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The Department of Politics & International Relations *Newsletter*



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Welcome

Welcome to our publication — a biannual (Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter) newsletter dedicated to keeping you informed on all things related to the politics and international relations department. Within this publication, you'll get access to student success stories, faculty highlights, guest speakers and events, program news and notes, community engagement efforts, and more.

From Our Department Chair



Greetings from the second floor of Bomberger, where we've said goodbye to 16 outstanding graduates! This group of students has impressed us with their curiosity, drive, and sense of adventure. They've studied abroad in Argentina and Sydney, Australia, interned with a New York City campaign, and

worked with unaccompanied minors in France. They're headed to master's programs in public policy, to policy careers at the State Capitol in Harrisburg, and legislative work for the House Foreign Affairs Committee. We wish them the best as they join our growing list of exceptional alumni.

Our semester was nothing short of a whirlwind, with visits from immigration scholar Zeke Hernandez, political scientist Sam Abrams, and the first deaf mayor in the United States, Neil McDevitt. Students from Dr. Shai Karp's Race in the American City course headed to Philadelphia for a walking tour of the city's historic 7th ward, while my Civic Spark Policy Lab students completed and presented research for our two community partners: Montgomery County and Ann's Heart in Phoenixville. As we enjoy the summer respite, we are gearing up for an engaging fall semester. Please drop us a line or stop in for a coffee in Cafe 2020 if you're in the area!

Annie Karreth - Associate Professor of Politics, Department Chair

Congratulations to our graduates!

Congratulations to the 153rd graduating class of Ursinus College — we wish the following politics and international relations majors continued success in all of their future endeavors:

Kathryn Adams, Lucy Bamford, Sara Bozzomo, Riley Frymoyer, Nathaniel Linden, Grace Maccarelli, Foster McGrath, Neil O'Donnell, Reda Oueldaissa, Vincent Pfattner, Jessica Pizzo, Connor Rancher, Grace Richter, Katherine Rubinkam, Olivia Zarzycki, Alex Zelaya.



In addition, Lucy Bamford, Grace Maccarelli, Riley Frymoyer, Alex Zelaya, Kate Rubinkam, and Vincent Pfattner graduated as members of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest academic honors society.

Commencement Awards and Honors

Each year, we honor particularly accomplished graduates with several awards. Students are recognized for academic achievements, leadership, and global engagement. We are pleased to present the award winners for the Class of 2026.

Heller Prize

Established by Flloyd E. Heller, Jr., 1933, in his will as a memorial to his father, Flloyd E. Heller, Sr., his wife, Mary Francis Heller, and himself. The prize is awarded to the graduating senior or seniors who has achieved **outstanding grades and accomplishments in the field of government, politics, and political science.** **Awarded to:**
Jessica Pizzo

Joseph H. Melrose Jr. Prize

Awarded to the graduating senior or seniors who, in the judgment of the faculty, has demonstrated a **strong intellectual curiosity, concern for overlooked and underdeveloped areas, a global perspective, and a sense of adventure.** **Awarded to:**
Lucy Bamford

The Professor Eugene H. Miller Prize

Endowed by the Honorable Hermann Frederick Eilts '43 and awarded annually for the **best essay on a subject in politics and international relations.** **Awarded to:** **Vincent Pfattner**

Student Leadership in Politics Prize

This award is designed to recognize a student who has demonstrated **tremendous dedication and leadership** to the college. **Awarded to:**
Connor Rancher and Katherine Rubinkam

The Future Alumni Award: Lucy Bamford

The French Award: Foster McGrath

The Thomas P. and Frances T. Glassmoyer Scholastic Award: Jessica Pizzo

Inclusion and Equity Student Award: Conner Rancher

The Mary Onopchenko '85 Memorial Prize: Connor Rancher

Student Achievement - CoSA and APEX Day

Every April, we reschedule classes for a day so every student can participate in the [Celebration of Student Achievement \(CoSA\)](#). This year we also hosted an [APEX day](#) to highlight students' professional and experiential achievements. These days are filled with talks, poster presentations, and performances from hundreds of students from every discipline. The following students participated in CoSA and APEX day:

Honors Research Presentations:

- Vincent Pfattner *Analyzing Preparedness for Compliance with the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) Across Member States of the European Union*
- Riley Frymoyer *Do partisan cues influence college student's perceptions of political fact? A political and epistemic investigation into the factors that influence political beliefs*
- Jessica Pizzo *Fortified Borders, Fractured Markets: The Impact of Border Fortifications on Trade and Foreign Direct Investment*
- Alex Zelaya *Speaking of Language: The Relationship Between Language as Capital and Minority Language Education*
- Foster McGrath *Anti-French Sentiment as a Factor in the Coup Belt*

Research and Internship Poster Presentations:

- Nanditha Vinod: *Clearing the Path to Progress: The Political Challenges of UXO and Sustainable Development in Laos*
- Maria Meco: *Internship at Cardoso Law*
- Sara Bozzomo: *Internship at Portnoff Law Associates*
- Kate Rubinkam: *Internship at Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development*
- Vincent Pfattner: *Fullbright Business Development Internship at Volvero in Padova, Italy*

Co-Curricular Activities:

Ursinus Model United Nations 2026: Mikayla Baker, Faith Brothers, Zainab Chaudhry, Nathan Linden, Isabella Loza, Foster McGrath, Zeynep Oguz, Zayne Perez, Connor Rancher, Addison Rogers, Damari Rorie, McKenzie Snyder, Bryce Svensen, Nataly Torres-Miron, and Nanditha Vinod

Civic Spark Policy Lab: Riley Frymoyer, Lucy Bamford, Grace Richter, Sara Bozzomo, Zeynep Oguz, Zainab Chaudry, Liam Janschka, Anne Salvo, Nataly Miron-Torres, Mikayla Baker, and Maria Meco

Civic Spark Policy Lab:



This spring, Dr. Annie Karreth introduced an exciting new policy analysis course—the Civic Spark Policy Lab. Offered through the APEX Hub for Civic and Global Leadership, this hands-on course gives students the opportunity to explore careers in public policy, nonprofit management, public service, and law while making a tangible difference in their community.

During the first iteration of the course, 11 students partnered with the Montgomery County Office of Innovation, Strategy, and Performance and Ann's Heart, a Phoenixville-based nonprofit, to tackle live policy and operational challenges.

Dr. Karreth is excited to continue this work in the second iteration of her course, which will be supported by a \$3,000 Periclean Faculty Leadership (PFL) grant from Project Pericles.

Student Spotlights

Lucy Bamford - Watson Fellowship



Politics major Lucy Bamford '26 has been awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, a highly competitive one-year grant that supports graduating seniors pursuing independent, global projects outside the United States. Lucy is among approximately 40 students selected nationwide this year.

An environmental studies and politics double major with a minor in media and communication studies, Lucy will utilize her Watson project to examine how communities around the world define and redefine waste. She hopes the experience will shape her future in environmental communication and policy, helping her make sustainability more accessible and actionable.

Jess Pizzo - Internship on Capitol Hill

Interning for the House Foreign Affairs Committee felt like stepping directly into the room where global issues stop being abstract and start turning into real policy decisions. Instead of just reading about foreign policy in class, I was suddenly surrounded by it through briefings, hearings, conversations that connected events happening across the world to decisions being made on Capitol Hill. A lot of my day-to-day work involved research and writing, whether that meant pulling together background memos or tracking developments in different regions, but what made it exciting was seeing how that information actually gets used. It made everything feel fast-paced and high stakes in a way I hadn't experienced before.



One thing that really stood out to me was how much foreign policy isn't just about big speeches or headline legislation, but about the quieter mechanisms of power, like oversight and the balance between authorization and appropriations. I started to see how influence works behind the scenes, through hearings, staff work, and the way issues are framed. It definitely challenged how I had thought about Congress before. Instead of being one big, unified process, it's much more layered, with different committees and actors shaping outcomes in ways that aren't always obvious from the outside.

Overall, the experience made everything I've been studying feel a lot more real and a lot more complicated. It pushed me to think more critically about how U.S. foreign policy is actually made and who gets a voice in that process. At the same time, it confirmed that this is the kind of work I want to be doing, which is something that sits at the intersection of global issues and public service, where the stakes are high, and the impact is tangible.

Alumni Spotlight



The department welcomed several Politics and IR alumni back to campus this semester to host a series of events, including career panels led by Emma Crowley '17 (shown left), Hannah (Engber) Mundt '18, Robyn (Clarke) Linscott '10, Carver Wolfe '21, and Tom Pomenti '03; and a [policy skills bootcamp](#), led by Paul Cottam '19.

Guest Speakers & Events

Throughout the academic year, our department hosts guest speakers for students, faculty, staff, and the community to address a variety of important issues. Events this academic year included:



The Truth about Immigration

Dr. Zeke Hernandez, award-winning scholar and business professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, gave a lecture on the impacts that immigrants have on their host countries. Rejecting simple characterizations of immigrants as victims or villains, Dr. Hernandez spoke about how immigration is overwhelmingly good, but the immigration system in the United States is profoundly broken.



The Divided Jewish Political Community in America

Samuel Abrams, Professor of Political Science at Sarah Lawrence College and a Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, spoke on the divided Political Community in America. Widely published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, among others, Dr. Abrams had an engaging conversation with students before his talk, and sparked an insightful discussion during the event.



A Conversation with Neil McDevitt, PA's First Deaf Mayor

As part of Civic Spark's Democracy without Barriers series, Mayor McDevitt shared his journey in public service, reflecting on the experiences that have shaped his leadership. Mayor McDevitt spoke to the campus community about the importance of accessibility and inclusion in strengthening civic life and ensuring that public goods truly serve everyone, inspiring a conversation on building more equitable and inclusive communities.



Accessible Government Hackathon.

As part of the *Democracy without Barriers* series, students learned about barriers disabled people face in accessing government services and fully participating in democracy. Students were excited and engaged to participate in this hands-on event, led by experts Kara Derstine, of the Ursinus College Office of Disability and Access and Maddie Crowley, of the Lurie Institute for Disability Studies at Brandeis University.

Publications & Reviews

- ***United States Foreign Policy Global Hotspots*** Dr. Ann Karreth and Dr. Michael J. Kryzanek co-authored a book published by Routledge. [Read the description.](#)
- **“Rousseau’s Republic of Letters”** Dr. Jonathan Marks wrote a review of *Letters from Rousseau*, edited by Eve Grace and Christopher Kelly for LawLiberty blog. [Read the review.](#)
- **“Douglass Rejected That Black Gratitude to Lincoln Required Jingoistic Praise”** Dr. Jonathan Marks wrote a few words on Frederick Douglass’s Freedmen’s Monument address for the UnPopulist. [Read the piece.](#)

Lectures

- **“Free Speech on Campus: The First Amendment isn’t Enough”** Dr. Jonathan Marks gave the Constitution Day address at Xavier University.
- **“The Anti-Renter Regime in American Housing Policy”** Dr. Shai Karp presented at the Northeastern Political Science Association Annual Meeting.
- **“HUD’s Broken Promises: Inequality, Racialized Politics, and the Devolution of Urban Governance”** Dr. Shai Karp presented at the Social Science History Association Annual Meeting.

Alumni Publications

- ***How to Protest: Lessons on Nonviolent Action*** (forthcoming, 2026) Dr. Megan Hershey (Class of 2005), Professor of Political Science at Whitworth University, wrote a book that will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press this fall. [Read the description.](#)

Politics & International Relations alumni:

Share your good news with us, we’d love to hear from you!

