

# DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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## Word from the Chair

This issue of the Political Science newsletter highlights several programs that we sponsor to provide students with career advice and preparation. You will also read about other initiatives in which the Department is engaged, including the Living Wage Report 2019, asylum testimony, and experiential learning opportunities in DC and Ireland.

Mike Allison, Professor and Chair

## Career Preparation

Employment opportunities for Political Science graduates are numerous. Our graduates often go into government, foreign service, military intelligence, law, education, public administration, business, public policy, non-profit sectors, sales & marketing, strategic communications, journalism, public relations, and human resources.



Center for Career Development Visit

The range of career opportunities can also be overwhelming. That is one reason why we have prioritized providing career assistance to our students throughout their entire time at Scranton. In addition to meeting with one's academic advisor, students enrolled in our Scranton and the World course visit the Career Center each year. Through the Ignatian Global Citizenship Program (IGCP), the Department runs networking trips, including site visits to Harrisburg and Washington, D.C. We are currently planning an April trip to Philadelphia.

In November, Erin Carlin and Colin Sommers shared their summer internship experiences with other students. Through the Scully Scholarship, Erin interned with the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. Colin won financial support from the Royal Internship



Experience to complete at internship at an immigration law firm in Syracuse. Erin is pursuing a job or fellowship related to the environment in DC. Colin is interested in a career in intelligence and plans to attend law school after graduation.

We have worked closely with the Career Development Center to bring alumni to campus to share their career paths and advice with students. In the fall, students met with Dan Bryan, Senior Advisor to the Governor for Strategic Communications at State of New Jersey, to speak with students about New Jersey politics and career opportunities.



Mr. Daniel Bryan and students

During the Jesuit Universities Humanitarian Action Network conference that we hosted in June 2019, alumni spoke about their careers in humanitarian assistance. We also had career counselors on hand to work with students on resume preparation and job search strategies.

Keep an eye out for details on our April 2020 networking trip to Philadelphia.

## Fall 2019 Events



Sam Maloney (Friends of Lackawanna) and Andrea Mulrine (Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine) speak with students.



Conor Nealon and Claire Sunday with Congressman Matt Cartwright (PA-08)



Denis McDonough, Chief of Staff to President Obama



Irish Ambassador to the U.S. Dan Mulhall

## Ignatian Family Teach-In

Two dozen University students and chaperones traveled to DC in November to gather in the context of social justice and solidarity to learn, reflect, pray, network, and advocate together at the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice. Through the Ignatian Global Citizenship Program (IGCP), the Political Science Department sponsored the attendance for seven Political Science and International Studies majors. Students also descended upon Capitol Hill to lobby their members of Congress to support comprehensive and humane immigration reform.



Scranton contingent at IFTJ



Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill

## Scranton in Ireland—January 2020



Fr. Dan discusses the 1916 Rebellion



Scranton contingent in Ireland



Dr. Whittaker and Fr. Dan share some Irish history and culture with students at Trinity College

## Assisting Asylum Seekers

Violence perpetrated by street gangs, drug cartels, organized crime groups, and corrupt state officials have forced hundreds of thousands of people from Central America to flee their homes in search of security and economic opportunity in the United States. If lucky enough to overcome deadly obstacles in Mexico and along the U.S. – Mexico border, these individuals might have the opportunity to seek some form of relief from deportation, such as through asylum, withholding of removal, or Convention Against Torture protections, in a U.S. immigration court.

In order to be granted one of these protections, applicants must demonstrate that there is a strong likelihood that they would be at grave risk of harm should they be

forced to return to the country from which they fled. They must also convince the court that the persecution would occur because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, and that their government would be unable to protect them.

I have provided expert witness testimony in over fifty asylum cases, involving threats, extortion, sexual assault, torture, and murder perpetrated by the MS-13 and 18<sup>th</sup> Street gangs, drug cartels, and other criminal groups in Guatemala and El Salvador. In preparing expert witness testimony, I provide written and telephonic testimony to explain whether the persecution that the asylum seeker describes in his or her testimony is consistent with



El Paso, Texas migrant shelter

my understanding of conditions in the country.

Political Science, International Studies, and Latin American Studies students have assisted on several of these asylum claims. Please contact me if you are interested in doing so as well.

Dr. Mike Allison

## Alumni Notes

### Was Qassem Soleimani's Assassination Ethical? Catholic Social Teaching Can Help

Published Jan 21, 2020 in [Current Events](#), [Faith & Politics](#), [In the News](#), [Justice](#) - Approx 4 mins DISCUSSION 16



Doug Jones, SJ, reflected on how Catholic Social Teaching could help us evaluate whether the United States was justified in its recent killing of a top Iranian general on The Jesuit Post.

Doug is a 2010 Political Science and International Studies graduate of the University of Scranton who also holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Rutgers.

### Connect with us!

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## Living Wage 2019 Update

In partnership with The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development, The University of Scranton's Office of Community and Government Relations, Ellacuría Initiative and Political Science Department released a comprehensive report that details what it costs to live a modest, dignified life in Northeastern Pennsylvania. A living wage is a rate at which a worker can reach a standard of living that meets essential basic needs and enables the worker to live a modest but dignified life.

### Key Findings

- In Lackawanna and Luzerne counties and across Pennsylvania, the living wage income need has increased for all family classifications from 2016 to 2018. For a family of two adults and two children in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties, the living wage income rose from \$44,056 to \$48,069, a 9.1 percent increase.
- The region as a whole has an above-average proportion of families living in poverty compared to the rest of the Commonwealth.
- The state's minimum wage of \$7.25 does not meet the living wage standard for any of the family compositions examined in the study. The gap between minimum wage income and living wage income has increased as of 2019.
- The cost of meeting some human needs increased dramatically since the 2016 report, including housing costs by 20.2 percent; medical expenses by 12.7 percent; transportation costs by 4.2 percent; and childcare expenses by 4.4 percent.



Julie Schumacher Cohen, Assistant Vice President of Community Engagement & Government Affairs and adjunct professor of Political Science delivers the report to over 150 government and community leaders in November 2019.

### Key Recommendations

- Increase wages: To foster and maintain more family-sustaining jobs, raise the PA and/or federal minimum wage, and further increase economic development and workforce activities, including strategic higher education and K-12 collaborations to ensure a match between regional skills and needs.
- Support tax credits for low-income families: Support federal tax credits, and potential expanded state tax credits, to assist with basic costs for low-income families, including populations experiencing special economic challenges, such as grandparents serving as caregivers in the wake of the opioid epidemic.
- Address housing affordability: Identify and implement a range of strategies aimed at providing affordable housing in ways that address both the necessity of continued economic development and the needs of low-income residents.
- Expand access to existing social safety net programs that address issues, such as food insecurity and early education, and ensure that federal and other poverty measures adequately address the realities of low-income Americans.

*University Press Release*