POLITICAL SCIENCE / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026



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INSTITUTIONS: A FEW REFLECTIONS

By Mihaela Czobor-Lupp
Department Chair

This academic year will be my third and final year as chair of the Department of Political Science and International Relations. That fact alone has made me think about transitions: their role in the life of institutions, their contribution to institutional meaning, and the challenges and promises they bring. But there is more to the story. This year, our department is shaped by two important transitions: the retirement of Barbara Allen and the arrival of a new colleague, Meredith Dost; by a departure and by a beginning.

Barbara Allen began teaching at Carleton College in 1990. For me, that was the year after the fall of the communist regime in Romania: a year of promises and challenges, of newly gained freedom to build liberal-democratic institutions, but also of a frantic search for liberal-democratic traditions in Romania's past that could guide our transition. Meredith Dost begins teaching in 2026, almost four decades later, after the span of time that marks Barbara Allen's deep and rich presence at Carleton College. The two moments bring together different generations, different historical periods, and different lives and styles of thinking and teaching: a long history, and a beginning with its own promise, freedom, and unpredictability.

This moment in the history of our department invites us to pause and think about how institutions preserve memory and build on accumulated wisdom while also opening themselves to reinvention: to the novelty that, as Hannah Arendt reminds us, is constantly brought into the world by the human capacity to start anew.

This is how John Stuart Mill urges us in the first chapter of his *Considerations on Representative Government* to think about institutions: "Let us remember, then, in the first place, that political institutions (however the proposition may be at times ignored) are the work of men; owe their origin and their whole existence to human will. Men did not wake on a summer morning and find them sprung up. Neither do they resemble trees, which, once planted, "are aye growing" while men "are sleeping." In every stage of their existence they are made what they are by human voluntary agency."

What Mill stresses here, passionately, is that we are responsible for our institutions, that they exist only through our active tending, through the decisions we make, and, perhaps, most of all, through the depth and boldness of our vision, our ability to imagine yet another way. However, what Mill pushes into the background is that institutions also require our ability to cherish and preserve what Edmund Burke calls 'prejudices.' This is what Burke has to say about 'prejudices' in his Reflections on the Revolution in France:

> *You see, Sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess that we are generally men of untaught feelings, that, instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree, and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices; and the longer they have lasted and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them. We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that this stock in each man is small,*

> *and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it wiser to continue the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision skeptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit, and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature.*

What Burke adds to the truth that Mill tells us is that institutions happen at the crossroads of conservation and transformation, of preservation and revolutionary agency. The idea is that we can revolutionize only within specific limits, as those who tend, as Burke reminds us, an already existing garden. This garden is a treasure of inherited wisdom, which we can miss altogether or learn how to see. Burke thus seems to add a new meaning to Mill's emphasis on the crucial responsibility we bear for our institutions or, perhaps, to make it even clearer. Institutions are, indeed, made by human voluntary agency. They are an expression of our freedom, a freedom that cannot be divorced from responsibility. However, responsibility becomes here an act of listening and responding to something that is already there, to the accumulated wisdom of the past that we are summoned to see and translate into present insight and skill.

This little story about transitions in our department makes me even more aware of the fact that, as a species—should I dare to say it? —we are also living today, in many ways, at the crossroads of history. This is a time when orders and structures, both human-made and belonging to nature, are coming undone. It is a time when existing institutional arrangements, both domestic and international, are being mindlessly dismantled. This is therefore, more than ever, a time to think about institutions: about their meaning and about the responsibilities we have for their existence and identity.

Moreover, given the nature of institutions as a combination of tradition and human voluntary agency, this also seems to be a time when we need, more than ever, to rethink the meaning of 'conservatism' and 'progressivism.' Perhaps what we need most of all is to reimagine the power of tradition, what Burke calls 'prejudices,' to orient us in radical and revolutionary ways. This ability might also make us aware of the fact that the true power of revolutions comes from seeing again, in a new light, the universal orienting energy and potential of past human wisdom, of values and ideas that continue to retain their universal opening and appeal.

LIFE PRESENTS, AND YOU ADAPT



An Interview with Barbara Allen, James Woodward Strong Professor of Political Science and the Liberal Arts, Emerita
By Her Research Assistants
Sonja Holtey '28 and Bjorn Holtey '23
on the occasion of her retirement

Professor Barbara Allen's career at Carleton has come to a close after 38 years, but her positive impact on the Carleton community will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression. From her decades-long election news study to her innovative classroom activities and assignments, Professor Allen has demonstrated her passion for political science, her students, and a brighter future. Professor Allen was a major motivator for both of us to become political science majors after we were placed in her Argument & Inquiry classes and joined her research group in 2019 and 2024, respectively, and her steadfast support and kindness have touched the lives of the thousands of students she has taught. We were honored to have the chance to speak with her regarding her unique and inspiring path to Carleton and her experience at the college since 1988.

Professor Allen grew up in rural Indiana, where she helped with her family's chicken hatchery. While her mother's side of the family was composed entirely of teachers, she did not originally intend to pursue a career in teaching. With a history of undiagnosed dyslexia, she recounted thinking during her final college exam, "'I never have to sit in a classroom again. I never have to be in a classroom again,'" but she added that you should "never say never." During her undergraduate degree at Indiana University, she pursued a variety of independent projects and studies to supplement her education, noting that "I did the classes [...] but what was really valuable was being able to work with professors on their projects, but then I also had projects, and so I got my professors interested in my projects." This work would influence her years later in her teaching career; she described how "a lot of the things that I ended up teaching were [projects] that I did myself." For her undergraduate honors thesis, she interviewed city council members and mayors in Big Ten University cities to understand how ideology and attitudes toward higher education affect local environmental policy, a project guided by one of her mentors, political psychologist John Sullivan.

When Professor Allen was 19 years old, she met political scientists Elinor and Vincent Ostrom, whom she referred to as "one of those 'and the rest is history' kind of statements," noting that "I got in with them at the very, very beginning of their work." Professor Allen began her work with the Ostroms in 1972 and worked with them until they passed away in 2012, three years after Elinor Ostrom received the Nobel Prize in Economics. Professor Allen continues to work as a Senior Research Fellow with the Vincent and Elinor Ostrom Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis. While working with the Ostroms, Professor Allen decided to attend graduate school, where she was mentored by political scientists such as Lynton Keith Caldwell and Marjorie Hershey. After serving as a teaching assistant for classes of approximately 450 students, Professor Allen tried something new and began work as a barista and a server. It was during this work that she became interested in women's and gender studies, describing how "I got into the sociology of the whole thing [...] what happens when a woman who's a server in the restaurant initiates the work for the

man who is this older cook. That dynamic was really interesting to me." Professor Allen also worked briefly as a freelance photographer and had the opportunity to take photos at the 1980 Republican National Convention. Subsequently, Professor Allen moved to Northern California, where she lived and worked at the Farallones Institute in the inaugural year of the institute's rural center and their self-sustaining house called the Integral Urban House. She also continued with the Ostroms, writing and typing up abstracts for political science articles on a manual typewriter in her tent at the rural center. Although she learned a great deal from these experiences, she began to wonder, "Am I in the right place?"

Professor Allen returned to Indiana to pursue a PhD and wrote her dissertation as a feminist response to the work of Alexis de Tocqueville. When she graduated, she remembered being faced with "a bad economic time" and a dismal job market. Professor Allen described how she had "paid a lot of attention in geometry and algebra" and was familiar with engineering, so she and a friend, who had been a timpanist in the National Symphony Orchestra of Nicaragua, began a business constructing and selling timpani. Along the way, Professor Allen picked up four international patents, and her timpani are displayed at the Rhythm! Discovery Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. After giving a talk on her timpani business, Professor Allen recounted a man from the Indiana University Kelley School of Business calling her and offering her a job, with him telling her that her talk was one of the best that he had ever heard about the make-or-buy decision in manufacturing. At Indiana University, she taught small-business entrepreneurship, where she incorporated readings from Tocqueville and the Federalist Papers as examples of organizational theory. In the long term, however, she knew she wanted something different, and she applied for a job with Carleton's political science department.

Among other topics, Professor Allen's courses at Carleton explored American politics, constitutional law, political news coverage, relationships between politics and different forms of media, feminist political theory, and the works of Alexis de Tocqueville and Martin Luther King Jr. She enjoyed coleading off-campus study programs during multiple years, and she has also taught as a guest professor at the University of Luxembourg, where she was placed for her Fulbright Fellowship. Professor Allen is a former political science department chair and director of women's and gender studies at Carleton. She is a contributing editor of Stanford University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, and she is a fellow at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs' Mondale Policy Forum. When asked if she had a favorite class she taught, she described her thought process as "like when you're asked about your favorite children," but she noted that she particularly enjoyed her final course at Carleton, *Politics of the Future: The Psychological and Political Barriers to Imagining New Orders*, that she taught with Professor of Psychology Lawrence Wichlinski. The class "really came out of the belief that if you want to understand things, you get with some other people who want to understand things and you sit down and you talk." Professor Allen emphasized her appreciation for engaging in discussions with students, noting that "one of the great gifts of Carleton is that I've always been working with students who were so able to sit together and figure it out [...] I never felt pressure at Carleton to have every answer to everything."

While at Carleton, Professor Allen has led multiple projects in addition to teaching. For over 20 years, Professor Allen has led the Carleton College Election Study, a project she is especially proud of. As part of this project, she works with current and former Carleton students to analyze U.S. election news coverage since 2000. She recalled watching coverage

of the First Gulf War and the bombing of Baghdad and calling John Sullivan, a friend and mentor, to tell him that "I'm putting some videotape in the VCR. I'm going to record CNN." She ultimately recorded all of the CNN coverage of the First Gulf War and conducted a study on the coverage and the flip in public opinion, which, she related, "got me thinking about the idea of analyzing the news." She began collaborating with Sullivan and, later, his graduate student, Daniel Stevens (who is now a professor at the University of Exeter), marking the beginning of an election news study that has continued for decades. At different points in time, the research group has analyzed political advertisements and considered news coverage related to the murder of George Floyd, comparing local, cable, and national news coverage. Professor Allen has been an author and publisher of a number of books, and she is especially fond of Tocqueville, Covenant, and the Democratic Revolution: Harmonizing Earth with Heaven. A book cowritten by Professor Allen and Professor Stevens, Truth in Advertising? Lies in Political Advertising and How They Affect the Electorate, received the American Politics Group 2019 Richard E. Neustadt Book Prize. Most recently, Professor Allen is collaborating with Professor Stevens and current and former Carleton students on America's Window on the World: How Local Television News Covers Politics and Elections, an upcoming book that is scheduled for publication by Springer Press. Professor Allen is also an award-winning filmmaker. Her first film, *Signing On: Stories of Deaf Breast Cancer Survivors, Their Families, and Community*, focused on deaf people's experiences with the healthcare system and won Best Documentary at the 2011 Twin Cities Film Fest. The film showed throughout Europe in various Deaf Film Festivals and is available for streaming at VSYN+. It has been used throughout the United States in medical trainings for workshops focused on the healthcare experiences of non-English-speaking communities. Her second film, Actual World, Possible Future, focused on the lives and work of Elinor and Vincent Ostrom and aired on WTIU, a PBS affiliate in Indiana; an updated version of the film is planned for release in April 2027 for a celebration of Elinor Ostrom's work. Allen emphasized the support she received from Carleton over the years, recalling, "There's been a lot of 'out of the box,' and it got all supported. I don't remember a lot of 'No.' I remember a lot of 'Yes, let's.'" Professor Allen highlighted how reflecting on her own learning experiences allowed her to better assist students, and she offered important advice: "Ask for help. Don't be embarrassed or proud—just ask for help. It's out there." Professor Allen expressed that Carleton changed "in really some great ways" during her time with the school, and she indicated that some of her favorite parts of being a professor were working closely with students on research projects and hearing the different things that students had to say in the classroom. She also noted the joy and value of her wonderful colleagues and emphasized how she felt "very blessed to have worked with them."

Following her retirement, Professor Allen is continuing to pursue a variety of projects. Currently, along with her ongoing research, she is working on a film about Miriam Rothstein (née Mary Meyers), a silver medal-winning Olympic speed skater and poet, and Professor Allen is considering producing a documentary about disinformation in political advertising. Additionally, as a silver medal-winning athlete herself at the National Senior Olympics for biking, Professor Allen is continuing her 10-year career in competitive sports and training for her first triathlon. As she looks back on her life both before and during her time at Carleton, she reflects: "It sounds like there was a plan, but there is no plan. **Life presents**, and **you adapt**, and you make the kinds of changes that you can make in your little area, and you **be kind to people**."

INTRODUCING: PROFESSOR MEREDITH DOST

Meredith Dost is thrilled to join the department and the Carleton community! Her research interests are in American politics and policy. She studies the political economy of administrative burden in the U.S.—the paperwork, wait times, and other hurdles people encounter when they apply for and keep public benefits— by analyzing the dynamics of policy implementation and citizen-state interactions. Focusing on public services for low-income individuals and households, she examines administrative governance that is shared across multiple levels of government. For example, highlights from her dissertation research on the mass political implications of the administrative burden of Medicaid were published in *Perspectives on Politics* last year. Meredith's current research topics include the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), the National School Lunch Program, and departments of motor vehicles (DMVs). Across these projects, she builds original datasets that measure the intricacies of program administration, compiling administrative, survey, and archival sources, and analyzes them quantitatively.

Though this is her first time living in Minnesota, she is originally from the Chicago suburbs and is excited to be back in the Midwest. Meredith attended the College of William & Mary as an undergrad, double majoring in Public Policy and Hispanic Studies—an education she benefitted from tremendously. She looks forward to being back in a liberal arts environment. After William & Mary, she worked at Pew Research Center in Washington, DC, contributing to polls on American politics and policy. Her PhD is from Harvard University in Government and Social Policy. Following her PhD, she was a National Poverty Fellow at the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in residence at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Most recently, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Better Government Lab, a joint research center between Georgetown University and the University of Michigan, where she remains an affiliate.

While at Harvard, Meredith advised and mentored many undergraduate students, both as an academic advisor to political science students and as a resident tutor living alongside undergraduates in one of the residential houses. One of her favorite experiences was advising senior honors theses, seeing students go from a research topic to a well-defined original argument with evidence.

This year, Professor Dost will be teaching POSC 122, the introductory American politics class, in both the fall and the winter. In the winter and spring, she will also teach two new courses that fall squarely in her areas of passion: the politics of U.S. social policy (POSC 209), and a course on administrative burden and citizen-state relationships, focusing on interactions that take place within the welfare state (POSC 311). Meredith cannot wait to meet and get to know the students in her classes and in the department this year!



Prof Dost (right) and friends after their summer choir concert.

GATHERING, DISCUSSING, LEARNING, CELEBRATING: SOME OF WHAT WE DID THIS LAST ACADEMIC YEAR



Populism and Positional Blurring in Context: How Dimensionality and Idealogy Contrain Strategy
with Jacob Gunderson ‘17, University of Gothenburg, Sweden
September 22, 2025, 5 PM, Multicultural Center 019
See also his essay on Page 17



Comps Kick-Off Meeting
with Barbara Allen, Greg Marfleet, Ryan Dawkins, and Julie Buchwald
September 23, 2025, 12 PM, Hasenstab 002



Weighing American Influence in Latin America and the Consequences of USAID’s Fall
with Daniel Batlle, Hudson Institute Fellow, and Pro Al Montero
September 23, 2025, 5 PM, Athenaeum
Co-sponsor with Alexander Hamilton Society-Carleton



POSC/IR Fall Get-together
for Students, Staff, and Faculty
October 16, 2025, 12 PM, Hasenstab 111



Wynia Lecture: Ethnoracial Hierarchies and the Fragility of Democratic Society
with Jana Morgan, Rutgers University
October 21, 2025, 4:30 PM, Multicultural Center



An Interview with Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist and Author of *Yet Here I Am: Lessons from a Black Man’s Search for Home*
with Jonathan Capehart ‘89 and Fatima Taylor-Karama ‘26
October 22, 2025, 5 PM, Weitz 236



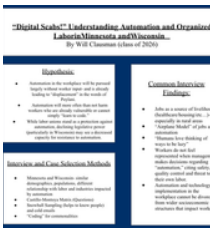
Militarism and Moderation in U.S./China Relations: A Conversation with Eric Sayers and moderated by Visiting Professor Christopher Heurlin '02
November 06, 2025, 5 PM, Athenaeum
Co-sponsor with Alexander Hamilton Society-Carleton

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GATHERING, DISCUSSING, LEARNING, CELEBRATING: SOME OF WHAT WE DID THIS LAST ACADEMIC YEAR



Let's Talk: The Enduring Power of Communist Regimes
with Visiting Professor Christopher Heurlin '02
November 10, 2025, 5 PM, Hasenstab 002



Fall 26 Comps Poster Presentations
November 13, 2025, 4:15 PM, Hasenstab 002



Back to the Future in American Policy in Latin America? Assessing the Venezuela Crisis and the Abduction of Maduro
with Profs Silvia López (LTAM) & Al Montero (LTAM/POSC)
January 15, 2026, 12 PM, Olin 149



Corruptible: Who Gets Power and How It Changes Us
with Brian Klaas '08 and Moderated by Prof Al Montero
January 29, 2026, 5 PM, The Athenaeum
Co-sponsor with Alexander Hamilton Society-Carleton



Trivia Night!
with Prof Dev Gupta
February 04, 2026, 6 PM, Great Hall



Disobedience Across Borders: Lessons of Hope from Resistance Movements
with Profs Summer Forester (POSC), Meredith McCoy (AMST), and Xianan Jin (POSC, Univ of Exeter)
February 12, 2026, 12 PM, Hasenstab 002



Evaluating International Politics One Year Into Trump
with Profs Al Montero, Dev Gupta, and Tun Myint
February 12, 2026, 4 PM, The Athenaeum
Co-sponsored with United Nations Association-Carleton and Alexander Hamilton Society-Carleton

GATHERING, DISCUSSING, LEARNING, CELEBRATING: SOME OF WHAT WE DID THIS LAST ACADEMIC YEAR



Let's Talk: Jewish Politics After Sovereignty
with Miko Zeldes-Roth '18
February 19, 2026, 4:30 PM, The Athenaeum



Winter 26 Comps Poster Presentations
February 25, 2026, 5 PM, Great Hall



Southeast Asia Speaker Event: A Lecture and Q&A
with Afreen Akhter and Moderated by Prof Summer Forester
March 02, 2026, 5:30 PM, The Athenaeum
Co-sponsored with Alexander Hamilton Society-Carleton



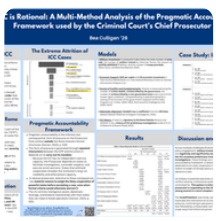
Let's Talk: Motivated Reasoning and Research Methods
with Andrew Little '06
April 03, 2026, 5 PM, Multicultural Center 019



Major Declaration Celebration
April 07, 2026, 12 PM, Hasenstab 002
We welcomed **49** new majors from the Class of 2028



Breakfast with Convocation Speaker
with Joel Simon
April 17, 2026, 8:30 AM, Hasenstab 002



Spring 26 Comps Poster Presentations
May 06, 2026, 5 PM, Anderson Atrium

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GATHERING, DISCUSSING, LEARNING, CELEBRATING: SOME OF WHAT WE DID THIS LAST ACADEMIC YEAR



The US and Iran at War: What Does It All Mean?
with Arshad Mohammed, Nathan Freier, Shervon Cassim '00
and Moderated by Jon Olson
May 08, 2026, 5 PM, Olin 141
Co-Sponsored with Alexander Hamilton Society-Carleton



Comps Distinction Presentations and Celebration
with Hannah Anderson-Brownlee, Liwei Weng, Sophie Stein,
Trinity Hanif, and Bea Culligan
May 13 and 14, 2026, 7 PM, Multicultural Center 019



The Industrial Base Imperative? Allies, Supply Chains, and American Strategy
with Daniel Fata and Moderator Prof Laurence Cooper
May 19, 2026, 5 PM, The Athenaeum
Co-Sponsored with Alexander Hamilton Society-Carleton



Senior Dinner
with Emcee Al Montero and Keynote Speaker Summer Forester
and "You've Come a Long Way: A Longitudinal Study" SlideShow
May 20, 2026, 5:30 PM, Great Hall



Let's Talk: Women's Political Participation After the Genocide in Rwanda
with Visiting Professor Xianan Jin
May 22, 2026, 5 PM, The Athenaeum



Ice Cream Social
May 28, 2026, 12 PM, Hasenstab Terrace



RETURNING TO CAMPUS

By Guest Speaker Jacob Gunderson '17



It was surreal to be back at Carleton College in September of 2025. In some ways, it felt extremely familiar. After eight years away, it was like stepping back in time. The buildings were mostly the same, except the Arena Theater and Concert Hall, where I worked for years in the Instrument Library, had long been demolished and the Political Science Department had moved out of the top of Willis Hall, its home while I was at Carleton, to the old Music Hall, now freshly renovated and rededicated Hasenstab Hall. Even the town was half frozen in time and half completely different. The coffee at Goodbye Blue Monday was the same as I remembered, but just down the street there is now a gap in the street where the Archer House used to stand, almost like a tooth had been knocked out before its replacement was ready to grow in.

Of course, the most surreal moment was presenting my research. The paper [*Positional Blurring in Context: How Dimensionality and Ideology Constrain Strategy*], co-authored with Nicolás de la Cerda (University of New Mexico) and now forthcoming in Perspectives on Politics, uses data from Europe and Latin America to test the argument that the extent to which populist political parties present clear positions on economic and cultural issues depends on whether they compete in unidimensional or multidimensional party systems and whether they are exclusive or inclusive populists. In hindsight, the project was grounded in the comparative perspective and careful analytical approach that characterized my education at Carleton. In that sense, presenting the paper and discussing it with professors Al [Montero], Greg [Marfleet], and Paul [Petzschmann (EUST)] was remarkably familiar and comfortable. This was something I had done many times through coursework and comps, so doing it again felt natural. [Find the paper at https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592726105805]

However, presenting research as an external guest was also strange. I have taught many courses and given lectures at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, at the University of Konstanz, and at my current institution, the University of Gothenburg. Going back to Carleton to give a talk was different. There was a feeling of everything coming full circle that has not been present when I teach or give a talk in other contexts. Having one foot in an institution and the other outside made me realize how those disparate experiences have come together to crystallize my sense of my own progress as a scholar, and how my time at Carleton laid the groundwork for that progress.

In sum, the main takeaway for me from the experience, besides the excellent feedback that helped improve the manuscript, was a deep feeling of gratitude—not only to the department for giving me the opportunity to present my research, but for the ways in which my education at Carleton had prepared me for my current career and for the social environment in the Political Science Department that has created, and continues to create, a context in which students like me can develop their skills and pursue rewarding, meaningful lives. It has certainly done so for me, and it certainly looks like it will continue to do so.



TRAVELING TO SHANGHAI

By Professor Alfred Montero

After many years of teaching about China's stunning transformation over the last 40 years, I decided that I needed to take a study trip to see it for myself and to learn from locals. I traveled to Shanghai in early December of 2025 and spent a week visiting research and economically important sites in and near that city, including the high-tech hubs of Hangzhou and Suzhou. Carleton alumni and current Chinese students at Carleton facilitated things by getting me access that I would not have been able to secure on my own. For instance, I spent a day at the deepwater port of Yangshan, the largest in China and accessible only in official vehicles that are authorized to cross the 32.5 kilometer bridge expanse that reaches the man-made island of the port. I learned how the Chinese government is rapidly automating most port functions. In fact, one part of the port (that I was not allowed to tour) is fully automated. One lane on the bridge to the port is dedicated to automated trucking. I also learned that fancy technology is not the only thing on display; Chinese ingenuity is as well. My guides showed me how they load three 4.5-meter electric vehicles into a standard 12-meter container; a simple metal bar and straps raise the third car partially over the second. China is the only exporter that uses this simple practice.

On my first day, I got a similar tour of the bio-science complex in Suzhou. Suzhou seemed as much of a metropolis to me as Shanghai, though it is only a one-hour car ride away and much less on the efficient bullet train. It is a major location for foreign direct investment and particularly production in the bio-medical fields. Suzhou continues to grow quickly and it is now the sixth largest GDP within China. I dedicated another day to tour the "AI coder village" in Hangzhou, home of Alibaba and Deepseek, which is easily accessible on the bullet train. Alumni guides and friends translated for me as I listened to a group of young coders discuss their experiences and their hopes for their own startups in a "digital nomads" center set up by the Chinese Communist Party. These and other experiences during my week in China inspired me to expand and deepen my attention to China's role in global capitalism in my winter 2026 public policy gateway course.





REFLECTING: MPSA CONFERENCE 2026

By Sonja Holtey '28

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to travel to Chicago this past April with Joanne Chung '26, Efram Stewart '26, Matthew Vincent '26, Madeleine Goldberger '28, and Ella Hennigan '28 for the 83rd Annual Midwest Political Science Association Conference. We presented a poster entitled "Examining Elections: Political News Coverage by Local, National, and Cable Television News Providers" that summarized recent findings from our research work led by Professor Barbara Allen and Professor Daniel Stevens of the University of Exeter (a former visiting professor at Carleton) as part of the Carleton College Elections Study.

Our poster examined television news coverage from the 2020 and 2024 election cycles by Minnesota local news providers (KARE, KMSP, KSTP, and WCCO), national news providers (ABC, CBS, and NBC), and cable news providers (CNN, FOX, and MSNBC). The findings focused on data from more than 2000 election stories that were annotated and coded by members of the Carleton College Elections Study. Specifically, we analyzed variables such as candidates mentioned, offices mentioned, tone of content, primary frame, and frequently mentioned issues.

Aside from Matthew, who attended the conference in 2023, it was everyone's first time attending the conference. Each of our group members had the chance to present findings from our poster, and our conference discussants asked insightful questions and offered helpful feedback for our continued work. One discussant mentioned that it could be interesting to compare our data on the most mentioned issues with Pew Research data on what issues voters considered most important and see if there is overlap. We are currently working on implementing this idea.

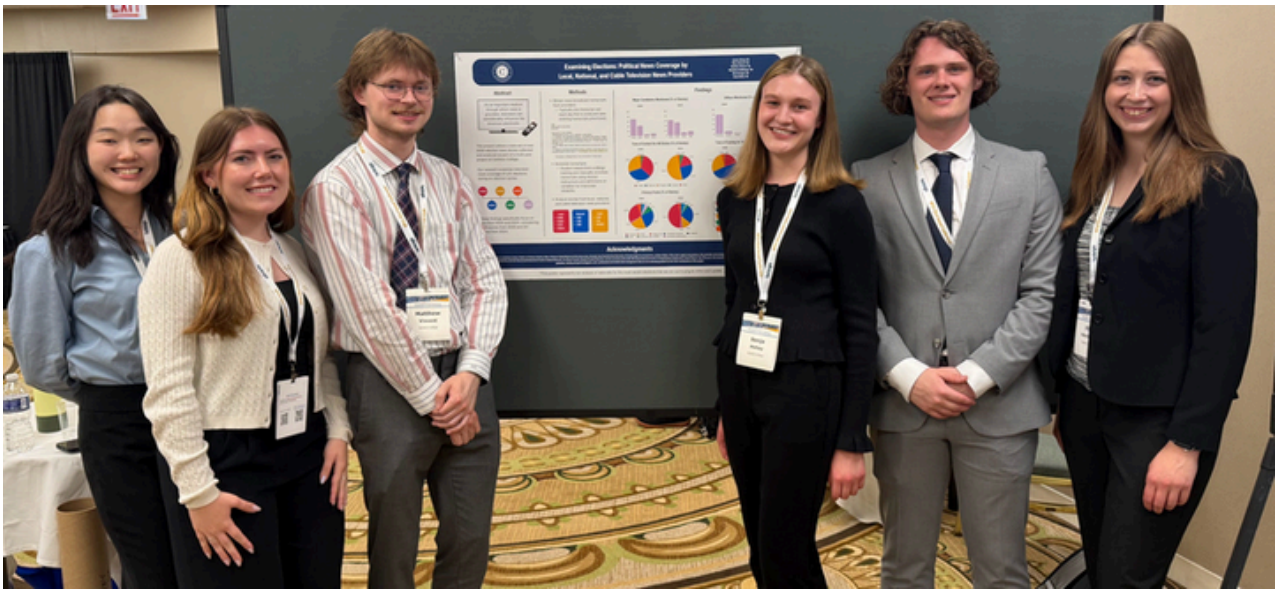
We also enjoyed meeting and talking with the students whose posters were located next to ours, such as a student from Creighton University, who had researched the topic of county partisan coalitions in the South in the era of Andrew Jackson. After presenting, we walked around the conference area and listened to the other poster presentations, which highlighted the compelling research work being conducted by political science students across the Midwest. We were especially happy to see Becker Ostrom '26 and Lily Wong '26, who were also presenting.

The Palmer House hotel in downtown Chicago was a beautiful and historic setting for the conference. Between our travels and our poster presentation, Efram, a Chicago native, embraced the role of tour guide and showed us attractions such as Millennium Park and the BP Pedestrian Bridge. We also had the chance to try some traditional Chicago deep-dish pizza at Pizano's Pizza & Pasta, a restaurant recommended to us by Professor Ryan Dawkins.

Attending the MPSA conference offered a meaningful opportunity to connect with our peers from across the Midwest and grow closer as a research group. Seeing so many thoughtful and engaged political science students was inspiring. For the rising juniors in the

group, creating a research poster, presenting on findings, and answering questions regarding data also provided excellent preparation for Comps.

We are incredibly grateful for the generous support from the people who made it possible for us to attend the conference: Professor Allen, Professor Stevens, and Bjorn Holtey ’23 provided valuable feedback and encouragement during the application and poster-creation process, and Marynel Ryan Van Zee and Karen Moldenhauer of the Office of Fellowships and Julie Buchwald, POSC Administrative Assistant, thoughtfully worked with us to secure funding for our travels from the Sarah Seddon Jenner ’83 Student Travel Fund. We sincerely appreciate all of the faculty, staff, and students who have contributed to the Carleton College Elections Study, and we would like to extend a very special thanks to Professor Allen for her decades-long dedication to research and Carleton’s students.



L:R Joanne Chung ’26, Madeleine Goldberger ’28, Matthew Vincent ’26, Sonja Holtey ’28, Efram Stewart ’26, and Ella Hennigan ’28



2026 HONORS

These Political Science majors earned honors across campus.
Students here are Class of 2026 unless otherwise noted.

DISTINCTION IN INTEGRATIVE EXERCISES (COMPS)



Hannah Anderson-Brownlee
"The Impact of Racial Resentment on American Foreign Policy Attitudes"



Stephanie Baranov
"War of the Words: Extended Two-Level Game Theory Analysis of Putin's Speeches and Actions from 2007-2025"



Beatrice Culligan
"The ICC Is Rational: A Multi-Method Analysis of the Pragmatic Accountability Framework Used by the Criminal Court's Chief Prosecutor"



Trinity Hanif
"Agents of Subordination: The Legitimizing Function of Feminized Actors in Al-Qaeda's Recruitment Ideology"



Sophie Stein
"Riding the Red Line: Structural Forces and the Racialization of Urban Space in Chicago"



Huynh Tran
"Repression through the Lens of Spatiality and Governmentality: Vietnam's Civil Society and Its Creation of Physical, Discursive, and Institutional Distance from the State"



Liwei Weng
"Reframing Totalitarianism: Technocracy, Cybernetics, and the Self-Reinvention of Ideological Domination in China"

2026 HONORS

MORTAR BOARD

NATIONAL COLLEGE SENIOR HONOR SOCIETY

MORTAR BOARD is a national honor society that recognizes students who have combined distinguished scholarship, leadership, and service to their colleagues and College Community.

Class of 2026



Joanne Chung



Manoka Kozaki



Ruth Matondo

Class of 2027



Cara Doud



Zoe McDaniel



Talia Raich



Cordelia Whitman

2026 HONORS

The PHI BETA KAPPA Society

PHI BETA KAPPA is a national honorary scholastic fraternity founded in 1776. The Carleton chapter was established in 1913 and elects its membership from students who rank in the highest 15 percent of their graduating class and meet other prescribed criteria.



Hannah Anderson-Brownlee



Suwannee Conroy-Baarsch



Beatrice Culligan



Trinity Hanif



Isabel Intrater



Manoka Kozaki



Sophie Stein

2026 HONORS

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP
Rotary Foundation Global Grant Fellowships are used to fund graduate-level studies abroad related to one of the seven Rotary areas of focus, as well as sustainable, measurable, and needs-based community service projects to be completed during the scholarship period.



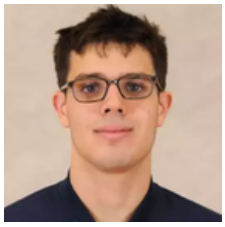
Trinity Hanif

SECOND CENTURY STUDENT AWARD
This award was established to honor Carleton students who have made an outstanding contribution to the College through significant service to others. The award is not intended to recognize academic or political success, but rather to honor service on or off campus that enriches and strengthens the institution and the lives of its members.



Fatima Taylor-Kamara

IAN KRAABEL '85 MEMORIAL PRIZE
Established in 1987 by the classmates and friends of Ian Kraabel '85, who died in an avalanche on Mount Baker n the summer of 1986, this award honors Kraabel's unusual intensity, originality, and athletic ability. The prize is awarded each year by the history department to a major who best reflects Kraabel's personal qualities and his desire to pursue knowledge and understanding.



William Clausman

LEE SIGELMAN PRIZE
The Lee Sigelman Prize honors Professor of Political Science Lee Sigelman, who graduated from Carleton in 1967 and served as the editor-in-chief of the American Political Science Review from 2001-2007. The prize recognizes the best paper written by a junior political science major.



Mariana Duran Amaya '27

CHANG-LAN FELLOWSHIP
Established in memory of Sing Cheg Chang and Chien Wei Lan Chang by Judy Chang Wederoth, parent of Michael Chang Wenderoth '93, the Chang-Lan Endowed Fund's purpose is to promote cultural understanding between the United States and China. Chang-Lan Fellowships are awared for personal or academic explorations pursued in China or for China-related projects conducted in Asia.



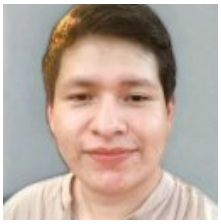
Amelia Hildebrandt '27



Rosemary Zhou '27

2026 HONORS

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP
These fellowships are awarded to enable qualified students to carry out independent research activities in any field taught at the College or to undertake projects in the creative and performing arts.


David Fulguera

EMILY T. MONTGOMERY ‘00 MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP
This fellowship was established in memory of Emily T. Montgomery ‘00, an English major and an active member of the campus community. Emily’s trip to Honduras on a Carleton fellowship was a pivotal one in her academic career. This fellowship will support students wishing to pursue fellowships in Latin or South America.


Suwannee Conroy-Baarsch

PROFESSOR ROY F. GROW FELLOWSHIP FUND
Established in 2014, the Professor Roy F. Grow Fellowship Fund celebrates the career and life of Roy F. Grow, the Frank B. Kellogg Professor of International Relations. Created by Michael Hasenstab ‘95 and Mary Ann Hasenstab, and contributed to by many students, colleagues, family, and friends of Roy, the fund supports student fellowship and research opportunities in Asia.


Professor Roy Grow

Pah Na - Political Science/International Relations
Leo Wang‘28 - Political Science & International Relations and Geology

Rachel Azan (Computer Science, Chinese)
London Bettman (Computer Science, Studio Art)
Jessie Choi ‘27 (Chemistry)
Brynn Gaebe (History)
Karin Grevstad-Nordbrock ‘27 (Religion)
Porapa Klangsathorn (Computer Science, Mathematics, Statistics & Data Science)
Benedict Le ‘28 (Biology)
Anh Thu Nguyen ‘27 (Psychology)
Kritika Pandit (Computer Science, Statistics)
Eliana Simon (History, Classics)
Anna Teggatz (Chemistry)
Maximilian Votruba ‘27 (Religion)
Margaret Walker (Environmental Studies, Art History)


Pah Na


Leo Wang ‘28

OFF CAMPUS STUDY: EASTERN EUROPE

Lizzie Applebaum '28

Our dorms in Bucharest were in a busy neighborhood, convenient to the Old Town and Parliament. It was an ideal place to live, but I was eager to understand Bucharest beyond this central, touristy, area. My final project for Mihaela's class, which allowed us to explore any topic in Bucharest, was about neighborhood identity. One neighborhood I visited was Industriilor, in the east, reaching the city limits. I observed a more diverse population than I had seen in central Bucharest, including people playing cricket in an empty field, and others sitting on their porches or in chairs on the street, conversing with neighbors. Seeing how community was built in this residential neighborhood, far from the center and lacking a park or plaza, helped me see what Bucharest could mean for the people who lived there and in other neighborhoods like this one, rather than the touristed view I'd had before.

Leo Wang '28



One of the most memorable moments of my OCS program was going to an Orthodox Easter service at night. I have never really been religious at all in my life, and living in Romania, a country where over 75% identifies as Romanian Orthodox, was foreign to me. Going to this Easter service and to my surprise, being welcomed despite clearly not belonging to the White Romanian majority, made me rethink my assumptions of religion. Oftentimes, we see how religion causes wars and divisions amongst people, but this night, it showed me inclusivity. When I lit my candle, I was able to pass my flame on to many other Romanians, and this moment connected me to these strangers around me. It was strangely powerful and moving, to be an outsider, yet still welcomed into this holy evening for Romanian Christians. This experience reminded me that religion, despite causing lots of conflict and issues in the world, also provides hope and community.

LAURENCE COOPER

Professor of Political Science
Associate Department Chair, Political Science and International Relations



I presented a paper, "Of Origins and Ends: Rousseau's Aristotelian Nature," at last month's annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Boston. This paper is part of a larger project on Nature as a guide to human well being.

In April I gave a lecture titled "Two Cheers for Democracy" at the University of Wisconsin—River Falls. When people praise "democracy," they inevitably have in mind a certain kind of democracy. But they don't all have the same kind of democracy in mind, which is why those who believe themselves to be defending democracy are often seen by others as threatening it, and vice versa. A way past this blind and blinding partisanship is offered by the great political philosophers, especially Alexis de Tocqueville, who, as he himself put it, "undertook to see, not differently, but further than the parties."

Since I announced my engagement to Jessica in last year's newsletter, I'm reluctant to return to the topic. However, we were married on Crete last June, shortly after the end of Spring term.

MIHAELA CZOBOR-LUPP

Chair of Political Science and International Relations
Professor of Political Science



During the past academic year I continued working on: my memoir/philosophical essay, my project on Mihail Sebastian, the Jewish Romanian interwar writer and journalist, and my project on the French philosopher, Tzvetan Todorov.

As part of this work, I presented in November 2025, a paper on Sebastian at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Political Theory. In the spring of 2026, I was invited as a keynote speaker at a conference organized by the Faculty of Political Science (University of Bucharest) to celebrate its 35th anniversary. The event meant a great deal to me because I was one of the founding members of the Faculty of Political Science in 1997. My speech was titled *The Relevance of Critical Culture for Democracy: A Few Reflections from Mihail Sebastian*. In May 2026, I also gave two speeches at La Sapienza University: *Art and Humanism in the Work of Tzvetan Todorov* and *From Pariah's Isolation to Resistance: The Story of Mihail Sebastian*.

I was also very happy to lead for the third time my Off-Campus Studies Program, (Beyond) Xenophobia and Nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe, in Spring 2026.

RYAN DAWKINS

Assistant Professor of Political Science



I spent the summer working with three amazing undergrads building a new research agenda through the Summer Research Partners program. I also submitted two new papers for review, each with undergraduate co-authors. One of those papers I am presenting at APSA this weekend. However, perhaps my most important update is that my new book, *America's Two Majorities: How Policy and Identity Shape Democrats and Republicans* is under contract with Cambridge University Press, with a publication date tentatively scheduled for August 2027.

CHRISTINA FARHART

Associate Professor of Political Science

Christina Farhart spent a large portion of the summer traveling and attending conferences domestically and abroad. She was honored to be recently elected as a governing council member for the International Society of Political Psychology. She will be working with an incredible international team to engage in conversations about scholarship revolving politics globally and in the U.S. She continues to study the relationship between misinformed beliefs, conspiracy theories, and other consequential political beliefs and behaviors. In conjunction with Professor Ethan Struby in Economics at St. Olaf, their work on misinformed beliefs of the economy and perceptions of inflation was published in the Journal of Macroeconomics. Two other recent publications appear in Science Communication and Scientific Data. She is excited to be developing new projects with co-authors and students on democratic consequences of election legitimacy and racialized misinformation. She has enjoyed her guest appearances on radio and podcast programs over the last year and looks forward to upcoming conversations. She is looking forward to the busy 2026-2027 academic year!

SUMMER FORESTER

Associate Professor of Political Science

Summer Forester continues to research how feminist movements affect state action on women's rights. Most recently, Professor Forester – along with colleagues at Simon Fraser University – received a partnership award from UN Women to update the Feminist Mobilization Index. This Index, the most robust and comprehensive quantitative dataset on feminist movements, measures three dimensions of activism - presence, autonomy and strength— and combines them into a single indicator of feminist mobilization covering 126 countries from 1975 to 2015. The UN Women partnership will support Professor Forester and her colleagues in updating the index to 2025 and then analyzing how feminist movements affect a range of issues including violence against women and economic inequality. Beyond this project, Professor Forester continues to research gender equality machineries in the global south, especially Jordan. She presented her research findings at the 2026 European Conference on Politics and Gender in Newcastle, UK. This fall, Professor Forester will travel to Dhaka, Bangladesh to participate in an international convening sponsored by one of the oldest transnational feminist solidarity networks, Women Living Under Muslim Laws. The event, Women, Power, and Evolving Political Orders in Muslim Society Contexts, will bring together academics and practitioners of women's rights from around the world for dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and experiences on how feminist gains can be advanced and sustained amid evolving political orders.

FACULTY & RESEARCH UPDATES

HUAN GAO
Assistant Professor of Political Science

I have just returned from eight months in China, where I returned to fieldwork in urban communities. I had the opportunity to visit various residential communities, speak to local government office staff, interview NGO activists who work in communities, and participate in community events. This research will help me complete the book project "State Power in Disaster Stricken Cities" on state-society relations in urban communities in China. I also joined a research team that conducted a political value survey of Chinese college students and am working on a paper about how Chinese youths view political legitimacy and government performance.

DEV GUPTA
Professor of Political Science

This past summer, I worked with Campbell Pflaum ('27) and Lucas Heldman ('28) on a project that looks at how political, cultural, and economic peripherality shapes the projection of soft power and cultural diplomacy strategies of countries participating in the Eurovision Song Contest. We spent several weeks fine-tuning a coding framework and testing different iterations using past broadcasts to improve intercoder reliability scores. We will continue the coding work during the academic year (hopefully with the participation of additional students!). Additionally, I advanced work on two other projects: an article on contested citizenship status in Cyprus that draws heavily on interviews that I conducted during my Fulbright fellowship and fieldwork conducted last winter, and a piece on how national selection processes that strategically prioritize elite vs. mass cultural preferences shape the results and rankings of Eurovision performances. This was the first summer in a very long time that I didn't travel, but I enjoyed staying put in MN, spending lots of time in my garden and at different local dog parks with Archie and Enzo, pictured here.



GREG MARFLEET
Dorothy H. and Edward C. Congdon Professor of Political Science

I continue to work on the security document analysis project using data generated by students in the spring research group. I have also been planning for the Winter 2027 Washington DC Off-campus studies program.

TUN MYINT
Professor of Political Science

During the 2025–2026 academic year, Professor Myint advanced several key research initiatives focusing on his core themes of environmental governance, democracy, and sustainability. His active work included ongoing institutional and local policy research regarding the Ford Dam removal project, evaluating the impact of human-environment interactions on regional ecosystems. Additionally, he continued expanding and overseeing the Public Memory of Myanmar Digital Archive, a critical project documenting socio-political shifts, and served as an editor for the Independent Journal of Myanmar Scholarship. He edited a special issue on Myanmar military defection after the 2021 coup. Balancing local and global fields, he also translated his research into experiential leadership by guiding Carleton's Alumni Adventures cruise along the Mekong River in December 2026, examining first-hand the political economy and ecological changes of the main Southeast Asian river communities.

Professor Myint's scholarly profile in recent years has also been deeply intertwined with the legacy of the late political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott of Yale University, who passed away in 2024. Contributing to global academic discussions and memorials, Dr. Myint authored prominent tribute pieces reflecting on Scott's monumental impact on the study of agrarian societies, subaltern resistance, and state power. As part of this honoring of his former mentor's legacy, Professor Myint was invited by Princeton University Press to write a newly featured Foreword for the 2025 edition of Scott's highly acclaimed book, Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play. This major introductory essay bridges Scott's foundational theories on informal cooperation and grassroots autonomy with contemporary socio-political and environmental governance challenges. In this introductory essay, Professor Myint contextualizes Scott's foundational concepts—such as "anarchist calisthenics" and the "anarchist squint"—reaffirming how grassroots autonomy, everyday informal cooperation, and local ingenuity remain critical for navigating modern state hierarchies and ecological challenges. Alongside this major volume, Professor Myint expanded his tribute scholarship by co-authoring a featured review essay titled "On In Praise of Floods: The Untamed River and the Life It Brings by James C. Scott" for a special symposium in the Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia (SOJOURN). This piece specifically connects Scott's final, posthumous book to Professor Myint's ongoing research in Southeast Asian social-ecological governance, exploring how untamed natural environments naturally resist state-driven engineering and control.

JON OLSON

Visiting Sit Investment Chair in Asian Policy and Political Science

Jon Olson will be returning to Political Science for AY26-27, teaching a number of national security elective courses. Since he was last at Carleton (AY24-25), Jon has been continuing his teaching duties at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and co-authoring national security thriller novels with his fellow Annapolis alum, David Bruns. Their 12th and 13th books released this year--*Weapons Free* and *Alpha Strike*--and their 14th novel, *Balance of Power*, will be released in January of 2027.

Jon is available during office hours to meet with any student interested in discussing national security topics, needing career advice, or if you have questions about public service of any kind. He's also happy to talk about dogs since he and his wife, Melissa, have been adopting elderly, unwanted dogs for many years now.

STEVE POSKANZER

Professor of Political Science & President Emeritus

My new book, *The University's Voice: Principled Silence and Purposeful Speech* (Johns Hopkins Press 2025) came out last November, and I have been busy giving talks and writing op-eds to raise the visibility of my theories on whether/when universities and colleges should take institutional positions on pressing political, economic, moral, and social issues. I also have a chapter entitled "Stances in Defense of Institutional Academic Freedom" that is included in an important new book of essays by constitutional law scholars called *Academic Freedom in the Era of Trump* (Oxford University Press 2026), which is edited by Lee Bollinger and Geoffrey Stone.

FOUR DECADES OF DEMOCRACY: NOTES FROM THE ALACIP CONGRESS IN BUENOS AIRES



By Al Montero
Frank B Kellogg Professor of Political Science

In late July I spent four days in Buenos Aires at the XIII Congreso Latinoamericano de Ciencia Política, the biennial meeting of the Latin American Political Science Association (ALACIP), held July 21–24 at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella. The congress theme could hardly have been better matched to my current research: "Cuatro décadas de democracia en América Latina: entre el fortalecimiento y la erosión en un mundo incierto" — four decades of democracy in Latin America, between strengthening and erosion in an uncertain world. ALACIP was founded in 2002 in Salamanca, Spain, and its congresses have since moved around the region — Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Uruguay, Chile, Portugal, and now Argentina for the second time. It is the principal gathering of political scientists working on Latin America, and it has grown accordingly. This year's edition, co-hosted with the Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político (the Argentine national association, founded in 1983), ran to a 148-page program: twenty-nine thematic tracks, seventeen symposia organized by ALACIP's standing research groups, and roughly 1,500 papers. A pre-congress "Escuela ALACIP" offered ten advanced methods courses to 215 researchers before the meeting even opened. Mariana Llanos of the GIGA Institute in Hamburg gave the inaugural lecture on four decades of comparative political institutions; William Howell, of Johns Hopkins, closed the congress with a lecture drawn from his new book on the rise of the strongman presidency.

The host institution was itself part of the story. Di Tella is a private, nonprofit university founded in 1991 on the Avenida Figueroa Alcorta in the north of the city. It descends from two remarkable Argentine institutions: the SIAM Di Tella industrial company, once the largest manufacturer in the country, and the Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, created in 1958, which was simultaneously the home of Argentina's artistic avant-garde in the 1960s and one of the first serious centers of social science research in Latin America. Today Di Tella has one of the strongest political science faculties and doctoral programs in the region. The choice of Buenos Aires as the congress site was also significant. This year marks fifty years since the 1976 coup, and among the congress's cultural offerings was an immersive projection on the last military dictatorship — a useful reminder, in a building full of people theorizing about democratic erosion, that four decades of democracy is not a very long time. There were also free tango lessons at midday, which I am told were oversubscribed.

My own contribution was a panel I organized and chaired on Thursday afternoon, "Democratic Resilience and Anti-Fragility in Latin America." Carlos Meléndez (Institute of Social Sciences, Lisbon) presented original survey data from Peru on what he calls democratic entropy — erosion driven less by authoritarian citizens than by the quiet normalization of negotiated, informal legality. Mariana Sendra and Asbel Bohigues argued

that presidential approval is the gate through which concentrated power converts into public legitimacy, which gives aggrandizing presidents every incentive to keep their numbers up. Marcus Melo, Gabriel Negretto, and Carlos Pereira made the case that what predicts resilience is a long historical legacy of executive restraint. My paper introduced new events data-based measures to show how institutional and political actors constrained the autocratic actions of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil (2019-2023). Serving as discussant, what struck me in putting the four papers side by side is that all of them decenter the strongman. The interesting variation is not in the ambitions of would-be autocrats, which are depressingly similar across cases, but in the credibility of the constraints they run into.

The four papers, along with several more I hope to recruit this fall, are the seed of a special issue on democratic resilience for the journal, Latin American Politics and Society, with a follow-on panel planned for the Latin American Studies Association meeting in Mexico City next June. Closer to home, the trip fed directly into my plans for my upcoming seminar on democratic resilience in Latin America for the winter 2027 trimester. This course will have students dig deeper into the exact question the congress spent four days on: whether the democracies that have survived their would-be autocrats are actually the same democracies they were before.



Prof Montero visited Ateneo Grand Splendid – the most beautiful bookstore in the world.



As well as, Plaza de Mayo, while in Buenos Aires.





INTERVIEWING JONATHAN CAPEHART ‘18

By Yainkain Fatima Taylor-Kamara ‘26

Interviewing Jonathan Capehart ‘89 at Carleton College about his memoir, *Yet Here I Am: Lessons from a Black Man’s Search for Home*, was surreal. I was finally meeting someone whose voice was already familiar to me. Whenever I visit home, my aunt usually has MSNBC on, so Capehart has been a familiar face in my family for years. Yet, sitting across from him as the student leading a conversation about his life and work felt extraordinary and was the coolest thing I’ve probably ever done.

What struck me immediately was how warm Capehart was throughout the experience. Despite his national profile and career, he approached the conversation with humility, openness, and genuine care for Carleton students. That generosity also comes through clearly in his memoir. The book is funny, yet vulnerable, and deeply reflective, tracing Capehart’s journey from childhood to adulthood and his career in journalism and political commentary. For me, one of the most moving parts was reading about his years at Carleton.

At the time, I was a senior beginning my final year at Carleton, and while reading the book, I found myself constantly reflecting on my Carleton experience. In many ways, the memoir felt like a love letter to the college: to the friendships developed, intellectual growth, challenges, and moments of self-discovery that shape us long after graduation. Reading about Capehart navigating Carleton decades before me made the campus feel part of a larger continuum of stories, especially for students of color, like me, trying to find our footing in spaces not always built with us in mind.
Capehart and I share several similarities that made the conversation feel personal. We are both Political Science majors, involved with KRLX, and are interested in facilitating difficult conversations about identity, politics, and belonging. Seeing someone who once occupied many of the same spaces I now do, build such an influential career was affirming.

During the interview, we discussed how his experience at Carleton shaped his voice and prepared him to navigate predominantly White professional spaces as a Queer Black man. One of the most memorable moments of our conversation came when he spoke about belonging. Capehart encouraged students to act as though they belong in every room they enter and to resist the urge to constantly prove themselves worthy of being there.
That advice resonated deeply with me. Imposter syndrome affects many students from marginalized backgrounds, especially in elite academic and professional spaces. Too often, self-doubt limits people before anyone else can. Hearing someone as accomplished as Jonathan Capehart speak candidly about those struggles while emphasizing confidence, authenticity, and self-worth felt validating and empowering.

I was particularly fascinated by how Capehart reflected on representation in journalism and politics. Our discussion touched on the tension between being included in institutions and actually being heard. His honesty about the frustrations, compromises, and tiring responsibilities of being “the only one” in such spaces gave the audience a nuanced

understanding of his career and his role in combating the broader challenges facing media today.

Interviewing Jonathan Capehart was an absolute honor and one of the highlights of my time at Carleton. Beyond the excitement of speaking with a nationally recognized journalist and political commentator, the experience reminded me of the power of storytelling. Yet Here I Am is a reflection on identity, community, perseverance, and what it means to create a sense of home in spaces where we may not always feel welcomed.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to interview Capehart and to share in a conversation that felt both intellectually enriching and personally affirming. His visit was a reminder of the many paths Carleton students can take and the importance of confidently carrying our voices into every room we enter.



Capehart ‘89 and Taylor-Kamara ‘26, October 22, 2025

ALUMNI UPDATES

In mid-July, we asked alumni to update us on their lives. Here is what they had to say.

JOHN CAIRNS '63

57 member of Plymouth Congregational Church (founder of Carleton College) now a member of the Board of Deacons (aka, directors or trustees).

RICHARD KOORIS '66

I am actively involved in real estate development, specifically focussed on affordable and sustainable housing types and executions. One of our other current privately financed projects provides extremely affordable housing and other services to recently incarcerated individuals who have left the correctional system and are reintegrating into society.

JOHN MOLLENKOPF '67

My shift into retirement from being a professor is finally happening after 45 years of teaching at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, a year in city government before that, and 8 years at Stanford. Still intend to be active in research and publishing and am thinking of this as an extended sabbatical from departmental meetings, administrative duties, and bureaucratic sludge. New York City continues to be an exciting innovator in urban politics and policy.

JOE NATHAN '70

Post Carleton life has been spent on 1) Working on local, state and national educational reform and politics, 2) Writing 2,000+ guest and regular columns for national (ie USA Today and Wall Street Journal) and local newspapers, and 3) Helping young people learn how they could make an important, positive difference, NOW. For 35 years, I've helped teens turn their ideas into bills and bills into laws.

I spent 12 years as an urban public school educator after Carleton. I wrote a book, Free to Teach. Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander read it and hired me to direct a National Governors Association project. I worked with Alexander, Governor Bill Clinton and other governors to produce the *Time for Results* report. This helped guide reforms including funding strong early childhood education, public district and charter school choice, and dual (high school/college) credit programs such as Minnesota's Post Secondary Options (PSEO) and Washington State's Running Start. I've worked with 30+ state governors, helped write several Presidential speeches and met five times in the Cabinet Room with President HW Bush. I was a Senior Fellow for 22 years at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute. Various foundations and government agencies funded the Center for School Change, which I founded and directed.

I've appeared on 600+ TV and radio programs, including the "Today Show," "Good Morning America," "PBS News Hour," "NPR's All Things Considered," etc. I wrote a weekly column for the St. Paul, Rochester and Duluth daily papers. And, I currently write a two/month column for 15 suburban and rural newspapers, including the Northfield News.

ALUMNI UPDATES

PETER DRYMALSKI '71

I retired from 42 years as a public interest lawyer, having worked first for the Senate Watergate Committee, then the Prince William County VA Office of Consumer Protection, Neighborhood Legal Services of DC, and the Consumer Protection Office of Montgomery County, MD, where I wrote the first manual of Maryland common ownership community law. I married ManFang Wen, of China, in 2023. I now volunteer for the Miniature Painters, Sculptors and Gravers Society of Washington DC and as the newsletter editor for the Washington-Virginia-Maryland Garden Railroad Society. As a sideline, I am especially proud of the article I wrote on lawyers as battlefield commanders during the US Civil War, "Trial By Combat", published in the May, 2014 Journal of the New York State Bar Association.

JONATHAN LANGE '75

While mostly retired, I still consult with a community organization in Grimsby, England. I travel there four times a year. We are working on damp housing and jobs for the community in the wind energy industry. The campaign for a "Living Wage" which I helped start in the UK, just celebrated 25 years of victories.

JACK BARLOW '76

Retired from Juniata College (Professor of Politics).

WALTER KUNTZ '77

Retired from Northwestern Mutual in March of 2020 and moved from Chicago to Maryland. Busy with grandkids and volunteering. When did I ever find time to work? Just celebrated 49th anniversary with Esther.

LAURI ROCKNE '80

I steward for wildlife. I own a half mile of forest along a river and 2 mile wildlife corridor. My neighbor across the river does too. Right now a mama Bear and her three cubs and mama Otter with her kits are dominant. The bucks have tall fuzz covered antlers. Lots of baby birds are fledging. The young raccoons and skunks are exploring their freedom.

My radical political act is to take this land out of the economy. It is in a conservation set aside and will transfer on my death to a conservation friend. If he decides he doesn't want it, he'll return it to the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibway from whom it was stolen.

TOMY RUSCITTI '81

Retired in 2025. I was the Treasurer for Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco. I am currently living in San Diego, managing investments, reading, staying active and traveling.

JEFF BLODGETT '83

I continue to chair the Board of WIN Minnesota, an independent political organization focused on continuing to move Minnesota in a progressive direction.

ALUMNI UPDATES

NOEL SYMONS '86
Recently retired and loving it. Celebrated with an eight week drive around the country, hitting numerous parks, visiting friends and family, and taking in world cup games in LA, Dallas and Atlanta. Next up: Alaska!

CYNTHIA KIERSCHT '87
I am currently the U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti having moved from West Africa, where I was the U.S. Ambassador to Mauritania for 3+ years, to East Africa in September 2024. Any Carls in the area are welcome to stop by and explore the Gulf of Aden!

NELLIE WILD '91
I am currently serving as an Advisor to LiverRight, a company whose mission is to expand access to liver care in the US. As a LiverRight early supporter, I am leveraging my expertise in strategic partnerships, health care policy, and communications to support company growth.

LEIF BROTTEM '98
I am currently serving as an Advisor to LiverRight, a company whose mission is to expand access to liver care in the US. As a LiverRight early supporter, I am leveraging my expertise in strategic partnerships, health care policy, and communications to support company growth.

MEGAN HADDOCK '01
I have a great job - I run an international and interdisciplinary network of researchers who study civil society, the nonprofit sector, philanthropy, volunteering, social economy, etc. and just concluded organizing a conference in Lisbon, Portugal for 700 people from 70+ countries. It was very successful and very fun, and Lisbon is a nice city to visit.

AISHA (BIERMA) ELMQUIST '02
I am excited to share that I am running for the Minnesota House of Representatives in District 40A. Outside of the campaign, life with my husband and kids keeps me busy. I look forward to returning for the reunion in the summer of 2027!

EMILY YATES '04
I'm delighted to report that I'm absolutely in love with my (somewhat) new job as Denver Public Schools' Director of School Improvement. After 17 years in the public charter school sector with KIPP Colorado as a Teacher, Principal, and Chief Academics Officer, I am thrilled by the sheer complexity and breadth of impact my amazing team can make, in partnership with the leadership in our more traditional public schools in Denver.

As a side hustle, I've begun practicing Reiki, a Japanese healing energy practice, on interested hospice patients.

Life is good, and I owe a lot of my current capacity for enjoying it to my time at Carleton.

ALUMNI UPDATES

ANDREW NAVRATIL '07
In October 2025, I became a Special Assistant United States Attorney in the Northern District of Georgia.

JONATHAN DILLE (NEE EIDSVAAG) '08
I've had a lot happening over here. Last May, I got married outside of Bend, Oregon and we just finished up two weeks traveling in Switzerland and France for our honeymoon. We spent one week hiking through Switzerland on the Via Alpina trail and another week resting in Chamonix at Mont Blanc.

Professionally, for the last year and a half, I've been working as the acting superintendent at Pinnacles National Park and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. After waiting out the federal hiring freeze, I was promoted to the permanent Superintendent position at San Francisco Maritime NHP in July. We have lots of high profile infrastructure/historic preservation projects funded through the Great American Outdoors Act underway at the park. Never thought of myself as a boat guy, but here I am!

ZOE SCHWARTZ '08
I transitioned to full-time with Fitness by Zoe (FBZ) two years ago, focusing on scaling my business through Strategic Strength, a 12-week online fitness and nutrition program for high-powered women. I'm grateful for the amazing support from my Carleton friends (several who have become clients and are AMAZING), faculty, and mentors—thank you!

ALEKSANDAR STOLLER '08
I got married this past February to Ms. Ashlynn Welker in Winter Park, Florida. I just started my third year emergency medicine residency at Yale New Haven Hospital.

JOHN CRONIN '18
I work as a Data Scientist at Apple.

CONNOR WEBBER '18
I am living in Nashville, TN, with my wife, Schyler, and have been working as an attorney for the Tennessee Innocence Project since 2022. My daughter turns two on July 30th! Time flies!

NICK CAPUTO '19
I've joined the new Johns Hopkins School of Government and Policy as an Assistant Professor, focusing on frontier AI governance.

ALUMNI UPDATES

JOJO ZHANG ‘23
I’m continuing to work as a non-profit fundraising consultant in Boston, and getting into the groove of things as I approach my third year anniversary here and three years out of college! I just moved and adopted a second cat as well.

NATE BAUER ‘24
Just wrapped up working on two state legislature campaigns in NYC (Stephanie Ruskay for State Assembly in AD69 and Jessica Scarcella-Spanton for State Senate in SD23)! Looking for my next opportunity now, but also catching up on sleep.

TORI GRAY ‘24
Recently finished my masters in International Affairs at UCSD School of Global Policy and Strategy and started at a market research company called KADRO as a strategy and insights analyst. I now live in the south Bay area with my partner.

ALEIA JOHNSON ‘24
I am currently a rising 2L (second year) at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. This summer, I have had the amazing opportunity to be a Law Clerk at the Minnesota Attorney General's Office. I am learning a lot, and looking forward to beginning the fall semester.

TEAGAN KLINKNER ‘24
In May I graduated with my Masters in Threat Intelligence, then began working in that field at Saronic Technologies! We were just in the news for rescuing the soldiers in the Strait of Hormuz!

SADHANA MANDALA ‘24

I'm officially a U.S. citizen! I had my interview and civics test two days ago, passed, and had my application approved! My political science degree from Carleton definitely gave me a leg up in passing that civics test :)

To my surprise, the USCIS office told me they had a swearing-in ceremony available that afternoon, so I was officially sworn in right then! The ceremony took place at the D.C. courthouse and was wonderful! There were so many people of all ages and backgrounds. The judge at the D.C mentioned that 53 different nationalities were represented.

The League of Women Voters was right outside the courthouse, so the very first thing I did as a new citizen was register to vote—I can't wait to cast my ballot this fall! And I'm finally able to have my name on all my publications at the Center for American Progress.



Dr. Jennifer Pietenpol '86
Chief Science & Strategy Officer, Vanderbilt Univ Medical Center

Stay Curious, Ask Questions, Lift Others

"As I pursued my doctoral training... I carried with me instincts that Carleton had deeply nurtured—curiosity, disciplined thinking, collaboration, and a drive to ask consequential questions... I remember interviewing for my postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins with one of the leading physician-scientists in cancer research. Early in our conversation, he looked at my curriculum vitae and said, "I see you went to Carleton. The smartest person I know graduated from Carleton." I have never forgotten that moment."



Ruth Matondo '26
Political Science, Major
French, Minor

Who We've Become

"My comps, or senior thesis, advisor Alfred Montero, once shared an anecdote about how there are classes people go to college for. Classes that challenge us intellectually in ways we had not anticipated, and above all, teach us things we would have never otherwise known or learned. I believe that Carleton is the kind of institution that young people around the world desire to go to college for. A place where we can flourish and become well-rounded individuals. oming. Someone who believed in us during moments when we struggled to believe in ourselves."



Jeremy Gaurama '26
Computer Science, Major

Who is Carleton?

"But Carleton is more than just a small school in Minnesota. It is, objectively, the best school in Minnesota. It is, objectively, the best school in the United States for undergraduate teaching, for 15 consecutive years. It is, objectively, the best school in the world to produce people throwing frisbee disks in the air and catching it. And people should know about us. The Carleton experience is unmatched. From the faculty and staff, all the way to partying at Canoe––rest in peace Wade house, Carleton gave me a bunch of education in and out of class."



Political Science and International Relations, Class of 2025, Faculty and Staff

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