

[Newsletter Name]

Name the newsletter contest, see page 2.

Political Science and Public Affairs

Fall 2006

Greetings from Cullowhee

Message from the Department Head, Niall Michelsen

I hope this inaugural newsletter will begin a new and fruitful level of interaction between current members of the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs and you, our predecessors. Since joining WCU as PSC/PA Department Head in fall 2001 I have witnessed great changes on the world stage and in our department. I hope to share some of those exciting changes with you in these pages.

It has been a joy to experience the rejuvenation of the department through the hiring of several new, talented, and energetic faculty. For many of you, their names as well as mine are new. Be assured that we all appreciate the students and faculty who have preceded us. Based on many long conversations with my senior colleagues, Dr. Don Livingston and Dr. Gordon Mercer, I have gained some sense of the rich history of the department.

Our curriculum blends practical expertise and examples with theoretically informed analyses of politics from the local to the global levels. We supplement our full-time professors with talented and politically experienced part-time instructors. Together we provide a fine blend of practical and theoretical information and education that prepares students for a variety of career paths. Indeed, our faculty is second to none in the classroom. For the third consecutive year a different faculty member has been one of the five finalists for the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award, with Gibbs Knotts winning in 2004. No other department on campus can match this accomplishment.

Our department is at the center of a growing and evolving university and fall 2006 marks our move into the refurbished Stillwell building. We are integrally involved in WCU's association with the American Democracy Project, we are proposing a new International Studies major to be housed in our department, and I serve as WCU's campus liaison with the UNC in Washington Internship Program. In the

latter program we have placed eight students in semester long internships in Washington. This is consistent with our increasing attention to the career aspects of our educational responsibilities. We are encouraging our students to complete internships and take advantage of their unique educational opportunities. This effort is bolstered by the recent addition to our department of the Local Government Training Program headed by Vickey Wade. We continue to work closely with the Public Policy Institute headed by Gordon Mercer.

In addition to excellent teaching credentials, our faculty are active researchers and regularly publish articles in top professional journals such as the Journal of Politics. Our work reaches past the pages of academe, however. Research by Gibbs Knotts on the causes of voter turnout was featured in The Washington Post. Chris Cooper's survey of citizen satisfaction in Sylva, NC (with MPA student, Alison Melnikova) is being used by the town to help plan the town's future.

As befitting an excellent and respected department, in the last few years our faculty have served as President or President-elect of various professional organizations. For instance, Gordon Mercer assumed the Presidency of the Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in 2005. Claudia Bryant was recently elected as President-elect of the North Carolina Political Science Association. Don Livingston also served as President of that organization in the 2004-05 academic year.

I would be remiss if I did not close this letter by mentioning the key to our recent success. In 2003, we hired a new Office Assistant, Lynn Kaufman, who has totally transformed and upgraded our operation in countless ways since she arrived in Cullowhee. We hope she is with us for many years to come.

I hope you will take this opportunity to get in touch with us, tell us what you're doing, and reflect on what your time in Cullowhee has meant to your personal and professional success. If there's anything I can do to help you, please don't hesitate to ask.

Name the Newsletter Contest

This is your newsletter--send us your suggestion for the newsletter name and if your title is selected you will win two tickets to the WCU Homecoming football game October 14th.

Faculty Bios

Let me introduce you to our faculty and staff.

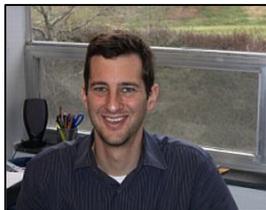


michelsen@email.wcu.edu

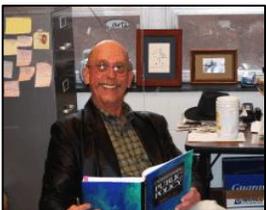
Dr. Niall Michelsen, Associate Professor and Department Head, came to WCU in 2001 from Roosevelt University in Chicago, IL. He received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina-CH. Specialties: International Politics; U.S. Foreign Policy. (email:



Dr. Claudia Bryant, Assistant Professor, joined the faculty in 2003. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. Specialties: American Government and Politics; Latin American Political Systems. (email: cbryant@email.wcu.edu)



Dr. Christopher Cooper, Assistant Professor and Director of the MPA program, joined the faculty in 2002 after receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. Specialties: American Political Parties; Media and Politics. (email: ccooper@wcu.edu)



Fred Fisher, Visiting Lecturer, received his bachelor's and MPA degrees from WCU. Specialties: American Government and Politics; Global Issues. (email: ffisher@email.wcu.edu)



Southern Politics. (email: gknotts@email.wcu.edu)

Dr. Gibbs Knotts, Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, came to WCU in 2000 after receiving his Ph.D. at Emory University. In the summer 2005, he was appointed Associate Dean. Specialties: Political Analysis;



Dr. C. Don Livingston, Professor, received his Ph.D. from the University of Mississippi. He joined the faculty in 1984. Specialties: Congress; American Presidency. (email: dlivings@email.wcu.edu)



Dr. Gordon Mercer, Professor and Director of the Public Policy Institute, came to WCU in 1980. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida. Specialties: Political and Organizational Leadership; Public Administration. (email: mercer@email.wcu.edu)



Ms. Vickey Wade, Director of the Local Government Training Program. Since 1993 she has managed WCU's Local Government Training Program, which became part of the Political Science and Public Affairs department in August 2005. She received her M.A. in English from N.C. State. Specialties: Municipal and County Government. (email: vwade@email.wcu.edu)

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Ms. Lynn Kaufman, Administrative Coordinator, joined the department in December 2002. She has over 30 years of office experience. (email: lkaufman@email.wcu.edu)

MESSAGE FROM MPA DIRECTOR, Chris Cooper

As most of you know, our MPA program has been training students for public service since the early 1980s. Since then we have graduated hundreds of students into positions in local, state, and national government, as well as non-profit and for-profit organizations. We provide a unique program with instruction by both full-time faculty with impeccable academic credentials and part-time faculty who provide a wealth of practical experience. Our students are also quite diverse—about half coming to us in mid-career, and the other half who enroll in our program immediately after graduation from college. This unique approach to education, mixing both theory and practice, is the hallmark of our program.

I have had the distinct pleasure of serving as the MPA Director sine June 2005. In that time I have worked hard to continue the excellent work done by recent directors, Gordon Mercer and Gibbs Knotts. We are always examining and reorganizing our program to ensure that our coursework helps our students to understand the theory and practice of governance—and the ways theory and practice can inform one another.

Of course the mark of distinction of any program is not the content of courses, but rather the contributions its graduates make to public service. In the past few years our students have found employment as town managers, community service directors, police officers, firefighters, planning directors, budget analysts and a variety of other positions that make our region, state, and nation better.

If you're one of our MPA graduates, please drop me an email to let me know who you are and what you're doing. I'd love to hear from you. If you're in a position to work with one of our interns, please let me know that as well. Finally, we believe that the best advertising for our program is word of mouth, so if you know any quality people who are considering a career in public service, please ask them to consider our program.

Chris Cooper
email: ccooper@wcu.edu

UPCOMING DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS

- Constitution Day (Fall 2006)
- Congress to Campus (Fall 2006)
- The People Speak (Fall 2006)
- Global Issues Simulation (Spring 2007)
- American Youth Congress (Spring 2007)

STUDENT AWARDS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We continue to graduate some truly outstanding students, many of whom are continuing on to graduate or law school, and others who enter the public or private spheres. Just to name a few examples, **Charles Francis** is earning an MA in International Studies in addition to his MPA from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs (the top MPA Program in the country). **Diane Depietropaolo** is entering her second year at the prestigious UNC School of Law. Two of this year's graduates, **Sam Hyde** and **Carrie Vickery**, will join Elon University Law School's inaugural class this fall.

Many of these student success stories were made possible through work outside of the classroom. Over the last two years we have placed six of our students in the National Conference on Undergraduate Research. We are very proud of our majors **Courtney Swartwout**, who presented a paper on Women in Global Politics at a conference in the United Arab Emirates this spring, and **Max Long** who was a finalist for a Truman Scholarship to fund graduate education dedicated to promoting Social Change. For the fourth straight year our students have presented their research at the North Carolina Political Science Association annual meeting.

2005-06 DEPARTMENTAL AWARD WINNERS

Outstanding Freshman

Aftin Crowe, 3.5 GPA, made quite an impression on her American Government and Politics professor as a student dedicated to the study of political science

Outstanding Sophomore

Courtney Trumpler, 3.7 GPA, hopes to attend Georgetown Law School

Outstanding Political Science Major

Michael Blackmon, graduated with a 3.94 GPA. Michael is currently in the Wachovia Bank management training program.

Harold Rogers Memorial Award

BJ Pendry, 3.5 GPA, is well known on campus as a "Golden Ambassador" and for his active participation in Greek and student government groups

Chan Carpenter Pre-Law Scholarship

Josh Dees, 4.0 GPA, is a basketball player who transferred to Western from the University of Wyoming

Charles Stevens International Relations Scholarship

Scott Mann, 4.0 GPA, is a world class kayaker

JOIN US FOR HOMECOMING – OCTOBER 14.

A Message from Dr. Lisa Thomas-Briggs (MPA 89)

Fellow graduates,
As an MPA graduate and current faculty member in WCU's Applied Criminology department I want to encourage you to visit with the Political Science department during Homecoming October 14. On behalf of my husband and head football coach Kent Briggs, I hope you will be in attendance when the Catamounts battle UT-Chattanooga.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Political Science and Public Affairs
358 Stillwell
Cullowhee, NC 28723
Phone: 828-227-7475
email: lkaufman@email.wcu.edu
Website: <http://www.wcu.edu/as/politicalscience/>

Visit our faculty, students, and new departmental location. Please contact us if you intend to visit.

Political Science & Public Affairs
Western Carolina University
358 Stillwell
Cullowhee, NC 28723

OUR CONTACT WITH YOU

We are interested in establishing an Alumni ListServ that will allow us to keep you informed of significant departmental activities via email. Please fill out the information form below and indicate your interest in being included on our Alumni ListServ (mail to the department).

____ Yes, I would like to be on the Alumni ListServ.
Here is my email address:

____ Yes, I plan to attend Homecoming October 14. I plan to bring this number of guests _____

Please make the following corrections to my mailing address:

NAME - PLEASE PRINT