

POLITICAL SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

Gustavus Adolphus College

From a Seat in the Classroom to a Seat at the Table

My name is Amber Hanson Glaeser, and I am proud member of the Gustavus Adolphus College class of 2010. I was a Political Science and Communication Studies double major, and now have the opportunity to serve as the Director of Public Policy for Minnesota Farm Bureau.

I grew up on my family's farm and graduated with just 36 people from Grand Meadow High School. Gustavus was the perfect fit for college because it was big enough to push me outside of my comfort zone but small enough to make sure I didn't get lost in a crowd.



Amber Hanson Glaeser '10 is Director of Public Policy for the Minnesota Farm Bureau and is the winner of the 2020 First Decade Award given by the Gustavus Alumni Association

I now live in Lakeville with my husband Scott and our two little boys- Henry and Oscar.

I work at Minnesota Farm Bureau leading the Public Policy team. I have the great honor to serve as the state and federal lobbyist for nearly 30,000 Minnesota Farm Bureau families on legislative and regulatory issues pertinent to agriculture, environment, taxes and rural America; manage the Public Policy team and develop legislative strategy based upon grassroots involvement including activating advocacy campaigns online and through legislative fly ins; facilitate the state and federal Political Action Committees (PAC) and governing board of directors; direct the grassroots policy development process to guide Farm Bureau members in setting state and national policy; and communicate with media on legislative updates.



The Political Science department sends its students off into the world well prepared. In the classroom, I was able to learn tangible skills that are truly helpful outside of the classroom.

I don't know if I fully realized when I was sitting in Old Main that the skills I was learning were going to come in handy nearly a decade down the road. However, I think the most important thing I gained from the Political Science department was the lasting impact from the relationships I built. From continued friendships I made at Gustavus and a professional network from an engaged alumni circle to the investment that each professor made in me. I will always be thankful that I learned how to discuss policy topics succinctly and thoughtfully from Kate Knutson. Chris Gilbert held me accountable in ways that made me a better student and ultimately a better professional. And I still hear from Richard Leitch with words of encouragement that mean just as much now as they did in his office as a student. I am forever thankful for my time at Gustavus and look forward to what the future continues to hold as a proud alum of the Political Science department.

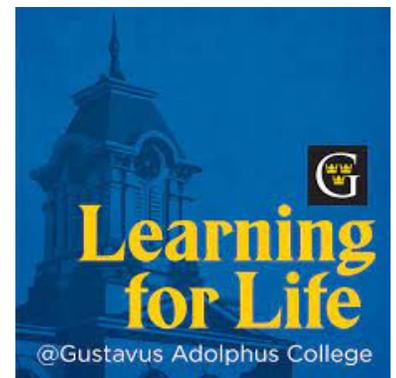
In Case You Missed It...

This year's Nobel Conference, **Big Data REvolution** addressed many of topics of interest to students of political science. Law, public policy, and social justice were front and center in nearly all of the keynote lectures and discussions. All of the lectures and panel discussions were recorded and are available online for free: <https://gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference/2021/>

Listen Up!

Have you heard about the Gustavus podcast **Learning for Life @ Gustavus**? Check out these recent episodes featuring political science faculty and alumni.

-  Professor **Kate Knutson**
[I'm Learning, They're Learning, We're Learning Together](#)
-  **Samantha Vang '16**
[Delivering World-Class Leaders](#)
-  **Dr. Chia Vang '94**
[From Refugee to Gustie to Hmong Historian](#)



Student Spotlight

Andrea Olvera Oros is Going to Change the World

Andrea Olvera Oros '22 answers questions posed by POL Academic Assistants, Maria Flores Marquez '22 and Shae Archambault '22

Tell us a little bit about yourself- how did you end up here at Gustavus and as a political science major?

In high school, I served as a student advisor for former United States Representative (now, Minnesota Attorney General) Keith Ellison. My research for the Representative focused on the impact that DACA had on Minnesotan students and advocating for the program. The process to identify the impact of DACA in my community and having a voice to advocate for it is why I found home in public policy. During this time I had the opportunity to meet with local organizations, community leaders, local politicians, and a variety of DACA students to understand the real impact and history of immigration policy. It was an experience that I still reflect on, and my first introduction to understanding the complexity and actors of public policy.

What is your current internship? What are your favorite parts/things you've learned from it?

I am currently interning for the US Senate in Senator Tina Smith's St. Paul office focusing on banking, business, and housing outreach. This position was followed by my summer at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis where I had the opportunity to attend their Racism and Economy series. The series is a large part of my current internship as it helped me identify the history of housing and wealth disparities in our country, two major issues that Senator Smith works on as part of the committees she serves on.



Senior Andrea Olvera Oros meets with Senator Tina Smith as part of her congressional internship



Aside from the casework that our office does, my favorite part of working in outreach is getting to meet community leaders that are working to make a difference in our state. However, a moment that felt surreal to me was when I was on the phone with an organization that I had previously volunteered for. It was strange to be on the other side of the policy cycle. It is also exciting to get calls from other DC offices.

What advice would you give to other Gusties looking to enter the political field or government sector in general?

I am a big advocate for “hands-on” experience! Work for a campaign, attend a city council meeting, go to town halls or volunteer your time to an organization that works for an issue you are passionate about. I would also say, have informational interviews with alumni who are in jobs that sound interesting to you. At Day at the Capital my first year at Gustavus, I met an alum who was working outside of the government field. She is the reason why I started exploring how to use a degree in political science in a business field. Overall, my advice for working in the political field or government sector is to build a portfolio of issues that you are passionate about by getting involved.

What are your future plans for after Gustavus?

I hope to pursue a career path in financial services! My dream profession is to become the director of a non-profit that works towards providing financial literacy to underserved communities. Regardless of what the future holds, I just hope to serve in a leadership position where she can contribute to creating a prosperous community.





Semi-Random Thoughts on the COVID-19 Era – and Federalism

By Chris Gilbert, Professor of Political Science

This past week the historian of science Allen Brandt told the *New York Times* that our national mindset on the Covid-19 pandemic needed to shift: Covid-19 is not just a crisis, it's an era.

As a citizen I find this thought disheartening! But as a political science professor, it's a very helpful idea that assists in organizing the jumble of disconnected ideas I've been pondering since our lives were upended in early 2020.

What I often call the blessing of teaching about politics – our courses should remain new and fresh because something new and fresh is always occurring in the political world – is also a curse. We tend to rush to fit new events and figures into our existing theoretical frameworks; in hindsight, that rush to judgment often precludes thinking in novel ways about the new.

So even as Donald Trump upended all the norms of presidential behavior (and of the U.S. political system as a whole) over the last five years, my class sessions on elections or the presidency couldn't and didn't just focus on Trump.

Similarly, since returning to the classroom this fall after remote teaching and then a sabbatical, I know that there's more to discuss than just the pandemic. And yet, the pandemic demands to be incorporated into our classrooms.

This semester my most immediate thoughts have turned to the topic many of you remember me talking about endlessly in your U.S. politics courses at Gustavus: federalism.

Federalism has always been a defining feature of the American political system, but not always in positive ways. It's great to think of states as "laboratories of democracy" that foster and spread innovative policies. These innovations might help improve lives (California's strict pollution control measures, for example) or they might promote and sustain inequality and discrimination (Jim Crow and "separate but equal").

Federalism's propensity to both help and impede progress has been on full display since Covid-19 arrived in the U.S. in early 2020. My pre-2020 State and Local Politics textbook didn't even mention state public health agencies or the emergency powers of

governors. But these and many other aspects of state and local government have become central to our lives as well as political flashpoints.

Moreover, federalism is destined to be a negotiated set of rules, not a fixed framework. The lack of an overarching national response to Covid-19 in 2020 (and 2021, for that matter) will enter our textbooks soon enough as a new

consequence of the blessing and curse that federalism turns out to be.

I'm working hard this semester to keep track of my evolving thoughts about federalism. Two years, or ten, down the road it might be worth revisiting initial ideas to see what's held up and what hasn't in the Covid-19 era. Then again, who can predict what era we'll be living in two or ten years down the road?

As always, we'll have something new to discuss.

Giving Back in a Big Way

Political Science alumni, Dave Peterson '95, Tim Johnson '93 and Paul Djupe '93, wanted to honor Professor Chris Gilbert, who served as a mentor to them at Gustavus. All three are now political science professors themselves (Dave at Iowa State University, Tim at the University of Minnesota, and Paul at Denison University). The three teamed up to fund a Heritage Scholarship in Chris' honor. The student who receives this four-year, academic scholarship will also have the opportunity to be mentored by Chris, Dave, Tim, or Paul.



Tim Johnson '93, Paul Djupe '93, Chris Gilbert, and Dave Peterson '95 reunite at a recent political science conference

High Achievers

Rebecca Kiesow-Knudsen '01 was recently named President/CEO of Lutheran Social services of South Dakota.

Andrea Lieser (Busch) '06 was appointed as District Court Judge in Minnesota's Fifth Judicial District (serving Blue Earth County).

David Hann '73 was elected Chair of the Minnesota Republican Party

Political Science Professor **Kate Knutson** won the 2020 Carlson Award for Distinguished Teaching, which was announced at the commencement ceremony for the graduating class of 2020 held in May 2021 due to the Covid pandemic.

A pandemic doesn't stop our fun! Political Science majors gathered for coffee and donuts with professors outside of Old Main this fall (Right)



Students in U.S. Congress participate in committee hearings during a congressional simulation

