

THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2019

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello and welcome to our annual departmental newsletter. This was another eventful year for the department and the University. Even in an intense year full of Silent Sam protests and administrative changes, our faculty remained dedicated to providing an excellent education. Our role as scholars and teachers has never been more important to our community, and we feel privileged to teach such incredible students.

Our Preyer Award this year went to Caitlin Young. The Preyer Award enables us to recognize our very best graduating student every year. This year Caitlin received highest honors for her thesis, titled "Food Stamps for Felons? An Analysis of the Impact of Public Assistance Policy on Offender Recidivism Rates." The committee praised her for demonstrating "an outstanding command of the literature and analytical techniques," and thus it is no surprise that this fall she will be a Research Assistant at the Urban Institute in their Housing Finance Policy Center. Caitlin's wonderful speech at our graduation ceremony was followed by a keynote public service address by Gina Collias, who ran in the 2018 Republican Primary election for the 10th District of North Carolina. Ms. Collias encouraged our students to get involved in public service in their communities.

We continue to deliver award-winning teaching to our students. This year, Professor Sarah Treul received a Chapman Family Teaching Award for excellence in undergraduate teaching and began her term as a Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Associate Professor. Both awards are extremely competitive, and the Gray Award is the most distinguished teaching award at UNC. Congratulations, Sarah!

Our faculty are also busy innovating new teaching strategies in the classroom as the University prepares for a new general education curriculum. In the fall semester, we deployed new courses to meet the changing demands of our students, such as more courses on data analysis and our new Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) course. This new style of course gives students the skills they need to conduct analytical and scientific research in the classroom and beyond. This year the CURE students created their own research, tackling questions relating to the effectiveness of intervening in civil wars, the link between economic development and terrorist attacks, and more.



Our research highlights are equally exciting. Our faculty published high-profile work on the sources and effects of partisanship in American Politics, an in depth look at Vladimir Putin and Russian politics, and new research on black representation in American Politics, just to name a few. Our faculty and graduate students continually impress me with remarkable productivity and the ability to create important, impactful research.

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR (CONTINUED)



We also hired two outstanding new faculty, Suzanne Globetti and Ted Enamorado. Suzanne comes to us from Vanderbilt University, where she was famous for her award-winning teaching in American Politics. Ted comes to us from Princeton University, where he recently completed his Ph.D. and won a few teaching awards of his own. Ted and Suzanne bring cutting edge skills in political science and a passion for excellence in teaching.

This University often finds itself at the center of critical debates that reflect the tensions and complexities of our world. This year was no exception, and our students and faculty grappled with issues surrounding race, place and heritage, anti-

semitism, and the new crisis of information quality. Throughout all of these discussions, our department remains committed to being a resource for students of all ideological stripes. Our teaching mission is to give our students the tools they need to resolve these challenges on their own terms, in their own ways. We hope you continue to aid us in this mission.

Mark J.C. Crescenzi

Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science

WELCOME NEW FACULTY TO POLITICAL SCIENCE



Ted Enamorado joined the department in July as a tenure-track Assistant Professor after recently completing his Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University. A specialist in political methodology, Ted develops and uses computational methods for quantitative research, with a substantive focus on comparative political economy. His research focuses on producing statistical tools that facilitate tasks that are critical to producing cutting edge research in political science, such as merging large datasets.

Born and raised in Honduras, Ted received his B.A. from the Universidad Católica de Honduras. He then worked as a research fellow at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC. Ted went on to receive an M.A. from Vanderbilt and worked as a consultant at the World Bank's Latin America and the Caribbean Region Poverty Reduction Unit before continuing his graduate studies at Princeton. While at Princeton, he was affiliated with the Program for Quantitative and Analytical Political Science and the Research Program in Political Economy.

Here at Carolina, Ted will teach both graduate and undergraduate courses in quantitative methods. As a member of the methods faculty, he will contribute to the department's ongoing efforts to provide political science majors and Ph.D. students with valuable skills in data science. An award-winning teacher at Princeton, Ted said, "I really look forward to training both undergraduate and graduate students at UNC and being a part of the process that equips them with the necessary tools to have successful careers."

While he has just arrived in Chapel Hill, Ted has wasted no time getting involved with the data science community in the area. He was a co-organizer of the 2019 Triangle Machine Learning Day. This event, held in September at Duke, brings together academic researchers and applied scientists working in all different areas of machine learning.

Ted is excited to be able to begin his academic career at Carolina. "It is my great privilege to join the Political Science Department at UNC—a dream come true on so many levels for me and my family," he explained. "For a junior faculty, there is no doubt that UNC provides the perfect environment to grow as a researcher and as an educator. At UNC you are surrounded by colleagues and students you have grown to admire not only because they produce outstanding research, but because they are extremely nice and welcoming individuals. The level of collegiality in the department is beyond par."

WELCOME NEW FACULTY TO POLITICAL SCIENCE



Suzanne Globetti joined the political science department this fall after having taught 14 years at Vanderbilt University and 4 at Bowdoin College. She received her B.A. at the University of Virginia and her Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin.

Suzanne teaches a range of classes about American politics and research methods. At Carolina, she'll offer the introductory American government class, along with courses on the mass media, public opinion, campaigns and elections, and beginning statistics. At Vanderbilt, she won multiple teaching awards and was widely considered the political science department's most successful classroom presence.

Politics isn't her only interest. She is an avid sports fan. The daughter of two former University of Alabama professors, Suzanne believes her biggest adjustment to UNC might be the change from a football first to basketball first sports environment. Trading the Nashville Predators for the Carolina Hurricanes will be similarly challenging.

PROFESSOR VIRGINIA GRAY RETIRES



Professor Virginia Gray, Robert Watson Winston Distinguished Professor of Political Science, retired from the department after nearly 20 years at UNC and nearly fifty years in academia. Professor Gray was a giant in the discipline, making important contributions to the fields of state politics and public policy. Virginia authored several books and scores of articles, as well as coedited a leading textbook on state government for many years. Her 1983 book with Pamela Conover, *Feminism and the New Right*, provides one of the first analyses of New Right politics in the US. Her 1996 book with David Lowery, *The Population Ecology of Interest Representation*, applied biological principles to the studies of interest groups in the American states. Professor Gray's 1973 article, "Innovation in the States: A Diffusion Study," was published in the *American Political Science Review* and has been cited over 1,500 times. In recognition of her foundational contributions, the State Politics and Policy Section of APSA created a book award in her honor in 2013.

Her outstanding research notwithstanding, Professor Gray is known at UNC and beyond for being a committed mentor of graduate students. She was a founding member of UNC's State Politics Working Group (SPWG), a group that meets biweekly during the academic year so that Ph.D. students can present drafts of dissertation chapters. Virginia could always be counted on to provide much needed support to the students. Whether it was help with the theoretical argument or much-needed references to the literature, Virginia's feedback was essential and many publications by SPWG alumni can be attributed to Virginia's assistance. She also published co-authored research with graduate students, providing them with the invaluable experience of seeing all of the behind the scenes work that goes into producing new knowledge.

Professor Gray served in various capacities in the discipline and beyond. She was President of the Midwest Political Science Association (2003-04), the Public Policy Section of APSA (1995-96), and the State Politics and Policy Section of APSA (1989-90). Professor Gray also served on the editorial board of four different journals, chaired several panels at conferences, and was a member of many award selection committees. Professor Gray was a public servant as well, serving on boards of organizations concerned with health care.

Professor Gray is also an avid sports fan, with a particular affinity for the Tar Heels. She could often be found in the Dean Dome for men's basketball home games, cheering on the team as fervently as the students. In addition to spending time with her two grandchildren, William and Nelly, She enjoys traveling to the Horseshoe Canyon Ranch, a dude ranch located in northern Arkansas, and she takes part in yoga retreats located throughout North America. She plans to continue living in Chapel Hill, and we are grateful that we will still be able to find her in Hamilton Hall in the Emeriti office.

FACULTY

AWARDS & HONORS

Evelyne Huber and **John Stevens** jointly won the 2019 Guillermo O'Donnell Award and Lectureship from the Latin American Studies Association. This award is given for outstanding scholarship in the field of democracy studies.

Together with Derek Epp (UNC Ph.D. 2015) and Kelsey Shoub (UNC Ph.D. 2018), **Frank Baumgartner's** book, *Suspect Citizens*, was awarded the C. Herman Pritchett Best Book Award from the Law and Courts Section of the American Political Science Association. **Frank Baumgartner** also received the Lijphart, Przeworski, and Verba Dataset Award from the Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association for the *Comparative Agendas Project*.

Virginia Gray was a co-winner of the Samuel Eldersveld Career Achievement Award, given by the Political Organizations and Parties Section of the American Political Science Association. It recognizes scholars whose lifetime professional work has made an outstanding contribution to the field.

Rahsaan Maxwell and his co-authors received a large grant from the German Research Foundation (DFG) for the project "Immigration, Integration, and Naturalization: Policy Decisions, Citizens' Response and Migrant Integration."

Jason Roberts was appointed to the Orange County Board of Elections.

Cecilia Martinez-Gallardo received the William Wilson Brown Jr. distinguished term professorship in Latin American Studies.

Sarah Treul is the 2019 recipient of the Chapman Family Teaching Award. She also received the prestigious Bowman and Gordon Gray distinguished term professorship.



GRADUATE ALUMNI NEWS

Tamar Malloy completed her Ph.D. at UNC in 2017. Beginning this fall, Tamar joined the University of Colorado Boulder as an Assistant Professor after spending the last two years as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pittsburgh. Her work focuses on the disciplinary uses of respectability, and by using contemporary cases from across the country she is able to demonstrate how dominant groups have used respectability to disguise and protect structural injustice in the United States.

Tamar began her work by looking at the idea of respectability, something which, in her view, had been taken for granted and not widely published about. Rather than focus specifically on the politics of respectability, she has begun looking at the background conditions that make it necessary and incentivize it. In her view, since United States anti-discrimination law only covers immutable changes, it permits discrimination based on identity, e.g. hairstyle, makeup, clothing, under the guise of respectability. The implications are wide ranging and stretch from the codifying of respectability policies in schools to the implementation of a racially coded dress code in the National Basketball Association. By allowing these types of rules to go unchallenged, it inevitably privileges those who are already comfortable with the norms based in existing power structures.

Tamar also brings contemporary issues to the forefront of the classroom, allowing students to engage with the world around them. While at the University of Pittsburgh, she taught a class on identity politics in which students would digitally superimpose old redlining maps of Pittsburgh onto a modern plan of the city. In this exercise, they were able to examine how the valuation of land under redlining has effected what areas are developed in different ways today. In so doing, students found themselves becoming more invested in learning about the impact these sorts of policies can have on the formation of a modern landscape as well as the historical context in which these policies were created. Through incorporating a variety of fields, including coding, historical research, legal analysis, and congressional study, Tamar helped these students learn how to begin their own well founded research.

Much of Tamar's work within and outside of the classroom has relied on interdisciplinary studies. She, in part, attributes this to UNC, where the faculty were supportive and encouraged this type of work early in her academic career. At CU Boulder she is excited to interact with colleagues across academic fields in order to cultivate a more open research environment. We look forward to hearing more from Tamar as she undertakes these new endeavors, and we wish her the best of luck in the coming years.

PROFESSOR MICHAEL LIENESCH RETIRES



Mike Lienesch, a nationally known scholar of religion and politics and American political thought, retired this spring after 42 years at UNC.

The breadth of Mike's intellectual curiosity and the depth of his knowledge made him an exemplary scholar. Mike has an extraordinary talent for showing how ideas work in the world, and this underlying interest shaped his early work on the American founding period as well as his later work on religion and politics. Mike's scholarship is distinctive for its extensive archival work combined with a broader focus on the analytic and political issues at hand. His most recent book, *In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, The Scopes Trial, and the Making of the Antievolution Movement*, he uses social movement theory and extensive archival work to locate the roots of anti-evolution activism in the religious fundamentalism of the early 20th century, and traces its shifting institutional and ideological forms to the present day.

It will not be surprising to anyone who had Mike as an instructor that he won multiple teaching awards at UNC, including the Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the Charles Robson Award for Excellence in Graduate Instruction. He also held more than one teaching professorship, most recently University Professor of Distinguished Teaching. Mike's courses in American political thought and religion and politics compelled students to rethink fundamental things about the world that they thought they knew. He combined good humor with an insistence on rigorous thinking and close reading. He was a dedicated mentor to graduate students, notably helping them to write with lucidity and precision and without academic clutter. As one former student put it, "who else combines such seriousness about political theory while conveying at the very same moment the pure enjoyment of understanding a text or argument and putting it into context?"

Mike was also an exemplary Departmental and University citizen, serving with skill and dedication on too many committees and initiatives to count. He was a compassionate mentor to junior faculty. He taught us the importance of making our own judgments while listening carefully to others, and remembering that the ongoing work of the community is more important than any single decision.

Although no doubt his children and grandchildren will appreciate his increased flexibility in retirement, you will be just as likely to find Mike in the archives researching his current interest in the development of the concept of "civil religion."



GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Dan Gustafson and **Rob Williams** published an article with Stephen Gent and Mark Crescenzi in *Political Science Research and Methods*. The article measures the strength of peace agreements in civil wars as a latent variable.

Caroline Carlson published two co-authored articles in *Political Geography* and the *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*: "*Political Implications of Residential Mobility and Stasis on the Partisan Balance of Locales*" and "*The Message and the Medium: An Experimental Evaluation of the Effects of Twitter Commentary on Campaign Messages.*"

Emily Wager was awarded a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant with Jim Stimson as a co-Principal Investigator. Her dissertation seeks to better understand American public opinion toward bigger government in an age of economic inequality. This multi-method research brings together findings from time series analyses, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and more. Emily also was interviewed on Matt Grossman's *Science of Politics* podcast in July.

Izzy Laterzo received a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship for the 2019-2020 academic year to learn Brazilian Portuguese. This fellowship is sponsored through ISA and the US Department of Education.

POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS



Amy Sentementes was presented with the **John Patrick Hagan Award for Graduate Student Teaching**. This award is given in honor of the late John Patrick Hagan, who received his doctorate in Political Science from UNC and was a member of the political science faculty at the University of West Virginia. The award is given to a graduate student judged to be “outstanding in the teaching of undergraduates as a graduate teaching fellow.” This year the award committee decided that Amy was highly deserving of the award. Amy taught two courses this year: Analyzing Public Opinion and Intro. to American Government, and her student evaluations emphasized how she kept her students engaged and eager to participate in class discussion. Several students also noted that Amy was one of their favorite instructors during their time at UNC.



Professor **Sarah Treul** was presented with the **Charles Robson Award for Excellence in Graduate Instruction**. Established in 1996, the Robson Award is given to a faculty member who has significantly influenced the professional and intellectual

development of graduate students. It honors Charles “Pat” Robson, a scholar of European politics and one of the Department’s Founders.

Stephanie Shady was presented with the **James W. Prothro Award for Outstanding Masters Research** for her thesis, “Divided We Blur: Internal Party Dynamics and Position Clarity.” Established in 1987, this award recognizes research excellence in honor of Professor Prothro, who served as chair of the department and had a major impact upon the discipline’s study of public opinion, particularly on issues of race and voting behavior. Stephanie’s paper addresses the causes behind position blurring within political parties and whether this ambiguity is strategic. She uses data from a new survey item to conclude that blurring is not always a strategic move by a unified party. Rather, intra-party divisions contribute substantively to the ambiguity of positions of the party as a whole.



Devin Christensen and **Leah Christiani** were both presented with the **James W. Prothro Award for Outstanding Research**. Devin’s article, “Can the Social Costs Argument from Harm Justify Helmet Mandates?” and Leah’s article, “When are Explicit Racial Appeals Effective?” were presented at the MPSA Conference in Chicago. Devin’s article argues that the social costs argument from John Stuart Mill’s harm principle is both rhetorically unsuccessful and dangerous. He makes this argument by analyzing the potential issues with mandating helmet use for motorcyclists and offers several ways that liberals could adjust their approach to paternalistic intervention. Leah examines whether the relative effectiveness of negative, explicit racial appeals depends on whites’ perceptions of threat. She uses a two-wave survey experiment that manipulates participants’ feelings of threat, and then examines their responses to an overtly racial political appeal.



Rachel Porter and **Rob Williams** were both presented with the **Earle Wallace Award for Graduate Student Teaching**. This award honors Political Science Professor Earle Wallace, who received numerous undergraduate teaching awards during his

long career at the University. The award is given to an “outstanding graduate teaching assistant who primarily serves as an assistant in large lecture sections.” Many of the students in their courses noted how dedicated they were to helping the class understand complicated material and explain any difficulties that arose.



Kim Barbour was recognized for providing outstanding customer service to the department in her role as Administrative Assistant to the Chair and department. Kim won the second annual, **Carol Nichols Extra Mile Award for Outstanding Customer Service**.



Tyler Steelman was recognized for providing endless amounts of support to the office staff throughout the academic year. Tyler won the second ever **Annual Hammy Award**.

UHLMAN SEMINAR

Innovation is at the heart of what we do here in the Department of Political Science, whether it is in finding new ways to teach or adopting cutting edge methods in research. And we like to think the same applies to our approach to holding celebrations! This year marked our 10th annual Uhlman Family Seminar, at which our students get an opportunity to show off their work to each other, to the faculty and, of course to Tom Uhlman and other dear friends of the department. To celebrate the event this time, we introduced a new format in research presentations – the Three Minute Thesis. Created at the University of Queensland in Australia, the Three Minute Thesis competition has graduate students summarize their years of work – and why it matters! – in just that, three minutes. Doing so requires students to get to the very heart of what they are doing and why it motivates them and to do so in a non-technical manner that will engage and, hopefully, fascinate a broad audience. It is the scholarly equivalent of the elevator pitch and is no less valuable in a world where the competition for jobs and grants gets ever more intense.

But most importantly, it is great fun. In well under an hour, we were able to hear from 10 of our graduate students on topics ranging from rebellions to regulations and much of the ground in between. Each presentation was judged both by a jury of experts formed of our invited guests and by the masses. In this our inaugural competition, Maura McDonald took first place for her presentation “Glass Slippers and Glass Ceilings: Women in the 2018 Congressional Elections” based on co-authored research with Rachel Porter. Kate McKiernan’s study of clientelism in Latin America, “Paving the Road with Votes” took second place. While the “people’s choice” award went to Devin Case-Ruchala’s “Bank Better Have My Money: The Politics of Financial Ownership.”

This year’s seminar was also graced by the return of three of our alumni: Lindsay Reid from UC Davis, Derek Epp from UT Austin and Anthony Chergosky from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. They each presented their current research and also caught us up on their lives as junior faculty in political science. Anthony also seems to have developed a second career as a television personality on La Crosse tv news! It was lovely for all of us in Chapel Hill to get a chance to catch up and to see the extraordinary growth of our alums as teachers, researchers and citizens.



PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

Milada Vachudova and former graduate student Jan Rovny (UNC Ph.D 2011) published a piece in the Monkey Cage of the Washington Post. The article, “*In Prague, protesters demand the resignation of Prime Minister Andrej Babiš,*” discusses the largest protest in the Czech Republic since 1989 and whether or not the movement has the potential to reshape the Czech political science.

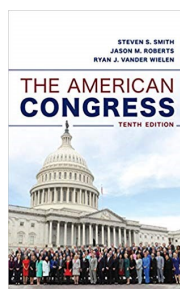
Rahsaan Maxwell published several noteworthy articles this year, including, “*Cosmopolitan immigration attitudes in large European cities: Contextual of compositional effects*” in the American Political Science Review, and “*Everyone deserves quiche: French school lunch programs and national culture in a globalized world*” in the British Journal of Sociology.

Together with former UNC graduate student Andrew Tyner (UNC Ph.D. 2018) and another co-author, **Donald Searing** published “*The Endurance of Politicians’ Values Over Four Decades*” in the American Political Science Review. The article shows remarkable stability in values and provides strong support for the persistence hypothesis which predicts that politicians develop crystallized value systems by their early thirties and largely maintain those values into retirement.

Working with current UNC graduate students, **Evelyne Huber** and **John Stevens** published “*The Varied Sources of Increasing Wage Dispersion*” in The European Social Model in Times of Crisis with Kaitlin Alper, and “*Private education and inequality in the knowledge economy*” in Policy and Society with Jacob Gunderson.

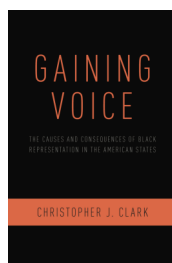


Frank Baumgartner co-edited a book titled *Comparative Policy Agendas: Theory, Tools, and Data*. This book summarizes recent advances in the work on agenda-setting in a comparative perspective. The book first presents and explains the data-gathering effort undertaken within the Comparative Agendas Project over the past ten years. Individual country chapters then present the research undertaken within the many national projects. The third section illustrates the possibilities and directions for new research in comparative public policy using the data presented in this book. All the data used and discussed in the book is publicly available.



Jason Roberts, along with his co-authors, published the tenth edition of the textbook, *The American Congress*. The tenth edition of this respected textbook provides a fresh perspective and a crisp introduction to congressional politics. Informed by the authors’ Capitol Hill experience and scholarship, the new edition reflects changes in Congress resulting from the 2018 elections and such developments as (a) a new majority party in the House; (b) new campaign spending numbers and election outcomes, rules, committees, leaders, and budget developments; and (c) recent political science literature that provides new perspectives on the institution. The text emphasizes the recent developments and includes important learning aids, including lists of key term, discussion questions and suggested further reading. Alongside clear explanations of congressional rules and the lawmaking process there are examples from contemporary events and debates that highlight Congress as a group of politicians as well as a lawmaking body.

Along with her co-authors, **Layna Mosley** published “*Protecting Workers Abroad and Industries at Home: Rights-based Conditionality in Trade Preference Programs*” in the Journal of Conflict Resolution.



Chris Clark published *Gaining Voice: The Causes and Consequences of Black Representation in the American States*. Scholars studying the causes and consequences of political representation, particularly in terms of gender and race, often turn to a concept called descriptive representation. Descriptive representation tells us the degree to which elected officials resemble their constituents, and whether such a resemblance has a bearing on the way they legislate. In other words, do people vote for candidates of their same racial/ethnic background or gender? If they do, does this affect the type of policies an elected official pursues? Further, if citizens see people who look like them in office, does it have an effect on their political attitudes and participation?



The New York Journal of Books called **Graeme Robertson** and Samuel Greene’s latest book, *Putin versus the People*, “...the first book that any politician, journalist, academic, or student starting to learn about Russia should read.

On Sunday, May 12, UNC Chapel Hill welcomed hundreds of friends and family members to campus for a day of celebration. Following the university-wide ceremony in Kenan Stadium, several hundred majors and their guests made their way to Memorial Hall, where the faculty and staff of the Political Science Department waited to greet them. Professor Mark Crescenzi, chair of the department, set the tone with a warm and witty welcome.

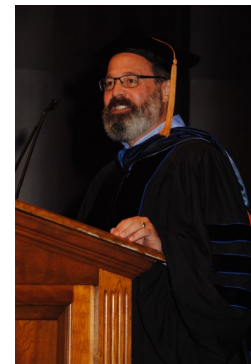
Crescenzi first introduced the winner of the L. Richardson Preyer Award, named in honor of the six-term member of Congress from Greensboro, North Carolina who proved a longtime friend of the department and the Carolina community. Typically, this award is given by the department faculty to the graduate with the most outstanding academic record. This year our Preyer Award winner was Caitlin Eileen Young, who also graduated with Highest Honors for her senior thesis entitled, *“Food Stamps for Felons? – An Analysis of the Impact of Public Assistance Policy on Offender Recidivism Rates.”* Following her graduation from Carolina, Caitlin has accepted a job as a Research Assistant at the Urban Institute, in their Housing Finance Policy Center. In addressing her fellow graduates, Caitlin reflected on what first drew her to the field of political science and encouraged her peers to follow their passions and hold onto whatever it was that first sparked their interest in the subject.

Next, Crescenzi introduced this year’s Commencement speaker, Gina Collias, J.D. and 2018 candidate for the Republican nomination to the US Congress in the NC 10th. After graduating with an undergraduate degree from UNC Chapel Hill, Ms. Collias went on to complete a law degree at Mercer University. She and her husband settled in Cleveland County, NC where Gina began working as a lawyer and realtor. Following the 2016 presidential election, Gina had a political evolution and turned her attention to addressing her newfound concerns for the country. In 2017 she founded the national Rational Republicans group on Facebook, where members of all parties can have civil political discussions about important issues. In an effort to effect further change, Gina ran for a seat in the Republican primary in 2018, though she was defeated by the incumbent. After reaching out to current and former Republicans across the country, as well as other women in politics, Gina accepted that her values were more in line with those of today’s Democratic Party. She will be running for the same congressional seat in 2020, but this time as a Democrat.

Ms. Collias’s address was followed by the department’s traditional recognition of each graduate. As Associate Chair Jason Roberts read their names the students took turns crossing the stage to be personally congratulated by Crescenzi. Among this year’s group of graduating seniors was Sabrina Collias, Gina’s daughter, who received a surprise hug from her mother to the delight of the audience. Once the last student had been celebrated and seated, Crescenzi closed the ceremony with heartfelt congratulations to the graduates and their families and invited one and all to partake in the reception outside on the patio. Cookies were munched, hugs were shared, mentors were thanked, and the students of the class of 2019 dispersed to begin the next chapter of their lives.

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