015 elections that ushered in the current administration were momentous as they marked the first time that an incumbent president lost an election in Nigeria. Those elections were conducted amidst serious national security issues including terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, and sabotage of petroleum production facilities. In addition, a serious economic crisis made the elections highly competitive. Corruption, which has always been a major political issue in Nigeria, was particularly salient as an electoral issue in 2015. Goodluck Jonathan, the incumbent, was expected to face a stiff challenge. But was expected to win re-election. Instead, he lost by more than one million votes to Muhammadu Buhari.

The 2019 elections were scheduled for February amidst concerns about the preparedness of the electoral commission to hold hitch-free elections. There were also rumors that if Buhari lost the election, he would refuse to relinquish power. Ethnic, religious and regional tensions mounted in many parts of the country. It was within this context of local and international concerns over free and fair elections that the role of international and domestic election monitors and observers assumed. I was delighted to be asked to join a team of international observers to monitor the presidential and National Assembly elections. Dean Brenda Bass, Dr. Phil Plourde of the Office of International Programs, and our own head of department, Scott Peters, went out of their way to facilitate quick approvals for my trip. I sincerely thank them.

Our team observed the elections in seven polling units in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, and in the neighboring Nasarawa State. Voters were very excited and began queuing up to vote as early as 5:00 am, several hours before the polls were scheduled to open. It is jokingly said that it is only soccer that Nigerians would wait patiently to play or to watch but surprisingly, voters were very patient despite long lines at many polling units.



Even when the card reader machines used in identifying and authenticating voters malfunctioned, voters waited patiently for them to be fixed. Some voters brought mats and blankets to sit on while waiting to vote.

In all the polling units where we conducted our observation, the elections were conducted peacefully, freely and fairly. Security personnel deployed to forestall any breakdown in law and order did not have to do anything as there was no threat to the integrity of the elections. The leading opposition party, the PDP, won in many of the units where we observed.

There were a number of things that, in my opinion, could be improved upon to make elections in Nigeria more credible. First, the electoral commission needs to be more adequately prepared. As in 2015, the elections had to be postponed because of inadequate logistic arrangements by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This year's unpreparedness would have been fatal to the integrity of the elections if the elections had not been postponed to give the Commission more time. INEC should start preparing for the 2023 elections now.



Second, the voting process was cumbersome, although this year much less so. This year, voters could vote as soon as their identities were authenticated unlike previous years. However, the ballot papers were too long. There were 73 presidential candidates and the party logos of each of these candidates had to be printed on the ballot papers. This delayed counting a great deal. Voting started and ended on Saturday but counting and announcement of results lasted until Thursday. Long delays between the end of voting and the announcement of winners and losers make voters suspicious of vote tampering or rigging after voting had already been concluded.

Third, staggered elections as were the practice this year and previous elections are unnecessary and cumbersome. There is no reason why all four elections (presidential, National Assembly, gubernatorial and state houses of assembly) cannot be conducted in one day.

Fourth, the preference of many Nigerians to cast ballots in their places of ancestral origins increases the personal

costs of voting. Millions of voters traveled from where they were domiciled to their ancestral homes and villages to vote. When elections are postponed in the last minute as was the case this year, quite a number of people are disenfranchised. Many voters could not travel back to their ancestral villages to cast their ballots after the postponed elections were rescheduled.

Fifth, the law banning campaigning two days before voting takes place makes no philosophical or practical sense. Candidates should be allowed to continue campaigning as some voters make up their minds in the last few hours. The ideal thing to do is to prohibit campaigning in the precincts of the polling units.

Finally, one of the more obnoxious legacies of military rule in Nigeria was the creation of a militaristic atmosphere around the voting process. There is a total ban on the movement of automobiles from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm on voting days. This is unnecessary. It creates the sense that exercising the constitutional right of the franchise requires giving up the equally valid constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of movement.

I was pleased to be part of this year's international election monitoring and observation in Nigeria. I have discussed my experience in my Politics in Africa class this past Spring semester and I gave a talk on it to Political Science Association.





DONNA HOFFMAN | PROFESSOR

After serving eight years as department head, I stepped down from that role at the end of the summer and returned to a regular faculty position. I spent the fall working on my research related to how presidents have used rhetoric to highlight (or downplay) their unilateral executive actions. This is research on which I continue to work and I presented a paper on it at the American Political Science Association's annual meeting in the fall in Boston (with Alison Howard). In addition, Chris Larimer and I began a project on congressional redistricting reworking some scholarly models that typically code Iowa's unique method incorrectly. We presented this preliminary research at the Midwest Political Science Association's annual meeting in Chicago in April.

In the fall, I also began preparing to teach three classes for the spring semester, something I hadn't done in a long time. It was very rewarding to be back teaching a full complement of courses. In addition to teaching Introduction to American Politics, and the Modern Presidency, I taught the senior seminar. This course, entitled "Reforming the Republic," seeks to have students examine and analyze institutional reforms, both from the perspective of American political culture and political science research.

As I finish my eighteenth (!) year at UNI, I continue to be surprised by the weather and enriched by the students who arrive on campus every fall. In addition, as I travel the state (and nation) it is rewarding to talk to the many alumni we have who look back so fondly at their time at UNI.



CHRIS LARIMER | PROFESSOR

A couple of new things to share about the past year: 1) I taught Intro to American Politics for the first time since 2006 (not much has changed), and 2) I co-authored a chapter with a student. The chapter, entitled "Outcomes of Political Decision Making," was co-authored with Marcus Weymiller and has been accepted for publication in the forthcoming Oxford Encyclopedia of Political Decision Making. I also had a solo-authored chapter on "Voter Turnout Field Experiments" published in the Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science. In other news, 2018 was another busy election year in terms of talking to the media and the community about the gubernatorial and congressional races in the state and the season is already ramping up for analysis of what to expect in the 2020 Iowa Caucuses. Outside of my academic role, I've really enjoyed serving on the Board of Directors for two fabulous organizations, the Panther Scholarship Club (PSC) for UNI Athletics and the Cedar Valley United Way."

FACULTY UPDATES



RAMONA MCNEAL | ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

I have had a diverse year for scholarship with two published co-authored journal articles. The first, in the *International Journal of Public Administration in a Digital Age*, explores whether social networking is having a transformative impact on political participation in the United States while the second, in the *International Journal of Public and Private Perspectives on Healthcare, Culture, and the Environment*, examines the effect of contemporary Medicaid policy on the elderly. Currently I have two co-authored studies under review. The first explores the impact of smartphones and social media on the 2016 presidential election while the second examines the relationship between authoritarianism and public opinion regarding government surveillance. Over the summer, my research agenda will be focused on studying factors related to state-level gun policy in the United States.



EVAN RENFRO | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

This year I was very pleased to receive the University of Northern Iowa Outstanding Teaching Award. I was also once again able to send three students to the prestigious academic conference on Strategic Deterrence in partnership with the United States Strategic Command held at the University of Nebraska's Law School, where their papers were selected for presentation. I was also able to send three students to present their research at the Iowa Human Rights Scholars annual conference at University of Iowa's Law School; I also served as a panelist. This was the first time UNI has participated in this conference, and I look forward to continuing to offer this as an opportunity for our students. Additionally, I was appointed the new faculty advisor for Pi Sigma Alpha, the national Political Science Honors Society. Research projects this year include an article under-review dealing with a close reading of books assigned to junior Marine Corps officers in light of the theoretical contributions of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, with the objective of better understanding why the US engages in the type of wars it does, the way it does. Additionally, I have another article under-review dealing with international pub culture parallel to, and in conflict with, neoliberalism. I also presented a paper at the Southern Political Science Association Conference in Austin, TX dealing with popular culture and its affect vis-à-vis militarism. Finally, my son turned one this year, and enjoys walking around, kicking soccer balls, and randomly screaming.

FACULTY UPDATES



JAYME NEIMAN RENFRO | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

I am happy to have successfully wrapped up my fifth year at UNI. I guess I have to stop saying that I'm new here at this point! This was another great year, full of bright students, engaging conversations about difficult topics, and research that fills my heart and brain. Some of the standouts this year included getting to teach the Senior Seminar for the Public Administration students and having them do podcasts on the unintended consequences that come with policy decisions. I am hoping to continue assigning students to do this, as it really gave them a chance to show off their unique skill sets and understanding of the material in a novel way. I am also working furiously on a book manuscript that will be completed by the end of summer and looking forward to having that off of my plate so that I can move on to some of the other research projects that I have on deck. This summer I will also be traveling to Florida to participate in the American Democracy Project conference and I look forward to spending time next year helping engage students and community members in the various events we have planned. Additionally, next year marks the 100 year anniversary of the amendment that gave women the right to vote. There will be MANY events on campus commemorating this event and I am honored to be helping to plan and execute many of them. It looks like it is going to be a very exciting year for us!

FACULTY AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Professor Evan Renfro received the UNI Bookstore Outstanding Teaching Award. Professor Renfro teaches courses on international relations, and especially enjoys teaching about the Middle East. He describes his teaching style as Socratic in nature and focused on "fostering critical thinking, with the goal of getting students to ask, even shout, 'Why?' about everything." He wants to help students develop skills that will allow them "to avoid the trap of creating more heat than light" when they examine world events. Students respond enthusiastically to this challenge. They especially appreciate the way he blends his experiences working in military intelligence with his scholarly knowledge and analysis. The Department congratulates Professor Renfro on his award!

Professor Chris Larimer and **Professor Brian Warby** were finalists for the Above and Beyond Award for teaching. Professor Larimer also received the Vajpeyi Fellowship for involving students in his research. Professor Larimer co-authored a peer-reviewed encyclopedia entry with **Marcus Weymiller, '18**. Congratulations to Professor Larimer for both accomplishments!

Professor Ana Kogl received a Professional Development Assignment for Spring 2020 for her project "Easier Than Saying No: Women, Domination, and Submission."

INTRODUCING



MEGAN RUXTON | ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

This year, I was excited to join UNI as Assistant Professor of Political Science and Assistant Director of the Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR). As an Iowa native, I have returned to my home state after receiving my doctorate from Colorado State University in Fort Collins and spending two years in eastern Montana. It has been a busy – and sometimes hectic – first year for me, but I have loved the many opportunities for personal and professional growth that have presented themselves. Through my work at CSBR, I have been stretched far beyond my comfort zone by being immersed in new research methods, a high volume of projects (with a diverse suite of topic areas), and an entirely new way of conducting research. My work has taken me to intensive focus group training in Washington, DC, annual meetings of the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research in Toronto, ON, Canada and Chicago, IL, and to an NSF-sponsored workshop on the effects of interviewers on public opinion research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



This spring I taught my first UNI class, Public Opinion and Voting Behavior, and was thrilled with the enthusiasm and commitment of my students. Being my first UNI teaching experience, I found myself in the role of learner as much as the role of teacher, having many productive discussions with my colleagues on approaches to teaching and how to respond to student needs. I look forward to teaching next year, and have already started brainstorming new strategies and activities to incorporate into my classes.



This year, in addition to all the other firsts in my life, our household welcomed the pitter-patter of furry little feet when we brought home our puppy, Pippin. He is a Cardigan Welsh corgi, and has completely upended our lives in the best way possible. He has even become internet famous, in a way that only the dog of a political scientist could be. When featured on a social media account run by an elementary school boy local to Cedar Falls (Gideon, of @IvePeiThatDog) the tweet featuring Pippin was retweeted by George Conway, and consequently received nearly 90,000 likes. I have come to accept the fact that my dog will always be more popular than me.

SNAPSHOTS

#PANTHERSVOTE



POST ELECTION ANALYSIS



WOMEN IN POLITICS



STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS



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Department of Political Science
University of Northern Iowa
335 Sabin Hall
Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0404

