



Revolution on Cullen Alumni Revisit UH Integration

Highlights from PGH

- In Fall 2012 4,250 students are enrolled in the UH Core American & Texas Politics Classes, a record number.
- This year's entering MA and PhD classes included students from five U.S. states and three continents.

In October the Political Science Department helped to organize "Revolution on Cullen," an afternoon symposium marking 50 years of racial integration at the University of Houston. Now one of the nation's most diverse research universities, the University of Houston began admitting black graduate students only in 1962, and did not admit black undergraduates until 1963. It integrated its athletic teams in 1964, making it one of the first southern public universities to do so. This special event focused on the personal challenges faced by those who helped to bring about this important change.

The afternoon's first panel, introduced by UH President Renu Khator, featured Gene Locke and Don Chaney. The moderator, Political Science lecturer Alison Leland, interviewed these two prominent alumni about their student experiences, why they decide to attend the University of Houston, and what they faced when they arrived.

Former NBA player, coach, and commentator Don Chaney, who helped integrate UH athletics, talked about the isolation of



being one of only a few black athletes in the athletics dormitory, and about the pressures on the new students to deliver winning games.

The other panelist was former Houston city attorney, and recent mayoral candidate, Gene Locke. Locke, a Political Science major while at UH, described how he and fellow students pressured the UH leadership to change campus culture, including by hiring more African American faculty and by expanding financial aid and housing opportunities for black students.

The event also featured a keynote address by novelist

Attica Locke (Gene Locke's daughter), who discussed the new challenges of fashioning a different kind of racial future in the United States while honoring the past and remembering its struggles. She read from her first book, *Blackwater Rising*, a novel partly set on the UH campus that reflects on the personal dynamics of student activism in the tense atmosphere of the early 1970s.

Students, alumni, staff, faculty and other members of the wider Houston community participated in this well-attended event, held in the Rockwell Pavilion on the UH campus. Alumni enriched the discussions with their own first-hand accounts during the Q&A sessions and the reception that followed.

This event was partially funded by much appreciated donations to the Department of Political Science Gift Fund, and by a gift from Andrews Kurth LLP.

Save the Date!

PoliSci Alumni Event
Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2013
UH Alumni Center

Rice University Professor (and UH alumnus) John Alford will speak on *Biology & Politics*

*
Recognition of
Professor Harrell Rodgers

Reception 5:15 pm
Program 5:45 pm

Contents

Letter from the Chair	2
Faculty News	2
Research that Matters	3
Student Research	3
New Scholarship Gift	4



Letter from the Chair

The study of politics known as “political science” focusses on asking questions about the political world that can be answered with existing or obtainable evidence. For instance, we expect to find similarities between how the U.S. President interacts with Congress and how executive-legislative relations work in the Mexican presidential system. But this is a testable proposition. If we find specific ways in which it is not true, we can investigate both systems to understand the reasons for the differences.

Because such questions are at the heart of the discipline, undergraduate students in all of our Political Science classes learn to frame questions about how politics works, and to interpret quantitative and qualitative data that can help



President Khator, Dean Roberts and Professor Scarrow at CLASS Research Day, 2012

them answer these questions. More advanced students take research methods classes, and some start conducting independent research. For example, in October, Political Science majors **Derick Fan**, **Stephanie Ruiz** and **Diane Stout** presented posters about their projects at the UH Undergraduate Research Day. Political Science major **Jessica Wahl** was recently awarded a Provost Undergraduate

Research Scholarship. All have been conducting their research under the supervision of faculty mentors.

By fostering such a question-oriented approach to politics, we give students skills they can use to understand complex social and political relationships. These skills make them better citizens, and they are useful in many professions in our data-rich society.

--**Susan Scarrow**
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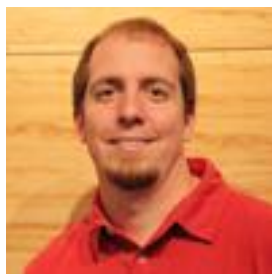
Alumni Spotlight

In the November 2012 elections UH Political Science alumnus **Senator John Whitmire** was re-elected to the Texas Senate, where he has served for the past 30 years. As the longest-serving member of that body, he holds the honorary title “Dean of the Texas Senate”, along with other positions such as Chair of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee, and member of several other committees.

After completing his B.A. in Political Science at UH, the future Senator Whitmire studied at the Bates College of Law and became a practicing attorney in the Houston law firm Locke Lord Bissell & Liddell LLP. Soon after graduating from UH, he started his long political career, winning his first election to the Texas House in 1972. He served in this body from 1973 to 1982, until his election to the Texas Senate.

Faculty News and Noteworthy

This fall we welcome three new faculty members. **Justin Kirkland** is an American politics scholar whose research focuses on legislative behavior and state legislative institutions. He earned his PhD at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



Justin Kirkland

We also have been joined by two members of a new instructional team that is

focusing on teaching the very important Core Courses in American and Texas Constitution and Government.



Bryan Cole

Bryan Cole comes to us from Ohio State University. His dissertation focused on the timely topic of how voter registration laws affect voter turnout.

Cyrus Contractor completed his doctorate at the University of Oklahoma. His dissertation



Cyrus Contractor

investigated Shi’a political and social participation in the United States.

Other News

In July Assistant Professor **Jennifer Clark** gave a talk at the Library of Congress on “Motion to Recommit”, a congressional procedure in the U.S. House commonly thought to protect the rights of the minority party.

Research That Matters: Doing Experiments in Political Science

In the social sciences, when we think of experimental research the discipline that comes most to mind is psychology. However, since the beginning of the 21st Century experimental research has been rapidly expanding in political science, to the point that every major journal usually publishes two or three experiments in each issue. The intellectual impetus for experimental methodology in political science is an increasing concern to establish "cause," something which is difficult to do using conventional public opinion surveys.

In an experiment, respondents are randomly assigned to a variety of different treatments, along with a control group, which makes it possible to test any number of hypotheses. The advent of Internet surveys has made experiments in



Professor Kent Tedin

political science an increasingly useful research tool.

Members of the UH Political Science Survey Experiments Working Group are using experiments to help answer important questions about the evolution of political opinion. One of their recently published papers demonstrates the power of experimental design. In this article, (*Political Research Quarterly*, September 2011), **Professors Kent Tedin,**

Brandon Rottinghaus and **Harrell Rodgers** investigated which mode of presidential communication is most effective at achieving desired political goals. Respondents saw President Bush argue in favor in the War in Iraq. One randomly assigned group saw Bush make his case in the State of Union message, another in an address from the Oval Office, a third in a press conference, and a control group simply saw a 20 minute video on the Founding Fathers. The research finds that the State of Union message did not increase support for the War in Iraq, but did increase Bush's favorability rating. The Oval Office message most effectively increased support for War, with the press conference falling in between.

In a second paper published in the *American Behavioral*

Scientist (December 2012), Professors Rottinghaus and Tedin used survey experiments to analyze the public opinion impact of Republican responses by (then) House minority leader John Boehner to President Obama's call for bipartisanship. Using actual video footage, they tested the impact of three different responses from Leader Boehner. They found that, compared to a control group, the more strident Boehner's response, the greater the reduction in approval for President Obama.

These examples illustrate how UH faculty and graduate students are using the power of survey experiments to help uncover the forces that shape public opinion.

Student Research & Awards

In summer 2012 graduate student **Andrea Eckelman** and **Assistant Professor Ling Zhu** received a grant from the UH Asian American Studies Center to complete a research paper on immigration, ethnic diversity and healthcare inequality in the American states.

Doctoral candidate **Robert Ross** recently was awarded a nationally-competitive Salvatori Fellowship from the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. The fellowship funds research related to the forming of the US Constitution. Ross is writing a dissertation that reassesses the

emergence of America's first political parties, looking at how political parties gained their constitutional foundation through "constitutional creations" involving the first amendment, the twelfth amendment, and Electoral College vote allocation by single-member districts.

Recent and Forthcoming Graduate Student Publications:

Veronica Caro and **Jennifer Clark**, "Multi-member Districts and the Substantive Representation of Women," forthcoming in *Politics & Gender*.

Ching-Hsing Wang "The Effects of Party Fractionalization and Party Polarization on Democracy," forthcoming in *Party Politics*.

George Hawley and **Iñaki Sagarzazu**, "Where Did the Votes Go? Reassessing American Party Realignment via Vote Transfers between Major Parties." forthcoming in *Electoral Studies*.

Graduate Alumni New Appointments and Honors

Carlos Huerta, Professor of Political Science at University of Texas-Corpus Christi, was elected to the APSA Council in Fall 2012.

Iñaki Sagarzazu has been appointed lecturer in politics at Glasgow University.

George Hawley holds a post-doctoral teaching fellowship in 2012-13 at the Honors College at the University of Houston.

Anna Mikulska was recently appointed to a two year post-doctoral fellowship at Rice University.

Introducing the Peek Family Scholarship

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We are pleased to announce that long-time UH supporters Dr Kathryn and Howard Peek have endowed a scholarship for undergraduate political science majors. The first scholarship from this new fund will be awarded in Spring 2013.

Howard Peek earned a Master’s degree in Political Science at the University of Houston. Dr. Kathryn Peek earned her MS in biology at the UH main campus and an MA in behavioral sciences

at UH Clear Lake before earning her Ph.D. in biomedical sciences at the University of Texas Health Science Center. She currently serves as Assistant Vice President for the UH Office of University Health Initiatives.

In explaining their reasons for establishing this scholarship, the Peeks mentioned their belief “that higher education is the best investment that citizens can make in their

community and that the University of Houston contributes great wealth to the region both economically and socially.”

The Department of Political Science greatly appreciates the Peeks’ support and leadership.

Pi Sigma Alpha Engages UH Students in Election Year



The UH chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national honors society for political science, has had an active fall semester. In September Pi Sigma Alpha members held a voter registration drive on the UH campus. Members had to learn registration rules and get deputized before they could help to register fellow students.

On Election Night 2012 Pi Sigma Alpha and the Political Science Department organized an election watch party at the Rockwell Pavilion in the M.D.

Anderson Library. Students, including many first time voters, dropped in all evening to get the latest news updates projected on the big screen television. Meanwhile, Pi Sigma Alpha members tracked the Electoral College results on their own hand-colored map. Student voters filled out posters explaining why they had voted. Assistant Professor Beth Simas watched along with the students, answering questions and contributing her own interpretations of the unfolding count.



Support UH Political Science!

***Share your news.**

We like to know what our former students are doing with their political science degrees! Also let us know if your e-mail address changes. Contact us at our e-mail address: PoliticalScience@uh.edu.

***Attend Alumni Events**

Watch your e-mail for more news about the 2nd Annual Political Science Alumni Event, which will be held in the spring. If you aren’t on the Political Science e-mail event mailing list and would like to be added to the list, please contact us at PoliticalScience@uh.edu.

***Support our students**

by contributing to our scholarship or general support funds. Donations help sponsor student activities such as visiting speakers and honor society events. Gifts to our scholarship fund bring double or triple benefits by enabling us to obtain matching funds for scholarship support.

To make an **on-line donation** or find out about other ways to give, including legacy gifts, [click here](#) or on the “Giving” tab on our web site.

Donations to the Political Science Department count as UH Annual Fund giving, and are tax deductible to the extent of the law.