

# SPOTLIGHT

FALL QUARTER 2023

A Departmental Magazine Of Cal Poly Political Science

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## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST ISSUE OF SPOTLIGHT,

a re-imagined version of our pre-Covid departmental magazine Alumni Connections. I look forward to another year of working closely with our amazing department to build ourselves into a more vibrant, resilient, and future-oriented department. At our recent fall retreat, POLS faculty and staff had productive conversations on our initiatives for Academic Year 2023-2024: further strengthening the POLS community on local, national and global levels, tackling existing obstacles to enhance graduation rates, and continuing to develop our “full-circle student support infrastructure.” To the alums and friends of POLS Cal Poly around the world, we say “Welcome Home!”

**Helene Shanruo Ning Zhang**, *Department Chair*



## WELCOME!

I am looking forward to working with the Political Science Alumni Advisory Board this coming year to continue to build on our tremendous momentum! We still have a lot to do. From discussing the Public Policy Institute and establishing the city networks, we have a terrific opportunity to positively impact the students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the Political Science Department! Please consider the opportunity to get more involved with the Department. Alumni and friends of the department can follow the Department and students on LinkedIn and Instagram. We welcome you to join and participate in the Alumni Advisory Board activities. Last, we appreciate the financial contributions to the Department from our alumni. Alumni participation is not just beneficial to the educational experiences for our students but is also a lot of fun for our alumni participants!

**Bryan Corcoran**, *Alumni Advisory Board President*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- » POLS student and faculty award winners
- » Info Sessions on grad school preparation and post-graduate programs
- » Faculty scholarship updates
- » Student club activities

## IN BRIEF

- » POLS established the Political Science Department Endowment in Spring 2023.
- » POLS Faculty has voted to support “Learn by Doing” student projects with POLS Endowment and Discretionary Funds.
- » We successfully recruited 6 lecturers during the summer. We are running 3 tenure-track hires on Law and Society, Public Policy, and Latinx/e Migration/Immigration Studies.



# STUDENT AWARD WINNERS

## Noa Tuliau

*Undergraduate Academic Excellence*



As a fourth-year student at Cal Poly, I look back fondly at my undergraduate experience in Political Science.

Surrounded by individuals with similar interests and drive, and guided by professors who want to use their wisdom and experience to prepare us for our unique paths, I have grown in a way that is both intellectual and personal. The lifelong skills, connections, and friends that I have gathered along the way are proof of the mark that this department can make on any current or prospective POLS student. With that said, it was an honor to have received the John H. Lynn Award for Undergraduate Academic Excellence from the Cal Poly Political Science Department. I would like to thank everyone who has been supporting me the past three years!

## Alex Sletta

*Outstanding Graduate*



The Political Science department connected me to many opportunities, like the Western

Political Science Association Conference where I presented a research project I created and conducted in my senior project. The professors in the department have a wide variety of backgrounds that represent the range of careers possible with a BA in Political Science or a Master's in Public Policy, including lawyer, political scientist, and diplomat. But I think the most impactful thing I experienced at Cal Poly was the passion my professors had for their areas of specialization, from voting rights and representation to Dolly Parton's 9 to 5 as a representation of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeois. I learned a lot from this department because my professors genuinely made me want to learn.

# PREPARING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

## Shelley Hurt, Associate Professor

*POLS Graduate School Advisor*



As the department's Graduate School Advisor, I am excited to encourage and assist Political Science students to pursue graduate degrees in Political Science, Public Policy, International Relations, and related fields. The department is committed to ensuring that Cal Poly graduates

thrive in their chosen career paths by seizing opportunities to acquire either a Master's or doctorate in Political Science or a related field. A graduate degree enables students to advance much further in their careers in both the public and private sectors. The Political Science Department experiences an outstanding record of success with students pursuing graduate degrees across the United States and abroad. As the Graduate School Advisor, I am happy to advise and assist students with the application process. Please contact me for more information.

## INFO SESSIONS

### POLS Public Policy 4+1

#### On Zoom

Scan Event Calendar QR code for more info  
Hosted by Nancy Arrington

### POLS Graduate School

#### October 17th

11:10AM-12:00PM  
Building 10-124  
Hosted by Shelley Hurt

### POLS / UC Law SF 3+3

#### October 27th

11:30AM-12:30PM  
Building 52-E03  
Hosted by Jennifer Denbow

## RECENT GRADUATES IN

# GRAD & LAW SCHOOL

### Hannah McDonnell

Georgetown University | Master's in International Business

### Clarissa Guglielmelli

Georgetown University | Master's in Foreign Service

### Denae Hollar

UCLA Law School

### Alisen Stasiowski

Columbia University | MA in Human Rights

### Matthew Renfro

UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy | Master's in Public Policy

### Luisa Tembo

UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy | Master's in Public Policy

### Mackenna Rawlins

University of California, San Diego | Master's in Chinese Economics and Political Affairs

### Cody Pajunen

Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) | Master's in International Relations

# FACULTY

## UNIVERSITY-WIDE AWARD WINNERS

### Jean Williams, Professor



I'm starting a new position as Honors Faculty Fellow for Experiential and Service Learning for AY 2023-24. In addition to teaching, I will be developing initiatives that enhance experiential and service learning opportunities for students who are part of the Honors Program, many of whom are Political Science majors. The work may include expanding opportunities for students to take service learning courses in the Honors Program, independent research options, and structured experiential learning opportunities abroad. I've been interested in service learning as a pedagogical tool for many years, so this is a wonderful opportunity for me to share my knowledge with the university. I regularly offer POLS 459: The Politics of Poverty, which uses service learning to teach students about poverty and homelessness.

### Nancy Arrington, Associate Professor



This summer I was awarded the Teacher-Scholar Mini Grant. Through this grant, I am collaborating with POLS student Brooksley Pruitt on a project that uses the lenses of co-learning and a pedagogy of vulnerability to assess the effectiveness of "the Book

Club Module," a pedagogical tactic to build classroom culture and incorporate research methods learning into substantive upper-division classes. In the Book Club Module, instructors assign recent articles that they have not yet read and read for the first time with their students in preparation for class. Class runs as a "book club" in the sense that the instructor and students share immediate opinions and reactions to the assigned reading. Leveraging survey data and written self-reflections of students in an upper division Judicial Politics course, we assess whether this tactic helped demystify academic research and increase understanding of research methods in judicial politics.

## WELCOMING NEW FACULTY

Dr. Serena Clark



- » Ph.D. from Trinity College Dublin in Ireland as a Rotary Global Grant Scholar.
- » Consultant for the United Nations and the Economist Intelligence Unit.
- » Research and teaching interests on migration/immigration, policy, American and comparative politics.

Dr. Chris Nelson



- » Ph.D. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- » 25+ years of working experience as a public policy analyst at state legislature, universities and at the RAND Corporation.
- » Research interests in public health preparedness and public health systems, transportation safety, education reform, and occupational safety and health.

Quemars Ahmed



- » J.D. UCLA School of Law; The first Muslim editor-in-chief of the UCLA Law Review.
- » Worked on the Elizabeth Warren primary campaign in Iowa in 2020.
- » Currently working for a nonprofit organization called Informing Democracy.

## POLS FACULTY AT THE SCHOLARLY FRONTLINE

—part one—



Craig Arceneaux  
Professor

“Last year in the Fall I accompanied students on our Cal Poly Study Abroad program in Spain. It was the fifth time I have participated in the program. In the summer, I attended the annual meeting of the International Political Science Association in Buenos Aires, Argentina to present material related to my recently published book, *Political Struggle in Latin America: Seeking Change in a New Era of Globalization*. The book includes case studies of the Indigenous, women and the LGBTQ+ community, the urban poor, and the precarious middle class. The premise is that the struggle of marginalized groups serves as a barometer of democracy in a country. There are plans to publish the book in German later this year.”



# STUDENT CLUBS

## Cal Poly Moot Court

Cal Poly Moot Court provides students with the opportunity to argue fictional cases while applying real-world laws and concepts in front of a panel of judges. As part of the club, members have the opportunity to pair up with a partner and travel to scrimmages and national tournaments in which they compete against other schools. It is the perfect fit for those who are interested in constitutional law, who love to build arguments, and who enjoy debating controversial topics with relevant case law. Moot Court is currently in its second year at Cal Poly, and the club is excited to see its membership steadily growing along with the development of a new Moot Court course. The club plans to compete in the Southern California Regional at Mount Saint Mary's University in Los Angeles this December. With the ultimate goal of expanding membership and getting people excited about appellate law, Cal Poly Moot Court welcomes anyone who wishes to join!

## The Political Science Club

The Political Science Club is a professional and social club for politically minded students at Cal Poly. We strive to create an environment where students can embrace the fun side of politics and connect with professionals and students who share their interests and areas of study. This year we will feature political trivia nights, speakers, professional development, and our quarterly Bowling with Professors Night. Our mission is to make sure that all students have a fun and safe environment to explore their major and the department outside of the classroom.



Left: Moot Court | Right: Political Science Club



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Political Science  
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## NEXT ISSUE

- » More on student awards, faculty scholarship, and alumni profiles
- » Innovations in the Cal Poly POLS classrooms
- » Cal Poly Mock Trial's new Alumni Coaches
- » POLS' brand new Learn by Doing Student Activity Fund

POSTAGE

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