

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SKIDMORE COLLEGE
Government Department

Spring 2005

Letter From Department Chair Ron Seyb

Dear Government Majors and Minors:

Every political scientist knows that forecasting the future is an enterprise fraught with peril. I am sure that *The Chicago Tribune* would like to take back its call of Dewey in 1948, and that Paula Abdul wishes that she had never placed a wager on Mario. There are, however, exceptions to the "march of forecasting folly." I am confident, for example, that next year the new chair of the Government department, **Professor Beau Breslin**, will deliver a secret speech to the 20th Congress of the Skidmore Faculty detailing and denouncing my crimes. This address will be the first step toward a departmental perestroika that will see an unsealing of the secret police files on Professor Vacs, a reexamination of Professor Graney's critique of the American politics nomenclature, and an endorsement of Professor Taylor's campaign to open up the Virgin Lands of Wilton for colonization.

Professor Kate Graney's rehabilitation actually began last month when the Skidmore College Board of Trustees voted to grant her tenure. Professor Graney will thus remain a member of the department as long as the grass grows, the water flows, and Barry Bonds continues to experience his woes.

Professor Breslin will be acting next year as the cool, uninhibited new leader for a department that is ready to get "footloose" after four years of relentless repression. Professor Breslin's coronation will take place this summer as part of **"The Government Department's 50th Anniversary Celebration."** This hoedown will occur on **Friday, June 3 and Saturday, June 4**. The two days will feature an opening reception; a lunch for students, alumni, and faculty; and two panel discussions, the first on the history of the department entitled, "Present at the Creation: Reflections on the History of the Government Department," and the second on the 2004 elections entitled, "Something Red, Something Blue, Something New?" Each panel will feature a felicitous mix of current and past faculty and alums. We hope that if you are in Mayberry... I mean, Saratoga Springs this summer that you will

join us for what promises to be the biggest event to come to these parts since Mary Lou Whitney launched her "No Bauble Left Behind" campaign.

Professor Breslin has already started to put his stamp on the department by beginning to recruit a "kitchen cabinet" of new faculty. The first member of the new "Breslin Band of Bosox Brigands" will be **Professor Terry Weiner**, who will be joining us from Union College during the 2005-06 academic year. Professor Weiner will be teaching in the fall a course entitled, "GO 251C: Race and the American Political System," which promises to be a bigger draw than the "Ken Starr Pinata Round Robin" at the annual "Clinton BBQ, Bile, and Bloviating" weekend. **Professor Aldo Vacs** will also be delivering a topics course in the fall entitled, "GO 366: Understanding Globalization: Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities." Professor Vacs has performed this course in the past before SRO crowds as part of the "Don Kirshner Rock Tour." He requests that all students leave their lighters, cell phones, digital recording devices, and "Lite-Brite Portraiture Kits" at home.

Next year will also mark the second year of our "senior thesis requirement" for earning department honors at graduation. If you are currently a junior who believes that he or she will be able to satisfy the GPA criteria (i.e., 3.0 cum and 3.5 in courses in the major), then you will need to develop a specific research question and compile a preliminary bibliography to present to your prospective thesis director prior to the end of classes on Tuesday, May 3.

Please do not hesitate to drop by to chat during my "Final Days" if you have any questions about the department's course offerings for the fall, the Government major or minor, or Henry Kissinger's after-shave.

I have welcomed the opportunity to test wits with you. I have always respected you. But as I leave you, I just want you to know-- just think how much you are going to be missing. You won't have me to kick around anymore because, ladies and gentleman, this is my last chair's letter.

Reflection of Governing Government

By Julianna Koch

Four years ago, "when there was not a more lovely spot than Camelot" Professor Ron Seyb succeeded Professor Aldo Vacs as chair of the government department. During his four-year term Professor Seyb drew on Ronald Reagan for his leadership style by not only taking many naps and spending his free time pretending to be a cowboy, but also by proving his skill as a "great communicator" in his unsurpassed use of entertaining emails. As he steps down, Professor Seyb was kind enough to offer some reflections on his time spent as administrator of the department, which he compares to the TV show "Happy Days".

Looking back, Professor Seyb noted that his favorite part of being chair was the "opportunity to interact more often with my colleagues both professionally and socially. All of them are superb teachers, excellent scholars, and delightful people." He also spoke favorably of having the opportunity to interact with all of the government majors. Quoting Oscar Wilde who said that "there are only two types of people: the charming and the tedious," Professor Seyb commented that he "found almost all of our students to be charming, and those who I have found to be tedious I have sent over to the History department."

Despite these positive aspects of being chair, Professor Seyb's realization that "administrative work demands the kind of talent that I lack" was both his biggest lesson and the

cause of his subsequent “administrative aphasia,” which required the frequent intervention of colleagues to prevent him from “precipitating a reprise of the Teapot Dome scandal (sans the petroleum products).” Through this experience Professor Seyb gained a new respect for administrators, “even those in OSHA who prohibit me from burning leaves in my office,” as well as for his colleagues who he continued to speak highly of. During his time in office Professor Seyb stated that saying “no” to colleague’s requests and proposals was his least favorite aspect of the job and almost all instances of invoking veto power was due to scarce resources, or petty envy. While humbly grappling with administration Professor Seyb wishes that he would have relied more on Chris DeLucia and her successor, Barbara McDonough who he says are “hyper-intelligent, omnicompetent, knowledgeable people who out-perform me in much the same way that Winston Churchill out-performed Neville Chamberlain during World War II.” When asked to ponder what he had learned from working with other professors and students as chair, Professor Seyb’s modesty and admiration for the department shines through. He responded, “I have learned that the human capacity for forbearance is almost limitless. The large number of mistakes that I have made during my tenure have been matched by an equal number of acts of forgiveness.” Perhaps he would wish to thank Ronald Reagan again for the image he has crafted as a responsive and effective chair which overshadows these supposed administrative shortcomings and mistakes.

June 1st marks Professor Seyb’s last official day as chair as he passes the position on to Professor Beau Breslin, but not, however, without making a number of “midnight appointments” to the Government department’s “Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”

Though the loss of power may be devastating, he assures the department that a peaceful transition can be expected, provided that

he continues to “expel any residual violent impulses by playing Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas.” In his free time Professor Seyb looks forward to spending more time responding to the demands of his dog “the Incurable Jackie,” convincing his wife that *The Contender* has Nietzschean undertones, which will be followed by traveling to Spain to allow her to chide him about his “putrid linguistic skills.” Though his schedule is already tight he is open to the possibility of working *Lost* into his TV viewing schedule at the advice of Professor Flagg Taylor. He is also hoping to finally be eligible for Oscar consideration in 2010 with a book project tentatively titled *The Postmodern Administrative Presidency*. In the meantime students can enjoy the Professor Seyb’s impressive collection of Presidential knowledge, not to mention videotape, in his course on the US Presidency offered this fall.

To Professor Breslin, Professor Seyb has left the following words of wisdom: “If you’re important, they’ll wait.” To the rest of the department he leaves the famous last words “I’ll be right back,” alluding to Johnny Carson who once said he wanted the statement as his epitaph. Colleagues and majors can rest assured that once he “abdicated the throne to the Dauphin for good” he can be contacted c/o the FBI’s witness protection program. Although Professor Seyb seems convinced the festivities that conclude his tenure will “resemble the celebration orchestrated by the Monkey Guards after Dorothy threw a bucket of water on the witch,” I think it is more than safe to say that professors and students alike will be sad to see their leader join the ranks of “ex-presidents”, “wandering among the people like discontented ghosts,”¹ and certainly less amused by department emails come fall. Students would be wise to pay a visit to Professor Seyb in his final days in office to join in the therapeutic quality of Grand Theft Auto, offer suggestions for his new

¹ Hamilton, Alexander “Federalist No. 72” *The Federalist* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001) 376

TV line-up, and even get their newsletter signed by Skidmore's own "great communicator."

Breslin Takes on Chair Position

By Peter Logan

A Department Chair faces the unique challenge of continuing to perform his or her tasks as educator and scholar while taking on the added responsibilities of department administration. At the end of this year, as Ron Seyb vacates his seat as Chair of Skidmore's Government Department, Associate Professor Beau Breslin will take on those responsibilities, guiding the department through the next four years. Fear not, though, underclassmen. Radical change is not on the agenda for Professor Breslin, whose hope is "to continue the great work begun by Professor Seyb in such areas as assessment, academic rigor, and excellence."

Students who have taken any of the several courses taught by Professor Breslin in the area of law and community justice understand that this is a fitting role for him. He has a solid reputation around here for both demanding workloads and dedication to his students' education. In addition to his numerous publications, including his recent critique of communitarian political theory, The Communitarian Constitution, he has had a direct impact on the judicial system of the Skidmore community. By co-teaching LW 200: Law, Citizenship, and Justice, a required course for any student who sits on Skidmore's Integrity board, Professor Breslin has educated those students who carry out restorative justice.

It is well understood that the position of Chair is a difficult one. Not only are there a variety of tasks to perform, but there is also the added challenge of finding the correct balance of academic and administrative work. This balance is indeed a concern for Professor Breslin, as he is

already working on finishing his next book project and is passionate about each of the courses he teaches, some of which he will be forced to drop in order to fulfill his duties.

Professor Breslin cares deeply about Skidmore and believes that, as an institution of higher learning, it depends on a faculty concerned with good citizenship. He feels that taking on his new responsibilities is the least he can do to be part of such an excellent program. For him, heading the department is not simply a responsibility. Rather, it is an honor, as he thinks of the faculty, staff, and students in and around the Government Department as "a wonderful and eclectic group of thinkers."

All things considered, Professor Breslin is optimistic about the future of the department and realizes that it is not only what he brings to the table that counts. He sees the department as being blessed with excellent faculty and staff, and is sure to extend his thanks to everyone involved: "Barbara McDonough, for one, is a remarkable Assistant. She makes the job of the Chair so much easier, and for that she deserves our gratitude."

With such a concerned citizen and accomplished scholar at the helm, the future of the Government Department is bright. In the years to come, be sure to thank him for his hard work and continue to offer assistance and suggestions so that the political education of our Majors and Minors continues to improve.

Happy Birthday Government Department!

By Taylor Leake

This summer, while alumni come back to celebrate class reunions, former Government majors, retired faculty and current professors will gather to celebrate another kind of anniversary. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Government department's

creation. From Friday, June 3rd to Sunday June 5th there will be panels, gatherings, and discussions for those who helped found the department, and those who participated after. These events include a panel of alumni and faculty on the history of the department, a discussion of the recent election, and a gathering of former government majors. (For more information on the upcoming reunion, visit Skidmore's reunion web page: <http://www.skidmore.edu/alumni/reunion2005/index.htm>) In preparation for these exciting events the faculty has asked me to research the founding and development of the department.

I began digging in the Library archives. I read through old course catalogues, President's and Dean's reports, Yearbooks, old editions of Skidmore News, and anything else I could find pertaining to the department in its early conception. What I discovered was that while our department started in 1955, Skidmore had political science courses and professors before that, and there were even a hand full of political science majors. I found that the earliest political course was in 1921 taught by Miss Kathryn Starbuck who held the position Assistant to the President. The course was called "American Political Institutions & Government", which bears a striking resemblance to today's GO 101 course "United States Government Institutions." In the 1930s Mark Mohler, a history professor, joining forces with Kathryn Starbuck, began teaching several courses in Political Science, and graduating a student every other year or so (except in 1936, when four students graduated with a Political Science major). They continued to offer about 8 courses a year until 1955 when they both retired.

In 1955 President Henry Moore hired a young Harvard Graduate, Henry Galant, to establish a more permanent department at Skidmore. He changed the name from Political Science to Government, emulating his Alma matter, and started the department, as we know it today. In the first few years, he did not have a very

large student base; he had to teach history courses just to keep busy enough. But by 1959 he graduated 9 government majors, and from then on the numbers kept growing. He chaired the department for 24 years, managing to expand it into a large and well-established department.

While I've learned quite a bit, searching through the library, I will soon begin conducting oral interviews for my research. In the coming weeks I will interview Henry Galant, and his wife Eleanor as well as Mary Ellen Fischer, wife of the late Erwin Levine (another founder of the Government Department). Hopefully these will give me an even clearer picture of how our department began and grew. I hope to gain a personal and intimate knowledge of the institution that has provided us with intellectual stimulation about government for 50 years.

A Conversation with Stephen Fox April 13th at 4 P.M., Ladd 206

During this session, Stephen Fox will discuss the Department of State and Foreign Service as well as career and internship opportunities.

Stephen Fox, Deputy Director, Office of Regional Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, is a foreign service officer with the Department of State. He has worked with a wide variety of issues including counter terrorism policy, the creation of the department of homeland security, negotiating and establishing international trade agreements, and US economic foreign policy. During his career, he has held posts in Tokyo, China, India, and Washington, DC.

Fox earned a law degree from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and a master's from the National Defense University. He is the parent of a first-year Skidmore student.

I M P O R T A N T D A T E S

April 8th 4 p.m.

Daniel J. Mahoney

*'The Continuing Relevance of
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn'*

April 11th

Senior Honors Thesis Deadline

April 13th 4 p.m.

Stephen R. Fox

State Department Conversation

April 19th

Iraq War Veterans Panel

Students on the Fence

April 21st 8p.m.

Sally Blackman Lecture

April 25th

Brian Glyn Williams

Dostum the 'Taliban Killer'.

Living with a Afghan Warlord

May 3rd

Pi Sigma Alpha Induction

Honors Convocation

Fiscus Lecture Review

Court, Country, and Culture

By Matt Bohenek

On Wednesday, February 16th, Linda Greenhouse, the Supreme Court correspondent for the *New York Times* and the Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar,

delivered the 2005 Ronald J. Fiscus Memorial Lecture. Her address, appropriately entitled "Court, Country, and Culture" examined the relationship between the United States Supreme Court and the American public via a number of recent cases, some well-known and others more obscure. She used such cases as *Lawrence v. Texas*, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, *Nevada Department of Human Resources v. Hibbs*, and *Brown v. Legal Foundation of Washington* to illustrate instances in which a conservative Court has made decisions that were decidedly liberal ones.

Ms. Greenhouse attributed these decisions to a cultural dialogue that exists between the Supreme Court and the American public in which this Court has been ready and willing to engage, citing Robert Post's "permeable membrane." She contended that the Court, because its Justices are not abstract robotic figures but rather human beings who have lived as employers, parents, spouses, and American citizens, is willing to examine prior decisions and to not always take them to their logical conclusions.

For example, in *Grutter*, Ms. Greenhouse noted that the precedent set in *Bakke* had been slowly deteriorating over time and the logical step for the Court to take would have been to rule against affirmative action and strike down Michigan's policy. However, the justices received amicus briefs from all realms of society; the military and various Fortune 500 companies, in addition to the expected civil rights groups and educators, filed briefs trumpeting the merits of diversity. She discussed the societal reality check that the Court received from these briefs and how the Court "took stock, realigned itself, and told us something new."

Ms. Greenhouse concluded her lecture by suggesting that the cases of the Guantanamo detainees may define this term for the U.S. Supreme Court because they are ambiguous and theoretical, and could very well spawn the same type of dialogue as in the *Grutter* example. She

closed her lecture with a quote from current Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Breyer: "All we can do is hold our breath and hope for the best."

Professor Beau Breslin, who is the coordinator of the Fiscus Lecture, observed that it is very difficult to truly understand Supreme Court decisions without the access that Linda Greenhouse has. Working for the *New York Times* as the Supreme Court correspondent for the past 28 years, Ms. Greenhouse has the more access and more insight into the workings of the Supreme Court than anyone else, save the Justices themselves. Her visit was a wonderful opportunity to receive some of her unparalleled insight, as Ms. Greenhouse proved to be candid, professional, and gracious during her lecture as well as in her time spent with students.

Professor Breslin extends his gratitude to everyone who contributed to this year's Fiscus Lecture, and would especially like to recognize two individuals: Professor Ron Seyb, whose introductory remarks were both a stirring tribute to Ronald J. Fiscus and an unforgettable experience for Ms. Greenhouse; and Barbara McDonough, who was invaluable in this endeavor, and is to the department as a whole.

RONALD J. FISCUS, a teacher and scholar of Constitutional Law, was a member of the Skidmore Government Department from 1980 until his untimely death at age 42 in 1990. After graduating from Carleton College, Ron served in the Peace Corps in Chad before completing a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Wisconsin. At Skidmore, Professor Fiscus was well known for the excellence of his teaching. He was one of the original faculty members involved in creating Liberal Studies I, served as its coordinator the first year it was taught, and was selected by his colleagues to give the very first lecture in the course. Ron was also instrumental in developing and establishing Skidmore's Law and Society minor, which involves students in a multi-disciplinary study of the relationship between law

and other social institutions and processes. After Ron's death his colleagues and friends endowed an annual lecture in his honor, the Ronald J. Fiscus Memorial Lecture, to bring to campus distinguished individuals who would speak on issues related to law and society. (Excerpt taken from <http://www.skidmore.edu/academics/gov/lectures.html>)

Citizen Studentship Five Miles Deep

By Sarah Kunz

On the first day of Citizen Studentship (HF203), Professor Burns spoke to our class for the first and last time as our instructor. After he outlined our two assignments - weekly reflective journal entries and a final class project on "something pertaining to liberal education", he left. The 20 of us remained with no syllabus, no leaders, and nothing to guide us as we attempted to explore everything about ourselves and each other in one semester.

The initial reaction of many students in the class was to rebel against "tradition" precisely because of the "nontraditional" characterization of the class. For over half of the semester, we had no designated leaders or structure. We tried, unsuccessfully, to implement the consensus model to structure our discussions. Students suggested we meet in other locations; sit on the floor - numerous "nontraditional" classroom variants.

The two most interesting parts of this reaction against established classroom norms was the presumption that our class had to be egalitarian and the hesitancy to agree to homework assignments that people considered restrictive or lacked creativity. Our blind commitment to egalitarianism was something that at first went unexamined and in retrospect hindered our ability to focus our ideas and engage in close examinations of the topics we were considering. A

few of us who had taken Professor Burns' Modern Political Thought class suggested that we read parts of *Tocqueville's Democracy In America* in hopes that it would enlighten our conversations on education, apathy and generalized cultural commentary. This proposal and several others were met with disagreement because of concerns about "traditionality" and "creativity". We struggled with conflicting goals of absolut freedom and absolute equality. Eventually our wanderings and stagnation led to deep frustration among not only classmates but our peer mentors and Professor Burns. We finally forced ourselves to concede that unlimited exploration grounded only in personal experience was stagnating, suffocating and in direct opposition to intellectual growth. We faced an ultimatum - decide on a structure and a focus, or fail.

In the past two weeks, we have limited the scope of our studies to the Skidmore Honor Code and it's implications for our educational community. We have drafted a list of questions exploring topics ranging from out of classroom interactions between students and professors to student accountability for each other. We've broken into small groups and are exploring the idea of honor, honor codes at other institutions, and beginning to ask questions of community members. Throughout the semester, one conceptualization of our goals has helped to keep us on track and to focus our intents. This conceptualization comes from the British understanding of the differences between the American educational system and their own. Whereas British education offers you a body of knowledge one inch wide and five miles deep, it is asserted that the American system provides an education five miles wide and one inch deep. Regardless of the shape of our final project, it is our overarching goal that we will have explored our topic five miles deep.

Transatlantic Phone Tag

By Kenny Olmstead

President Bush made a trip to Europe recently and it seemed that this was on the top of every news cycle for the duration of his trip. In England it was, of course, second from the top after Prince Charles and Camilla. President Bush reached out to the leaders of the EU and met with them in Luxembourg. There is a problem with this. It is exemplified in the fact that he met with dozens of officials and heads of state, all representing the EU. This has been a major rift in U.S.-EU relations. Henry Kissinger once said that the problem with dealing with Europe is that you never know who to call. This is still a problem that haunts EU foreign relations today, who do you call? Do you call the head of the council of ministers? Do you call Javier Solana? Do you just call Jacque Chirac? Tony Blair? The EU has no clear person for other nations to deal with and it is this fact that will prevent it from ever having a coherent foreign policy. Yet, despite this lack of a central leader in the EU, the fact that President Bush felt the need to meet with the EU at all is a sign that the EU is gaining ground on the world stage.

Then comes the big question, is a stronger EU a good or bad thing for America. The Bush administration has argued that a stronger EU would be good for the U.S. because it would give the U.S. an ally to share the burden of spreading democracy. That is the bright side of the question, but what about a strong EU challenging U.S. power? Granted it will be quite a long time before the EU is ready to fully play superpower alongside the U.S. The military question is still one that the EU does not seem ready to deal with. Recently Gerhard Schroder said that NATO was no longer the main organization in transatlantic relations. The problem with the EU becoming a true

superpower is that many of the nations in the EU are unwilling to pick up the big-ticket items that are needed to gain superpower status, like a military. The EU is largely known as the master of "soft power", while the U.S. is largely a proponent of "hard power." These are generalizations, but there is no doubt that the EU and the U.S. have differing strengths. This is where it becomes obvious that the EU cannot afford to alienate the U.S. and vice versa. A perfect superpower would wield "hard power" and "soft power" equally and use each when needed. If the U.S. is the ultimate user of "hard power" and the EU the champion of "soft power", clearly there is a common interest for both to get along.

In the end both powers will have to work towards strengthening the EU-U.S. relationship, it cannot be forced or ignored. In Europe there must be an effort to agree on one voice and in the U.S. leaders must respect the European's as equals. The EU must have one phone number to call and the U.S. needs to pick up the phone.

The Beacon of Democracy **By Betsy Sheridan**

In October, Matt Bohenek asked me to write a short piece for the fall newsletter. His request was just for me to "write 'something' about being a Government major and SGA President." At first, I debated trying to compare myself to George W. Bush, but it proved to be a far too difficult task (Dubbya and I do, however, share a distaste for tardiness and a fondness for nicknames). Perhaps I put off writing this article in hopes that John Kerry would become President, and I could write about our shared love of the Boston Red Sox. I tried to make a comparison between the SGA Senate and what goes on in

A T T E N T I O N J U N I O R C L A S S G O V E R N M E N T M A J O R S

Next year will also mark the second year of our "senior thesis requirement" for earning department honors at graduation. If you are currently a junior who believes that he or she will be able to satisfy the GPA criteria (i.e., 3.0 cum and 3.5 in courses in the major), then you will need to develop a specific research question and compile a preliminary bibliography to present to your prospective thesis director prior to the end of classes on Tuesday, May 3.

Washington. Since I could not decide which Senators should play the roles of Ted Kennedy and Trent Lott, the exercise fell short of any adequate level of humor.

One surefire comparison between Skidmore's Student Government and the American government is that both practice the beacon of democracy: free and fair elections. In February, we held our first round of elections for the next academic year. SGA president, Executive Committee, Class Presidents and Hall Presidents were all elected in many contested elections. Just like November's national election, many speculated which candidates would pick up different demographic groups, including, but not limited to the "art major kids," the "business majors" and most importantly the "liberal cause

activists.” The hottest untapped minority group proved to be the Young Republican Assembly.

No formal exit polling was done, so unfortunately I cannot offer fancy maps, charts and graphs showing how the third floor of Kimball voted compared to the 7th floor of Tower or how the “anthropology majors who are enrolled modern dance classes” voted compared to “male business majors who play at least one varsity sport.” However, I will declare the election a success. We reached a new high in voter turn out—over 1,000 students voted in the election! I am also pleased to announce that there are three fellow government majors serving on next year’s Executive Committee: SGA president Petria “Rusty” Fleming, VP for Communications Sarah “the Gipper” Kunz and VP for Financial Affairs Alex “Pretty Pretty Princess” Harold.

The second round of elections is quickly approaching, and I encourage you all to get involved outside of the classroom. To see legislative work in action, come to Senate on Tuesdays at 8:15 in Ladd 307. We hold two open forums for concerned students to speak.

Creative Thought Matters, Government Style

By Petria “Rusty” Fleming

Oddly enough, I came to Skidmore with the intention of being a studio art major. Throughout my high school career, I was heavily involved in theatre and attended summer classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. I’ve always been attracted to the perpetual creativity that the arts demand.

By the end of my sophomore year of college, I chose a discipline that at first glance, may seem less “artistic” than some of the other disciplines in the humanities. Even becoming an English major would have been more fitting, but I

decided that my chances of becoming the next great American novelist were slim. How did I make my transition to the government department? For this answer, it’s useful to pull out Skidmore’s current maxim, “creative thought matters.” Whenever I hear the motto, I always feel bad for Admissions and the PR people at Skidmore that hired someone to come up with the next “got milk?” slogan. Instead “creative thought matters” hit the Skidmore community and seemed to get some chuckles and a “duh” response at what may seem like an obvious statement. However, despite its cheesiness, I think the phrase encapsulates my Skidmore experience.

Since my freshman year, I’ve been involved in SGA. During my first year, I sat on senate as the vice president of a dorm. Since that time, I’ve also been a class secretary and executive committee member. I have been given an outlet to become involved in issues ranging from funding for NY state higher education/financial aid to voting rights in Saratoga County to even the development of Skidmore’s own First Year Experience. Reflecting on the last three years, all I can say is, “wow.” When in my life will I ever be given this kind of opportunity that allows me to get so involved in so many issues that I am passionate about?

I don’t think it is a coincidence that a lot of people in SGA tend to be government majors. The opportunities that I’ve had in my extracurricular experience have led me to my academic choice to become a government major. I came to the realization that I could be *creative* with public policy. In the same way that an artist paints a masterpiece, good policy and activism takes the same patience, extreme effort, passion, and creativity. My experiences with creative thought in a government classroom will hopefully serve me beyond Skidmore.

So I suppose my romantic fantasy of becoming a starving artist will never be realized, but I can be content with the thought of being a

starving non-profit working, activist, policy wonk.

SCUSA 56 at West Point

By David Grover

From Wednesday, November 10 thru Sunday, November 13, I had the pleasure of attending the fifty sixth annual Student Conference on United States Affairs (SCUSA) at West Point Military Academy. The conference's theme was, "Beyond Hegemony: the Goals and Consequences of American Action at Home and Abroad." At the conference, my fellow delegates and I listen to presentations from world-renowned experts including a diverse panel of academics and professionals and a keynote address by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna on terrorism and its implications. Dr. Gunaratna is one of the most knowledgeable people in the world on terrorist groups and has been invited to share his expertise with numerous international and U.S. institutions to help combat terrorism.

All of the delegates were also assigned to smaller groups of roughly twenty people. Each group included about five West Point cadets. The groups had five sessions to discuss and create a presentation and paper on a foreign policy issue or global region. My group, the Middle East Gulf States, was chaired by the Senior Intelligence Officer for the Arabian Peninsula in the Defense Intelligence Agency and a prominent Iraqi translator who gave us first hand accounts of the horrific retribution she and her family has faced due to her effort to help the Occupation and transfer of power in Iraq. We had great discussions and ended the weekend with a fashion show of Middle East Gulf States that suggested how the US should conduct foreign policy in that region.

Aside from being surrounded by experts (on the bus, I randomly sat next to a man who had been in charge of economic reconstruction in Bosnia), I think the most valuable part of the

weekend was being immersed in West Point culture. We did not have to rise for drill at the same time cadets did, but we did learn a great deal of what their lives are like. The experience gave me a respect for the military and a sense of commonality with West Point cadets. While many parts of our education differ, they were still just a group of 18-22 year-olds learning to understand the world. They were also incredibly mature. I am very grateful to the Government Department for the experiences and understanding SCUSA afforded me.

47th Academy Assembly

By Emily Friedman

Last month I attended the 47th Air Force Academy Assembly in Colorado Springs, CO. The conference consisted of some 150 undergraduate delegates from colleges across the U.S. and abroad, which participated in the student-planned conference, sponsored jointly by the Air Force Academy and Columbia University. Our assignment was to collectively deliberate on the topic: "Spreading Democracy: America's Obligation?" Following the conclusion of the four-day conference, a written consensus report reflecting the views and recommendations of the delegates, was to be published, and subsequently presented to the United States Pentagon. Although our intense deliberations and proposals will unlikely affect the policy makers in the U.S. government, the assembly process left me feeling inspired and encouraged.

For much of the assembly, we were engaged in round-table discussions, composed of 10-12 students. In my round-table, I was one of two politically liberal students, and the only one from the East Coast. The other delegates featured three Air Force Academy cadets, and a member of

the Canadian counterpart to the U.S. Air Force Academy, as well as six students from the mid-west, and one from California. I was amazed at the ease with which we discussed issues that are so often a cause of contention within this country. No matter what our political leanings were, every participant in my round-table agreed that democracy should never be pushed onto a society that is not willing to embrace all of the related political and cultural implications. Interestingly, after much discussion, we also theorized that no culture is inherently incompatible with democracy, alluding to the fact that should a nation desire democracy, it should notionally succeed.

After attending this conference with peers representing diverse political and cultural beliefs, I am left with a sense of optimism about my generation of diplomatic thinkers. While the current administration and its political opponents appears resolutely obstinate with respect to compromising with one another on U.S. policies, our assembly of student delegates tackled these very issues of contention and formed logical and mutually agreed upon conclusions.

NEWSA Meets Skidmore 'Girls'

By Steph Drahan

On Friday, March 4th, six Senior members of FAN (the Feminist Action Network) ventured to UMASS-Dartmouth to partake in the New England Women's Studies Association (NEWSA) Conference. Katie Garcia '05, co-President of FAN, arranged our trip because she had gotten a poster accepted to the conference on "Transphobia in Feminism." Excitement mounted, on our early morning drive to Dartmouth as we talked about the numerous sessions we would each get to attend during the two-day conference. We agreed to try and split up as much possible, so as to maximize our

exposure to the various topics that were being presented.

Despite our enthusiasm in attending NEWSA, we began to be disappointed halfway through the first day. This disappointment increased throughout the conference, eventually leaving us generally frustrated. While there were some interesting presentations and discussions (such as Friday's keynote address by Dawn Lundy Martin, co-editor of *Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism*), most of us felt that the conference left us desiring more. The feminism that was presented throughout the conference, to us, was dated. The ideas and concepts that were prevalent were reminiscent of second-wave (1960-70s) feminism, and not representative of the current third-wave of feminism. The third-wave addresses more nuanced issues within the movement, such as diversity and global issues. Because of our collective frustration with how feminism was being presented, we were able to gather some courage for the next day to question some of the presenters on the ideas they were putting forth. While perhaps the 'Skidmore girls' ended up with a reputation for being critical, we also got complimented by some of the other attendees and presenters for bringing up important points, and questioning what was being offered to us.

In the end, I feel we did what we've learned to do, deconstruct and analyze the information we were being presented with in a manner that allowed us to not only see bias, but also furthered discussion on these important issues. While the conference did not address third-wave ideals directly, in a way our being confronted with ideas we didn't agree with enhanced our understanding of the difficulty of diversity within the movement, which is a key tenet to third-wave feminism. All in all, while we expected to learn the most from our sessions, perhaps in the end we learned more important lessons, such as the value of a Skidmore education

and viewpoint, and how to employ it in the real world.

Faculty News

By Matt Bohenek

Professor Tim Burns, Professor Ron Seyb and Professor Natalie Taylor will be teaching Scribner Seminars as part of the First Year Experience in the fall.

The Virtual Republic: American Politics in the Media Age, Professor Seyb

Is the American "mediathon" sapping the public's interest in, engagement with, and knowledge of politics? In this seminar, students explore the influence of the mass media on political debate, political engagement, and public policy in the United States. We trace the development of the mass media from the turn of the 20th century to the present, assessing critically the claim that this development has contributed to an increasing coarsening of political discourse, a growth in public disaffection with politics and a diminution of the government's capacity to solve pressing social and economic problems. We will examine the effect of radio and television on political oratory, the genesis and evolution of "political marketing," the rise of an adversarial press, and the implications of the "new media" for American politics.

The Philosophic Principles of the American Founding, Professor Burns

This course examines American political thought with a special focus on the philosophic and political principles incorporated in the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution. Our aim is to uncover and understand the principles of our liberal or pluralistic democracy. Students will examine the sources of those principles, their articulation in the debates of the Founding period,

and the great challenge those principles faced in the crisis of slavery. The course will involve a careful reading of works by earlier thinkers who had a decisive influence upon the Founders, works by thinkers and statesmen from the Founding period, and works by thinkers and statesmen who were influenced by the Founders and sought to perpetuate, extend, or modify their work.

Educating Citizens for the American Public, Professor Natalie Taylor

Drawing on the writings of a number of prominent American citizens, we will consider the education that is fitting for citizens of a republic, who prize freedom and equality. American thinkers have long noticed that American democracy requires certain moral and intellectual virtues of its citizens. What are these virtues? What sort of education will foster them? We will begin our study of these questions with readings from the colonial period and continue with selected writings by 19th and 20th century authors. We will conclude the course with a consideration of the education offered at liberal arts colleges, which have been described as "distinctively American". Students will meet some of America's great political, historical, and literary figures, while formulating their aspirations for their own educations.

State Department Lecture Tour

Professor Roy H. Ginsberg has been invited by the State Department to lecture at universities, research institutes, and conferences in Warsaw and Krakow, Poland from April 4th to April 8th of this year. His topic will be European-American relations during the second Bush Administration and the impact of the European Union's foreign and security policy on these relations. He will also speak about his forthcoming book, *Demystifying European Union: The Enduring Logic of Regional Integration*, which is due out in 2006. Dr. Ginsberg will give

interviews to broadcast and print media while in Poland. This visit follows a digital videoconference on the topic of the 2004 presidential election and U.S.-European relations in which Professor Ginsberg participated last November with students from Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

The State Department asks professors and experts to lecture around the world as part of its public diplomacy outreach. Though sponsored by the State Department, lecturers are encouraged to express any opinion they may have on the topics on which they lecture. Intellectuals are invited based on their expertise and scholarship in certain areas; Professor Ginsberg has been invited because of his expertise and scholarship in the area of trans-Atlantic relations. This will be his fifth lecture tour, having previously traveled to Greece, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, and France. Professor Ginsberg notes that Skidmore graduate and government major Jody Rose Platt (Class of 1986) who works at the State Department helped organize this and other lecture tours for him.

Summer Session

During Summer Session I, **Professor Flagg Taylor** will be teaching a course entitled GO323: Dissident Political Thought. In this course, "students will examine the writings of some of the outstanding figures in twentieth century political thought. Attention will be primarily directed to their reflections on the nature of "ideological tyranny" or "totalitarianism" and its effects on the human personality and human relations. These will provide an avenue into more general themes that resonate throughout a broad tradition in political philosophy: the questions of tyranny, justice, and political responsibility. Students will be confronted with a variety of writings, including the poetry of Czeslaw Milosz, the plays of Vaclav Havel, the novels of George Orwell, and the perhaps unclassifiable work of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn."

Professor Bob Turner will be active this summer at Skidmore as well, team teaching ES241: The Adirondack Wilderness Experience with Professor Kyle Nichols of the Geosciences department. This course will be heavily based on experiential learning, including mountain climbing, canoeing the rivers, and meeting with a "credible variety" of people who both work and live in the Adirondacks. The course will examine, among other things, the evolution of the concept of "wilderness" and how it relates to the Adirondacks, which makes up more than 20% of New York State and is larger than Yosemite, Yellowstone, and the Grand Canyon combined. The instructors will use a variety of media, including paintings, the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the more experiential methods noted above.

For more information on the Summer Academic Sessions, please visit http://www.skidmore.edu/administration/osp/summer_academic_sessions/index.htm.

Internships

Professor Bob Turner, the Internship Director for the Government Department, says that internships are the best way to get a job after graduation because they offer practical skills and experience that enhance the classroom learning process. Internships can be completed for either three or six credits. Because "it is never too early to start thinking about internships for the summer," Professor Turner encourages everyone interested to check out the board in the third floor of Ladd and to stop by his office, Ladd 315, to chat.

Alumni News

Brian Harris '04, is working with Americorps in Nashville, TN. He is coaching a little league team and working to implement a youth council in six inner city community centers. The 4- 5 member

councils will advise Americorps on activities, best practices and will organize and participate in service learning projects, trainings and team building.

Elizabeth Byrne Feeney '97 (Government/Spanish) Graduated from SUNY Buffalo Law School in 2000, is currently working as a Senior Court Attorney for the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Second Department.

Erica Seifert '02 (Government and American Studies) is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in American Studies at Boston University. She previously taught 10th and 12th grade classes in geography and government.

Ben Clarke '01 after nearly four years at Luntz Research, has decided to leave and take a job as a speechwriter for Senator Bill Frist, Republican Majority Leader from Tennessee.

Rob Resnick '88 has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army JAG Corps.

Regina Corso '90-- Campaign Research Consultant/Pollster, Vox Populi Communications

Nadivah Greenberg '82-- Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania

Becky Mowbray '90-- Reporter, "New Orleans Times Picayune"

Michael Ross '86-- Assistant Professor of History, Loyola University, New Orleans

Kate Imbach '03 has worked as Government Affairs Associate for the Charles Group Consulting in Boston lobbying on an array of progressive legislation in Massachusetts and as a campaign director for MA state representative Mark Falzone.

Drew Murphy '04 is teaching 10th grade Global History in New York City.

Meryl Kenny '04 is a master's student at the School of Social and Political Studies at the University of Edinburgh where she is studying the impact of the candidate selection process on female representation in the Scottish Parliament.

Peter Fox '04 is teaching English in Argentina for the year and has been accepted at Columbia Law School for the Fall.

Morgan Mandeville '04 returned from Russia this summer, where she worked as an intern in the office of the mayor of Albany's sister city, Tula. She has been hired by Soros's Open Society Institute as a Program Assistant in the Central Eurasian Project, where she is working on the Caspian / Iraqi Revenue Watch program, that deals with issues of transparency and corruption in the oil sector. This is exciting news, because this is the exact topic that Morgan did her senior thesis on last year!

Scott Minkoff '04 is a Staff Assistant for Senator Sarbanes (D-MD). He and Jared Gottlieb (class of 2004) were in South Dakota campaigning for Senator Daschle.

Jaime Jansen '04 worked for the Office of Research for Empire State Development for the summer and is now working as a researcher in Sage College Office of Institutional Research and is applying to law school.

Rachel Silberman '02 is teaching 5th Grade for Teach for America in Southern Texas and is applying to public policy graduate programs.

Kate Clark '02 worked for 2 years for the Colorado Legislature's Office of Legal and is now teaching English in China. She is applying to public policy graduate programs.

Ben Fleisher '04 is applying to master programs to become a high school social studies teacher.

Janine Harrod '04 is working as a legislative analyst for the Massachusetts Restaurant Association.

Kate Imbach '03 worked for 1 1/2 years for a political consulting firm in Boston before working on the campaign of a candidate to the state legislature.

Andy Kirshenbaum '03 was working on the presidential campaign of John Edwards.

Ezra Seloff '04 is interning for Representative Rothman (D-NJ).

Ken Hardy '02 was working as a lobbyist in DC for two years, before entering Boston University Law School.

John Iz '02 has transferred from MSNBC news to work as a desk editor for the Foreign News Desk at NBC News.

Dave Bardorf '89, has been in the United States Marine Corps for 14 years. He deployed to Iraq for the first phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in January 2003 and returned in June of that same year. Dave was part of 2nd Tank Battalion during the war. Upon return from Iraq, he was promoted to the rank of Major and received orders to Marine Corps Systems Command in Quantico, Va. In his current position he manages all programs and projects that modify, sustain, and enhance the M1A1 Main Battle Tank.

Brenna Cohen '97 is enrolled as first semester student at Columbia University's "post-bac pre-med program." In studying science at Columbia and volunteering for a research project on HIV and diabetes by shadowing physicians in hospitals, Brenna writes: "I've discovered the value of my government background. It enables me to see the connections between medical challenges and socioeconomic factors that face patients in rural and urban communities."

Ben Petok '04 was Field Coordinator for Baltimore City and four area counties this past Summer-Fall for the Senate reelection campaign of Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.).

Matthew Slater '00, continues to work as an Assistant Public Defender for Miami-Dade County. He published (Summer 2004) his first law review article--"Trumpeting Justice: The Implications of U.S. Law and Policy for the International Rendition of Terrorists from Failed or Uncooperative States" in the University of Miami International and Comparative Law Review. Matt got married this past Fall.

POLITICAL QUOTES

"We have to fix it or Rumsfeld may never retire." --President Bush, on Social Security, at the annual Gridiron Dinner

"When he woke up he was surrounded by loved ones" -- his wife, his daughter and ... "my dad." --President Bush, on former President Clinton's recuperation from surgery

"Through six-party talks we convince him to hold a presidential election -- and then we send Bob Shrum over to help him." --President Bush, on how to deal with North Korean President Kim Jong-Il, referring to Democratic presidential campaign director Bob Shrum and his 0-8 record

"Sixty-four teams start and they're whittled down to just one. Kind of reminds me of what we've done with our allies." --New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson on the NCAA tournament, at the Gridiron Dinner

"The Secretariat building in New York has 38 stories. If it lost ten stories, it wouldn't make a bit of difference." --John Bolton, President Bush's nominee for U.N. ambassador

"The jobs I'm being asked to do, the five hats that I wear, are too much for this mortal. I'm a little amazed at the workload." --CIA Director Porter Goss, March 2, 2005

FALL 2005

GO 251C Race and the American Political System

Instructor: Terry Weiner

This course will examine the evolution, nature, and role of race in American politics. In particular, the course will focus on issues such as the persistence of segregation, educational and income inequality, the police and the criminal justice system's treatment of minorities, affirmative action and claims for reparations.

3 credits

Prerequisites: GO 101 or permission of the instructor

Tues/Thurs 11:10 A.M. – 12:30 P.M., Ladd 307

GO 366 Understanding Globalization: Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities

Instructor: Aldo Vacs

A critical examination of globalization as a political, economic, technological, social, and cultural phenomenon, which has wrought fundamental changes to our lives by making the world smaller and more interdependent. The course will explore the meaning, features and impact of globalization on the role of states, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and transnational corporations; the transformation of national sovereignty; the expansion of liberal democracy; the changes in international economic relations (trade, finance, investment) and institutions (GATT/WTO, IMF, World Bank); the promotion of social progress and backwardness; the rise and decline of nationalistic, ethnic, and religious confrontations; and the development of cultural diversity and homogeneity. Special attention will be devoted to analyzing the ideologies, actors, and interests promoting and opposing globalization as well as the risks and opportunities associated with globalization from the perspective of different groups.

4 credits

Prerequisites: GO 103 or permission from the instructor.

Tues/Thurs 2:10 P.M. – 3:30 P.M., Ladd 106

FALL 2005

Breslin - x5244, Rm. 319 (580-1491)							F A L L 2 0 0 5
Classes:	MW	GO 311	CONSTITUTIONAL LAW	4:00pm-5:20pm	LADD 307		
	MWF	LW 200	LAW, JUSTICE&CITIZENSHIP	1:25pm-2:20	TLC 202		
Office Hours:							
Burns - x5247, Rm. 316 (581-4073)							
Classes	MW	GO 308	CONT POLITICAL THOUGHT	2:30pm-4:20pm	LADD 206		
	WF	SSP 100	PHILOS PRINC AMER FOUN	8:40am-10:00am	LADD 207		
	M			9:05am-10:00am	LADD 207		
Office Hours:							
Ginsberg - X5245, RM. 314 (584-4126)							
Classes:	TU/TH	GO 203	COMP POL OF WEST EUROPE	12:40pm-2:00pm	LADD 206		
	TU/TH	GO 219	POL ECON OF EUR INTEGRA	9:40am-11:00am	LADD 206		
Office Hours:							
Graney - X5242, RM 306A (587-7687)							
Classes:	TU/TH	GO 227	RUSSIA: CENT OF CHANGE	2:10pm-3:30pm	LADD 206		
	M	WS 101	INTRO TO WOMEN'S ST	12:20pm-1:15pm	LADD 206		
	TU/TH			12:40pm-2:00pm	LADD 206		
Office Hours:							
Hoffmann - X5246, RM. 311 (587-7870)							
Classes:	TU/TH	GO 103	CRIT ISSUES WORLD POL	12:40pm-2:00pm	LADD 307		
	TU/TH	GO 239	NAT & POLITICS MID EAST	3:40pm-5:00pm	LADD 307		
Office Hours:							
Seyb - x5248, Rm. 310 (587-3239)							
Classes:	MWF	GO 252	THE PSYCH OF POLITICS	11:15am-12:10pm	LADD 207		
	MWF	GO 334	US PRESIDENCY	12:20pm-1:15pm	LADD 106		
	MWF	SSP 100	THE VIRTUAL REPUBLIC	10:10am-11:05am	LADD 207		
Office Hours:							
Taylor Natalie, - x5243, Rm. 306B (226-0423)							
Classes:	MWF	GO 101	INTRO TO AMERICAN GOVT	12:20pm - 1:15pm	LADD 307		
	MW	SSP 100	EDUCATING CITIZENS	2:30pm-3:50pm	LADD 106		
Office Hours:							
Taylor, Flagg							
Classes:	TU/TH	GO 103	CRIT ISSUES WORLD POL	2:10pm-3:30pm	TLC 201		
Office Hours:							
Turner X 5251, Rm 315, (584-0810)							
Classes:	TU/TH	GO 101	INTRO TO AMERICAN GOVT	9:40am - 11:00am	LADD 307		
	TU/TH	GO 331	STATE&LOC ECON DEVT POL	12:40pm-2:00pm	PMH 202		
Office Hours:							
Vacs, x5249, Rm. 309 (583-7920)							
Classes:	TU/TH	GO 309	LATIN AMERICA AND US	11:10am-12:30pm	LADD 207		
	TU/TH	GO 366	UNDERSTADING GLOBAL	2:10pm-3:30pm	LADD 106		
Office Hours:							
Weiner, Terry							
Classes:	TU/TH	GO 251C	RACE & AMER POL SYSTEM	11:10am-12:30pm	LADD 307		
Office Hours:							