



THE SOAPBOX

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE CENTER *for* POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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**CPP Promotes
Civility in Politics**

*Did you know
that in the past
soapbox crates were used as
temporary platforms
for making
impromptu public
speeches?*



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ON THE COVER

Wiley Runnestrand of Hiram College, Ohio, participates in a discussion at Allegheny's Tippie Alumni Center, where more than 50 students from around the country gathered May 18-19 for the National Conference of College Leaders: Pathway to Civility. Pictured next to Runnestrand is Michael Walton, also of Hiram College. (Photo by Bill Owen)

FROM *the* DIRECTOR



As you may know, the CPP occasionally steps beyond issues directly related to electoral engagement. In 2009, for example, we took a close look at the role of the media in American politics, and in 2007 we launched a novel program to help students appreciate non-electoral modes of political activism.

This past year, we set our sights on what we believe is one of the most important issues of our day: the way politics is conducted in America. One of the encouraging signs from the 2008 election is the increasing number of Americans, especially young Americans, willing to come to the polls. At the same time, segments of the electorate have become highly partisan and vocal, leading to a very different tone in politics. Allegheny alum and Stanford scholar Morris Fiorina '68 writes about this decline in civility in his new book, *Disconnect: The Breakdown of Representation in American Politics*. He notes that there is a "new cadre of political activist of various points of view who are self-righteous, obsessive and focused on single issues. They infuse the public discussion with acrimony, name-calling and resorting to any means to win."

This sentiment was echoed by *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, who pondered "whether we can seriously discuss serious issues any longer and make decisions on the basis of the national interest." Brookings Institution scholar Darrell West suggested we may have entered an "arms race of incendiary rhetoric," and Peggy Noonan of *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, "It's a mistake not to see something new, something raw and bitter and dangerous, in the particular moment we're in."

What, if anything, can a small liberal arts college do about it? Plenty!

The CPP's first step was to call attention to the growing rancor in our politics. With support from Allegheny President Jim Mullen and the Office of Public Affairs, the CPP commissioned a poll of 1,000 randomly selected Americans. To our knowledge, this was the first national

survey ever conducted specifically on the issue of civility in politics. The results, first reported in *USA Today* last April, spread like wildfire across the country. In brief, a vast majority of Americans view civility as a critical piece of our democracy, and they are truly disappointed by the deteriorating tone of politics. Also, they are eager to reach compromise solutions on a range of issues. In the pages to follow, we've included some material from the report, "Nastiness, Name-calling & Negativity."

In May, the CPP and the Civic Engagement Council at Allegheny convened a national conference of college Democrats, Republicans and independents from 14 different colleges and universities and nine states. Focused on civility and compromise, our program showed that young Americans want to move our national political discourse in a new direction.

Finally, we have begun planning several other thought-provoking events for the coming year. Sit on the sidelines and simply fret about this important issue? That's not what we do at the CPP.

Although much of the past school year has been spent working on civility-related projects, the CPP has not overlooked many other topics—from an important forum on the gay rights movement in the Republican Party, to a prestigious campaign finance panel, to a popular political music event. It's been a wonderfully busy year, as you will read in the pages to follow.

As always, I would like to thank the CPP student fellows for their unflagging dedication and hard work. I would also be remiss if I did not thank Mary Solberg, our program coordinator, for her efforts. Because of their commitment, this small operation—at this small liberal arts college—is making a big difference!

Warmest regards,

Daniel M. Shea, Ph.D.
Director



CPP Poll Ignites Civility Discussion

BY RICHARD SHAFRANEK '10

We at the Center for Political Participation hadn't planned to spend the year talking, thinking, and writing about civility in politics—but we did.

The issue first came to the fore, for us, with Congressman Joe Wilson's (R-SC) outburst during President Obama's address to Congress on Sept. 9, 2009. Before that, we noticed a growing incivility late in the 2008 Presidential race, but it was easy to brush off the often-fiery rhetoric as merely indicative of the passions and fervor of a potentially transformative election. Congressman Wilson's behavior, however, really seemed to demarcate a strange, angry, uncivil new world for the conduct of politics.

CPP seeks opinion of average Americans

Inspired to seek some answers, the CPP embarked on a series of civility-related events (which you can read about, in greater detail, elsewhere in this issue of *The Soapbox*). Our programs and events got students here and throughout the country actively seeking ways to address the problem of incivility. One of the highlights, for me at least, was joining CPP fellow Maya Brod in giving a presentation on civility and politics at the Harvard University Institute of Politics. Despite our efforts, we faced some nagging questions: What do people—the American people—really think about the issue of civility in politics? Is it that important to them? Do they perceive the same decline we'd been talking about for months? Does it matter? Does it turn them off from politics? Such questions demanded answers. In the words of Professor Daniel Shea, the CPP's

director, "to our knowledge, a systematic, comprehensive study of civility in politics had not yet been undertaken."

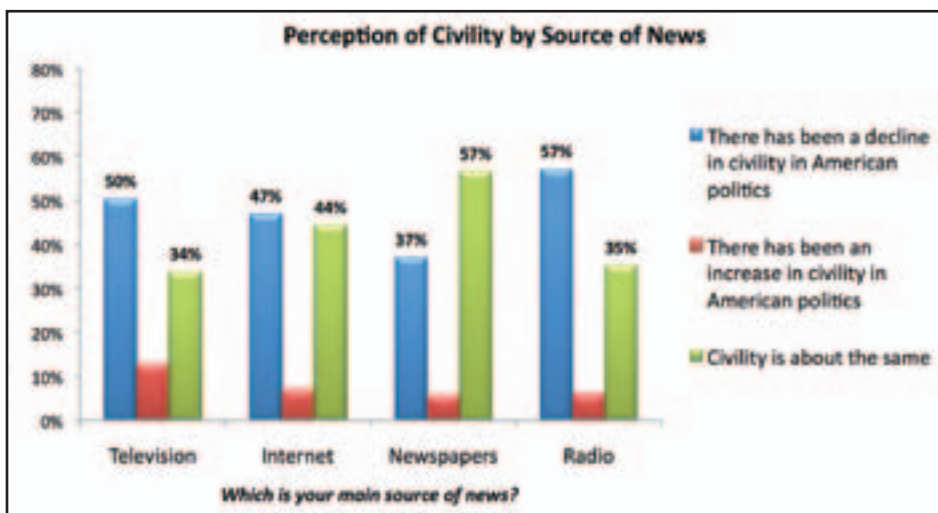
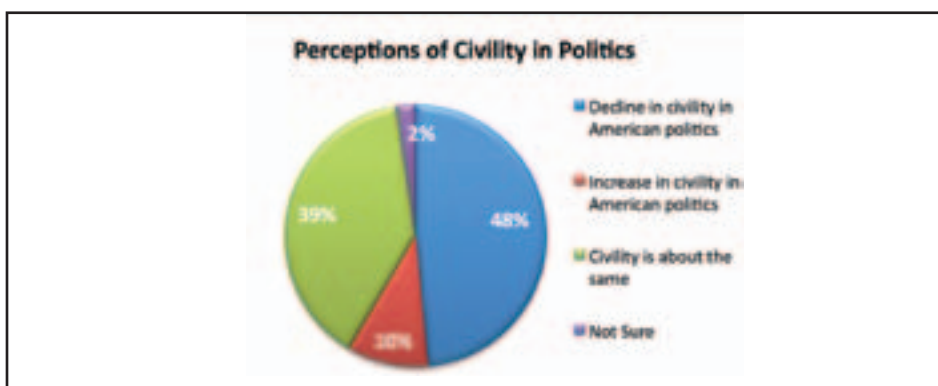
Civility survey confirms speculation

The CPP decided to conduct a survey. The project was of particular interest to CPP Fellows Maya Brod, Katie Janocko and to me because we were enrolled, at the time, in Professor Shea's research methods course. Conducting a survey would give us the opportunity to apply what we'd learned in the classroom. We spent many hours and late nights in the CPP conference room (and several fine Meadville restaurants) brainstorming our survey design. With Professor Shea's guidance, input, and practiced judgment, we crafted a thoughtful survey instrument (available online at allegheny.edu/civility) related to civility in politics. Thanks to the generous financial support of Allegheny's administration, we commissioned Zogby International, a reputable pollster, to put the survey in the field. Zogby polled—via telephone—1,000 average Americans. Our margin of error was +/- 3.2 percentage points, given a 95 percent confidence interval.

Until we commissioned the poll, our long discussions about civility consisted of little more than speculation. As far as we knew, the issue could have been off the radar for most Americans. Our survey,

however, confirmed our suspicions. We found that 95 percent of Americans, an overwhelming majority, believe civility to be important for politics. Furthermore, a majority of Americans—and a stronger majority of Americans who closely follow political news—believe that civility in politics has declined since the 2008 election. Interestingly, Americans' perceptions of increased incivility also seemed to be a function of where they get their political news: Radio listeners, for example, are much more likely to perceive a decline in civility than are newspaper readers. Most Americans, notably, seemed to agree on a "rulebook" for civility in politics. More than 80 percent of Americans considered behaviors like "belittling or insulting someone" or "shouting over someone you disagree with during an argument" to be out of line. So not only did Americans generally agree on what the rules of civility should be, they also agreed that those rules are regularly being broken.

Other findings were rather encouraging: 87 percent of respondents suggested, for example, that it is possible for people to disagree about politics respectfully. Perhaps most strikingly, an overwhelming majority of Americans suggested that they wanted compromise on a number of contentious issues ranging from health care to immigration. The complete results of our survey are available online at allegheny.edu/civility. It's difficult to highlight all of our findings because so much of what we learned is interesting, important, and compelling. A look at the full report, then, is definitely worth it.



These two graphs are a sample of the questions asked in the CPP poll of 1,000 Americans in the spring of 2010. Source: “Nastiness, Name-calling & Negativity: The Allegheny College Survey of Civility and Compromise in American Politics”

Media reaction widespread

Media reaction to our survey was immediate and forceful. *USA Today* put our survey on the front page of their Web site (where it garnered more than 2,300 reader comments) and featured us in their daily newspaper. Pulitzer Prize-winning editor of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* David Shribman compared Allegheny’s ideas about civility in politics to the Marshall Plan and Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society. “Years from now, if we are lucky,” Shribman writes, “we may recall that the big idea of the early 21st century came from Allegheny College in Meadville, Pa.” Clearly, we had struck a chord.

While our civility survey yielded some fascinating and important results, it is not an end in itself. Rather, it underscored the need for more action. In the coming year, the Center for Political Participation will focus its attention on other ways to bring civility back to political discourse. Hopefully, the answers lie with the same people who began the discussion around the CPP conference room a year ago: the students themselves.

Editor’s Note: Richard Shafranek graduated from Allegheny College in May 2010, having double-majored in English and political science. He served two years as a CPP fellow. In August, he began a one-year appointment with AmeriCorps as a Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) at Hiram College, Hiram, Ohio.

More on the CPP’s civility activities on page 6



ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

Money & Politics

PHOTOS BY MARY SOLBERG

“Dream team” panel discusses finance reform

They are what CPP Director Daniel Shea called “the dream team of panelists.”

Megan Luce, Sean Parnell, Stephen Medvic and Brenda Wright served on the Dec. 1 panel Money & Politics: Whose Democracy? The evening discussion at Tippie Alumni Center focused on the role of money in American elections and politics.

The panel discussion came eight weeks before the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that under the First Amendment Congress may not limit corporate and union funding of independent political broadcasts in candidate elections. The decision drew impassioned criticism from many camps, including the Obama Administration, that claimed the ruling would empower special interests and their lobbyists.

The CPP-hosted event provided an opportunity for students and others from the community to discuss the impending Supreme Court case.



Sean Parnell and Brenda Wright talk after the formal panel discussion.

Money & Politics panelists discuss finance reform at Tippie Alumni Center. Pictured, left to right, are: Sean Parnell, Brenda Wright, Megan Luce, and Stephen Medvic.

FROM THE PANELISTS:

“The legitimacy of democracy really depends on participation being broadly shared. Those who give over \$200 to an election are 95 percent white, 80 percent male, and 80 percent with incomes over \$100,000. It’s not representative of our country. The convenient short-hand answer is to get rid of the money from politics, but you’ll never get rid of that. The question, then, is, ‘How can government democratize the role of money in politics?’”

Brenda Wright

Director of the Democracy Program
DEMOS
Boston, Mass.

“Limiting political spending is like limiting free speech. ... Corporations represent the people, too.”

Sean Parnell

President, Center for Competitive Politics
Alexandria, Va.

“Campaign finance laws haven’t really addressed critical core issues to creating a better government. Current campaign finance laws are failing us. If we want to move forward, we really need to try new things, to keep the big money from influencing politics.”

Megan Luce

Associate Director, Democracy Matters
Hamilton, N.Y.

“Campaign finance is about money. The big-picture question is: ‘Is spending free speech?’”

Stephen Medvic

Associate Professor of Government, Franklin & Marshall College
Lancaster, Pa.

ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

Gay Rights and the Republican Party

Log Cabin speaker espouses personal liberty

The Center for Political Participation hosted one of the most thought-provoking events of the 2009-10 academic year with a visit by Scott Ables, a member of the national board of directors of the Log Cabin Republicans and a nephew of the late-great crooner Bing Crosby.

"As much as I love politics, there is nothing more thrilling than putting on my black tie and performing for an audience," Ables told Rebecca Schneider in an on-air interview Nov. 16 at Allegheny's radio station, WARC. As WARC general manager, Schneider teased Ables into singing an obscure vaudeville tune, as well as a rendition of "White Christmas," made famous by his famous Uncle Bing.

"I like the idea that I'm giving people an opportunity to relive a moment in their lives," Ables told Schneider.

For several years, beginning in the late 1960s, Ables appeared and sang on many television programs, including "The Lawrence Welk Show" and "The Art Linkletter Show." Currently, he lives in Los Angeles and is president of the Ventura Group, which provides educational and training services to mental health professionals and educators in the U.S. and Canada.

Same-sex marriage not on "front burner"

Later that day, Ables delivered a keynote address, titled "Gay Rights and the Republican

Party," to a packed Tippie Alumni Center. As a member of the Log Cabin's national board of directors, Ables discussed his organization and how it works within the Republican Party to advocate for equal rights for all Americans, including gays and lesbians.

Log Cabin trustees, he explained, include some of the most respected businessmen in the country, some acting as CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. "They don't wear their sexuality on their sleeve," Ables said. "That goes on at their house, I suppose. It's none of our business."

What is important, he added, is that they espouse what the Republican Party stands for, specifically, balanced budgets and fiscal discipline. The debate over same-sex marriage "isn't on the front burner" for Log Cabin Republicans, Ables explained, because same-

sex marriage "is a moral force set forth in the preamble of the Constitution."

"I'm more concerned about the divorce rate and its effects on children," Ables said.

The Republican Party needs to expand its platform to be more inclusive, he said, adding, "The Republican Party needs to be more than one issue. They will not have a chance unless they reach out to more people and become more diverse."

Still, Ables focused on the politics of equal rights today, stressing personal liberty over party affiliation.

"I don't care what party you're from, just get involved," Ables told students. "Regardless of party affiliation, it is essential that citizens become informed of all of the facts as to the issues and candidates in their city, country and state. An informed electorate is critical to sustaining our liberty and retaking control of our government."

In a blog from the Allegheny College Year of Social Change site, student Robbie Henderson wrote that Ables' speech made him rethink the Republican Party. Henderson wrote: "More importantly, [Ables] showed that the fight for equality cannot only be fought by one side of the political spectrum; that all people, under the Republican ideal of limited government, should be free to love who they love without the government telling them not to."



At Top: Scott Ables of Log Cabin Republicans spoke at Tippie Alumni Center Nov. 16, 2009.

Above: Scott Ables talks with Allegheny students, left to right: Brian Ahrens '12, Derek Dye '11, and Kim Versaw '10. (Photos by Mary Solberg)



Pathway to Civility Conference

STORY BY MARY SOLBERG, PHOTOS BY BILL OWEN

CPP hosts national conference on civility in politics

Joe Menze was the president of the College Republicans at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, Ind. Leyla Mansour-Cole was the president of the school's College Democrats. Given the political climate in America this past year, was it possible that they could work together?

"You can be 180 degrees different from me, but I can work with you," Menze said.

So he contacted Mansour-Cole about joining forces to raise money for the suffering people of Haiti, devastated by the Jan. 12 earthquake. Together, the two organizations planned a benefit concert that raised more than \$1,000 for Haitian relief.

"If I don't sit down with her and she won't sit down with me, nothing will happen," Menze explained. "So we sat down and look what happened."

Menze reflected on this story during the National Conference of College Leaders: Pathway to Civility, held at Allegheny College May 18-19. The story struck a crucial chord with other college students from nine different states and the District of Columbia who gathered to examine civility in politics.

More than 50 students convened for the two-day program and drafted a consensus statement that listed 10 tips to improve civility. (See sidebar on page 8.)

"The only thing we hear is bickering and arguing between the left and the right, between conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans. If we can find a way to actually open up dialogue, and maybe not even compromise, but actually get to know each other and understand where we each come from, it'll be better," said Alec Devall, a student at Louisiana State University.

Tom Horsman of Catholic University, Washington, D.C., added, "It's great to have this type of forum to raise awareness of the problem."

Encouraging students

Daniel M. Shea, political science professor at Allegheny College and director of its Center for Political Participation, said the need for the conference emerged as the American health care debate turned ugly this past year. The robust political activity that surged among youth in the 2008 election substantially declined just a year later.

"Our idea was to encourage students from both sides of the aisle to work together to examine the serious issue of civility in politics, establish a high bar for the respectful exchange of ideas, and, in the process, perhaps begin to develop some lasting friendships," Shea said. "We were quite impressed both with the students' passion for issues and with their determination to work together to create opportunities to reach consensus where possible. Civility, it seems, may be one of those areas for agreement."

U.S. Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper of Pennsylvania's 3rd Legislative District was the conference keynote speaker. She acknowledged that the 111th Congress has faced unprecedented incivility, particularly in the throes of the national health care debate. "It's been eye-opening for me to see," Dahlkemper told the students, adding that she herself had been the object of threats following her "yes" vote for health reform. "The good news I have to offer is that there really is civility in Congress except that it does not make the nightly news cut."

Listening and judging

An afternoon workshop on May 18 featured Peter Hwosch, founder and owner of Hwosch

cont'd. on pg. 8



At top: The Pathway to Civility conference held at Allegheny College May 18-19 drew more than 50 college students and administrators from across the country to discuss ways to reverse a growing incivility in politics.

Above left: Lauren Wilhelm of Slippery Rock University listens attentively to a workshop leader at the Campus Center.

Above right: CPP fellow Richard Shafranek leads a discussion on civility and politics at the conference.

Bottom: Dontavious Jarrells of Hiram College enjoys the conversation at the Tippie Alumni Center.



Pathway to Civility Conference, cont'd.

cont'd. from pg. 6

Productions, Make It Real Films and True Wealth Trainings, based in Oregon. A documentary producer and core member of the Transpartisan Alliance, he filmed the 2006 Reuniting America workshop that included Al Gore and stakeholders across the political spectrum.

During his workshop at the Campus Center, Hwosch had students pair off and practice exercises in listening and responding. Also, they examined how they judge themselves and others.

Afterward, Hwosch asked the students: "Why is it so hard to hang with people we disagree with? Why isn't that provocative discussion fueling great new ideas instead of rancor and rage?"

Two other morning workshops on May 19 featured Richard Shafranek and Maya Brod, graduating CPP fellows, and Michael Wolf, Ph.D., of Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, Ind.

Brod and Shafranek's PowerPoint presentation—"What's Political Correctness Anymore?"—prompted much discussion on the role of college students in tempering the incivility our nation faces.

Wolf's lecture was titled "'If Men Were Angels': The Merits of Political Disagreement." Wolf acknowledged that you can't

avoid disagreement when discussing politics. "The paradox," he explained, "is that we want disagreement for deliberation, but we don't want disagreement to stifle political participation. Citizens do have the power to determine how much disagreement they allow in. They can control political discussion."

Matt Lacombe, an Allegheny senior and a CPP fellow, led the final activity that resulted in the "10 Tips Toward Civility."

"I hope our conversation will continue on Facebook, maintaining both its passionate yet civil tone and allowing students to participate from different parts of the country," Lacombe said.

Conference participants included representatives from the following schools: Allegheny College, Louisiana State University, Catholic University, Central Michigan University, Macalester University, Chatham University, Hiram College, Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, Slippery Rock University, SUNY Fredonia, Thiel College, California University of Pennsylvania, Winthrop University and the University of Florida.

Above: Reflecting on personal experiences with conflict resolution are Daeja Baker, left, of Chatham University, and Erik Coler of SUNY Fredonia.

10 Tips Toward Civility

The following are recommendations from college students at the Pathway to Civility Conference.

1. Listen to opposing views.
2. Seek shared values.
3. Acknowledge the legitimacy of opposing positions.
4. Identify the problem at hand, focusing on it rather than on larger conflicts.
5. Avoid political caricatures, labels and generalizations that may not truly represent the views of your adversaries.
6. Accept that disagreement will exist without giving up your own convictions.
7. Clarify what is being said before attacking and/or responding.
8. Recognize the value of solutions beyond those offered by traditional party platforms.
9. Consider the consequences of what you say and do.
10. Hold yourself personally accountable for your own political actions.



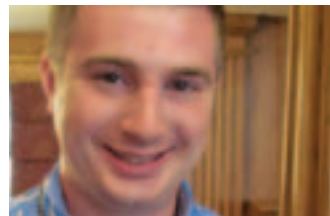
Several students from Hiram College discuss what they've learned at Allegheny's two-day conference on civility. Shown here are Michael Walton, left, and Wiley Runnestrand, both of whom graduated this spring.

Thoughts on Civility



"Personally, I believe a lot of the incivility we see today is rooted in frustration. People feel that they're not being heard."

– Gary Whitla, Thiel College



"The harsh, uncivil tone of politics has turned people off to politics. Going forward, we do need to change the tone. It has to start off small at an individual level. It's not easy."

– Tom Horsman, Catholic University



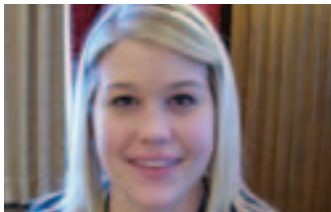
"We need to get back to the golden rule: Treat people like you want to be treated."

– Sydney Evans, Winthrop University



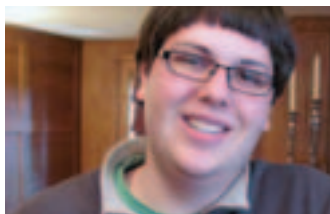
"We can all agree that incivility promotes a society in which negative infractions are reinforced. However, we cannot confuse incivility with passion for politics."

– Rodney Jacobs, Hiram College



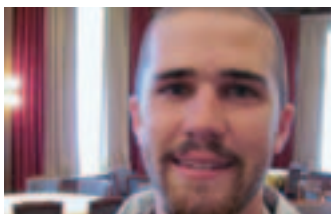
"Ultimately, it comes down to personal responsibility and how you conduct yourself with other people."

– Brittany Fox, University of Florida



"Building trust among people is important in order to have the difficult conversations we will encounter in this country. With trust, we can have serious conversations with good intentions. We're all working for the same goals, ultimately. We need to get out of our bubbles and get exposed to different viewpoints."

– Robert Hemphill, Macalester University



"I've seen political participation skyrocket, so is incivility a bad thing? I think we need to identify exactly what incivility is. I'm for passionate protest, but we do need to draw the line at personal attacks or it detracts from the debate at hand."

– Alec Devall, Louisiana State University

William Salama of Palestine and Daniella Shlomo of Tel Aviv, Israel, represented the OneVoice Movement during their February 2010 visit. (Photos by Bill Owen)

ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

OneVoice Movement

BY MARY SOLBERG

Movement promotes conflict resolution

Five years ago, the Israeli army hunted down an armed militant on William Salama's college campus on the West Bank in Palestine. During the 20-hour siege, Salama's dormitory was destroyed, books were covered with dust and bullets, and he and others were forced to remove their clothes in a body search.

"We were very angry," Salama recalls of the incident in November 2005. "I thought to myself, 'What can I do to end this conflict?' I believe in non-violence."

About four years later—on April 18, 2009—Daniella Shlomo experienced her own frightening moment. She was home in Tel Aviv when she got a telephone call that her cousin, a traffic policeman, had been seriously injured when a Palestinian motorist struck him. Her cousin continues to undergo surgeries for his injuries; the Palestinian was jailed.

Shlomo, who served with the Israeli army, has grown up with the uncertainty of her personal safety in the war-torn Middle East. "My mother always said, 'When you go in the bus, look at every single face, or if you go into a restaurant, stay away from the front door.' To me, it seems normal, but talking about it makes me realize it's not normal," Shlomo says. "I want my own kids to have a normal life."

When Salama and Shlomo met for the first time at Allegheny College last February, one wondered what would happen. An Israeli and a Palestinian? Would there be anger? Bitterness? Hostility?

But as a steady, wet snow blanketed the Allegheny campus Feb. 18-19, the pair did the only thing reasonable, fun-loving

20-somethings do: throw snowballs. In its sparkling whiteness, the snow symbolized the peace and hope that Salama and Shlomo brought to campus.

OneVoice kicks off Allegheny's civility program

The Center for Political Participation invited Salama and Shlomo to kick off Allegheny's year-long examination of civility in politics. As members of the grassroots OneVoice Movement, they understand that civility is at the core of any future resolution in the Middle East. OneVoice was founded in 2002, in the wake of the breakdown of the Camp David Accords. Its aim is to empower citizens to achieve a lasting peace.

"We seek to end violent extremism on both sides," explained China Sajadian, program director of International Education at OneVoice in New York City. She accompanied Shlomo and Salama and led a conflict resolution workshop at Allegheny's Campus Center on Feb. 19.

At the morning workshop, faculty, staff and students gave their personal reactions to conflict and discussed their positions on national security, militarism, and civil protest. One activity had participants stand on one side of the room or the other, based on whether they believed that conflict is or is not inherently negative. Interestingly, most agreed that conflict is not negative.

A global problem

During their first day on campus Feb. 18, Shlomo and Salama met with students in Assistant Professor Shanna Kirschner's Middle East Government and Politics class, as well as her junior seminar class, Democracy in the Middle East.

One student asked Shlomo and Salama what they think is the United States' "ideal role" in the Middle East.

"We live in a global world now. It's not a secret that the U.S. has a major role," Shlomo responded. "Without [U.S.] pressure, there will not be a peace process; you need a middleman in this case."

Salama added, "As Palestinians, we have hope in President Obama."

The OneVoice contingent also fielded many questions at an evening presentation at the Tillotson Room of the Tippie Alumni Center. Rabbi Ronald Bernstein-Goff, Allegheny's on-campus rabbi, asked one of the most pointed questions, saying, "Forgetting the past...Is that really realistic when the past is the reason this [conflict] exists? It's a Catch-22."

Shlomo responded, "I'm not saying forget the past, but you have to know how to move forward. Compromise will have to be made despite the past."

OneVoice sends young people like Shlomo and Salama around the world to spread the message that peace is possible in the Middle East. According to a OneVoice poll, 74 percent of Palestinians and 78 percent of Israelis are willing to accept a two-state solution.

For more information about the OneVoice Movement, go to:
www.OneVoiceMovement.org.



Allegheny students raise \$500 for Meadville Council on the Arts

Allegheny College students took political activism to a new, creative level last spring when they raised \$500 for the Meadville Council on the Arts.

"It's fantastic. This benefits a community organization, a non-profit service to the whole community," said Ed Miller, president of the Meadville Council on the Arts.

tion. Participating bands were asked to perform music with a political or social activism message.

"Perhaps the most basic, and important, way to get involved is through the exercise of our First Amendment right to free speech," Shafranek said. "We wanted to recognize the legitimacy of music as a means of political involvement."

Miller, of the Council on the Arts, agreed. His organization, located on the second floor of Meadville's historic Market House, offers myriad artistic venues, including a gallery, a theater,

The winner was Andrew Grossman of College Park, Md., who was awarded \$500. Second place went to Allegheny's own Ben Bussewitz, who won \$100. The third-place finisher was Gnome Hut, an Allegheny band that won \$50.



The Center for Political Participation, Allegheny's WARC radio station, College Democrats, and Allegheny Student Government sponsored the first annual "Rock for Change Battle of the Bands" on April 16, netting \$500. Money was raised from band registration fees, t-shirt sales and a raffle of an iPod Touch.

The idea for the fundraiser began with Richard Shafranek, a graduating student fellow of the Center for Political Participa-

and space for piano and art lessons. But like so many businesses and organizations, the Council on the Arts was hit hard by the recession in the past 18 months. It still has not received any state funding this past year.

The arts are always the first to get hit," Miller added, "so this gift from Allegheny students will go directly to the people to expose them to the arts."

The "Rock for Change Battle of the Bands" event attracted eight bands and solo acts.



At top: Chad Rugh, left, and Sean Holden (in horse head) perform at the CPP's first Rock for Change Art & Activism event on April 16. (Photo by Mary Solberg)

At left: Meadville Council on the Arts President Ed Miller, far right, accepts a check for \$500 from Allegheny students Brett Bacon '11, Richard Shafranek '10, and Rebecca Schneider '10. (Photo by Steven Jones)

At right: Guitarist Andrew Grossman of College Park, Md., won first place. (Photo by Mary Solberg)

Journalists: David Beard and Andrew Lubin

Online journalist, combat reporter offer insights

Two journalists—one an online editor and the other an independent combat correspondent—visited Allegheny College this past year.

The Center for Political Participation hosted both journalists during their separate visits to campus. David Beard, editor of *The Boston Globe's* online presence, Boston.com, spoke at Grounds for Change on Sept. 21. Andrew Lubin, a 1974 Allegheny graduate and a journalist embedded with the U.S. Marines in Afghanistan and in Haiti, lectured Feb. 23 at Quigley Hall's Henderson Auditorium.

David Beard visit

In his speech, "Ten Thoughts on the Future of Journalism," Beard outlined what it will take for journalists to continue to produce important, relevant work despite the financial crisis faced by the print media in the past year.

The Boston Globe's online edition, for example, published a story about 100 chambermaids in Boston who were earning only \$8 an hour with no benefits. About 500 online readers commented on the story, inspiring a rally outside the Hyatt Regency in Boston.

The article, Beard said, is a "template to make a difference." He explained, "It's the power of a good story told and the power of getting people to care."

In a question-and-answer segment, Beard acknowledged that the print media "provides a vital role," but added that most newspapers likely would not survive another decade. "People will be getting their news electronically," he said.



David Beard, editor of Boston.com, The Boston Globe's online presence, talks with Alexandra Jaffe '11 of Allegheny's The Campus. (Photo by Mary Solberg)

David Beard's 10 tips for news in an online age

1. Find a clever idea; it works!
2. You can make a difference.
3. Ask your neighbors for their thoughts and input.
4. Be your own paper girl/boy by marketing your stories.
5. Love your town; love your topic.
6. The best-edited online site attracts the most people.
7. In lieu of advertising, consider affiliate links with companies, such as Amazon, so that you can get a percentage of each sale off your site.
8. Seek volunteer contributions to help develop a story.
9. Find interesting, tech-savvy people to develop an angle.
10. Use technology to your benefit, e.g. maps, images.

He encouraged higher education to develop new ways to teach journalism, specifically in providing cross-over courses in the sciences, the environment and business.

Investigative journalism will remain vital and intact, Beard added, if journalists and online outlets pursue funding for research from small companies.

Andrew Lubin visit

When Andrew Lubin traveled to war-torn Afghanistan in 2009 with Gen. Larry Nicholson, local leaders around the city of Marjah asked him, "When are you going to attack Marjah? It's a pit of snakes that needs to be cleaned out."

Lubin, a 1974 Allegheny grad, understood right then and there how much the Afghan people want peace, too.

"They want what we want: a steady job, doctors for their families, schools for their kids, food, and water," Lubin told a packed lunchtime audience at Quigley Hall's Henderson Auditorium.

In his talk, titled "On the Front Lines with the Marines in Haiti and Afghanistan," Lubin described how the United States, and specifically the Marines, must implement counterinsurgency tactics in war-ravaged areas like Afghanistan and in earthquake-damaged Haiti. The solution advocated by the Obama Administration is to do three things: clear, hold and build.

"We need to clear out the bad guys, keep them out, and build local schools, hospitals and jobs," Lubin explained. "We need to make the Afghans choose between the Taliban or us, so choose us!"

Political science professor Howard Tamashiro was happy that Lubin's talk generated student discussion. "Mr. Lubin believes the U.S. could win the hearts and minds of the local [Afghan] people by introducing American development policies and creating jobs," Tamashiro said. "Many students began asking if this idea of micro-tribal economic development would be self-sustaining."

Three Books Published from the CPP

Lubin emphasized the importance of employing the clear-hold-build concept in Haiti as well. He explained: "Since Mother Nature handled the 'clear,' the 2,000 Marines of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit were working on the 'hold.'...The Marines supplied food, water, and medical care."



Andrew Lubin '74 returned to Allegheny College Feb. 23 to talk about his life as an embedded journalist in Haiti and Afghanistan. (Photo by Bill Owen)

During his visit to Allegheny, Lubin also visited Professor Courtney Joffness' journalism class in the Oddfellows Building. He described his career with the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondent Association and the research he did for his critically acclaimed book, *Charlie Battery: A Marine Artillery Unit in Iraq*.

"I patterned my *Charlie Battery* book after Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*," Lubin told the class, adding that he has been inspired by such writers/reporters as Dexter Filkins, John Burns, David Halberstam, Walter Cronkite, Ernie Pyle, and John Hersey.

Student Greg Waples asked Lubin whether it was difficult to report the facts in an era of blogging and Internet news.

"We've definitely segued from news to opinion," Lubin said, "but I make it important to keep my opinions out of it."

Center for Political Participation Director Daniel M. Shea has edited and co-authored three separate books this year.

In April, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. published *Campaign Rules: A 50-State Guide to Campaigns and Elections in America*, a 232-page volume that provides political activists, researchers, and all citizens an easy-to-use reference guide to help sort through the dizzying breadth of state-based electoral rules.

Shea co-authored the book with Nina Kasniunas, currently an assistant professor of political science and international relations at Goucher College, Baltimore, Md.

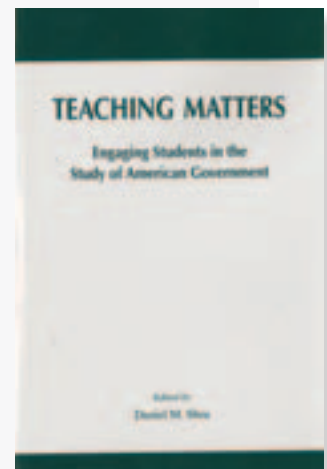
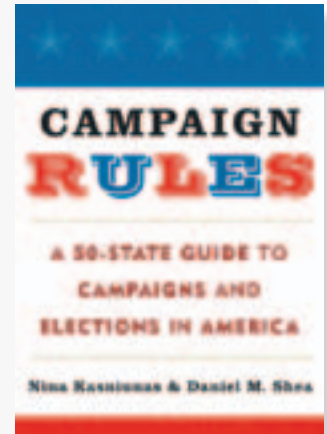
To order *Campaign Rules: A 50-State Guide to Campaigns and Elections in America*, go to amazon.com.

Shea also edited a 200-page paperback, *Teaching Matters: Engaging Students in the Study of American Government*, released in April 2010 and published by Longman, a division of Pearson Education, Inc.

Teaching Matters includes 12 chapters written by academics throughout the country who explore the connections between effective teaching and student political engagement. Some of the chapters deal with effective use of technology in the classroom, online instruction, and the use of case studies as a teaching tool.

"Simply stated, I believe our work in the classroom can inspire students to roll up their sleeves and become more connected in the political realm," Shea says of the book.

Also, the 4th edition of *Campaign Craft: The Strategies, Tactics and Art of Political Campaign Management*, co-authored by Shea and Michael John Burton, was released this spring by Greenwood Publishing Group/Praeger Publishers. Refurbished for the Obama age of political campaigning, the 240-page volume features contemporary campaign techniques from every angle, ranging from voter contact methods to future trends in political campaigning. To order, go to greenwood.com.



HARVARD CONFERENCE

CPP “wows” with presentation on civility and politics

CPP fellows Maya Brod and Richard Shafranek delivered an hour-long presentation on civility and politics at Harvard University’s Emerging Leaders conference Feb. 26-28.

“Henceforth, this will be known as ‘The Allegheny Initiative,’” said Bill Purcell, director of Harvard’s Institute of Politics, sponsor of the annual conference.

Purcell joined some 60 college students and administrators from throughout the country in applauding the CPP presentation, which examined the growing trend of incivility in our nation’s political discourse. Brod and Shafranek, both 2010 graduates of Allegheny, showed PowerPoint slides and a video and led a lively discussion on the causes and effects of incivility.

Besides Allegheny, there are 19 other colleges and universities that are members of Harvard’s National Campaign for Political and Civic Engagement. Under the auspices of the Institute of Politics, the consortium gathers once a year to share ideas and discuss program development to enhance youth political engagement.

This year’s conference focused on leadership. Harvard lecturers Pete Zimmerman and Kessely Hong delivered programs on ethics and negotia-

tion/mediation, respectively. Harvard Kennedy School Professor Carlos Diaz Rosillo gave a lunchtime talk on presidential leadership, from President Kennedy to President Obama, and Teresa Vilmain, a top political organizer and consultant, discussed team building.

“This will be known as ‘the Allegheny Initiative.’”

“To have power,” Vilmain told students, “you have to give it away.”

The IOP’s Director of Polling, John Della Volpe,

discussed the role of new media and also shared the findings of Harvard’s March 2010 “Survey of Young Americans’ Attitudes Toward Politics and Public Service.”



CPP Fellows Richard Shafranek '10 and Maya Brod '10 shake hands with Bill Purcell, then-director of Harvard University’s Institute of Politics. (Photo by Mary Solberg)

GRATITUDE TO THE SCHMITT ENDOWMENT

The Michael B. Schmitt Endowment helped fund many programs and scholarly research of the Center for Political Participation this past year.

Allegheny students, members of the community and schools throughout the country participated in CPP-sponsored events, ranging from programs on civility and politics, finance reform, and equal rights for all citizens. The Schmitt Endowment helped finance these programs and more.

“Without a doubt, the Schmitt Endowment ensures the future of the CPP at Allegheny College and makes it possible to examine important issues,” said Daniel M. Shea, CPP director.

Founded in 2008, the Schmitt Endowment is named in honor of the late Michael B. Schmitt, a member of the Class of 1971 and a political science major.

NEWS BRIEFS

Movie and Discussion

• In an effort to examine civility in its broadest sense, the CPP and the Office of Residence Life showed the movie “Promises” Nov. 4 at Henderson Auditorium, Quigley Hall. Afterward, Maya Brod, a graduating CPP fellow, and Sam Rigotti, a senior residence hall assistant, led students, faculty and members of the Meadville community in a thought-provoking discussion of the movie. “Promises” captures the lives of seven children—both Israeli and Palestinian—and explores the troubled boundaries of a Palestinian refugee camp, an

Israeli settlement in the West Bank, and the neighborhoods of Jerusalem. The film offers a refreshing and sometimes lighthearted look at the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Constitution Day

• The CPP celebrated Constitution Day last September by hosting a big-screen viewing of President Barack Obama’s historic health care reform address to a joint session of Congress. The president’s speech was aired on all the major networks Sept. 9. Students gathered for refreshments and a discussion at Grounds for Change at the Campus Center.

State of the Union

• Another big-screen event was held Jan. 27 at Quigley Hall for President Barack Obama’s State of the Union address. The state of the economy became a centerpiece of the president’s talk. Refreshments followed the campus event.

REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES DEBATE

The six declared Republican candidates for Pennsylvania's primary in the 3rd Congressional Legislative District debated in front of a standing-room-only crowd at Quigley Hall's Henderson Auditorium April 26.

"This was an important primary election, and we were quite pleased to host a candidate forum this year," said Daniel M. Shea, director of the Center for Political Participation, sponsor of the event.

Shea and Keith Gushard, *Meadville Tribune* political reporter, moderated the 90-minute debate attended mostly by citizens of the district. In his opening remarks, Mike Kelly, who three weeks later won the Republican nomination, described the U.S. House of Representatives as "the people's party." A Butler car dealership owner, Kelly added, "It's time to get people like us into office."

All of the candidates gave opening statements and then took questions from the moderators. Topics included jobs in northwestern Pennsylvania, military action against terrorists and the countries that support them, tax cuts, and campaign finance reform. As expected, most of the candidates voiced similar platforms; the differences came in the specifics.

Besides Kelly, 61, the other candidates were:

- Steven Fisher, 52, Cochran, a health insurance salesman
- Ed Franz, 48, Conneautville, an hourly worker at General Electric Corp., Erie

- Clayton Grabb, 47, a Butler pharmaceutical salesman
- Paul Huber, 65, a Meadville businessman
- Dr. Martha Moore, 52, a Sandy Lake family practitioner.

The candidates also fielded questions from the audience, including one person who asked if they would open an office in Meadville if elected. All the candidates agreed that they would. Another person asked, "In an agricultural area such as ours—and with our farmers struggling—how do you think the federal government could help?"

Ed Franz said he would push for reduction in regulations on farmers, Grabb said he would eliminate genetically modified crops, and Paul Huber talked about electing people to Congress "who understand the farm culture."

Following the debate, Ron Petersen of Meadville congratulated the CPP for hosting the Republican primary debate. He added, "They really covered all the bases."



The six Republican primary candidates who ran for a seat in Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District debated in front of a packed auditorium in Quigley Hall. (Photo by Mary Solberg)

Trek to D.C.

PHOTOS BY MARY SOLBERG

Students network in Washington, D.C.

Like the swallows returning to Capistrano, Allegheny College political science students and graduates converged on our nation's capital last April.

More than 175 alumni, students, parents and friends gathered April 8 at the Washington Court Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C., to kick off the long-awaited two-day Political Science Department event. Held biennially, the trip is a chance for current political science students to do some networking with Allegheny grads in the hopes of finding jobs or internships in the D.C. area. Also, it's an opportunity for alumni to catch up with former professors.

"It's a win-win-win situation," said Phil Foxman, director of alumni affairs at Allegheny. "The magic of the event is bringing together students and alumni. It shows that your relationship with Allegheny is lifelong."

President Jim Mullen delivered a rousing address, praising the strong ties between alumni and current students. He promised continued success as Allegheny approaches its bicentennial celebrations in 2015.

Other speakers at the reception were: John Sutphen '78, chair of the Timothy Alden Council Executive Committee, of Syracuse, N.Y.; Sharon Wesoky, chair of Allegheny's Political Science Department; and Christine Scott Nelson '73, chair of Allegheny's board of trustees, of Boston, Mass.

Sutphen discussed the necessity of "time, talent and treasure" to keep Allegheny strong for the future.

About 50 political science students and faculty who traveled to Washington spent April 9 attending tours, panel discussions and lectures at various sites. Michael Rooney '09 met visitors at CARE, and Alanna Houck '07 spoke at the National Council of LaRaza, the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Warren Payne '95 and Allegheny's Associate Director of Career Services Jim Fitch organized a career panel at the House Ways and Means Committee in the Rayburn Building of the Capitol. AndraLeigh Nenstiel '04 met students over coffee to discuss her job as an attorney with the Department of Labor.

Dana Brown, then-faculty member of the Political Science Department, arranged for students to meet Dave Wenhold, president of the American League of Lobbyists. Wenhold spoke at U.S. Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper's office in the Cannon Office Building.

"Lobbyists work for the people, too," Wenhold told the students. "Everybody really should be an advocate. Our founding fathers were lobbyists."

He encouraged students who are interested in lobbying to set themselves apart by finding a specific area of expertise. Members of Congress, he said, received 182 million e-mails last year, so make yourselves heard. Professor Robert Seddig led a group of students to the U.S. Supreme Court for a lecture in the actual courtroom of the High Court. Seddig retired this year after 43 years of teaching at Allegheny.

The Dotson Fund at Allegheny College provided funding for transportation and hotel accommodations.



From top: The ceiling of the U.S. Capitol Building's rotunda.

Raymond Srp '10 and Brett Fuchs '10 meet Allegheny College Trustee Yvonne Reed Seon '59.

Dan Conant '07, Derek Dye '11, and Jasmine Grace Carreon '08 enjoy conversation and hors d'oeuvres at the Washington Court Hotel.

Renewing Allegheny ties are Hillary Bennett '06, left, and Shateela Winters '05.

CPP Fellows 2010-11

The CPP boasts six fellows this year. Read a little about their activities and interests.

Katherine Janocsko '11

Katie is a senior majoring in political science and minoring in economics and communication arts. Her scholarly focus is on political parties and elections in American government. Besides working as a student fellow for the Center for Political Participation, she is the financial controller for Allegheny Student Government, a member of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, and a singer in Allegheny's Women's Ensemble. A resident of Munhall, Pa., she anticipates attending law school upon graduation.

Matt Lacombe '11

Matt is a senior with a double major in political science and economics and a minor in philosophy. This is his third year as a student fellow at the CPP. He runs varsity cross country and track. In 2009, he received the Doane Award for Distinguished Scholarship, and in 2010 he was named the Outstanding Junior Major in Political Science. This past summer, Matt was an intern in the office of FOICI (Foreign Ownership, Control, and Influence) of Defense Security Service, part of the Department of Defense. Following graduation, he hopes to study law.

Megan McNally '11

Megan is a senior majoring in political science, with a minor in mathematics. From Albion, Pa., she is a member of the Allegheny Gator Rowing team, Newman Choir, and Pi Mu Epsilon. Megan attended the Washington Semester Program at American University in the spring



Current CPP fellows, left to right, are: Chris Plano '12, Katie Janocsko '11, Megan McNally '11, Elise Swanekamp '12, Matt Lacombe '11, Jeramie Parker '11

of 2009. She interned at The Polling Company. After Allegheny, Megan hopes to work on a campaign or at a political consulting firm.

Jeramie Parker '11

Jeramie is a senior political science major, with a minor in religious studies. From Middletown, Md., he competes in Allegheny's varsity cross country, indoor track and outdoor track teams. He received an All-American award in cross country in 2009, finishing 11th in the nation. For the past two summers, he has worked for the Defense Security Service (DSS), part of the Department of Defense. In DSS, he worked in Foreign Ownership, Control, and Influence (FOCI). In the spring semester 2010, he interned with the international think tank International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), in London, England.

Chris Plano '12

Chris is a junior environmental science major and political science minor. His academic interests include electoral politics and what effect government regulation and legislation have on environmental protection. Chris participates in the Outing Club as a trip leader and is a member of the Lambda Sigma Honor Society at Allegheny. In spring 2011, Chris plans to study sustainable development in Kenya. After graduation, he intends to enter the Peace Corps.

Elise Swanekamp '12

Elise is a junior from West Seneca, N.Y. She has a double major in international studies and environmental studies, minoring in Spanish. She has been active in such political activities as College Democrats, Model United Nations, and Model Campaign USA. For the past two years, Elise has been a Davies Community Service Leader at Active Aging, a senior center located in downtown Meadville. In the future, Elise hopes to serve in the Peace Corps and become a Foreign Service officer.

Some of the best and brightest political science students at Allegheny College have served as student fellows at the Center for Political Participation. In fact, a quick Google search shows that many former fellows are quickly rising to the top of their professions.

In a Q&A with the CPP, many former fellows told us what they think of various topics, including the 2010 mid-term elections and political incivility. On the light side, most of those who responded agreed that *All the President's Men* is their favorite political movie of all time. (Some joked that the TV show *West Wing* should be allowed as an answer!) Other fellow favorite flicks include *Dave*, *Frost/Nixon*, *Air Force One*, *Charlie Wilson's War*, *Dr. Strangelove*, and *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Here are other responses:

What skills did you acquire as a CPP fellow that have helped you in your career?

As a CPP fellow, I was able to develop my creativity, communication and organizational skills, and independence in a professional environment. On the Hill, being able to communicate effectively over the phone and through e-mail is extremely important. My experiences at the CPP really prepared me for that.

-Maya Brod '10, congressional intern for the office of U.S. Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper

The most important skills that I acquired were effective "group-think," including brainstorming, accepting and incorporating disparate viewpoints, and working together toward a common goal. I

am a lawyer, and I am currently one of four law clerks for a federal court of appeals judge, so these skills are invaluable to my career.

-Kristin Marsteller Morrison '06, law clerk to the Honorable Karen Nelson Moore, United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit



What does it take to get a job in politics?

Motivation and the ability to network.

-Amy Warnick '06, development officer for GuideStar USA, Inc.

Networking and technological skills. Technology is the new frontier in politics, and campaigns are becoming more sophisticated, especially in their use of social networking tools.

-Shannon Scotece '04, adjunct instructor at SUNY Albany

What was your favorite political moment (national or otherwise) in the last five years?

I would have to say the 2008 election. Although I believe that the country was sharply divided politically and the candidates should have worked harder to close that gap, it was the first time in my lifetime that there was both a viable female candidate and a viable African-American candidate. It gave me hope that the face of politics could in fact diversify to better reflect the makeup of the general population.

-Lisa Alexander '08, law student at Albany Law School

Eliot Spitzer's landslide election in 2006. I'm not kidding. He ran a



very inspirational campaign and received 70 percent of the vote. He had the whole state believing that on Day 1, everything could change. We all know what happened on Day #435.

-Dave Seeley '03, Office of Assemblyman Joe Morelle, New York State Assembly

Do you see a legitimate decline in youth political engagement?

Absolutely. Especially amongst lower middle class, and lower class young people, because these young people are not getting union jobs like their parents and grandparents so they have no entry point into political engagement.

-Benjamin Swanekamp '08, research analyst for the New York State Senate

My organization had a youth outreach program called Campus Progress, so I definitely haven't witnessed a decline in youth political engagement. These college students volunteer on local and world issues.

-Anne Shoup '03, research associate at the Center for American Progress

How would you increase youth turnout in the 2010 election?

I would create a time machine, and go back to 1998, when most of these young voters were starting school. And then, over the next 12 years, I would ensure that their educational system took the time to instill civic values into their aspiring minds. Civic education is perhaps the only equalizer to all of the things that work to discourage young people from participating in the electoral process.

-Dave Seeley '03, Office of Assemblyman Joe Morelle, New York State Assembly

One approach that hasn't been tried as much as it could is running more intense mobilization campaigns in residential colleges. Residential colleges represent a dense population knit together with strong social ties. Mobilizing this population with an old-style neighborhood mobilization campaign should be fairly easy. Each dorm should have a dorm captain, with larger dorms subdivided into smaller units with their own organizers. Each captain should be given easy-to-use software that can track whether each person who lives in their dorm is registered to vote, whether they are voting locally or via absentee ballot, and if via absentee ballot whether they have received and mailed in their ballot. On Election Day, all local voters who have not voted early are offered rides and other assistance to get to the polls. Each captain is responsible for making sure that everyone in their dorm votes (or for a partisan campaign, that everyone of a particular political affiliation votes).

-C. Daniel Myers '05, doctoral candidate, Department of Politics, Princeton University

What are you most looking forward to in the 2010 mid-term elections?

I am anticipating the mid-term elections to reflect the fact that Obama-mania is dissipating, which hopefully will lead to two more years of rational, less political policymaking.

-James Beyer '09, law student at Syracuse University College of Law

I think there will be some interesting attack ads and negative campaigning, although I loathe the use of catchy one-liners that usually serve only to distort the truth and misinform voters.

-Kristin Marsteller Morrison '06, law clerk to the Honorable Karen Nelson Moore, United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

What do you think of the political climate in the United States today?

It seems awfully polarized and fractured. The left moves further left, and the right moves further right. What happened to the sensible moderates?

-Jordan Pallitto '05, management consultant for The Hill Group, Inc.

Breathtakingly caustic and irrational. The sprint to the right that both parties are taking scares me. In our über-wired society, voters have zero patience and at the same time are easily influenced by flat out lies and deceptions. Voters are poorly informed and rarely capable of making smart choices. The mainstream media (especially local network affiliates) only add fuel to the flames.

-Benjamin Swanekamp '08, research analyst for the New York State Senate

What topics and/or programs would you like to see the CPP address in the future?

I'd like a greater attentiveness to local politics and a greater focus on the local community. I think there are lots of opportunities for us to engage locally, and while I think the CPP already does a good job of it—with programs like MCUSA—I also think that we could certainly do more.

-Richard Shafranek '10, AmeriCorps VISTA Ohio Campus Compact, Hiram College

I think MCUSA continues to be a strong and engaging program. I like to see the CPP do events like "Hot Shots" and the media event. I think bringing people to campus is important, and I think students engage when there's a potential career opportunity.

-Christina Walrond '09, research analyst for The Institute for Science and International Security

Inspiration from a former fellow

When I began the project that would become the topic of a front-page *Washington Post* story [Feb. 11, 2010], it was unclear whether anything would result from the data I collected. From an outsider's perspective, it certainly appeared to be a thankless task—I spent hours poring over inconsistent International Atomic Energy Agency reports in an effort to develop a comprehensive picture of the Iranian gas centrifuge program. The data and conclusions, however, were both interesting and timely. I had the opportunity to co-author a paper with the president of the Institute for Science and International Security, nuclear expert David Albright. The project was of great interest to the news media, and the report was the subject of stories in, most notably, *The Washington Post* and Reuters. As a result, I learned a great deal about the technical aspects of a gas centrifuge program, and my parents got a newspaper clipping to hang on their fridge. Had I not committed to working on such an open-ended project, I never would have had the opportunity to write such a report. I urge all students entering the work force to take full

advantage of the tasks they are given. You never know what might result from your effort.

-Christina Walrond '09, research analyst, Institute for Science and International Security, Washington, D.C.



Have an update? The CPP asks former fellows to update their contact information by e-mailing the CPP offices at msolberg@allegheny.edu. Also, fellows can join in conversation and share photos and more at the CPP Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CenterForPoliticalParticipation) or join us on Twitter and YouTube.

Teaching Matters? You Bet.

BY DANIEL M. SHEA, *Allegheny College*



Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from CPP Director Daniel M. Shea's book *Teaching Matters*, published this year by Longman, a division of Pearson Education, Inc.

Youth political engagement remains a pressing concern and it is a problem that lies at the doorstep of political scientists and instructors of American Government. This group understands the fragility of democracy and the importance of participation from a broad spectrum of citizens. A generation turned off from politics is a problem, as it mutes the democratic character of our system and distorts the outcome of the policy process. The American Political Science Association Task-force on Civic Education hit the nail on the head in 2000 when it noted, "Current levels of political knowledge, political engagement, and political enthusiasm are so low as to threaten the vitality and stability of democratic politics in the United States."

Most would also agree with the conclusion of a Carnegie Foundation report: "If there is a crisis in education in the United States today, it is less that test scores have declined than it is that we have failed to provide the education for citizenship that is still the most important responsibility of the nation's schools and colleges."

Many political scientists are familiar with new scholarship and potential solutions to the disengagement problem, and they have numerous opportunities to reach students. Luckily, they are also the ones teaching American politics. Many have come to understand that introductory courses in American Government, in particular, offer a unique opportunity. Those in the youth engagement field are pleased to spend a few minutes with an unregistered voter or a disengaged citizen, filling out forms, and talking about the importance of politics. In introductory courses, we have a captive audience for at least 45 hours! And a stunning number of Americans take this course each year—upwards of nearly one million. What a unique opportunity. There are numerous objectives in the introductory course, but surely one should be the cultivation of civic skills and an understanding of the potential of citizens to bring about change.

Many organizations help citizens to better appreciate their role in a democracy, but colleges and universities are charged with the special

mission of helping students to expand important skills, broaden their intellect, and enhance their character. Certainly, an integral part of one's character is moral and civic maturity. The mission statements of most institutions of higher learning boast a commitment to helping students appreciate their role in democratic communities. Should not political scientists also endorse these goals?

Rather than being an individualistic, isolated activity, learning becomes a social enterprise.

Writing of college courses more generally, Anne Colby, Elizabeth Beaumont, Thomas Ehrlich, and Josh Corngold, the authors of an important new volume, *Educating for De-*

mocracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement, suggest several reasons why college instructors should pay special attention to political education. Whereas we might expect primary and secondary schools to provide a strong foundation for young citizens to understand political and civic responsibilities, mounting evidence suggests most high school civics programs do not impart sufficient information. One might suggest that life experiences should also provide important political knowledge, and these authors agree: "Informal education is critical for an informed and thoughtful electorate." But they also argue that relying on life experiences is inadequate. They write, "What we think of as a consumer-driven political education tends to reach most fully only the subset of people who are already concerned about and engaged with politics, providing much less to those who are not already interested and inclined to pay attention..."

A PARADIGMATIC SHIFT

Anyone who instructs an American Government course knows the challenges: large classes, a wide range of student abilities, numerous important topics to cover, and cynical, unprepared students. Thankfully, interest in finding ways of breaking the cycle of indifference has grown, as evidenced by the burgeoning American Political Science Association (APSA) Teaching and Learning Conference. How exciting to watch the program grow from a small gathering of true believers, to an oft-discussed and widely attended event. The section in PS: Political Science and Politics dedicated to teaching also has grown.

And of no little consequence, college book publishers have turned their attention to pedagogical innovations in order to meet market demands, surely a sign of change...

Becoming a good instructor takes time, training, effort, and continuous refinement.

Numerous studies have documented the importance of quality instruction in the promotion of civic and political skills, and an understanding of how the democratic process works. Data presented later in this book by my colleague Melissa S. Kovacs suggest that many who teach introductory courses in American Government are anxious to find better ways to “connect,” to find approaches that help students better appreciate their role in a democratic society.

I would argue, however, that for many instructors, such as myself, the first step may well be a paradigmatic shift...

Let us consider the elements of this new approach:

- Knowledge is constructed, discovered, transformed, and extended by students. Rather than simply providing new information to students, faculty can help students discern the meaning and nuance of complex material.
- Students actively construct their own knowledge. Students are provided information by the faculty member, but then activate their existing cognitive structures or construct new ones to process the new material. As such, there is an important distinction between new information (given by the instructor) and new knowledge (created by the student).
- Faculty efforts should be aimed at developing student competencies and talents, not simply their retention of new information. Instead of sorting students into static categories (“She gets it,” “He’s missing the boat,” etc.), efforts should be made to broaden dynamic competencies. “Within colleges and universities, a ‘cultivate and develop’ philosophy must replace a ‘select and weed out’ philosophy.”
- There is an interpersonal relationship between the student and the faculty member, and among students in the class. Rather than being an individualistic, isolated activity, learning becomes a social enterprise.
- Instead of competing, students work together. Learning is

a cooperative effort, not a competitive exercise. And instead of information moving in one direction, from instructor to student, enhanced learning happens when the flow of information runs in two directions. This recognizes that long-term, deep learning comes from the heart and not the head. The best way to advance this model is through personal relationships. (Ask students to point to the classes in which they learned the most and invariably they will recognize classes where they developed a connection with the instructor.)

- While knowledge and expertise in a field is critical, so too are teaching competencies and skills. Becoming a good instructor takes time, training, effort, and continuous refinement. Good teachers are not

born; they are created.

Colleges and universities are charged with the special mission of helping students to expand important skills, broaden their intellect, and enhance their character.

The loss of control, a change in the assessment process, and extra work should not be

taken lightly. All too often college instructors are overworked, under-supported, and doubly pressured. They also face a generation turned off from politics, a trend that threatens the vitality of our democracy. It’s a troublesome prospect during any time, but especially problematic as we confront staggering challenges at home and abroad. Instructors of government cannot, in good conscience, pass this issue off to others. John Dewey, the 20th century education theorist, succinctly stated, “Democracy needs to be reborn in each generation, and education is its midwife.” There are likely many routes to enhanced instruction to help students appreciate their democratic capacities and responsibilities. A shift to the new paradigm of learning is but one route. The core issue, however, is the importance of reflection and the willingness to change.



Former CPP fellow Amy Warnick '06 meets with political science professor Michael Maniates.