A presidential election year generates energy and activity on campus and within the Political Science Department. The political science faculty held three popular and well-attended panel discussions on the presidential election process. The first took place on Nov. 2, 2007, in the University’s largest lecture hall and featured professors Kenneth Hill, Mary Ellen Balchunis, and Michael Dillon on the impact of the electronic media, the Iraq War, and the multiplicity of candidates on the primary process. The second occurred on Feb. 15, 2008, and featured Hill, Balchunis, and professor John Shea addressing “After ‘Super’ Tuesday: Where Are We Going? What Have We Learned?”

During the final weeks of the spring 2008 semester, the College Democrats and the department sponsored a “Rock the Vote” celebration. This sunny Saturday afternoon featured a free barbeque, music, and lawn frisbee, along with an appearance on campus by Chelsea Clinton urging a large audience outside of the Newman Residence Hall to register and to vote for her mother, Sen. Hillary Clinton. The event concluded with an outstanding student surrogate debate, with political science majors Kevin Hall, ’08, now a Dickinson Law School student, for Sen. John McCain, Calvin Johnson, ’09, for Sen. Barack Obama, and Holly Kendorski, ’08, now a Thomas Cooley Law School student, for Clinton responded to questions from the moderator and from one another. The audience loved the fervor of the student surrogates and the applause for Johnson’s responses for Obama were an indication of things to come in the election season.

The fall 2008 semester began with a flourish when Balchunis, attending the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colo., arranged to teach her American Government classes by video hookup from the floor of the Democratic Convention to the ballroom in La Salle’s Student Union.

On Oct. 13, 2008, the department faculty held a third panel discussion focusing attention upon the “States to Watch” on Election Day, with Balchunis and Shea addressing the Democratic blue states and Hill and professor Joseph Brogan address-

Finally, on Nov. 3, 2008, only one day before the presidential election, Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, actress Debra Messing, and World Champion Philadelphia Phillies shortstop Jimmy Rollins appeared at noon on the plaza of the Union Building before a huge crowd of students, faculty, and staff to encourage everyone to get out and cast their vote the next day.

All of this excitement for our students will of course begin again for the congressional elections in 2010.
**VIEW FROM THE CHAIR**

Despite the global economic crisis, 2008 was a good year for the Political Science Department. For the second year in a row, our freshman majors increased as we continue to grow the department. And the outlook for September 2009 remains strong.

During 2008–09, the department published its first alumni newsletter, introduced new courses (Conservatism, Environmental Law and Policy, and Courts, Judges, and Judging), initiated the Moot Court program, revived the Alumni Reunion (see “Save the Date” on the back page of this newsletter), and participated in panel discussions on the 2008 presidential election.

This past year, my own responsibilities expanded. Last March, the Provost requested that I also serve as Coordinator of the University’s St. Thomas More Pre-Law Program. The Pre-Law Program is an extracurricular, not an academic, program, offers no specific courses, and is open to all students in all majors. More than 150 students currently participate. Historically, the Political Science Department sends substantially more of its graduates on to law school than any other department at the University. Thus, we see great potential for synergy between the continued growth of the department and of the Pre-Law Program. Since March 2008, we have published a Pre-Law Program brochure, now being utilized by the Office of Undergraduate Admission, established a Pre-Law Office in Olney 355, and stocked that office with resources on the range of legal careers, the law school admissions process, and how to study for the LSAT, as well as individual law school bulletins and national evaluations of individual law schools.

In closing, I want to thank each and every one of you who have sent notes, letters, and e-mails. I continue to try to personally respond to each and every one.

dillonm@lasalle.edu

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**EDUCATION AT WORK: THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND**

Travel agents love advertising gimmicks—"What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas." A University is not about gimmicks. What happens in La Salle’s classrooms does not stay there but is carried beyond the classroom into the social/political world by our political science majors.

MaryKate Kelly, ’10, an English and political science major, worked for a Philadelphia law firm. Kelly, elected to serve on the Political Science Departmental Board in both 2008 and 2009, was a member of the winning Moot Court team for 2008. One of the Moot Court judges, a name partner in a Philadelphia law firm, called last June looking for a student to assist with exhibits and documents for an upcoming trial. Kelly was hired full time for the summer, and, as a result of her hard work, she received a part-time position with the firm for her junior year.

Lauren Hauhn, ’09, a political science major, worked for the Mayor’s Office in Baltimore. She undertook an independent research project with professor Kenneth Hill during 2007–08 on Soviet-American relations. This independent research helped Hauhn to win the prestigious James A. Finnegan Public Service Fellowship for the summer of 2008. With her Finnegan Fellowship, she spent the summer of 2008 working for the City of Baltimore’s Department of International and Immigration Affairs. Hauhn is currently applying both to law school and to graduate school in international studies.

Adam Profitt, ’09, a political science major, worked for the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He combined his political work during the summer of 2008 in the Legislative District Office of Pennsylvania State Rep. Ron Raymond with a three-credit political science internship course. Profitt is now parlaying that experience in constituent work into his applications for state and local administrative positions following graduation.

Julie Swann, ’09, a political science major, worked at the Alice Paul Institute. For the past three years, Swann, who will attend law school in the fall, was active volunteering, researching, and working for the Alice Paul Institute in her home state of New Jersey. Her work at the institute resulted in a major independent research project on Paul, a pioneer for women’s rights who was the architect of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Maria Muscara, ’10, a political science and communication major, worked in community development in Chicago, Ill. Muscara, runner-up in the 2008 Moot Court competition, is a Kemper Scholar at the University. She spent the summer of 2008 on the North Side of Chicago working for DevCorp North. She experienced the struggles of economic and community development first hand, organizing community events, preparing press releases, and updating neighborhood databases. This student political activity beyond the classroom is a two-way street. When Muscara, Swann, Profitt, Hauhn, and Kelly return to campus, they bring these diverse economic/political/legal experiences back into our political science classrooms to enliven the educational opportunities for all our students.
CALLING ALL ALUMS
OUR CURRENT STUDENTS NEED MENTORS

For professors Kenneth Hill, Joseph Brogan, Mary Ellen Balchunis, and Michael Dillon, a top priority is to rebuild our alumni database and reconnect with all of you. You are the models and the resources for our current students.

LEGAL ALUMS:
In the past year we made solid progress reconnecting with many of our legal and judicial alums. Many of you participated in our Moot Court Program and/or are participating in our initial Pre-Law Mentoring program organized by Alumni Relations.

ACADEMIC ALUMS:
A top priority for the coming year, 2009-10, is to reconnect with our many alums who are teaching at the university, college, and secondary school levels as well as those alums currently in graduate programs. We know alums currently teach both regionally at Seton Hall, Albright, Wilkes, Immaculata, and La Salle, and at far-flung institutions like St. Andrews, Scotland, Syracuse, N.Y., and San Marcos, Texas. In addition, we know we have graduate students at Villanova, Notre Dame, and Georgetown. But, unfortunately, we have lost touch with, and would like to reconnect with, many, many others.

Please take five minutes and fill out the return card letting us know where you are now, especially if you are teaching or attending graduate school, and direct us to other alums you may know who are still engaged in the academy.

POLITICAL ALUMS:
And to all of the alums in elective politics, public service, consulting, or business, our current students could benefit from your experience and advice. They need your mentoring.

So whether you are a legal, academic, or political alum, keep the cards coming, reconnect with the department, attend the reunions, and give us the “News About You.” We hope to publish an online listing of department alums within the next two years, and we want to be certain you are all included.

SPEECH AND DEBATE HIGH SCHOOL CONNECTION

In a new initiative, the Political Science Department, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania High School Speech League (PHSSL), sponsored the District Finals in categories from Speech to Cross Examination and Lincoln Douglas Debate. Approximately 100 top high school students and their coaches from 10 to 12 area schools spent Feb. 28, 2009, on the campus for this tournament. The winners of the La Salle University tournament proceeded to the PHSSL State Finals at Susquehanna University later in March. Approximately 25 political science majors served as hosts, facilitators, and judges of the day-long activities. This event provided an opportunity for the high school students to see the extent of our expanded campus and to meet and ask questions of our La Salle students. We hope this tournament will become an annual event, showcasing the University and the Political Science Department.

NEWS ABOUT YOU!

The La Salle University Political Science Department wants to hear from you. Please complete this form and send it to: La Salle University, Political Science Department, 1900 West Olney Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19141-1199.

Name ____________________________ Year of Graduation ________ E-mail ____________________________

Home Address ____________________________ Phone Number ____________________________

Employer ____________________________ Title/Position/Occupation ____________________________

Business Address ____________________________

Graduate/Professional Degrees ____________________________ School(s) Attended ____________________________

News/Views/Willingness to Volunteer ____________________________

☐ Yes, I will attend the reception on April 3.
☐ Sorry, I cannot attend.

La Salle University, Political Science Department, Box 192, 1900 West Olney Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19141

FACULTY NOTES

The University has awarded Kenneth Hill a sabbatical for spring 2009. Hill has contacted academics throughout the United States, Israel, and the Middle East whom he will interview for his research on developing expectations regarding American foreign policy under President Barack Obama.

In August, Mary Ellen Balchunis, while attending the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colo., conducted her American Government classes at La Salle via streaming video from her laptop computer from the floor of the convention. Balchunis was also in Washington, D.C., for the Inauguration on Jan. 20, 2009.

After being named University Pre-Law Coordinator, Michael Dillon attended the Northeast Pre-Law Advisor’s Conference at Cornell University in June 2008, arranged for 25 juniors and seniors to be mentored by practicing legal alums, and completed the article “Fair and Balanced Law School Advising: How Can You Know if the Life of a Lawyer is for You?”
On Nov. 20, 2008, four representatives of the United States Environmental Protection Agency appeared on campus to speak with students in the new Environmental Law and Policy course. Two senior regional counsel, a remedial project manager, and a civil investigator for the agency each described how they first came to be employed at the EPA, discussed the nature of their scientific and legal work at the agency, and responded to questions from interested students and faculty. The students’ questions focused on the EPA’s environmental clean-up decisions at Superfund sites and on the conflict between polluting sources and the agency.

A number of former students from political science and from the sciences are currently employed at the EPA. Given the national attention and student interest in the environment and “green politics,” the Political Science Department is actively engaged in discussions with faculty from the Geology, Environmental Science, and Physics Department and others on campus regarding the possibility of a new interdisciplinary environmental sciences major. This new major would be for non-science students and would provide another avenue by which to enter into government service for our students.

An enlarged, renovated, and “greener” Holroyd Hall will re-open in August 2009.