

**Former Students Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2005**

In Attendance: Mike Balog, Brian Bunt, Glyn Cook, David Davenport, Clint Hackney, Brian Hervey, Pat Hurley, Stephanie Kern, Rose Loh, Paul Stafford, Michelle Taylor-Robinson, James Thurmond

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by Paul Stafford, Chair. The proposed agenda was approved by unanimous vote and brief introductions were made by all present.

Dr. Patricia Hurley gave an overview of recent department activities. Three new assistant professors were hired and will begin teaching in the fall 2005. Dr. Abrajano, from New York University, joins the Department as an assistant professor in the area of race and ethnicity and political behavior. Dr. Michael Koch, from University of California at Davis, joins the Department as an assistant professor in the area of international relations. Dr. Robert Walker, from University of Rochester, joins the Department as an assistant professor in the area of international relations. Two professors have announced they will be retiring at the end of this academic year. Dr. James Anderson will retire in August 2005 and Dr. Edward Portis will retire effective July 2005 but he will teach one semester a year for the next three years. The department's undergraduate programs office has had changes this year. Dr. Gary Halter stepped down as director of undergraduate advising after 25 years in the position. Dr. Michael Balog will assume the role of directing undergraduate advising and running the day-to-day operations of the undergraduate programs office. The department is currently seeking additional help for Mike. Dr. Robert Harmel has been named director of undergraduate programs and assisted by a faculty committee charged with curriculum matters. The committee is currently making a total overhaul of the political science Bachelor of Science degree plan. The goal is to make the Bachelor of Science degree the department's elite degree. The committee is also working on several new certificate programs to add to our existing Certificate of European Union Politics. Pat then gave a review of recent faculty and graduate student awards. On behalf of the Undergraduate Committee Pat then asked FSAB members their thoughts on the department's degree requirements and curriculum. Important areas of emphasis mentioned by members included mathematics, statistics, economics, business/finance, psychology, foreign language skills, writing, ethics, more flexibility for students in electives and perhaps offering more 'certificates' in various courses of study.

The minutes from the previous FSAB meeting, held on September 18, 2004, were reviewed and approved.

Stephanie Kern gave an overview of departmental development activities. Kern handed out an account summary. The Board has been using the money saved by not printing an alumni newsletter to hand out more undergraduate scholarships. This academic year the Board has already awarded five scholarships totaling \$1,235. Unless they are established and continuous

awards, such as the Bonnie E. Browne Award, most scholarships given on behalf of the Board are called "FSAB Grants." The Board was recognized for its efforts in assisting with the department's newest undergraduate honor--the Gary Halter Internship in Public ?????. This program will involve placing qualified undergraduate political science majors in specially designated internship positions with the City of College Station. Depending on the availability of qualified students, the intention is to provide students for two such internships (each of one semester's duration) per academic year. The Board will give a \$250 cash award to each of the chosen interns to support their work. In an effort to support the department's Summer European Academy and the Mary Anne and J.W. Kornegay Scholarship for Study Abroad, the Board will also be funding four or five students participating in the Summer European Academy who did not receive financial aid from other funds. In response to two questions asked at the previous Board meeting, Kern investigated and reported back to the Board that members cannot donate frequent flier miles to the Texas A&M Foundation or to Texas A&M University. If a member wishes to give air miles to the department they would have to pay transfer fees and would not receive any tax benefits. Kern also investigated and reported back to the Board that if they were still interested in sponsoring an online web bulletin board/forum for undergraduates needing career advice from former students the department could hire a contractor to set it up for a small fee.

The Board broke for lunch at 12:20 p.m.

During lunch Dr. Kim Q. Hill presented "Civic Engagement and the Democratic Process in America" based on his research regarding Robert Putman's book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*.

The presentation ended at 1:05 p.m. and the Board members took a short break. The meeting resumed at 1:25 p.m.

Mike Balog discussed the upcoming Political Science Career Day which will be held on March 30, 2005 from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. In addition to former student speakers the Career Center will be in the building offering their services to students. There was much discussion regarding the proposed Career Day posters. It was eventually decided that the speakers would let the classes out a few minutes early to view the posters and ask questions of any representatives present. Kern would provide cookies and printed notes to lure students walking by the exhibit but not attending any Career Day presentations. There was then discussion about the professions represented at Career Day and how to recruit and diversify our speakers. Kern handed out a list of former students who at some point in time have expressed an interest in Career Day and Hurley urged the members to contact their friends who might be willing to help with Career Day.

The Development Committee was briefly addressed. Stafford said he sees everyone as working on the development committee and he encourages everyone to help with development. Also, try to bring back people who have wandered away from being active members. Kern added that if the combining of meeting and activities, such as today's trip to Northgate and a basketball game were popular, the Board could continue to arrange such events.

The Mentoring Program at last count had six former-student mentors and seven undergraduates officially participating in the program. The actual number of people utilizing this service is higher but not known to the department since some students bypass the department and contact the mentors directly. Mentors present voiced their experiences with the program. Glyn Cook said that he blind-copies Balog on e-mail replies to new undergraduate participants to alert the department of their participation and that this could be done by all mentors to obtain a more accurate number of students participating. Stafford encouraged the members present to sign-up as Mentors and also contact other former students that they know who would be willing to participate. Kern would like for the department and Board to give some display or token of appreciation for former students' participation in the program on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Stafford told the Board that he co-sponsors in the late spring a reception in Dallas with the College of Liberal Arts for newly accepted students. He would like to see a way to promote the department during the event and promote the Board too.

The next meeting date was set for Saturday, September 17, 2005. This is a home game against SMU.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m. Those members interested are invited to join the Board at Fitzwilly's on Northgate and then follow the group to the 5 p.m. basketball game at Reed Arena.