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The Department of Politics & International Relations *Newsletter*

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Welcome

Welcome to our new 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.

Congratulations to our graduates!

Congratulations to the 149th graduating class of Ursinus College — we wish the following politics and international relations majors continued success in all of their future endeavors!

John Byrne, Jalen Everette, Alex Giampino, Joshua Grahame, Alexander Han, Ashley Kaminski, Ellie Mikus, Devin Molina, Chase Outcault, Abigail Peabody, Timothy Pyne, Gregory Quick, Emelyn Rodriguez, Brandon Slaboda, Miranda Staley, Keturah Walker-Johnson

In addition, Joshua Grahame, Ashley Kaminski, Abigail Peabody, Brandon Slaboda, Miranda Staley, and Brooke Yanaga graduated as members of Phi Beta Kappa, a prestigious national honor society.

Commencement Awards and Honors

Each year, we honor particularly accomplished graduates majoring in Politics or International Relations with several awards. Students are recognized for academic achievements, research, and global engagement. We are pleased to present the award winners for the Class of 2022.

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: Joshua Grahame and Brandon Slaboda

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: Simbarashe Kanjanda and Emelyn Rodriguez

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: Abigail Peabody
Honors thesis - Candidate Emergence Among Women: Responsibility to Run

Student Leadership in Politics

This award is designed to recognize a student who has demonstrated **tremendous dedication and leadership** to the college.
Awarded to: Jalen Everette

Celebration of Student Achievement (CoSA)

At CoSA on April 21, three students presented and defended their honors thesis:

- Emelyn Rodriguez (Politics) completed her thesis: What Role Do Women in Politics Play for Democratic Erosion?
- Abby Peabody (International Relations) completed their thesis: Candidate Emergence Among Women: Responsibility to Run
- Joshua Grahame (Politics & Applied Economics) completed his thesis: Feed-in Tariffs and Sustainable Energy: Why Different OECD Governments Support Sustainable Energy at Different Rates Through Feed-in Tariffs



Miranda Staley '22, Difficulties Obtaining Medical Insurance and Care in the U.S.

Miranda, an International Relations major, also presented her research and findings at CoSA. Her research grew out of her work at an insurance brokerage that dealt with enrolling existing Medicare clients into Medicare Advantage plans. Miranda's goal was to observe the inner workings of a brokerage and see how reality compares to what she has learned in some of her classes. Learn more about the impact and takeaway of Miranda's findings [here](#).



National Model United Nations Conference

Consistent with the United Nations' goal to make the world a better place, a delegation of Ursinus College students participated in the National Model United Nations (NMUN) Conference on April 3-6, discussing global concerns and proposing solutions to some of the world's most pressing issues.



For the first time since the pandemic, Dr. Becky Evans, associate professor of Politics and International Relations, led 18 Ursinus students to the National Model UN Conference in New York and returned with a distinguished delegation award representing Indonesia, one of the highest designations Ursinus has ever received.

“At Model UN, students act as diplomats for their assigned nation within a particular UN committee. Cooperative, hands-on learning allows students to confront a range of topics from pandemic preparedness and international security to gender rights and economic development,” said Evans when asked for an overview of the program. “Students develop an appreciation of differing viewpoints, experience the challenges of negotiation, see the rewards of cooperation, broaden their world view, and discover the human side of international relations and diplomacy” according to Evans.



Under the leadership of head delegates, Hira Khattak '23 and Olivia Negro '23, Ursinus students joined 2,500 other students from almost 100 countries to better understand the inner workings of the United Nations and other international organizations. Students prepared draft resolutions, plotted strategies, negotiated with supporters and adversaries, resolved conflicts, and navigated the UN's rules of procedure – just as Member States in the UN do.

Ean Chasinoff '24 shares, “I realized that, while it may be frustrating to constantly compromise and debate, these are the actions that lead to actual results, and they should matter to everyone who cares about the principles they extoll. If what matters to me is people and their well-being, I must also value cooperation over my ego and seek to work with other people even when it forces me to adapt.”

While at the conference, students not only gained insight into the intricacies of diplomatic negotiations and global politics but also learned firsthand about possible career paths in foreign policy. Students found the chance to personally meet with alumni very rewarding. “I loved getting the opportunity to meet Ursinus alums Paul Cottam '19 and Carolyn Strainic '11, who both work in New York City at the United Nations, and hear about their experiences as Ursinus grads in the field of international relations and foreign policy,” said Negro.

The Model UN conference builds real-world skills—strengthening participants' speaking, debating, and writing abilities, while also honing critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership skills. Ursinus students left New York City with the tools and experiences that will help prepare them to be the next generation of global leaders.

Interested in learning more? Having participated in Model UN conferences since 1966, Ursinus has sent a delegation to the National Model UN in New York City for over 50 years. Students who wish to be a part of this rich history can contact the faculty adviser of the program, [Dr. Johannes Karreth](#), associate professor of Politics and International Relations. All majors are welcome!



Faculty Spotlight: Johannes Karreth

Awarded Tenure and Promoted to Associate Professor

Dr. Johannes Karreth has a great record as a scholar, particularly but not only regarding the role of international organizations with economic leverage, like the IMF or the World Bank, in conflict prevention and mitigation. He has been a mentor to any number of our students both formally, in guiding research projects, and informally, in helping students figure out how to make the best use of their time and their opportunities here. Dr. Karreth is that elusive person, the teacher-scholar.



Student Spotlight: Emelyn Rodriguez

Political Science Major Turns Disappointment Into Dream Internship

Last summer, Emelyn Rodriguez '22 and her Bronx-based family made a five-hour trip to Washington, D.C., to move her things to the nation's capital, where she planned to complete an internship during the fall semester. When plans for what the political science major intended to be a dream internship on Capitol Hill didn't work out, she made the difficult decision to move—again—back to Ursinus.

"I'm a first-generation student, and my family has really high expectations and high standards for me," said Rodriguez, who was born in the Dominican Republic and moved to the United States in 2014.

"It was a little bit hard on my family to know that I was no longer going to do the internship that was supposed to set me up for life and be my future. That's how they planned it."

Coming back to Ursinus I was like, 'I cannot let "my family down. I cannot disappoint myself.' So I started looking for internships everywhere."

She applied to so many on Indeed.com that when she received a phone call two days later—as she was in the process of moving back to campus—she needed some help from the caller to figure out which internship was being offered. It turns out the call was from the office of Stephanie Sawyer, a criminal judge in Philadelphia. For Rodriguez, who plans to attend law school after a gap year teaching in New York City, it was a perfect match. “I was just so interested in having an internship that would be equivalent to what I was planning to do in D.C., but on my first day I was working in court. I thought, ‘This is amazing. This is where I want to work 10 years from now.’”

Beyond making an impact in the area of criminal justice, part of her long-term plan also involves helping her community—which is no surprise coming from a Melrose Fellow who volunteers her time to teach GED classes in Montgomery County Correctional Facility.

“I’m interested in bringing the community together and finding resources to help people bring out their best self.”

It is a goal that sounds a lot like the work she is already doing for Judge Sawyer. “What she does is amazing,” said Rodriguez. “She pairs up her defendants with community service, or nonprofit organizations that are willing to work with them, to lower recidivism. She doesn’t necessarily sentence them right away; she gives them a chance in life. She always says, ‘I sentence people, not charges.’” Sawyer also assists defendants with overcoming other obstacles, such as childcare needs and job placement.

“A lot of judges are just sentencing and sentencing, and not looking out for the defendants. Judge Sawyer actually has a vision for these defendants. It is so amazing to see her plan out their future and then actually follow through. We need more judges like that, especially for minorities.”

Rodriguez is a big part of the process. She attends court, identifies defendants’ hurdles, and works to build a support system of sorts. She estimates that she contacts 15 nonprofits each week in hopes of identifying ones that will work with defendants. Out of every 15 she contacts, she finds approximately two that are willing to help—and then she organizes and hosts meetings between the judge and the staff at the nonprofit. Rodriguez also seeks out employers open to hiring people with a criminal record, and facilities open to providing childcare.

“I really love that I have an impact on them. Just because I was willing to call somebody and set up a partnership with them, a person’s whole life might change. And that’s what I’m looking forward to: continuing to make change in people’s lives.”

“Emelyn has created an amazing opportunity for herself,” said Anna Marks, the pre-law coordinator. “She found this internship through sheer perseverance, sending applications to many and diverse offices. Working with Judge Sawyer has allowed Emelyn to confirm that she wants to be a lawyer and also to benefit from the wisdom of an experienced mentor. It seems to be a life- and career-shaping opportunity.”

“We have a saying: ‘If you fall once, get up twice.’ And that’s what I feel like I did when I got this internship,” said Rodriguez. “I didn’t just stay on the ground dwelling on the fact that I was not able to work on Capitol Hill. There was something out there for me; there was something better for me. I do feel like this opportunity was the one for me. I don’t think I would have enjoyed Capitol Hill as much as I enjoy going to Philadelphia and working with Judge Sawyer.”

Guest Speakers & Events

Throughout the 2021-22 academic year, our department was able to host guest speakers for students, faculty, and staff to address a variety of important issues.



Antiracism and Free Expression

Amna Khalid, Associate Professor of History at Carleton College, and Jeff Snyder, Associate Professor of Educational Studies at Carleton discussed how although campus antiracism initiatives are sometimes portrayed as in tension with campus free expression, these two campus things are related.

The Future of Abortion in America: Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health

Ursinus welcomed Patty Skuster, Esq., Beck Chair in Law at Temple Law School and an expert on Reproductive Rights Law and Health and Human Rights to discuss the future of abortion. Skuster's work aims to improve understanding of abortion regulation and the effect of reproductive health law on public health outcomes.

Meet Court of Common Pleas Judge Melissa T. Pavleck

Students had the opportunity to meet with Court of Common Pleas Judge Melissa T. Pavleck and hear firsthand how judicial decisions are made.