

Political Currents



Bringing an end to poverty

Rachel Miller ('11) brings HOPE both at home and abroad BY BREANNA GARRETT ('14)

Before completing her degree in international affairs, Rachel Miller ('11), made the decision her sophomore year that her passion was to contribute and succeed in the nonprofit world. So, she talked to her adviser and added a nonprofit studies minor and set out to gain experience within the nonprofit arena as an undergraduate. Along with her roommate, she applied for volunteer positions with Project HOPE and both students earned placements in the nonprofit's development department. "I worked hard to prove myself and became an intern, then a temp, then a full-time employee," says Miller.

As coordinator in conference and sales for Project HOPE, Miller has consistently been reminded why she so desired being a part of the organization in the first place. Project HOPE, founded in 1958, seeks to improve healthcare worldwide. With its headquarters located 20 minutes from Miller's parents' house in the Shenandoah Valley, the nonprofit organization is not only close to home, but it is also a convenient way to touch lives internationally. While the organization hosts events for similar nonprofit associations, Miller is in charge of the marketing and advertising of the conference center. The Winchester, Va., native also coordinates all events held at the conference center and, the most important task, creating and maintaining a budget.

After her JMU courses and professors helped her establish her personal career goals, Miller sought Project HOPE to help her accomplish them. While networking herself through the organization, she was introduced to the South Africa country director. Her individual development plan was to work on becoming a program officer for one of Project HOPE's field programs. The Project HOPE South Africa country director then led Miller to a program called Village Savings and Loans, which was similar

'If you have a goal, find out who the players are that can help you get there, and ask for their guidance.'

– RACHEL MILLER ('11)

to the microfinance institution she was initially seeking.

For four months, Miller created and completed a Village Savings and Loans training manual and then flew to South Africa. Project HOPE's clinic, located in Zandspruit, South Africa, focused on two serious issues within the slum community. With diabetes



(Above): Rachel Miller ('11) traveled to Zandspruit, South Africa, to launch the Village Savings and Loans program as part of Project HOPE South Africa. Communities which do not have access to a bank can use VSL for entrepreneurial activities. (Inset): Miller proudly displays her Project HOPE T-shirt, one of the means of marketing and advertising she uses to spread the message about Project HOPE.

and hypertension at a high rate, Miller was sent to launch the VSL program. She says, "Every week, members contribute to a "pot of money" and can take out loans from that pot. They are charged interest, which helps the fund grow. Essentially, it acts as a bank, which is extremely important for communities such as Zandspruit, which do not have access to formal financial services. The loans are intended to promote entrepreneurial activity and act as a form of insurance in times of need. At the end of a cycle

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Engaged with the Valley, the USA and the world

BY CHARLES H. BLAKE

Engagement is central to JMU's new vision statement and has long been a focus of the political science department's students, graduates and faculty. This newsletter illustrates a mix of engaged learning, civic engagement and community engagement. In fall 2013, Amanda Cleveland and Lili Peaslee received a new U.S. Department of Justice grant to extend their collaboration with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America while Jennifer Taylor released a grant-funded study on military families. Both of these faculty projects involve undergraduate and graduate students in their work. Tim LaPira's research on lobbying is drawing increasing national attention while providing additional opportunities for undergraduate research. In this issue Tom Culligan and Rachel Miller also share their commitments to civic and community engagement following their graduation from JMU. These and other forms of engagement were celebrated by the School of Public and International Affairs' fall 2013 symposium, as discussed by Rob Alexander.

Alumni energy helps fuel our department's efforts to support JMU students. We count on your willingness to share your professional experiences and wisdom with current students and fellow alumni alike. David Jones discusses the various ways in which your generosity of time and spirit helps current students. In turn, Elaine Chisek details a new Career Peer Advising program in which current students help others to connect with JMU graduates.

As this newsletter went to press, our department received the welcome news of a new endowment supporting student internships and career development in public service. The generosity of the McLeskey Family Foundation will fund the creation of the Barry DuVal Virginia Public Service Fellowship. Once this program is launched, our department will select one rising senior each spring as a fellow who will conduct a public service internship in Virginia during the summer. The endowment honors

'Alumni energy helps fuel our department's efforts to support JMU students.'

Barry DuVal — a 1981 JMU graduate who has been president of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce since 2010. He is a former Virginia Secretary of Commerce & Trade (1998–2002) and a past mayor of Newport News (1990–1996). Barry has kindly agreed to liaise with each fellow to set up shadowing and networking opportunities.

Keith Grant and Kristin Wylie are the newest members of our 30-person faculty. During the 2012–2013 school year, faculty published two books, 11 articles, and three book chapters; had two new book projects under contract, and presented 26 papers at professional conferences. In spring 2013, John Scherpereel received the Provost's Award for Excellence in International Education; Hakseon Lee received the Provost's Award for Excellence in Academic Advising; and Melinda Adams received JMU's Woman of Distinction award. In mid-2013, Lili Peaslee was one of seven national finalists for the Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement for Early Career Faculty. In fall 2013, Bernie Kaussler received the Madison Scholar Award for the College of Arts & Letters, while in February 2014 Amanda Cleveland received JMU's Cahill-Goodman Award for Early Career Faculty.

In August 2014, Robin Teske will retire after a quarter century of excellent work as part of our faculty. Inside these pages Robin reflects on her work at JMU. Anyone wishing to make a gift to JMU on the occasion of Robin's retirement can donate to the departmental Endowment Honoring Retiring Professors. This endowment, which funds teaching and research innovation by departmental faculty, is now in the final year of a five-year advancement campaign begun in 2010.

Monetary donations are vital to JMU's present and future, but sharing your time and expertise with current students makes the Madison community come alive. If you would like to add your name to a list of departmental alumni willing to conduct informational interviews about your career field with recent graduates and current students, please contact me. If your travels bring you back to the Shenandoah Valley, remember that you are always welcome in Miller Hall. ☺

→ CONTACT Charles Blake at blakech@jmu.edu.

How much lobbying is there in Washington?

Political science students help shed some light

BY TIM LAPIRA

The seemingly simple question, "How much lobbying is there in Washington?" is surprisingly hard to answer. After Congress passed the 1995 Lobbying Disclosure Act, which ostensibly required all lobbyists to report their activities, the answer should be a no-brainer: find the disclosure forms and count them up.

The problem is that just about everybody in Washington knows that the lobbying disclosures don't really disclose everything. The reason: the Lobbying Disclosure Act definition of "lobbyist" is too narrow. If they want to, lobbyists can fully comply with the law and do virtually the same influence-for-pay as "strategic policy consultants," yet choose not to disclose.

To try to get a better estimate of how many lobbyists there actually are, I bought the lobbyists' phonebook and recruited a small army of students — Meredith Gray ('13) and Amy Roberts ('13), public policy and administration majors, and Rachel Wein ('13), a political science major — to help me. When they weren't writing papers or studying for exams, these students came to my office to do exhaustive Internet searches on a random sample of people listed in the commercial directory Lobbyists.info. What they helped me discover was remarkable.

We found that about half of those involved in some form of policy influence did not disclose lobbying activities in 2012 (*LaPira and Thomas, 2014*). That is, for every one lobbyist who discloses his or her activities, there is one so-called "shadow lobbyist" who does not.

All told, I estimate that organized interests spent about \$6.7 billion lobbying the government, not merely the \$3.3 billion disclosed to the government. Put another way, for every one member of Congress, the lobbying industry produces about \$12.5 million. By comparison, the average 2012 budget for a member of the House of Representative's office was only \$1.3 million. So, in a presidential election year, in a down economy, during arguably the least productive Congress ever, lobbyists accounted for more than nine times the typical House member's official operating expenses.

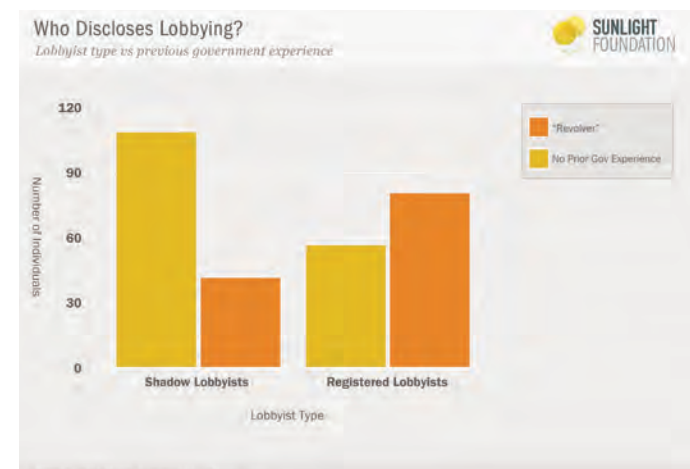
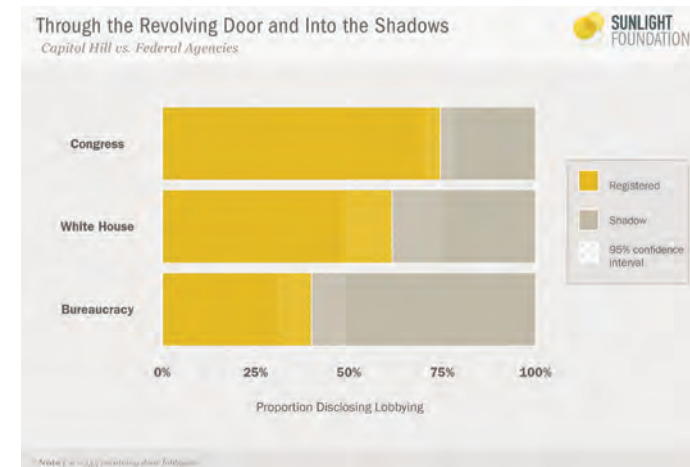
Who discloses and who does not? This is not exactly an easy question to answer because of the low disclosure rates. But I could

'I estimate that organized interests spent about \$6.7 billion lobbying the government, not merely the \$3.3 billion disclosed to the government. Put another way, for every one member of Congress, the lobbying industry produces about \$12.5 million.'

— TIM LAPIRA, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

reach some general inferences based on where they used to work. To do this, my students categorized lobbyists into those who've gone through the proverbial revolving door, and those who haven't.

Revolvers — lobbyists who worked inside the federal government



— are nominally more likely to disclose their lobbying, though 41 percent still choose to hide it. On the other hand, conventional lobbyists — those who were never on the federal payroll — are much more likely to be opaque about their influence activities.

What these data do not tell us is why some lobbyists disclose and others do not. I am currently exploring this question by talking to a variety of former members of Congress, lobbying firm managers, association executives, political lawyers and reform advocates in Washington, D.C., for a book on so-called revolving door lobbying. This work is sponsored by the Mr. & Mrs. F. Claiborne Johnston Jr. Endowment grant for junior faculty.

What my research does tell me is that it's needlessly hard to figure how much lobbying there actually is in Washington. Fortunately, with the assistance of some very bright and motivated JMU students, I am beginning to shed some light on a profession that is often misunderstood and too easily maligned by politicians and pundits. ☺

→ LEARN MORE about professor Tim LaPira at www.jmu.edu/polisci/faculty_lapira.shtml. Read his works in progress, including *Revolving Door Lobbyists and Interest Representation*, (with Herschel F. Thomas III) and *Interest Groups & Advocacy* at <http://ssrn.com/author=1708711>.

BETHECHANGE

Big impacts

Political science professors work with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to improve mentoring research and help at-risk youth

BY AMANDA CLEVELAND AND LILI PEASLEE

Over the past few decades, mentoring programs that match young people with caring adult role models have blossomed as a way to have a positive impact on the lives of at-risk youth. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the largest and perhaps best known men-

toring program across the country. The Harrisonburg-Rockingham County chapter is the largest program in the state, serving more than 750 children and youth in 2012 (The Richmond chapter, which has an operating budget 50 percent larger than Big Brothers Big Sisters of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County, is the second biggest, with around 625 matches).

Mentors, or Bigs, at Big Brothers Big Sisters are matched with mentees ages 5 to 14. The Bigs commit to spend one hour a week for at least a year with their Little. College students, who often leave the area

during the summer, are asked to commit a minimum of three semesters to the program. Matches can be site-based, where Bigs meet with their Littles at school, or community-based, in which mentors meet with their mentees outside school hours.

Many of the young people who are served by BBBSHRC often face personal, family or environmental risk factors that increase

the likelihood that they will experience negative life outcomes. One-third of mentees have a diagnosed learning disability and more than 20 percent suffer from a chronic illness. More than two-thirds (69 percent) live in families earning less than \$30,000 a year with one-fifth of those making less than \$10,000. Similar proportions qualify for free and reduced-price lunches and 32 percent live in single-parent families.

Research shows that mentoring programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters of America can significantly affect the lives of such young people, who often lack positive role models and caring adults to help them develop a positive self-worth and the ability to make healthy life choices. The impact of strong mentoring relationships includes decreases in risky behavior, such as substance use and delinquency, and increases

in positive behavior, such as improved grades, school completion, and better relationships with other adults.

Unfortunately, however, the positive results noted by many mentoring evaluations are not consistent (or, of concern to researchers, statistically significant) across programs or across matches within the same mentoring program. While mentoring



Members of the JMU Applied Research and Evaluation Team team (l-r) are Dr. Amanda Cleveland and Dr. Liliokanaio Peaslee with Big Brothers Big Sisters Executive Director Sue Totty and Director of Programs Emily Dovel at the BBBSHRC office in Harrisonburg.

Student research corner

BY GENNA BECKENHAUPT ('14)

If you had asked me a year and a half ago if I had ever considered pursuing a career in political science research, I may have laughed. And if you had told me that I would be accepting a fully funded spot in the University of California Irvine Political Science doctoral program shortly before graduation, I would have been stunned. As a junior, research was not even on my professional radar. But a lot has happened in a short amount of time.

With the encouragement of Dr. Sulfaro I applied for and was accepted into a research

program. I spent six weeks enrolled in the Texas A&M Summer Research Academy where I received an accelerated crash course in political science research methods, Stata, and GRE test-taking, and I got a real sense of the demands of graduate school. In those six weeks I developed a quantitative research paper exploring the effects of negative campaigning on blacks and Latinos in comparison to whites, from the conception of a hypothesis to finishing a 20 page paper.

In October I was invited to present the paper at the University of Michigan Emerg-

ing Scholars Conference. Not only was I presenting in the company of my inspiringly accomplished peers but also in front of some political science giants, some of whom are personal idols of mine. After presenting my work in front of all those political scientists and receiving their feedback and suggestions, I knew that this really was the road I wanted to be on. I feel that research is the best way that I can affect change. Without the resources and direction of JMU's Political Science Department I might never have realized my goals. P

holds promise, the relationship that develops must be of high quality and marked by strong interpersonal connections between mentor and mentee.

Moreover, because many at-risk youth have experienced instability and disappointment in their lives, when a mentoring relationship ends early it can actually have a negative impact and produce worse outcomes than if no mentoring had taken place at all. What remains unclear – in both research and in practice – is how mentoring programs can facilitate consistently strong matches.

It was with this question in mind that in 2011 we – along with former political science professor Gary Kirk – applied for a Best Practices in Mentoring research grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The resulting grant award of \$478,000 is the largest ever in JMU's College of Arts and Letters. The grant allowed us to conduct a two-year research study examining the impact of enhanced mentor training and support on the strength of match relationships and on mentee outcomes. While research is being conducted in partnership with BBBSHRC, our development of mentor training and assessment instruments was also informed by collaboration with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. This effort will allow us to expand the results of the project, currently in its final year of data collection, beyond the local community. We anticipate that our findings will be used to improve the training practices of mentoring programs nationwide.

Although it is still too soon to draw definitive conclusions from our research, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has recognized our project as a best practices site in program development and evaluation research. In 2013 they included us as one of three grantees nationwide to be showcased in a panel highlighting agency-funded research at the American Society of Criminology annual conference.

In early fall 2013, we received a second grant award from OJJDP for \$299,000 to look at factors that have an effect on mentoring

relationships beyond mentor training and support. Most importantly, this new research project will also examine the long-term impacts of mentoring on youth, allowing us to better assess the cost-effectiveness of programs like BBBSHR and thus address another major hole in mentoring research.

Our OJJDP grants have also enabled the department to expand funding and research opportunities for graduate students in the department's Master of Public Administration program. We have been able to provide tuition and stipend support for five M.P.A. students, and a sixth student will join us this spring. Graduate assistants have gained experience in mentor recruitment and data entry and analysis, as well as accompanying us to national conferences.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County has a longstanding strong connection with James Madison University when it comes to mentoring local youth: nearly 90 percent of the agency's mentors are college students, with the vast majority hailing from JMU. Without the support of the university community, the agency would not be able to help as many young people who are in need of its services. Over the past two years, OJJDP grant funding has expanded BBBSHR outreach at the university, successfully

increasing the number of mentors and children served by the program. Our research partnership with BBBSHR promises to magnify the impact of mentoring by not just expanding but also improving these relationships. P

→ **LEARN MORE** about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Harrisonburg Rockingham County at www.bbbshr.org

About the Authors: *Amanda Cleveland and Lili Peaslee are both assistant professors of public policy and administration in the JMU Department of Political Science. Together they head the Applied Research and Evaluation Team. Cleveland is currently in her fourth year at JMU and specializes in program evaluation. Peaslee is in her sixth year and specializes in youth development and policy studies. Both are currently involved in several other community-based research and evaluation projects that permit students in their courses to apply their knowledge to serve local needs.*



Senior international affairs major Camille Vargas ('14) shares time with her "little brother."

Bringing an end to poverty

Continued from Page 1

(typically one year), the money is divided out proportionally among the members based on how much they contributed, so no money is lost."

Miller's South African mission experience was an exploration of gratitude for the many blessings and opportunities within her own life. Because her heart is still with those people she helped in South Africa, she is happy to know she has developed the components needed to improve the lives of others. With faith in her leadership and those she left in charge, her South African trip

will always be particularly special. Raised to realize how fortunate she has been, Miller says she is driven to help put an end to poverty. With motivation from her mother and with inspiration from her two favorite JMU professors, John Scherpereel and Melinda Adams, Miller has gradually taken steps to be the best person she can be.

"Do not be afraid to extend yourself," Miller advises all classmates, peers and students. "If you have a goal, find out who the players are that can help you get there, and ask for their guidance." P



→ **LEARN MORE** about Rachel Miller and Project HOPE at www.projecthope.org/news-blogs/blog-authors/rachel-miller.html

Reflections from Retiring Professor Robin Teske

Political Currents: You will be retiring from the political science department this spring after 25 years of service. What did you like most about working in the department?

Teske: That's an easy one. Definitely the best things have been my students and my colleagues. JMU students are special. There's usually a critical mass of students in every class who are motivated, work hard, are eager to learn, are willing to engage with each other and the material they are studying, and are willing to take the time to think deeply and critically. I hope that over the years my students have learned a few things from me; but I know that I've learned a great deal from them.

One of the things that makes this department unique is that me and my colleagues have been able to develop and maintain a real sense of community among the department faculty and staff. We all genuinely like, respect and enjoy one another. It's truly a gift and a blessing to have had a job where, after 25 years, it continues to be fun to come to work.

PC: How has the political science department changed since you first arrived? How have the university and students changed?

Teske: Both the department and the university are much bigger now than they were 25 years ago. When I arrived in Harrisonburg in August 1989, JMU had fewer than 10,000 students and, if I remember this correctly, I was the 12th or 13th faculty member in the department (and the second woman). In the intervening years both the university and the department have more than doubled in size. One of the most important commitments that the "old" department faculty had during this period was integrating many new young professors into the department in a way that retained a sense of community. They built a department atmosphere where everyone feels their voices are heard and taken seriously. I hope we have done this, but I should probably let the younger faculty speak for themselves on this issue.

As for the university as a whole, during my time at JMU there has been a major change in the amount of monetary support the university receives from the government of Virginia. For example, in 1987 the university received approximately twice the amount of state support per full-time student (in real dollars) than it received in 2012. Over the years tuition

increases have replaced some but not all the money pulled back by the state. This makes it very difficult for JMU and other public universities to do our work. The heart of any university is its faculty, and the core mission of JMU is fine teaching. I hope as JMU moves into the future it will have the resources to make sure the faculty gets the support it needs, and that academics remain strong.

PC: What were some of your favorite courses to teach and why?

Teske: The courses I taught the most are international law and introduction to international relations. But perhaps my most memorable course was a short-lived class in International Law II. The students in one of those classes were on a mission to educate and explain to the country as a whole how important international law really was. The students decided the best way to do this was to get on Oprah, and to talk to the president. Oprah at the time had a contest where she asked her viewers to propose and plan an episode of her show, and she would then give the winning proposal national attention by airing the winners' episode. The students believed that winning this contest would be a perfect way to give international law the national attention they thought it deserved. They also believed that if they were able to talk as a class with the president (yes — the U.S. president, who at the time was President Clinton), their conversation with the president would give added legitimacy and credibility to international law, and to a foreign policy based on international law. The students told me they would work on the Oprah side, and that it was my job to arrange the meeting for them with the president. Needless to say we made it neither to the Oprah studio in Chicago nor to the Oval office in Washington, but it was fun trying.

PC: How do you plan to spend your retirement?

Teske: As is everything, my plans for "retirement" are a work in progress. I like political philosopher Hannah Arendt's definition of politics. Arendt defined politics as the human capacity for action, the ability to begin something anew whose outcome is uncertain. In a sense, every class and every new semester is like that. I expect retirement will be, too. I love teaching, and will continue to teach a few courses a year — probably Peace Studies and



International Law. In the last few years I've become increasingly interested in the emerging field of Earth jurisprudence, or "wild law." Earth jurisprudence involves decentering the legal system from its focus on human beings, and expands the context of the law to include the natural world. One of the questions Earth jurisprudence is asking us is whether it is possible to change our consciousness to the point where we are able to build a legal and governance system where, as Thomas Berry has put it, "the Earth is primary and ... humans are derivative." I believe the answer to that question is yes, and I am in the process of trying to figure out how I can best make my own contribution. Options include going back to my work as an attorney, taking the time to write more, getting more involved in local sustainability issues or, perhaps, all of the above. Then there's also our ongoing "Saturday night supper club," my bridge group, membership in a piano quartet, continuing to develop my definitely out of control "edible landscaping" and spending time with far flung friends and family. Oh, and former students, please stop by if you are in Harrisonburg.

PC: Anything else you'd like to share?

Teske: Yes — I'd like to thank all of those who have helped make the last 25 years so memorable. This includes colleagues and friends, current students, and former students. Thank you all. I'm not sure what retirement will bring, but I'm excited about finding out. I also look forward to getting advice from Doug Skelley and Kay Knickrehm, who started their retirement journeys several years ago. And in talking about beginnings and endings, perhaps T.S. Eliot put it best:

*What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY CANDICE HEATH ('14)

MADISONPERSPECTIVES

JMU Politicos help alumni launch careers

BY TOM CULLIGAN ('05)

Like many good ideas at JMU, this one began over beer and wings at the Buffalo Wild Wings on Main Street, across from campus. Sitting around a table with Dr. David Jones and fellow political science and international affairs alumni who had traveled back to campus to meet with soon-to-be alums who were looking for career advice, our small group discussed how we could extend the welcoming environment of JMU from Harrisonburg to Washington, D.C. We also discussed how to help both current students and alumni capitalize on the network of alumni working in politics, law and international affairs.

As a recent graduate who had just landed his first job on Capitol Hill, I was all too familiar with the difficulties of leaving JMU, diploma in hand, and trying to figure out how to make connections with employers for career advice and, hopefully, a job. The department prepared us well for the professional world but we lacked a strong network of alumni who could offer informational interviews or leads on jobs.

From that initial gathering at B-Dubs nearly eight years ago, the JMU Politicos group was born, and it now extends the JMU experience for the department's alumni to Washington and Richmond. Our mission has been to capitalize on the professional networks of JMU alumni to give recent graduates a hand up in navigating the job market and introducing them to the people that could open doors to internships and careers.

Since then, JMU Politicos has hosted speaking engagements with senators and congressmen, held happy hour networking events, and sponsored resume workshops and mentoring sessions for recent alumni. We have hosted luncheons with department faculty to give alumni the chance to relive their days in class and reconnect with favorite faculty members and old friends. And of course, the Politicos have also become synonymous with the ever-popular JMU on the Hill reception that brings together the university president, faculty members and alumni on Capitol Hill each spring.

One of my favorite events each year is the program for recent graduates to welcome them to Washington with a full day of workshops and networking. Students get advice from recent alumni about living in D.C. and how to network to get that first job, and even get feedback on their resumes in one-on-one informational

'The JMU Politicos has become such a strong and successful resource because of the active involvement of JMU faculty, current students and alumni, in both Washington and Richmond.'

— TOM CULLIGAN ('05)

interviews with alumni working in their field of interest. The day culminates in a happy hour where new alumni meet older alumni and make connections to give them a leg up in their job searches. It's become a popular program and a fun tradition for the group.

The JMU Politicos has become such a strong



This issue's guest alumni columnist Tom Culligan ('05) is the appropriations legislative assistant for congressman Frank Wolf in Virginia's 10th district.

and successful resource because of the active involvement of JMU faculty, current students and alumni, in both Washington and Richmond. Today, the group coordinates closely with the department's alumni advisory board, on which I have been privileged to serve for the last three years, and also works closely with the JMU Alumni Association. It fills a critical need for new graduates to get a strong start on their career by connecting with older alumni and leveraging their JMU network. What started as an enthusiastic idea over beer and wings has grown to be a powerful resource for students, faculty and alumni — a resource that will grow and evolve for many years to come.

P

Changing public policies for veterans

Research that makes a difference in lives of military families

BY JIM HEFFERNAN ('96)

Jennifer A. Taylor, JMU assistant professor of political science, knows firsthand the hardships that military families endure — the long deployments, multiple relocations, emotional and financial stress, and the uncertainty. As a Navy wife Taylor moved 15 times over the course of her husband's 25-year career, often forced to start over in a new town with no real job prospects, a limited social network and three young children to resettle.

"Everywhere we went I kept seeing the same issues coming up with other military families," she says. "It seemed like there ought to be a better way to build connections among these families that wasn't command-driven. As military families, we're conditioned to provide help, not to ask for help. And when you're constantly moving someplace new and you have to develop a support system, it's very challenging."

Despite her family obligations and the constantly changing scenery, Taylor managed to carve out a career as a development officer and executive in the arts, social services and education. But along the way she experienced her share of employer discrimination. "As a military spouse, your resume starts to look like Swiss cheese."

The family's last duty station was Norfolk, Va., where Taylor enrolled in a Ph.D. program in public administration. There she met Vivian Greentree, co-founder and director of research and policy for Blue Star Families, a nonpartisan organization that advocates for military families on the national level. Taylor was looking to transition from the nonprofit world to teaching and research, and her experience as a mem-

ber of the military community endeared her to the upstart organization. "We began thinking about how we could use our research skills to influence the national conversation and change public policies for veterans, service members and their families," she says.

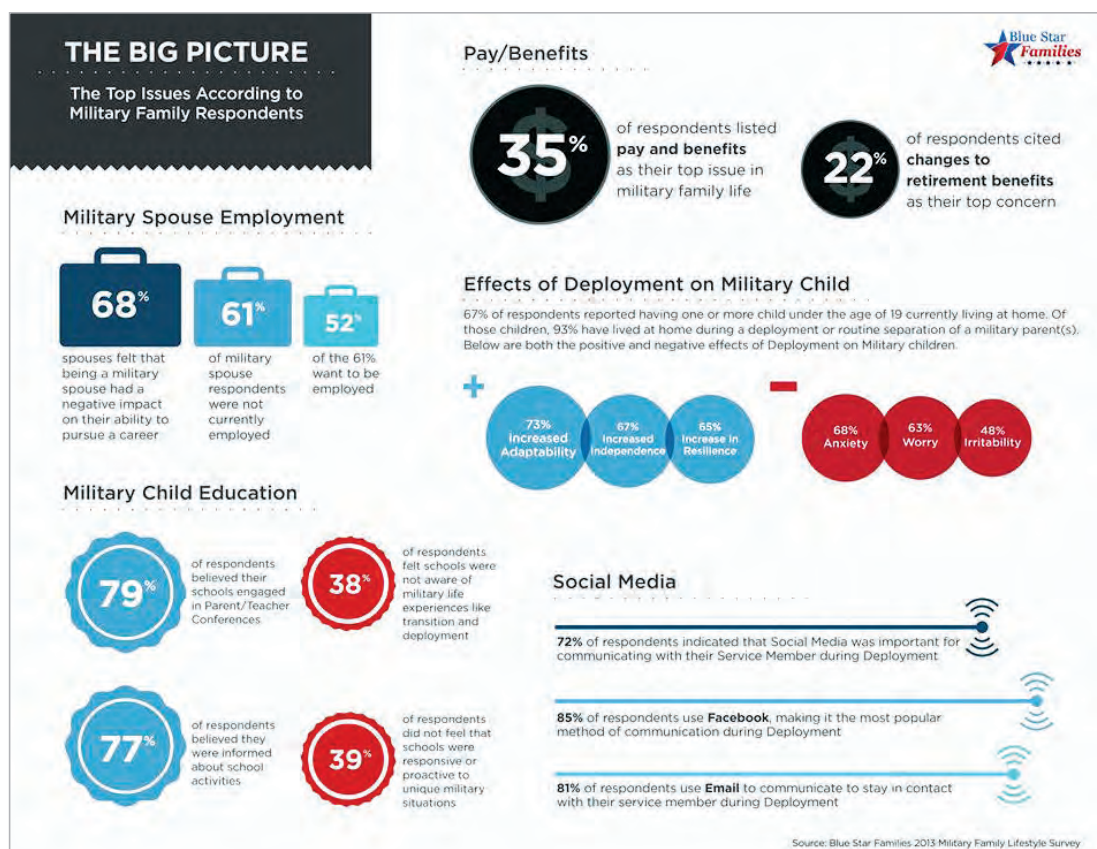
Taylor joined the Blue Star Families research team as a lead investigator in 2011. The organization surveys military families on an annual basis to identify their needs and concerns and then analyzes and reports the findings to lawmakers and the administration at a hearing on Capitol Hill hosted by the Joint Military Family Caucus. "It's a

wonderful opportunity for our research to make a difference," Taylor says.

And it has. The Blue Star Families organization has helped shape public policy like the proposed Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which is designed to remove barriers to educational success due to frequent moves and deployments, and portable teacher licensure for military spouses. The group has also been active with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Administration in developing opportunities for virtual employment and transferable businesses. "Military spouse unemploy-

'More than one million service members will be transitioning to civilian life in the next few years. Along with the challenges of reintegration and transition like finding employment, pursuing additional education and job training, many military families will also lose their health benefits.'

— JENNIFER A. TAYLOR



Military families face struggles — spouse employment and school empathy — as shown in this Blue Star Families graphic

ment hurts the whole family," Taylor says, which often negatively impacts the successful civilian transition of service members.

Changes to retirement benefits are also a top concern among military families, according to the organization's 2013 survey. "More than one million service members will be transitioning to civilian life in the next few years," Taylor says. "Along with the challenges of reintegration and transition like finding employment, pursuing additional education and job training, many military families will also lose their health benefits. Veterans retain their health benefits as they separate, but families will lose theirs."

In addition, Blue Star Families has been instrumental in shedding light on the fact that military spouses and dependents are at an incrementally higher risk for suicide than service members and veterans, and yet programs and services for military family members are minimal and suicide rates are not tracked by the Department of Defense.

One of the findings that most concerns Taylor is the index measuring

whether military families would recommend military service to others. On a scale of -100 to 100, the 2013 respondents' score ranged from -28 percent for service members to -38.8 percent for military spouses. "We're an all-volunteer military," Taylor says. "What does that mean for the future?"

Taylor notes that her students Vanja Basrarić ('13M) and Colleen Taylor ('13) were of invaluable assistance on the 2013 Survey Research Team. Basrarić, a research assistant, designed survey instruments, conducted data analysis and literature review, and developed

presentation materials. Taylor did her public policy and administration internship on the research and was involved in team meeting management, communications, copyediting, survey design and analysis.

Bridging the military-civilian divide is vital. "There are things that civilian families can do to support military families in their community, whether it's making and delivering a meal, mowing the lawn, or watching the children while the spouse goes to the grocery store. All of these simple things can make a difference."



(Top, inset): Lt. Cmdr. Asa Taylor and daughter Amelia, age 6. (Top): Rep. Sanford D. Bishop Jr. of the House and Senate Military Family Caucus, flanked by panel discussants and research team members, speaks at the 2013 Military Family Survey Release at the U.S. Capitol. (Bottom right): M.P.A. graduate student Dane Sosniecki accompanied Jennifer Taylor to the 2013 Survey release. (Bottom left): Jennifer Taylor and her husband, Lt. Cmdr. Asa Taylor, take a White House tour hosted for military families in August 2010.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF JENNIFER TAYLOR

My first JMU semester

Faculty fellow lauds student participation

BY ANTA SANE, JMU PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY FELLOW

It has been a wonderful experience to be a Preparing Future Faculty Fellow at JMU. I really loved it and enjoyed teaching the African Politics course during the Fall 2013 semester. I had a very good group of students who were engaged and prepared in each class. It was a pleasure teaching the class and, yes, I looked forward to teaching every Tuesday and Thursday. We had good class discussions and the one I enjoyed the most, among many, was the discussion that followed a documentary by Dambisa Moyo, a Zambian economist, about foreign aid in Africa. Class time was not enough to keep on with the students' discussions, arguments and positions about the impact, or lack thereof, of foreign aid in Africa.

These are memories and moments that I will miss and will be with me throughout my academic career. One of my students put a big smile on my face when he told me that this was the best class he'd taken that semester. Another one asked me which class I would be teaching in the spring semester so he could take it. Yet another hugged me on the last day of class and thanked me for all she learned throughout the semester.

One student expressed the wish that I had my PowerPoint slides on Blackboard. I told my students that I wanted them to do the reading prior to class, and I did not want them to not



read and to only rely on my PowerPoint slides, which were only highlights.

These comments, feedback and positive attitudes really made a difference in my first semester fellowship at JMU. I found Harrisonburg to be a very nice community as well. I loved being able to go from

place to place without using my GPS. I am enjoying another fruitful semester, teaching Global Politics, and I enjoy the students' discussions on all aspects of globalization and international relations. ¶

→ LEARN MORE at www.jmu.edu/osap/PFF.shtml

About the Author Anta Sane is the JMU Preparing Future Faculty Fellow, and she teaches African Politics and Global Politics. Sane is a native of Senegal, West Africa, and a Ph.D. candidate in political science at Howard University. Her areas of concentration are public policy/public administration, international relations and comparative politics. Her areas of interest are women in politics, gender and governance and economic development. Her dissertation, "Gender Inequities in the Process of Public Governance: The Case of the Senegalese Parliament," evaluates the role of Senegalese women parliamentarians in reducing gender disparities in three policy areas: citizenship, family law and women's healthcare. Her study is intended to draw attention to the impact and effect of these policy areas, as well as the obstacles Senegalese women in office are facing in advocating for the aforementioned policies.

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Alumni give students insight and inspiration

BY DAVID JONES

The political science department has long recognized that alumni serve as sources of inspiration and insight for its students. Former students of Tony Eksterowicz's U.S. Congress class may recall visits by Dannie Diego ('99), Mike Swansburg ('00) and Brian Stout ('99), who regaled students with stories from Capitol Hill. Connecting JMU graduates with current students has since been the focus of the department's alumni outreach efforts. Much of this outreach happens through JMU Politicos, an organization for alumni working in politics, policy and related fields. Through a series of Politicos-led programs, alumni have helped students make connections, secure internships, sort out potential career paths and take other steps toward launching careers in public service. As alumni have worked together on these efforts to help students, they have strengthened their connections with each other.

Each spring since 2006, a group of alumni has returned to the JMU campus for a career workshop for departmental majors. In addition to introductory panel discussions, this event features break-out sessions during which students get fine-tuned advice on pursuing their particular interests as well as feedback on their resumes. This workshop format has been employed by the JMU Washington Semester program for 15 years. Each June, recent graduates and current students are invited to participate in an alumni-led workshop focused on careers in the Washington, D.C., area. This program was inspired by Tom Culligan ('05), who pressed the department to develop programming for recent graduates seeking help with the transition from JMU to D.C. For this program, each student is paired with an alumnus working in a field that matches his or her interests. It also features an alumni-led panel discussion on "Living and Working in D.C." Last year, the D.C. workshop was capped off by a reception on Capitol Hill hosted by President Jonathon R. Alger.

Recent efforts have turned toward more intimate dinner events that foster informal interaction between alumni and students. In February, students participating in the Global Affairs Washington Semester program communed over Sichuan hot pot with alumni who share an interest in international affairs. In Richmond, alumni talked politics

with students of Hon. Pete Giesen's state and local government class and Dr. Lili Peaslee's public policy seminar at the end of their day-long trip to the capitol. Guests heard remarks by several lawmakers, including Senator Emmett Hanger ('71, '79M), Secretary of the Commonwealth Levar Stoney ('04), and Delegates R. P. "Dickie" Bell ('88) and Scott Surovell ('93).

In addition to providing career advice, alumni enrich classroom learning by serving as guest speakers on campus. Under the leadership of Catherine Hill ('89), the department's alumni board is building a list of alumni who are willing to speak to classes about their areas of substantive expertise. So far the list includes elected officials, foreign service officers, attorneys, lobbyists, Capitol Hill staffers, law enforcement officers and policy analysts. ¶

Alumni interested in getting involved in these student-outreach efforts should complete the department's alumni survey and check the appropriate boxes: www.jmu.edu/polisci/alumni.shtml. Potential guest speakers should email Catherine Hill at CCHill@oag.state.va.us

(Top and middle): Alumni meet students to offer career advice and networking as well as to dispense guidance to fine-tune resumes. (Bottom): Informal events like this dinner at a Sichuan restaurant help students and alums interact in a more relaxed atmosphere.



Transforming communities

Public affairs symposium focuses on civic engagement

BY ROB ALEXANDER

During fall 2013 the School of Public and International Affairs sponsored its third-annual public affairs symposium, providing a focused opportunity to explore a contemporary aspect of public affairs. Previous symposia focused on the future of American society from the perspective of the 2012 elections and a 10-year retrospective of the domestic and international effects of Sept. 11, 2001. The 2013 forum, "From Volunteerism to Engagement: Transforming Our Community and Beyond," involved a series of roundtable discussions, panel presentations, films and visiting scholar lectures considering multiple dimensions of civic engagement: its meaning, how to become civically involved and the rewards such engagement can bring.

Headlined by Paul Loeb, award-winning author of *The Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in a Challenging Time*, the symposium spanned four weeks in September and October and engaged JMU faculty and



Panel presentations and round table discussions engage symposium participants in such complex arenas of civic engagement as cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay and addressing climate change.

staff members and students, as well as citizens of Harrisonburg and the surrounding communities. Overall, several hundred participants engaged in discussion and debate regarding such diverse topics such as the impacts of civic engagement on students and organizations, citizen engagement and political change in Tunisia, and how civic engagement can enhance economic development efforts.

One panel examined the intersection between civic engagement and environmental science, addressing how 'citizen scientists' should contribute to increasingly complex problem-solving arenas such as cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay or addressing climate change. Panelists and participants agreed that, while citizens have an important role to play, it is up to governments to decide how best to utilize engaged citizens as resources. ☞



The first group of Career Peer Advisers are front row (l-r): Danielle Rosati, Emily Fay, Genna Beckenhaupt. Back row (l-r): Lauren Scannelli, Matthew Ferramosca, Patrick Shea.

New Career Peer Advisers Program Launches

BY ELAINE CHISEK

A new pilot program inspired by Liz Hammer ('13) helps students navigate the daunting task of looking for summer internships and thinking about opportunities after graduation. A variety of career paths are available to our majors and learning about them helps students select courses and internships that put them in the best position to achieve their goals.

Kicking off the new pilot program is the first group of CPAs: Genna Beckenhaupt, Emily Fay, Matthew Ferramosca, Danielle Rosati, Lauren Scannelli and Patrick Shea. These students participated in weekly training sessions focusing on topics such as resources in the university and in the department, internship requirements, networking and interviewing.

The CPAs opened their doors for weekly office hours in October 2013. Plans for the spring semester include conducting workshops and offering mock interviews. Each adviser is also charged with conducting research into a particular career path, developing lists of resources that will assist students in learning more about that path and working to identify alumni in that field. The CPAs will publish their results on the department's website. Through this effort the program will develop a library of articles that can be used as a resource for new majors. ☞

Political Science Faculty News & Notes



Dr. Melinda Adams

Melinda Adams was the 2013 recipient of the JMU faculty award as a Woman of Distinction. She was publicly recognized at an award ceremony in spring 2013.

Amanda Cleveland

is the 2014 recipient of the Cahill-Goodman Award at JMU. The newly established Cahill-Goodman Faculty Support Endowment recognizes excellence in teaching that integrates teaching and scholarship by early-career faculty with three to five years of service. Cleveland will receive a \$1,000 honorarium.



Dr. Amanda Cleveland



Dr. Hakseon Lee

Hakseon Lee was the 2013 recipient of the Provost's Award for Excellence in Academic Advising. He received a \$1,000 honorarium and was publicly recognized at the Provost's award luncheon in spring 2013.

Bernard Kaussler published *Iran's Nuclear Diplomacy: Power Politics and Conflict Resolution* (Routledge 2013). The research monograph is part of Routledge's New Diplomacy Series. Learn more at www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415643856/. Kaussler was also named the Madison Scholar for the College of Arts & Letters for the 2014-15 academic year. He will receive a \$1,500 honorarium and will deliver a public lecture on campus in fall 2014.

Learn more at www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415643856/. Kaussler was also named the Madison Scholar for the College of Arts & Letters for the 2014-15 academic year. He will receive a \$1,500 honorarium and will deliver a public lecture on campus in fall 2014.



Dr. Bernie Kaussler



Dr. Lili Peaslee

Liliokanaio Peaslee was one of six national finalists for the New England Resource Center for Higher Education's 2013 Ernest A. Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement for Early Career Faculty. Ernest Lynton framed faculty scholarly activity as inclusive, collaborative and problem-oriented work in which academics share knowledge-generating tasks with the public and involve community partners and students as participants in public problem solving. NERCHE believes that Peaslee's community-engaged work serves as a model of the public scholarship that Lynton championed.

John Scherpereel was the 2013 recipient of the Provost's award for Excellence in International Education. He received a \$1,000 honorarium and was publicly recognized at the Provost's award luncheon in spring 2013.

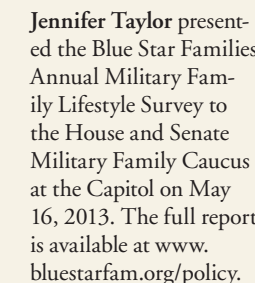


Dr. John Scherpereel



Dr. Nicholas Swartz

Nicholas Swartz is the 2014 recipient of the Provost's Award for Excellence in Graduate Advising. He received a \$1,000 honorarium and was publicly recognized at the Provost's award luncheon in spring 2014.



Dr. Jennifer Taylor

Jennifer Taylor presented the Blue Star Families Annual Military Family Lifestyle Survey to the House and Senate Military Family Caucus at the Capitol on May 16, 2013. The full report is available at www.bluestarfam.org/policy. Taylor also presented a keynote speech, "Putting the Military Family in Context," at the Virginia Universities Value Veterans Conference hosted by JMU.

See what political science emeriti faculty are doing at www.jmu.edu/polisci/emeriti/index.html

Faculty publications, presentations and projects

In March 2013 Liliokanaio Peaslee, Amanda Cleveland, Gary Kirk, Nicholas Steinbrecher and Sue Totty presented "Implementing an Experimental Design in Youth Mentoring Programs: Lessons for Community-based Research and Evaluation" at the Ask the Expert roundtable presentation at the American Society for Public Administration annual conference in New Orleans.

Amanda Cleveland, Liliokanaio Peaslee and Chris Murguia presented "Developing a Child Youth Outcome Survey: Evidence-Based Research on Improving Instrumentation for Youth Mentoring Programs" at the

National Youth-at-Risk Conference in Savannah, Ga., in March 2013. In April 2013 they also presented "Assessing Mentoring Relationships: Factors Affecting Mentor Perceptions of Match Quality" at the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Conference in Chicago.

In June 2013 Melinda Adams, Suraj Jacob and John Scherpereel published an article, "Gender Norms and Women's Political Representation: A Global Analysis of Cabinets, 1979-09" in *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*.

Continued on Page 14

NEW FACULTY



Kristin N. Wylie earned a Ph.D. from the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, with specializations in comparative politics and methodology. She also earned a B.A. in political science from Louisiana State University and a Master's in Latin American studies from the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas. Prior to joining the JMU community, she

was a visiting assistant professor at the State University of New York at Geneseo and an adjunct instructor at Louisiana State University. Her teaching interests include gender and politics, comparative and global politics, political institutions, development, social movements, and research methods. Wylie's research examines how electoral rules, political parties and constituencies interact to affect the representativeness and accountability of democracy. In her dissertation she investigated barriers to women's participation in Brazilian electoral politics and the individual and party-level characteristics enabling women to overcome those obstacles. She is currently developing research agenda exploring popular movements for political reform, and connections between women's participation in social movements, electoral politics and gender equity policy initiatives.



Keith Grant earned a B.A. in international relations and French in 2004 from Bucknell University. In 2010, he completed his Ph.D. in political science at the University of Arizona, where he specialized in international relations and research methodology. Prior to joining the JMU faculty in 2013, Grant served as a visiting professor at Bucknell University and senior political scientist with Guardian Six Consulting.

Grant specializes in violent interstate conflict and international institutions. He is also interested in applications of social network analysis to international affairs. His previous research has been published in *International Studies Quarterly*, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, and the *Journal of Peace Research*. He was the co-editor of *Major Powers and the Quest for Status in International Politics* (Palgrave, Macmillan, 2011). His current research focuses on participation in intergovernmental organizations, alliance portfolio composition and management, and feedback loops in international behavior. At JMU, Grant teaches courses in American foreign policy, research methods, international organizations and conflict.

Faculty publications, presentations and projects continued from Page 13

Liliokanaio Peaslee and Nicholas Swartz published *Virginia Government: Institutions and Policy* with CQ Press in fall 2013.

Amanda Cleveland and Liliokanaio Peaslee presented findings from their ongoing research with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Harrisonburg-Rockingham County, "Testing the Impact of Mentor Training and Coach Support on the Quality of Mentor-Mentee Relationships and Outcomes for At-Risk Youth," at an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention-sponsored panel at the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting in November 2013.

From Feb. 27 to March 7, 2014, Kenneth Rutherford led a U.S. State Dept. supported scoping mission to conduct Northern Iraq mine and unexploded ordinance risk education activities, centered on Syrian refugees. The project's goal is to improve the safety and security of Syrian refugee youth residing in Northern Iraq by carrying out an arts-based landmine/explosive remnant of war risk education program that includes survivors and people with disabilities. In May 2014 Rutherford will be presented the 2013-14 Human Security award by the Center for Unconventional Security Affairs at the University of California, Irvine.

In April 2014 Tim LaPira received a \$3,500 grant from the Dirksen Congressional Center for his project "Revolving Door Lobbying: Public Service, Private Influence, and the Unequal Representation of Interests."

ClassNotes&AlumniNews

99 Dannie Diego ('99), a congressional liaison officer at the United States Agency for International Development, married James Western on July 4, 2013. Fellow JMU Washington Semester alums Heather Nelson ('99) and Mollie Daughtrey Poland ('99) were members of the bridal party. Diego, Nelson, and Poland first met as participants on the 1998 JMU Washington Semester program.

00 As senior account manager at Microsoft, Austin Adams ('00) won a company-wide Excellence in Execution award for a project involving the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

06 Geary Cox II ('06, '08M) will begin as program manager in the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in September 2014. Cox will oversee conventional weapons destruction programs within a

regional portfolio. Previously, Cox worked at the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU. He will continue as a doctoral student in the School of Strategic Leadership Studies at JMU with an anticipated graduation date of December 2014. *Kristen Fallon ('06) graduated from Columbia Business School in 2013 and now serves as an economic policy advisor to U.S. Sen. Jeff Flake.

07 Jessica Killeen ('07) earned a J.D. from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in 2013.

08 After earning a J.D. from the George Mason University School of Law in 2013, Lauren Brice ('08) clerked for the judges of the Arlington County Circuit Court. *Josh Linden ('08) earned an M.A. in Democracy and Governance from Georgetown University in 2013.

NEW FACULTY PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATIE LANDIS

Visit www.jmu.edu/polisci/alumni.html for current news and events

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Alum is Northern Virginian of the year

Breaking the cycle of poverty BY NATALIE KAAR, REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION, NORTHERN VIRGINIA MAGAZINE, JUNE 2012

As executive director of FACETS, a nonprofit that connects vulnerable area families with resources for housing and other basic needs, Amanda Andere ('02) works tirelessly to help erase a problem that many misunderstand – or aren't even aware exists.

Andere says, "In Northern Virginia, and specifically in Fairfax County and other wealthy counties in Northern Virginia, people don't think about poverty and homelessness... don't understand that there is a real need in our area." She further explains, "A lot of folks are the working poor, and, you know, we want them in our community as well."

Of her leadership at FACETS the past three years, Andere says she is proudest of not only helping to reduce Fairfax County's shelter wait list but providing services to break the cycle. In her first year at FACETS, 18 people moved into housing; the second year, nine; and the third, six. "Every year we're kind of chipping away at the numbers of people who need that housing," she says.

The trifecta vital to FACETS' and its partners' success comes in the form of access to: education, employment and affordable housing. Looking to the future, Andere anticipates, "If we are increasing access to those three things, we know we'll have a more stable community."

Giving back—at FACETS, on the Reston Association board, through Reston's Martin Luther King Jr. Christian Church, as an adjunct profes-

sor at Mason, a member of Nonprofit NoVa, etc. – comes naturally to Andere who always saw her immigrant parents give greatly, thankful to those who had helped them. She says, "That's why I'm inspired to make sure that we have a community that does that." ☺



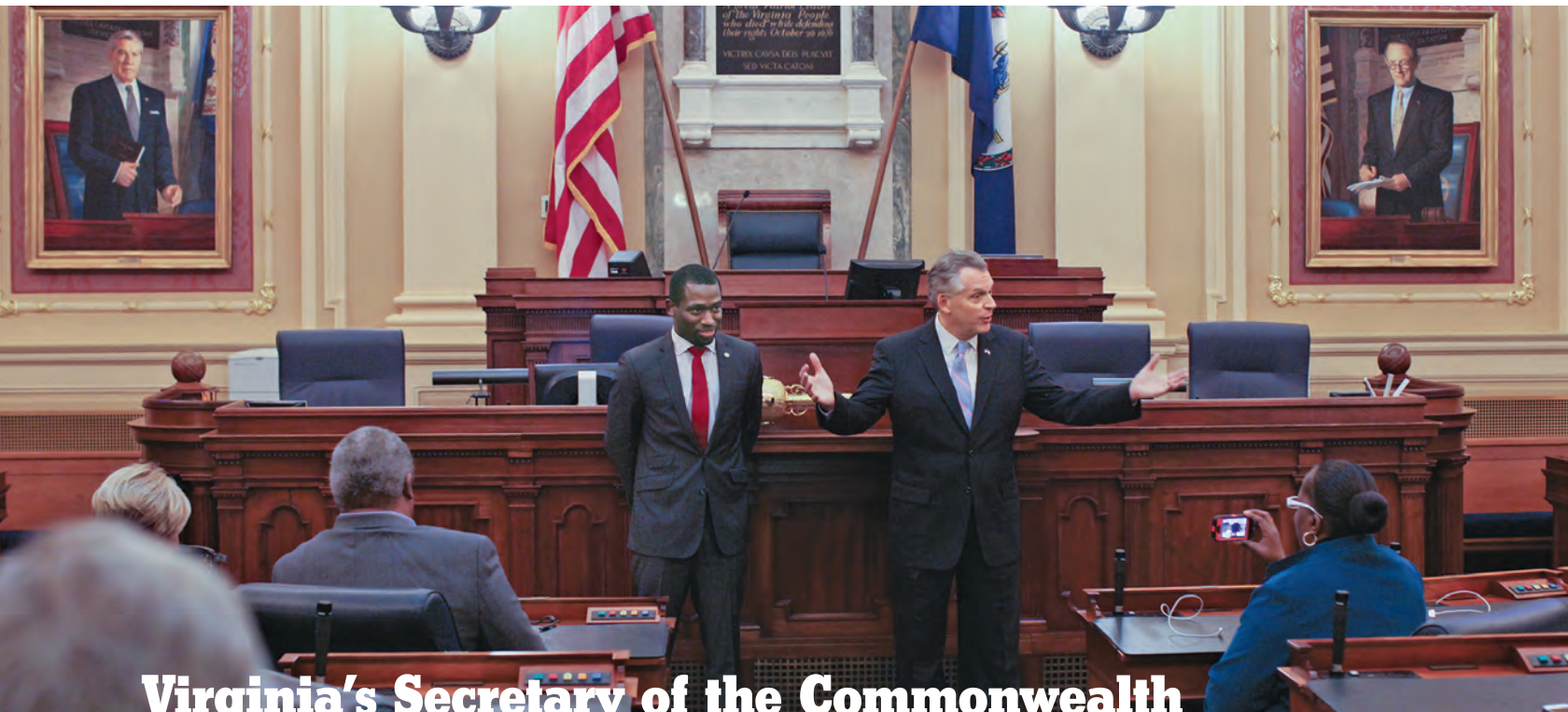
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Virginia's Secretary of the Commonwealth

Levar Stoney ('04), the first African-American man to lead student government at JMU, is Virginia's new Secretary of the Commonwealth. In his position, one of the most influential in state government, Levar brings a personal civility that is desperately needed, along with expertise honed during a career in politics and government. Previously Levar served as the deputy director of the McAuliffe Gubernatorial Transition, and was the deputy campaign manager of McAuliffe's 2013 campaign for Governor. While serving as executive director of Virginia's Democratic Party, he was one of the youngest state Democratic Party executive directors in the United States. Levar is known for his ability to bring people together. In doing so, he is chang-

ing the temperament of government from animus to accord, and bringing President Madison's belief in civil discourse to the highest levels of government in the commonwealth.

'I came to JMU knowing that I wanted to get involved in politics. I just didn't know whether or not JMU was going to provide me the launch pad. It has done that more than I ever thought it would.'

- LEVAR STONEY ('04)

public policy and administration major

BE *the* CHANGE

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL WHITE, COURTESY
OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

Be the Change for a brighter future! www.jmu.edu/BetheChange