

# Political Science Alumni Newsletter

“Everybody can be great...because  
anybody can serve.”

-Martin Luther King Jr.

Volume VIII, Issue I



## Greetings

Since 2012 was a presidential election year, we decided the Fall 2012 issue of the *Alumni Newsletter* should shine a spotlight on alumni involved in various campaign and election activities. In past editions of the *Newsletter* we have featured Political Science alumni who have run for and held elected public office. However, this time we wanted to learn more about the experiences of those active behind the scenes – as political consultants, fundraisers, staffers, campaign field operatives, GOTV volunteers, even as an aide to the First Lady.

The different experiences of the alumni profiled here exemplify the diverse array of choices open to those interested in a career in politics, beyond actually running for public office. The profiles of these young alumni also underscore the benefits of a political science degree and the organizational, analytic, and communication skills it teaches. In addition, these alumni reveal how Political Science Department faculty and courses inspired them and influenced the direction of their lives.

**Susan McCarthy, Department Chair**

**Samantha Wood, Class of 2013, Editor**

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“These alumni reveal how Political Science  
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and influenced the direction of their lives.”

# Andrew Slom

## Class of 2011

Since graduating from Providence College in 2011, Andrew has been attending Rutgers-Camden School of Law in Philadelphia, where he is currently earning his juris doctor. Andrew notes that the guidance offered by his Political Science professors at PC helped him in the process of selecting a career. The professors helped him to understand the significant role that government plays in the lives of its citizens, and the importance of public service. This is what ultimately inspired Andrew to pursue a career in which he could help others, and become a more active citizen in general.

This past election season, Andrew was involved with “Obama for America” as a liaison for Rutgers-Camden School of Law. As a strong proponent of every citizen’s right to vote, Andrew worked hard to ensure that people in his local area were given the opportunity to vote on Election Day. His main task was signing up other Rutgers students to help with voter protection. On Election Day, Andrew drove around to various polling locations in

Philadelphia to make sure that all registered citizens were being allowed to vote.

Andrew really enjoyed volunteering in this way. He found all the poll-workers to be very friendly, and he was pleased to see so many people exercising their right to vote. He noticed that the people he encountered at the polls were all upbeat and proud to complete their civic duty. Their cheerful attitudes were surely due in part to the work that Andrew had done in the weeks leading up to the election. His work helped to ensure that everyone would be able to have a positive and pleasant voting experience. However, Andrew mentioned that a difficult aspect of this volunteer work was motivating the other law students to get involved. He felt that at some points there was a lack of enthusiasm from the other law students, and this translated into an overall sense of apathy towards the election. Yet, there is no doubt that Andrew’s good attitude and hard work helped to boost the political activity of some of the students.



Andrew credits the Political Science department, and especially Dr. Cammarano with preparing him for his role as a volunteer for the Obama campaign. He mentioned that the passion displayed by his professors helped him to put his life into perspective. Before entering PC, Andrew had very limited knowledge of government and politics, but with his first Political Science course at PC he came to understand society and the part he played in it. Soon after that class, Andrew was doing phone-banking for the Obama campaign during his 2008 campaign. It is obvious that these experiences strongly impacted Andrew as he continues to work in these capacities. Andrew was very pleased to have worked closely with two other PC alumni within the Obama Campaign this year, Ryan Holt and John Ryan Cummings, both of whom graduated in 2009.

“My professors taught me the significance of the role that government plays in our lives and the importance of public service.”

Andrew Slom is pictured above (right) with Mayor Nutter of Philadelphia (left) on the 2012 Election night.



## Megg Whelan

### Class of 2009

Megg graduated from Providence College in 2009 with dual degrees in Political Science, and a major of her own creation, Political Marketing. After graduation, she moved to Washington DC and within six weeks landed her dream job. She has been employed as a fundraising consultant for a Republican consulting firm for about three years now. She works for a variety of clients, ranging from Congressional, Senatorial, and Gubernatorial candidates, to advocacy and non-profit organizations. Her daily tasks consist of drafting email solicitations, building donation pages, formatting and sending blast emails, coordinating list rentals, and collaborating with colleagues to implement the fundraising strategy across social media and online advertising platforms.

Megg credits her Providence College experience with much of her preparation for her current work. Megg had long desired to work as a political fundraiser, but it was the ability to construct her own major in Political Marketing that was instrumental to achieving this

dream. She states that Dr. Cammarano and Dr. Jamison, from the Marketing Department, helped her tremendously in getting this major approved by the school so that she could specialize her area of study to what she ultimately wanted to do. Both of these professors advocated to the Dean on her behalf, set up independent studies with professors in other departments, and continue to serve as mentors even after her graduation. Dr. Carlson's "Media and Politics" course and an independent study in political communication have proved to have been particularly helpful in her current work. Interestingly, Megg also gives credit to her theology core classes. Many of her conservative clients have asked her to write on abortion and same-sex marriage. Because of her unique education, Megg has received formal training in these areas, which other consultants have not necessarily received.

In addition to her courses, Megg's work as the chair of Relay for Life during her sophomore and junior years allowed her to become comfortable with asking people for money to support a cause. In fact, Megg states that the success of the PC Relays for Life achieved from 2006 to

2009 gave her the confidence and motivation to seriously pursue a career in fundraising.

Megg was very successful in her work during the past election season, raising millions of dollars for dozens of clients. Her favorite part of the job is the writing aspect, in which she is able to take an issue, research the client's stance on it, and craft a fundraising solicitation. It can be a difficult and tedious process when first attempting to discover a client's "voice". But Megg said when she finally understands that voice and is able to portray it, it is such a rewarding experience. Her job also comes with some difficulties. The first is that it demands an overwhelming time commitment. From Labor Day until Election Day she has to be on-call at all times. However, Megg has grown accustomed to this lifestyle and has been able to handle the stress much better throughout this election season than in 2010. The absolute worst part of the job is when her candidate loses. Megg often spends two years or longer working very closely with a candidate, and seeing him/her lose on Election Night is can be heartbreaking.

However, it is clear that Megg's diligent attitude and the passion that she has for her work has led her to be very successful in her occupation.





## Danielle Ladd

### Class of 2012

Since graduating from Providence College with a degree in Political Science less than a year ago, Danielle Ladd has remained very involved in politics. She first interned for Congressman John Larson's campaign in Connecticut, working as his press and communications intern. In this work, she was responsible for composing press releases, maintaining social media outlets, and compiling a detailed analysis of events. She also went door-to-door and made phone calls advocating for the Congressman.

After interning there for a month and a half, she went on to become a Field Organizer for President Obama's campaign in New Hampshire. Danielle states that her responsibility was Obama's "ground game". She organized a territory that consisted of eight rural towns, about 45 minutes from Concord where she was stationed. Within three months, she had built a workforce of 100 volunteers. These volunteers worked to contact and persuade voters by educating, motivating, and mobilizing them in support of Obama. Their main objective was to speak with undecided voters and to encourage other supporters of the President to volunteer. During the campaign, Danielle was once given the opportunity to introduce the Second Lady, Dr. Jill Biden. Danielle stated that it was a humbling experience to have been selected to give this speech, and it is something she will always fondly remember.

As a field organizer, Danielle mentioned that she was most proud of her volunteers. The people she met while in this work were some of the most welcoming people she had ever interacted with. Yet, Danielle also had some challenges in this work, especially in the beginning. Upon initially taking on this role, she realized that there was a lack of clarification of her tasks, responsibilities, and day-to-day operations. She had to slowly figure out these things on her own. In addition, this type of work required a lot of time, and Danielle found herself working from 9 am until midnight on most days.

Despite these things, Danielle's work in the campaign was very rewarding. As someone who has always been passionate about politics, she knew that she could not sit back passively throughout the election. She mentioned that her professors at PC encouraged and challenged her to look outside the scope of a textbook and realize how policies implemented in the U.S. have worldwide implications. These factors are what motivated her to become involved in the 2012 elections. Danielle is a recent hire for Mercer, where she will be working as a Senior Advisory Consulting Analyst. There she looks forward to experiencing firsthand the Affordable Care Act and the effects it has on employers and their employees.

## Rachel Nitsche

### Class of 2008

After graduating from Providence College in 2008, Rachel moved to Washington DC and accepted a job working as a staff assistant for the Senior Senator of Maine, Olympia Snowe. After serving with Senator Snowe, she moved on to accept a position as a research assistant for Maine Senator Sunsan M. Collins. There Rachel worked on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee staff. Rachel mentioned that she reflects fondly on her time working for both Senators, as it allowed her to give back to her home state of Maine. Rachel currently works as the security office administrator at the Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Senate.

Rachel says that the experience she gained at Providence College had a great influence on where she finds herself today. She mentions that her academic advisor, Dr. Mark Hyde, encouraged her to apply for the Washington Semester Program at American University in DC. Through this program, she was able to hear from and meet with many important guest speakers in her classes. She was also able to intern for a political fundraiser. This opened up great networking opportunities to meet many people in DC. This program, along with a summer internship with Senator Snowe in Maine, set Rachel up with a solid foundation for her career in Washington.

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## Carmine Perrotti

### Class of 2011

Carmine has been leading a busy life since graduating from Providence College in 2011 as a double major in Political Science and Public and Community

Service. Soon after graduation, he joined the White House volunteer traveling advance team in which he traveled for the Office of the First Lady. There he served as an advance volunteer, planning site logistics and organizing press and motorcade to support Michelle Obama at events around the country. Since November 2011, Carmine has been working as a political appointee for the Obama-Biden Administration at the U.S. Department of Education. He serves as the Confidential Assistant to the Under Secretary of Education, Dr. Martha Kanter. His main task is to manage the scheduling, logistical, and administrative aspects of the Under Secretary's daily business. Additionally, he serves as Dr. Martha Kanter's key point of contact, communicating with all internal and external stakeholders. He also collaborates on special events and projects for the Under Secretary with other support staff and stakeholders.

Carmine attributes much of his current success to the education he received and the relationships he developed at PC. His professors, particularly Dr. Battistoni, served as strong advocates and mentors for him throughout his job source, and continue to do so, especially as he partakes in the graduate school application process. The diverse opportunities offered to Carmine as an undergraduate student were invaluable in helping him determine what career to pursue. The internship programs he was involved in, at various government agencies and not-for-profit organizations, allowed him to identify his responsibility in our democratic society. Other experiences, such as independent study courses and his participation in the Forand student research, allowed Carmine to deepen his

understanding of the intrinsic inequalities in education, race, gender, and healthcare. This knowledge challenged him to promote not only social welfare programming, but other equality initiatives as well. Carmine added that his PSC courses allowed his understanding of policy and community to develop analytically, ethically, and contextually. They especially increased his knowledge of empirical analysis and allowed him to develop a quantitative and qualitative skill set.

Outside of the office, Carmine was involved in the election as a volunteer in Virginia under the Obama and Tim Kaine (U.S. Senator) campaigns. Carmine stated that he enjoyed having conversations with constituents about what he saw as the need to re-elect President Obama. He cites Dr. Bill Hudson's American Politics course as one class that allowed him to "develop a contextual framework for understanding national elections, the electoral college, and other election factors." This class gave him the background to be an active volunteer for the election.

In the near future, Carmine hopes to pursue a graduate degree in public policy with a concentration in social policy. This desire was partly influenced by Dr. Julia Jordan-Zachery's "Lost Bodies" course. This course, along with the rest of his internships and educational experiences, has helped Carmine to recognize his desire to work in this capacity. A graduate degree will help to expand his knowledge of race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, and will deepen his learning of the resulting economic, political and policy decision-making. Additionally, in his work as a political appointee, Carmine frequently advocates for the fundamental human right of education. The Department of Education coordinates policies and programs related to higher education, and oversees several initiatives focused on enhancing education for specific populations. Carmine's ambition to work in social justice is continually deepened by these diverse programs that he is involved with through the Department of Education. Carmine stated, "I aspire to continue my work of community building, advocating for social policies through direct service, and challenge my analytical reasoning."

# Rachel Nitsche '08

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Additionally, her classes and professors at PC helped her develop important skills for her current occupation. For example, debates in class allowed her to become comfortable interacting with groups of people and helped develop her diplomatic skills. Organizing papers taught her research and writing skills. As a PC Admissions Ambassador, she earned leadership, public speaking, and communication skills, which are all integral parts of being a professional. In her spare time, Rachel is a member of the Junior League of Washington, a women's organization committed to promoting voluntarism and the betterment of the community. She also serves on the board of the Providence College Capital Area Alumni Club.



## Political Science Department News

Associate Professor **Joe Cammarano** and senior PSC major **Amanda Nelen**, '13, will present a paper at the annual conference of the Midwestern Political Science Association, held April 11-14, 2013, in Chicago. Their paper is titled "Find the Etch-a-Sketch Moment: Examining the shift in presidential candidate messaging from primaries to general elections, 2000-2012." In it, Amanda and Dr. Cammarano challenge the conventional wisdom that candidates make more ideological appeals in primaries than they do in the general election.

In late October, Professor **Susan McCarthy** attended a conference on "Religion and Resistance in China" at Oregon State University, at which she presented a paper titled "Serving Society, Repurposing the State: Religious Charity and Resistance in China." In the paper Dr. McCarthy analyzed how Chinese faith-based charities enable religious adherents to push back against government restrictions on religion, while engaging in charitable endeavors the Chinese government enthusiastically supports. She argues that the behavior of these charities illustrates the complex nature of resistance and compliance in authoritarian regimes such as the PRC.

Assistant Professor **Jeffrey Pugh** has helped PC secure a grant of \$2000 from the United States Institute of Peace for a campus symposium on "Post-conflict Peace-building and Justice in the Middle East." The event is being co-sponsored by the Political Science Department and Pi Sigma Alpha. The one-day seminar, scheduled for April 11, 2013, will feature lectures and round-table discussions involving guest speakers, faculty, and students.

