As the 2014-2015 academic year begins, the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion launched its 14th year of operation. Over the course of its operation MCIPO has become a highly recognized research organization that has built a reputation for producing accurate measures of public opinion at the local, state and national level. When the Institute was created in 2001 during the tenure of President Arthur Taylor, its mission was three-fold: to provide Muhlenberg students with access to high quality educational opportunities in the area of public opinion research; to assist local governments, non-profits and community groups in gathering public opinion that can enhance the quality of their work; and to expand Muhlenberg College’s name recognition and reputation across Pennsylvania and the nation. Thanks to the work of hundreds of Muhlenberg College students and the Institute’s staff, MCIPO has made great progress in reaching the goals established in its mission and as the new academic year begins the Institute is poised to continue its development as a high-quality research center.

Since its founding in 2001 Muhlenberg students have been at the heart of MCIPO efforts. Students play a fundamental role in the day-to-day operations of the Institute, including such activities as interviewing, lab supervision, computer programming, payroll management, data analysis and report production. While Dr. Chris Borick has served as MCIPO’s director since its establishment, students continue to do the heavy lifting needed to produce consistently high quality public opinion research. Once this research is produced the MCIPO webmaster Maureen Bayraktar has done wonderful work in making the results accessible to the public and continually updating the look and content of the Institute website.

For many the Institute continues to be associated with its election polls that have been a staple MCIPO product since the 2002 election. Indeed the Institute’s polls have been highly regarded by both the state and national media and have proven to be very accurate in predicting election outcomes. But beyond its election polls the Institute has become a leading national outlet for research on American public opinion regarding climate change and hydraulic fracturing. Through partnerships with major universities such as the University of Michigan and the University of Montreal and world renowned think tanks such as the Brookings Institution, MCIPO has expanded the scope of its research efforts and gained new audiences within academia and public policy communities. And while establishing its reputation on a national and even international level, the Institute continues to work with local public libraries, school districts and non-profit organizations as it seeks to fulfill the mission of community service that was established at it's origin over a decade ago.
Muhlenberg Students—moving beyond the classroom

Rachel Marie Asaro ’14 – is working as Events Director at the Foreign Policy Research Institute

Natalie Benjamin ’14 – is working at Deloitte as an Audit Assistant in Philadelphia

Sarah Chabolla ’14 – works as Field Organizer for the Iowa Democratic Coordinated Campaign

Jeremy Fuchs ’14 – is attending the Columbia University School of Journalism

Mitch Hanna ’14 – has a job as Main Street Manager with the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. He is working on the revitalization in downtown Allentown.

Emily Hirsch ’14 – is working in Philadelphia as a Communities Fellow for Repair the World, where she recruits, trains and serves alongside volunteers to create change in the local and larger Jewish community.

Clare Mooney ’14 – has been accepted into the CIEE Teach Abroad Program in Spain. She is in Madrid as a Language and Cultural Assistant.

Andrew Schlesinger ’14 – is working for Lincoln Financial in Philadelphia

Kathleen Rogers ’14 on the Senate floor with Representative Mike Schlossberg ’05 and Representative Paul Clymer ’59
Pi Sigma Alpha Welcomes New Members

Congratulations to the following students who have been inducted into the Eta Upsilon Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society.

Class of 2014:
- Ryan H. Lee

Class of 2015:
- Keith Beizer
- Courtney Buchalter
- Christopher Chaky
- Melanie Ferrara
- Michele Freesman
- Benjamin Kauffman
- Catherine McClellan
- Leah Messler
- Tyler Schoen
- Amanda Trakhtenberg

Congratulations to the following students on their Law School acceptances!

Matt Gross is attending Drexel University School of Law

Ross Handler is attending the Washington College of Law at American University

Zachary Liebnick is attending the University of Connecticut School of Law

Emily Paulus is attending Villanova University School of Law

Dianna Shinn is attending Wake Forest Law School
Kathleen Roger’s thesis, “The Women of the Pennsylvania General Assembly: Explaining Women’s Representation in Pennsylvania State Politics” states that women constitute 51.2% of the population in Pennsylvania, but only 17.8% of Pennsylvania’s state legislature. While the proportion of women in the Pennsylvania General Assembly appears to be increasing fairly steadily overtime, progress in the states that border Pennsylvania, though less steady, has been made more quickly.

For decades, scholars have studied the underrepresentation of women in politics in order to understand why women have not yet been elected to office in numbers commensurate with their proportion of the overall population, as well as what consequences arise due to their absence. Additionally, scholars have extensively researched the great deal of variation in the proportion of women across the 50 states. These differences have largely been attributed to the variability in other factors across states, such as the dominant political culture, the professionalization of the legislature, the presence of term limits, the recruitment practices of political parties, the cost of running a campaign, and whether officials are elected to single-member or multimember districts. As a full-time, highly professionalized legislature that lacks term limits and elects officials to single-member districts, the Pennsylvania General Assembly presents a great number of structural barriers to women’s representation.

This exploratory case study of the 45 women of the Pennsylvania General Assembly sheds greater light on the motivations, opportunities, obstacles, and rewards of being a woman in Pennsylvania politics by appealing to the experts: the women who have successfully been elected to the legislature despite the odds. Kathleen demonstrates this by employing a three-part, mixed-methods research design, including a database of basic information about each female legislator, an original survey, and several interviews. Her findings indicate that supportive families and political parties, as well as confidence in one’s natural abilities and the availability of open seats, have been crucial in motivating the women of the Pennsylvania General Assembly to run for their current seats. Kathleen’s thesis adviser is Dr. Lanie Mathews-Schultz.

“Somebody once said that it’s not that women see things differently; they see different things. My life experiences as a mother, a daughter, as a sister are different than most men I know...So I’m going to have a different life experience that I bring to the table.”
Sarah Chabolla’s thesis, “Performance, Production, and Protest: Turkish National Identity and the Project of Modernity,” considers how an identity is a way in which an individual can socially define his or herself. Identity provides a context for one’s life and how one fits into society and interacts with other individuals. Similarly, national identity provides a foundation for collective association based on common state boundaries and culture. However, such methods of identification are not natural but constructed, as theorized by Benedict Anderson in his groundbreaking book, *Imagined Communities*. Using the theories of Anderson, Judith Butler, and Erving Goffman, Sarah creates a new framework through which to study national identity construction, which involves repetitive and reiterative performances and practices that reinforce, reshape, and resist the hegemonic national identity. Using Turkey as a case through which to apply this framework, Sarah examines the ways in which a unique Turkish identity was constructed in the post-Ottoman era. However, not all Turkish citizens have unquestioningly accepted the Turkish identity, and some have actively opposed the supposedly monolithic national identity by asserting alternative conceptions of identity and self. The various feminist and labor movement provide effective examples of such oppositional performances. Sarah’s thesis adviser is Dr. Brian Mello.

Emily Hirsh’s thesis, “Impact and Implications of Sustainability Initiatives at Muhlenberg College,” explores sustainability at Muhlenberg, related to students' knowledge, behavior, and attitude about sustainability. Specifically, her research questions focus on students awareness of sustainability initiatives on campus, how these initiatives have impacted their behavior, the extent to which students can make the links between Muhlenberg initiatives and larger issues, and the relationship between student voice and sustainable initiatives. Emily’s survey also focused on water bottle usage on campus. Her thesis is advised by Dr. Michele Deegan.

Dianna Shinn’s thesis, “Capitalism and Democracy: Assessing Inequality in America,” focuses on the political policies that have contributed to the deepening of inequality in America. Political decisions beginning in the late 1970s as a result of an ideological shift towards neoliberalism and a less regulated free-market economic system have created the abnormal levels of inequality in America. This paper will focus on three realms of government policies - the exploitation of tax loopholes, the decrease in unions, and the deregulation and globalization of the financial sector. The aim of this thesis is to not only highlight the growing inequality in America, but also to illustrate how government policies rooted in neoliberal ideology have led to the erosion of American democracy. Her thesis adviser is Dr. Brian Mello.
Faculty Highlights

Dr. Chris Borick continued his research on American public opinion related to climate change. Borick published and presented a number of papers that examined the factors that determine public views on. Along with Dr. Barry Rabe he published an article entitled, “Weather or Not?: Examining the impact of Meteorological Conditions on Public Opinion Regarding Global Warming,” in the American Meteorological Society’s journal Weather, Climate and Society. The article based on research drawn from the National Surveys on Energy and Environment, which Borick co-directs, found evidence that suggests public acceptance of global warming is related to their experiences with localized weather.

Borick was also part of a team of Canadian and American researchers that studied public policy related to the Great Lakes. The research which was funded by a grant from the Canadian Government and included a survey of residents of the Great Lakes basin that measured concerns, use and policy preferences in regards to the Great Lakes. Borick co-directed the survey component of the project and was invited to present the findings at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington in April.

Dr. Borick co-authored two papers with Dr. David Amdur and Dr. Rabe on public views on the carbon tax. The first paper which was released as part of a series from the University of Michigan received widespread national media coverage regarding its findings on the importance of revenue use in terms of public support for a carbon tax. The second paper which builds on the earlier findings was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association and dedicated to Dr. Amdur, who tragically passed away earlier this year.

Finally, Dr. Borick became the president of the Pennsylvania Political Science Association during the association’s annual meeting in Harrisburg and will serve in that capacity over the next two-years.

Dr. Michele Deegan has written several papers and articles during the last year: “Building Community While Complying with the Affordable Care Act: A Case Study of a Regional Community Health Assessment in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania,” with Lanethea Mathews and Bonnie Coyle, forthcoming in the Journal of Progress in Community Health; “Implementing the Affordable Care Act in Pennsylvania,” paper presented with Lanethea Mathews-Schultz at the PA Political Science Association conference April 2014, Harrisburg, PA; “Implementing the Affordable Care Act in the States: The National, State & Local Consequences of State Choices Regarding Medicaid Reform,” a paper presented with Lanethea Mathews-Schultz at the PA Political Science Association conference November 2013, Philadelphia, PA.

Dr. Deegan also has been a research analyst for Sustainable Communities grant funded by the U.S. Department of Urban Development and served on the Sustainability Consortium for the last 18 months. The grant is designed to create a Sustainability plan for the Lehigh Valley region which encompasses housing, the environment, the economy, and land use. As part of this grant, the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium engaged in a series of community surveys. Over the grant period, Muhlenberg College students participated as research assistants, collecting data on over 5,000 individuals in the region. During the last year, Deegan also completed a state wide study on employed individuals with developmental disabilities, “Employment Practices Research Project,” commissioned by the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council (PDDC) conducted for the Lehigh Valley Research Consortium in partnership with The Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living (LVCIL) and prepared a report for the DaVinci Science Center entitled, "STEM Outcomes for Lehigh Valley Students."

Dr. Jack Gambino co-authored with Dr. Mohsin Hashim a paper called “Wading with Cobras: Experiential Learning and Short-Term Study Abroad in Bangladesh” at the Northeast Political Science Association conference in Philadelphia last fall. He and Hashim also delivered presentations on short-term studies courses and sustainability education at the How Green is My Valley: Campus Sustainability Conference 2014 at Lehigh University in February and at the Pennsylvania Political Science Association meetings in Harrisburg in April. Dr. Gambino also delivered a paper “Theorist in Exile: Judith Shklar and the Limits of Citizenship” at the Midwest Political Science Association meetings in Chicago in April. He also served as a discussant on a panel on Political Theory and the Arab Spring at the same conference. Dr. Gambino was also appointed as co-chair of the campus-wide Steering Committee of the College’s self-study for the Middle States Accreditation review process. When he is not on campus, Dr. Gambino can be found busily training his labradoodle puppy “Keeri” who has joined his family after the recent departures of his beloved Boston Bulls.
Dr. Hashim presented his paper Jamaat-e-Islami as Semi-loyal Opposition: A Case-Study of the Role of an Islamist Party in the Democratization Process of Bangladesh at the 2014 Annual National Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. He also presented his research on Identity and Identity Coalition Cleavages in Post-Soviet Russian Foreign Policy Formulation at the 2013 Annual National Meeting of the American Political Science Association. He and Dr. Gambino delivered their co-authored paper Wading with Cobras: Experiential Learning in a Short Term Study Abroad Program in Bangladesh at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association. They were also invited panelists in a Roundtable on Short-Term Study Abroad Courses at the Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Political Science Association. At the Midwest Political Science Association, Dr. Hashim chaired a panel on Property Rights and Governance. He also served as Chair and Discussant of the panel Understanding Regime Change in the MENA Region at the Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association. He and Dr. Mello will be presenting their paper Military Interventions and the Shaping of Islamic Political Mobilization in Bangladesh and Turkey at the 2014 Annual National Meeting of the American Political Science Association. Dr. Hashim is also presenting a paper on Privatization Strategies in the Russian Oil Sector at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association. He has been invited to serve on the National AP Development Committee for Comparative Politics and Government. Dr. Hashim spent a month in Bangladesh conducting research on the Jamaat-e-Islami political party.

Dr. Chris Herrick was awarded “Best Faculty Paper” by Northeastern Political Science Association at its 2013 meeting for his paper Perceptions and Misperceptions: China’s Relations with the States of Southeast Asia in the Context of its “Peaceful Rise”. He has also received a contract from Bloomsbury Press for a text on China’s Peaceful Rise.

Dr. Lanetha Mathews-Schultz presented research on implementing the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) along with Dr. Michele Deegan at the Northeastern Political Science Association meeting in Philadelphia, PA and at the Pennsylvania Political Science Association in Harrisburg, PA. Michele Deegan and Lanetha Mathews-Schultz also published, along with co-author Bonnie Coyle (Community Health Director for St. Luke’s University Hospital Network) the article, “Building Community While Complying with the Affordable Care Act: A Case Study of a Regional Community Health Assessment in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania,” in the Journal of Progress in Community Health Partnerships.

Dr. Mello’s book, Evaluating Social Movement Impacts: Comparative Lessons from the Labor Movement in Turkey came out in the fall of 2013. He is currently working on an edited volume on political theory and the Arab Spring, which will be the focus of his sabbatical during the Fall of 2014. In addition, he has presented a paper on anarchism, society, and pick-up basketball at the Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA. The paper takes its inspiration, in part, from his new first-year seminar, “Exploring Anarchy”. Dr. Mello delivered an invited talk in Hamburg, Germany as part of a special conference on radicalization and Turkish politics in the 1960s in late June.

Dr. Alton Slane presented his paper “The Fourth Amendment and Police Use of DNA” at the Annual Conference of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago, IL in April 2014. In February 2014 he presented “Fourth Amendment Issues and Warrantless Blood Tests Following an Arrest for Drunk Driving” at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Slane also presented “The Fourth Amendment and the Use of Dogs to Detect Narcotics” at the Annual Meeting of the Northeast Political Science Association in November 2013 in Philadelphia, PA. Dr. Slane is Faculty Parliamentarian for the 2014-2015 academic year.
As another school year begins, it helpful to reflect on and share our accomplishments over the last year as we welcome new and returning students to our classes. For the first time, last fall we hosted over 20 alumni at our department’s Alumni Weekend Open House and connected alums to current students during an Information Session co-hosted with the Career Center. Alums, Julie Klein ('12), Nikki Rhodes ('08), Ryan Chapoteau ('08), and Michael Czin ('06) provided advice to students about the job search and their early career experiences. We also hosted two special campus conversations to discuss the Syrian and Ukrainian Crises. These sessions, led by faculty and students knowledgeable about regional politics and history, were very well attended and provided an open forum for conversation.

In addition we had the pleasure of having Dr. Richard Huizar, Consortium for Faculty Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow in Political Science & Latin American Studies in our department. Dr. Huizar taught a class on Mexican politics and brought his expertise of comparative politics to our learning environment. Dr. Huizar worked closely with Latin American Studies minors and also gave several presentations to our campus community about his research on Mexican Energy policy.

Students’ research contributions continued to expand as well. Last spring we were able to send 7 students to the PA Political Science Association conference to present research on topics such as democracy and inequality, women’s representation in elected office, religious tensions in Tanzania, and corruption in post-Soviet Russia. Several of these presentations were the result of Honor’s theses. Additional theses were completed on Sustainability Initiatives at Muhlenberg College and Turkish National Identity and the Project of Modernity.

To prepare for careers in public service and politics, many students took advantage of internships during 2013-2014 including positions with U.S. Senator Bob Casey, State Representative Michael Schlossberg, LaNTA, the Greater LV Chamber of Commerce, and the LV Economic Development Corporation, to name a few. Many of our recent grads have already secured full time employment or are starting graduate school. We wish them much luck in the future and hope that they stay in touch with us.

For those of you who are alums, we will again be hosting a get together during Alumni Weekend this year on Saturday, September 13 from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. So, if you are visiting campus, be sure to stop by to see us and catch up. Stay in touch with our department by joining our Facebook page!