On April 13, the Beta Xi chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha welcomed one of its largest classes of new members in chapter history. Seventeen outstanding students joined the national political science honor society. The eligibility requirements are strict: students must earn a 3.3 overall GPA, a 3.5 major GPA, and have taken at least three 300-level political science classes.

Richmond’s focus on interdisciplinary learning means many students meet these requirements without having declared a Political Science major. Students from the International Studies (IS) and Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law (PPEL) programs are also able to join Pi Sigma Alpha as long as they meet the guidelines set forth by the national office.

This year’s awards ceremony, held in the Richmond Room overlooking Westhampton Lake, was a celebration of student achievements. Faculty, staff, and students came together to recognize the successes of our scholars, both as new Pi Sigma Alpha members and in other academic and community engagement pursuits (see story on p. 2).

Guests were fortunate to hear from keynote speaker Todd Haymore, a former Political Science major who now serves as Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry for the State of Virginia. Mr. Haymore spoke about his path to public service and how students might approach their own careers in political science.

Did you know?

- Political Science professors are consistently recognized for outstanding teaching; most recently, Dr. Andrea Simpson was recognized with a Distinguished Educator Award
- Three of our faculty also serve as program chairs for other interdisciplinary major programs
- Students can earn credit for participating on our award-winning Mock Trial team, which qualified for the national tournament this year for the first time since 2009
- Under the direction of Assistant Professor Jennifer Bowie, students have made three field trips to the Supreme Court of the United States, and one to the Fourth Circuit United States Court of Appeals. In the spring, several classes returned to the Supreme Court to meet with Justice Sotomayor.

A Message from the Chair

We celebrated another great year in the Political Science. The students engaged in high quality learning experiences both inside and outside of the classroom, and the graduating seniors commenced well prepared for professional life, graduate school, and service.

Faculty and staff were recognized with awards for outstanding accomplishments and each in their own way continue to provide essential leadership in teaching, learning, governance, and program administration on campus. Alumni assisted in so many ways: helping students with internships and professional connections, delivering guest lectures, and contributing to our discretionary funds, which support student learning and alumni engagement. We have much to be grateful for!

-Dr. P
Many students were recognized at the Pi Sigma Alpha and Department of Political Science Awards reception on April 13 and the annual commencement reception on May 7. The department presented awards to students who excelled in academics and community engagement throughout their years at Richmond.

The **Spencer Albright Book Award**, for the graduate(s) with the highest GPA in political science coursework, was presented to Casey Nolan and Madeline Smedley.

Several rising juniors and seniors were awarded **Albright Scholarships** for academic achievement in political science coursework: Daniela Amador, Inderjeet Gunnala, Byongho Lee, and Jessica Sandor.

The **Best Paper Award**, for the best-written senior seminar paper as judged by a committee of political science faculty, went to Aaron Berryhill for his paper, “The Future of Democracy: A Comparison of Tocqueville and Fukuyama on the Inevitability of Democracy.”

The **Department of Political Science Richmond Award**, presented to a graduating senior with an outstanding record of applying lessons of political science to the service of the city of Richmond, was given to Sharon Lim.

Three rising senior women were awarded the **May Thompson Evans and William Ney Evans Scholarship**, based on their academic records and interest and involvement in public service. Those students are Alexandra Abreu, Sydney Freeman, Estelle Ou.

Congratulations to all the award recipients!
Guest speakers

This year marked an expansion in the Political Science Brown Bag lunch series. The lunches have traditionally featured our faculty and students sharing their research, but our focus this year was guest speakers from outside the university.

In the fall, we welcomed C-SPAN founder Brian Lamb and Dr. Michael Mazarr of the RAND Corporation.

In the spring, the department co-hosted talks by Black Lives Matter activist Alicia Garza and modern slavery expert Kevin Bales.

For information on these and other talks, please visit polisci.richmond.edu or facebook.com/urpolisci.
Are you a Poli Sci alum? Future issues of our newsletter will feature alumni news and updates. We’d love to hear from you about what you’ve been up to since you left Richmond, no matter how long it’s been.

To share news about your personal and/or professional life, please email bethann.howard@richmond.edu.

Don’t forget to check out our Facebook page for events, photos, and news about our students and faculty!