Cindy Stevens, partner, Deloitte & Touche (the world’s largest accounting firm), is the 2010 Alumni Fellow for the College of Arts and Sciences. She is a 1983 graduate with a degree in Political Science and hails from Louisville, MS. Sponsored by the Mississippi State University Alumni Association, the Alumni Fellows Program recognizes alumni who have distinguished themselves in their respective careers. They are selected by each college or school and are invited to return to campus to meet with students, both in the classroom and informally. Ms. Stevens visited the PSPA department Friday morning, Oct 29th. She met with a graduate and an undergraduate class, and was hosted with a reception by the department. At Deloitte & Touche Stevens is Director of government relations, where she is the firm’s primary contact with Congress. Moreover, she is very involved with MSU as a member of the Board of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government. In addition, she serves on a variety of other national boards, including the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, Capitol Hill Club, Value in Electing Women to Congress (VIEWPAC) and U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Public Affairs Committee.
The undergraduate program is healthy and after a decline in majors in the 2005-2007 era the program is growing. Figure 1 shows the number of majors based on fall enrollments at all MSU campuses. Over the past two years, the number of enrolled majors has increased by 25%.

Over the past 5 years, our full-time students in the MPPA program have increased, bringing our program to nearly 100 matriculants. In our current entering class, our GPA is the highest it has been in 5 years.
These data show that enrollees in the MA program has remained fairly stable over the five year period 2005-2010, except for the banner year of 2009. The program is currently considering various options for a fifth year MA to spur growth. On the other hand, the Ph. D program is sizeable and has experienced significant growth. There was a significant acceleration in the last two years in total enrollment. Figures rose from an average of about 20 enrollees in Fall 2008 to the current level of approximately 30.
Three Professors from the PSPA Department, Dr. Rick Travis, Dr. Brian Shoup, and Dr. Jeff Cavanaugh presented a program on The Politics of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Cavanaugh focused on “Afghanistan and the 21st Century Great Game in Central Asia;” Shoup focused on “Identity Politics and the Dilemmas of State-Building in the AF-Pak Region;” and, Travis focused on “Making Sense of the U.S. Descent into the Afghan Maelstrom.” The program was inspired by the College of Arts and Sciences in connection with the campus wide reading program for freshmen, Maroon Edition. The common reading, around which this program was built this year, was Three Cups of Tea, by Greg Mortenson and David Relin.

By: Dexter McKinney

The PSPA Department has completed its new website thanks to Dr. Bethany Stich, Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Administration. Visit our website at www.pspa.msstate.edu.
As pictured left to right, Alexander Habighorst is a junior Stennis Scholar from Carriere, MS. Laura Elizabeth Tate is a senior Stennis Scholar from Jackson, MS. Nathan Calvert is a Junior Stennis Scholar from Neshoba, MS. Anna Rush is a senior Stennis Scholar from Hattiesburg, MS. Taylor Luczak is a senior Haley Barbour Scholar from Glens Falls, N.Y. Antoinette Jenkins is a junior Bill Collins Scholar from Hernando, MS. Roy Grantham is a freshman Stennis Scholar from Hattiesburg, MS. Not pictured are Jamie Beene, a sophomore Stennis Scholar from Mantachie, MS. Jack Pitts is a junior Stennis Scholar from Flowood, MS. Matthew West is a sophomore Stennis Scholar from Starkville, MS.

President Keenum appeared to teach class in Political Leadership, a course offered by Dr. Jerry Emison this fall.
Dr. Barbara Patrick, assistant professor, received her Ph.D. from MSU and recently served as the principal investigator on the Presidential Climate Survey. The research was funded through MSU SSRC. The purpose of this study is to gauge opinions on various political, administrative, social policy issues relating to the Presidential race in 2008. Dr. Patrick was also interested in understanding the impact of race on these opinions. She has presented some of her findings at various state and national professional organizations. Some data have been made available to her graduate students, several with whom she is engaged in collaborative research for possible publication. Meanwhile, Dr. Patrick is utilizing portions of the data with her upper class political science students for teaching the quantitative analysis of social science data. The students then develop independent research projects. The Presidential Campaign Survey study is continuing. Dr. Patrick expects to conduct a follow up survey on the next presidential election. This is an innovative method that promises to significantly add to our knowledge about American public opinion.

By: Bailey Smith

Dr. Eddie French, an Assistant Professor, has been appointed the PSPS Graduate Coordinator, where he primarily teaches graduate classes in the Ph.D. and MPPA programs. Dr. French holds a PhD in Public Policy and Administration from MSU and began working here in 2008. He was awarded the 2010 Arts and Sciences Researcher of the Year for Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the Outstanding Political Science/Public Administration Graduate Professor Award in 2009.

Dr. Emison, who teaches courses in the department of political science and public administration and engineering, has also developed a very important presentation that illustrates how a factor outside of one’s professional training can have an influence on professional achievement. Over many years as a specialist in public administration and policy, Emison has given his presentation on Luck to a variety of professionals. While his students acquire a substantial amount of technical training, Dr. Emison helps them to understand the role of an entirely different phenomenon in their achievement. Like the information he has provided to administrators, managers, and etc for over 10 years, he discusses tactics and techniques that can heighten lucky opportunities. Emison believes people are lucky who take risks. In this presentation, Emison discusses his personal life and how luck has presented unimaginable opportunities in his professional development. If you would like to attend Emison’s lecture, “Luck Matters for Professional Careers,” it will take place November 17, at 6:00pm in the ABE Building Room 100.

By: Dexter McKinney
The Department of PSPA recently enjoyed a visit from US Court of Appeals (5th Circuit) Judge Leslie H. Southwick, who was this year’s Constitution Day speaker. He earned his BA degree at Rice University in 1972, and his JD degree at the University of Texas School of Law in 1975. Prior to being appointed to the federal court in 2007, Judge Southwick was in private practice in Jackson, MS from 1977-1989. Later he served as Deputy Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice Civil Division in Washington, D.C. He returned to Mississippi and was elected to the Mississippi Court of Appeals and served from 1994-2006. It is also worth noting that our guest served in Iraq as a Deputy Staff Judge Advocate as well as a Staff Judge Advocate for the 155th Brigade Combat Team. With such an impressive set of credentials, it is easy to imagine the eager students that filled the auditorium in order to hear Judge Southwick speak. Those listening enjoyed humorous and professional opinions regarding the Constitution and the profound effects such an old document still has on our society today. Upon pulling out his own pocket sized copy of the Constitution, Judge Southwick drew his audience in through reminding them of the important founding principles of our country, and the document upon which that foundation is inscribed. To conclude an informative and entertaining speech on the Constitution, Judge Southwick answered many demanding student questions which demonstrated a very engaged student body. Based on an enthusiastic response to Judge Southwick, it is sage to conclude that Constitution Day was a tremendous success for all parties involved.

By: Bailey Smith

Tyson Elbert, a Ph.D student, recently returned from the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Program (ICRPS) in Oregon. ICRPS is a summer program that describes itself as bringing together “an international, multidisciplinary group of faculty, students and professionals to study together the many facets of rural policy, from policy formulation to policy impacts.” The outstanding graduate students that are chosen to attend this program each participate in a comparative rural policy research project and online distance learning courses, as well as various field observations.

In reference to one particular field experience at a dilapidated housing facility, Tyson states that, “More than any other [trip] during the program or any other in my travels within the United States… it left me with an altered paradigm…it was truly an eye-opening experience.”

In a summary of his experience with ICRPS program, Tyson states that the trip definitely benefited him in his field of study—public policy. He goes on to suggest there was value to Mississippi State, because of the significant networking within ICRPS and the many universities affiliated with this Consortium. According to him, “the structure of the program was well devised; the content extremely useful to my scholarly goals; and the lessons and real world experiences will not soon be forgotten.”

Tyson says that he also acquired long term mentors among the professors at ICRPS. He recommends the program to anyone interested in rural policy.
John Rush, VP for Development and Alumni for three and a half years, started his career at MSU in the PSPA department. The Leakesville native, received his BS in Political Science in 1994. He then became a student recruiter, before resigning to work for the MSU Foundation in Agricultural Engineering. After briefly studying counseling education, Rush decided to take another route. He joined the MPPA program in PSPA at the advice of then Director, Ed. Clynch.

Rush credits the PSPA department for teaching him how to be a good listener and how to pair peoples’ interests with those of the University from a development point of view. As the VP of Development and Alumni, Rush’s responsibilities include being the CEO of the Mississippi State Foundation, overseer for Alumni Association, aircraft operations, and shared advising.

When asked what it takes to be successful, Rush said that one must have a formula. His personal formula for success is “building networks, participating in diversified activities, and having a strong work ethic.” And indeed, Rush has made many accomplishments. He is particularly proud of the success of the State of the Future Campaign, which raised $462 million, vastly exceeding the previous campaign that generated $132 million. Rush concluded his conversation with his three word motto that guides his everyday life: “loyalty, pride, passion.”

By: Dexter McKinney

Two professional staff members within the Mississippi State University Foundation are receiving promotions to lead key fundraising areas at the institution.

Alumnus Brett Aldridge has been named the new director of development for the College of Education, and Barbie Hampel will now direct the university’s annual giving program. Both began their duties July 1.

As education fundraiser, Aldridge will work with the dean’s office and seven departments of the academic unit. Most recently, Aldridge was assistant director of development for Mississippi State’s James Worth Bagley College of Engineering and previously held a similar position with the university’s Division of Student Affairs.

Hampel will be responsible for securing annual gifts for the university through direct marketing efforts. Since 2006, Hampel has served as coordinator of the MSU Foundation’s telefunding program. Hampel holds a bachelor of arts in psychology and a master’s degree in public policy and administration with an emphasis in human resources from Mississippi State.
Bully was presented with his Master’s of Public Governance by Professors Eddie French and Whit Wade on October 21, 2010.

Go Dawgs