FROM THE CHAIR

It seems that every time I write this column, I automatically start the same way; it’s been a busy semester here at CSU. I suppose I’ve learned the wisdom of Garrison Keillor’s weekly radio skit, which begins, “it’s been a busy week in Lake Wobegon.” It always is.

As I write, in early January, we’re busy hiring new colleagues, one in international relations (who will follow, but hardly replace, Bob Lawrence, who retires this summer) and one in comparative politics. We have completed interviews for the former, and will soon interview for the latter.

Once again, we’ve been enormously impressed with the applicants. It’s a credit to CSU’s ever-stronger reputation that outstanding scholars and teachers want to work here. Last year, both our department and several other College departments hired our first choices. That’s a big deal when we’re competing with many better-known universities.

Still, as CSU continues to change, there’s no doubt that its traditions hold strong, especially with alums. I hear regularly from you, via email or through the website (see the links on page two). Please do keep in touch. It’s a way for us to remember where we’ve come from, during our very busy days working on where we’re headed.

And, I suppose I should conclude, that’s how it is, this week in Lake Wobegon.

Bill Chaloupka
Department Chairman

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

For many alums, it’s old news that Colorado voters passed Referendum C last November 1, limiting the effects that the Taxpayers’ Bill of Rights (TABOR) would have had on higher education funding for the next five years. But since many of our alums live far from Colorado, they may not have heard.

TABOR limits the amounts government can retain and spend, forcing refunds when revenues surpass tight limits. Without launching a long explanation, TABOR was particularly troublesome in the wake of the recession that happened, post-bubble, earlier in this decade. Creative state financing forestalled truly draconian cuts in higher education, but the legislature had just about used up its tricks; this coming budget year could have been ugly. Nervousness on campus was palpable.

Supporters of “C” included many Republicans, nearly all Democrats, and a broad cross section of leaders in the business, labor, education, and environmental communities in Colorado. Many of the state’s newspapers endorsed the measure. Of course, it also faced fierce opposition.

When “C” passed, by a comfortable margin, the message was clear: Coloradoans supported the programs most mentioned in the debate. And one of those programs was public higher education. Those of us who have spent our careers working in public higher education were gratified. We know our work is important to the state, and we believe our fellow citizens support us. The vote confirmed that. And, just to ice the cake, the turnout was strong. This wasn’t a victory among a tiny handful of voters. The large advertising budgets and massive press coverage brought out one of the largest “odd year” turnouts in decades.

This spring, the legislature is working out the consequences of that referendum. It’s not a trivial exercise: there are many worthy state programs, and many worthy claims on the resources now available. The university is also working on its budget, and that won’t be simple, either. Since “C” effectively sunsets in five years, it isn’t entirely obvious how the funds will be used. What is clear is that the university won’t be facing the truly difficult times that would have been inevitable if the measure had failed.

Colorado has a good system of public higher education. It isn’t lavish and it isn’t overbuilt. It contributes to the culture and economy of the state. Without strong higher education, Colorado families would have their options significantly reduced; many students would not be able to pursue collegiate work at the level they’re capable of. And, as the business community explained, businesses thinking about expanding or moving to Colorado might well think twice, since their employees expect public higher education to be available.

We’ve believed, for a long time, in the value of higher education. Many of our students keep in touch, and we know that many of them launch careers and lives that “give back” to the communities that got them started. We know that public higher education is important. And now we have even more evidence that our fellow Coloradoans agree.

– John Straayer, Professor
STUDENT NEWS

With new procedures for handling scholarships in the College of Liberal Arts, our department shifted its schedule, awarding scholarships in the fall. In future years, some scholarships will be awarded in the fall, and some in the spring. The new schedule allows our students to better compete for college-level scholarships. It also allows us to make some of our awards into scholarships, with better tax consequences for the recipients.

Christina Elizabeth Farhart, a senior, was the first recipient of the Lang Scholarship, the first named and endowed scholarship in our department. Christina has been active in CSU’s Honors Program, and has been an RA in the CSU dorms. She was on CSU’s swim team. And, with all that, she has a 3.93 (out of 4) grade point average, double majoring in Political Science and Psychology. She’s a former intern for U.S. Congressman Bob Beauprez.

Whitney-Marie Bostick, a junior, was awarded the Bob Peek Memorial Scholarship, awarded by the College of Liberal Arts. She is a double major in Political Science and Technical Journalism. She has been active in CSU’s Greek system, with Kappa Delta Sorority. Her ambition is to attend law school after she graduates from CSU.

Maggie Cox received the department’s Outstanding Junior award. Maggie worked for the United Methodist Hospital in Omaha while attending high school, and is aiming toward a career in the law.

Allison Miller received the department’s Outstanding Senior award. Allison is active in the Campus Women’s Alliance, and is active on social justice and globalization issues. Like most of our students, she has worked during her college career, currently as an archiver at the Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere, on campus. After graduation, she hopes to work in the non-profit sector, perhaps in Latin America.

Congrats to all these outstanding students!

CALL FOR UPDATES

You can submit your address and e-mail directly to us with a link on the newly redesigned Political Science web site at www.colostate.edu/Departments/PoliticalScience/Alumni.html That page also includes highlights from recent newsletters. If you missed one, you can download a PDF version.

CONTACT INFORMATION

We’d love to hear from you. All faculty e-mail addresses are on the department Web site. Contact the chair at williamc@colostate.edu.

FACULTY NEWS

Steve Mumme is currently on sabbatical, working on a book about U.S.-Mexico issues. Courtney Daum, Kathryn Hochstetler, Scott Moore, and Kyle Saunders all received Academic Enrichment Program grants to assist in current research. This is a CSU initiative, and all four professors were awarded grants in the first round ever for the College of Liberal Arts.

Dimitris Stevis is back in Fort Collins after a sabbatical leave, which he used to study international labor issues in Europe.

Michele Betsill, along with faculty in other CSU departments, was awarded a major National Science Foundation grant for research into climate change issues. Professor Betsill will be on sabbatical leave next year, conducting some of this research.

Courtney Daum and Eric Ishiwata joined the faculty in the fall, and have completed their first semester of teaching at CSU.

Alan Lamborn was promoted to Associate Provost for Student Affairs at CSU. He had previously served as an Associate Dean for the College of Liberal Arts here, and until last year was teaching classes in the department. He continues to serve on graduate committees for our students.

Bob Duffy continued his service as Graduate Coordinator for the department, and Brad MacDonald continued as Undergraduate Coordinator. Both positions are critically important, assisting in advising students, fielding questions from new and prospective students, and addressing policy issues.

Valerie Assetto will be on sabbatical next fall, continuing her work on issues in Eastern Europe. She will split her time during the sabbatical between Fort Collins and Budapest.

ALUMNI NEWS

Brian Barry (M.A., 1997) recently joined St. Mary’s Hospital in Grand Junction, Colo., as the Director of Planning and Business Development. The hospital is currently building a $225M expansion.

Michael Conklin (B.A., 2005) lives in Jersey City, N.J., and is currently working in Lower Manhattan for a background investigation company.

Clayton Heil (B.A., 1994) received the Juris Doctor from Georgetown University Law Center in 2004. He currently serves as the Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel for the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations. With his wife, Heather and son, Colin, he lives in Falls Church, Va.

Debra (Krumnow) Hollingsworth (B.A., 1979) recently moved back to her home state of Texas, in the Houston area. She would enjoy receiving e-mails from former classmates. (justdeb1203@hotmail.com).

William E. Lopez (B.A., 1971) earned an Ed.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1999 and is currently a Senior Lecturer in the College of Education and Human Sciences at UNL, teaching Elementary and Middle Level Social Studies methods. Prior to that he earned an M.A. in Education from CSU in 1988 and taught Social Studies for 23 years in Fort Lupton, Colo.


George William (Jerry) Sherk (B.A., 1972; M.A., 1974) is an attorney and holds adjunct appointments with the University of Denver College of Law and the International Water Law Research Institute, University of Dundee, in Scotland. His recent article in the NYU Environmental Law Journal was dedicated to one of his CSU professors, the late Henry Caulfield.

Bruce Walthers (B.A., 1977) currently serves as Vice President for Student Affairs at Red Rocks Community College in Lakewood, Colo., and lives in Evergreen. (We somehow got old information in a recent newsletter.)

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