

Spring 2025 Newsletter

Dear Alumni and friends,

I hope this message finds you well as we welcome the arrival of spring. It's a time of renewal and growth, and I'm excited to share some updates from our department with you. Our faculty and students have been busy with research and classes, and graduation is just around the corner.

In this newsletter, you'll find highlights of this year's scholarship recipients, a collaborative faculty and graduate student publication, student achievements, and ways to stay connected with us. We hope you enjoy reading about what's been happening in our community.

This will be my final introduction to our newsletter as Department Chair, with my term concluding at the end of this summer. I will return to the department as a faculty member to focus on my research. Beginning this fall, Professor Ryan Vander Wielen will take over as Chair, and I know the department will continue to thrive under his leadership. It has been an honor to serve in this role, witness the incredible work and dedication of our faculty and students, and connect with so many of our alumni. I am grateful for your support and look forward to seeing the continued growth and success of our department.



As always, we are grateful for contributions from our alumni and friends which help to provide financial support to our students, recruit excellent faculty, and support cutting-edge research in multiple

areas of political science. I hope you'll consider investing in our students and faculty by making a gift today or speaking with Brianna Goodfellow, Director of Development, at (631) 793-4687 or

brianna.goodfellow@stonybrook.edu.

Please stay in touch and send us updates about your accomplishments. If you enjoy reading about these developments, please follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [Facebook](#) to keep up with all our department news. Our profile name is SBUPoliSci on all platforms.

Best wishes,

Leonie Huddy, PhD
Distinguished Professor and Chair,
Department of Political Science

2024-2025 Department Scholarship Recipients

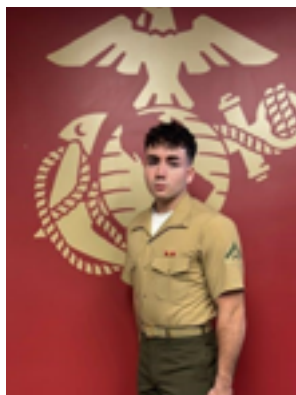
We would like to congratulate our outstanding scholarship recipients for the 2024-2025 academic year. These six students have showcased incredible academic achievement, commitment to their academia, and a dedication to excellence in political science.



Jade Fang, a political science and economics double major, is the recipient of the **Alumni Pre-Law Scholarship** for her exceptional academic record, with plans to pursue a career in law. The scholarship was established to support undergrads interested in becoming a lawyer and intended for students who have taken law-related courses or had previous work experience

in the legal industry and show promise for a future career in law.

Deniz Guvecoglu, a political science major, is honored for his service to the United States Armed Forces and was awarded the **Davidson Family Scholarship**. The scholarship was established by Robert C. Davidson '72, and Barbara Davidson, his wife. The Davidson Family Scholarship was created to support a Junior or Senior, preferably majoring in Political Science, who is a veteran of the armed forces of the US or Coast Guard, who has served on active duty.



Asha Rath, a political science and biology double major, has been recognized by the **Patricia A. Gramer Memorial Scholarship**. The scholarship was created to commend an undergraduate student who has demonstrated outstanding academic excellence and is writing a senior honors research thesis in political science.

Nathaniel Feldberg, a senior political science major, has been celebrated for his academic excellence, earning the **Robert Clasen Scholarship**. The scholarship was established by Robert Clasen '80, Political Science BA alumnus and practicing attorney, who generously established the fund to appreciate the education he received at SBU and to provide scholarship support for students who demonstrate potential and promise through their coursework.



Joel Beauchamp, a senior University Scholar and political science major, is the recipient of the **Mark Herzinger Scholarship in Political Science** for his academic achievements and commitment to the field of political science. The scholarship was generously established by Mark Herzinger '89, Political Science BA alumnus and

intended to give back to support undergraduate students who are majoring and studying political science.

Lana Gouda, a junior political science and economics double major, is the inaugural recipient of the **Harsh Bhasin Political Science Endowed Scholarship**. The scholarship is named in memory of Ambassador Harsh Bhasin (1944-2023), who served as a career diplomat and then taught at SBU for twenty years. It was established to provide support for undergrad students in the Department of Political Science who have demonstrated an interest in the study of international relations. The scholarship was generously endowed by contributions from his family, former students, and Stony Brook community members.



These scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000, provide crucial support to our students, enabling them to pursue their academic and professional goals. We are immensely proud of their accomplishments and look forward to witnessing their continued success. Congratulations to our 2024-25 scholarship recipients!

The Political Science Society Take on D.C.

This past December, the **Political Science Society**, a non-partisan, research and policy-oriented club, embarked on an enriching weekend trip to our nation's capital. The club is open to students in any major, and anyone interested in learning about politics. The three-day visit was packed with educational and memorable experiences.

The journey began with tours of national monuments and memorials, providing students with a profound sense of history and patriotism. They also explored several museums, deepening their understanding of American heritage. A highlight of the trip was a professional development and networking class hosted by the Leadership Institute, which offered valuable insights into career building and the importance of alliances in the political arena.

Ethan Rothburd, a senior math and economics double major, shared his excitement: "I had only been to D.C. once before as a kid, and the city didn't hold much significance to me then. This time, with the Political Science Society, I loved experiencing the many places at the center of the political world. It was incredible to see the Capitol and monuments up close and make friends along the way."

A junior political science major, **Anika Drees**, found the professional development workshop particularly enlightening: "The class was very informative, as I haven't taken many courses on policy making or campaign strategies. My concentration is political psychology, so the class connected closely with my studies. The most important lesson was about alliances—if you turn your back on your word and friends, you have nothing. The speaker also led an activity where we lifted our candidate up and broke the other candidate down, which made me think of research into morality and voting."

On the second day, the group toured the Smithsonian Museums, including the Air and Space Museum and the American Art Museum. Later in the afternoon, they strolled around the National Mall, visiting various memorials and monuments and soaking in each site's historical significance.

The final day of their trip was spent at the Museum of American History, rounding off their educational adventure before heading back to campus. The trip broadened their academic horizons and fostered camaraderie among the members, making it a truly unforgettable experience.



Political Science Society in DC

Spotlight on Excellence: Celebrating our SUNY Chancellor's Award Recipients

We are thrilled to announce that two outstanding students from our department have been honored with the [SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence](#). This award recognizes students who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievements, leadership, and contributions to their communities. It is the highest honor bestowed upon a student by SUNY. Join us in celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of **Rachel Alexandre** and **Peter (PJ) Joyce**!



Rachel Alexandre, is a senior Honors College scholar and Globalization and International Relations and Political Science double major. Her dedication to her studies and her community is truly inspiring. When asked what this award means to her, Rachel said, "I was shocked when I read the letter stating I had received the SUNY Chancellor's Award. I'm really honored and thankful

to the SUNY [Chancellor's Award] Selection Committee for recognizing me in this way. Although even without the award, I would still be just as committed to these projects. From a young age, my parents instilled in me the importance of community and helping others, values that continue to drive my work both on and off campus. Big or small, my goal has always been to make a positive impact wherever I go."

Rachel is an Obama-Chesky Voyager Scholar and has an exciting summer ahead, filled with public service initiatives around the globe. Her projects include a study abroad trip to Tanzania, working with an international law firm in Spain, and shadowing projects for an entertainment PR company in New York. These experiences will give her a versatile perspective on tackling public service issues. Rachel credits her success to the mentorship she received from faculty members like Juliette Passer. She is actively involved on campus as an Undergraduate Coordinator for the Center for Civic Justice, a Stony Brook University's Advocacy Corps student representative, and an Andrew Goodman Foundation campus ambassador. Her work at the Canadian Consulate General in New York and her participation in the JFEW International Relations and Global Affairs Program have been integral to her growth as a social advocate.

Peter (PJ) Joyce, an Honors College, political science and history double major, recently completed his BA in fall 2025. He is currently pursuing an MA degree in Public Policy. His commitment to academic excellence and campus involvement has earned him this recognition. PJ expressed his gratitude, saying, "I'm really grateful to have received the award and honored to be recognized among so many other amazing peers." PJ is looking forward to continuing his work in a university environment, either at Stony Brook University or another institution. His passion for higher education and student engagement is evident in his future aspirations.



PJ expresses immense gratitude to Professor Jason Rose for being a mentor and advisor. His involvement on campus includes working for the Student Engagement and Activities (SEA) office, serving as a Resident Assistant (RA), and participating in the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) and club life. He was the Vice President of College Democrats for two years and is currently working with the campus dietician on waste-weighting initiatives in dining halls. PJ aspires looking to get involved with the Graduate Student Organization (GSO).

Rachel and PJ exemplify the spirit of excellence and dedication that defines the SBU community. Their achievements inspire us all, and we are proud to have them as part of our department. Congratulations to Rachel and PJ on this incredible honor!

Why Anxious People Lean to the Left on Economic Policy: Personality, Social Exclusion, and Redistribution

Political scientists have observed a link between support for left-wing policies and having an anxious personality, but there has been little agreement on why.

PhD Candidate Adam Panish has “always been interested in how our personal desires and fears shape the political opinions that we voice in public.” Some of the most influential theories in political psychology argue that conservatives are anxious people. But in fact, most high-quality studies show that liberals are more anxious.



Upon this realization, Panish and Associate Professor Andrew Delton, conducted a series of studies to investigate more thoroughly why there is a connection between left-wing politics and anxiety by combining political science, social and personality psychology, behavioral genetics, and anthropology lenses.

“This was a true collaboration,” said Delton.

“Adam is an expert at applying personality psychology to political science and at analyzing large datasets. I apply evolutionary psychology to political science and experiment design. By working together, this research really is more than the sum of its parts.”

Panish and Delton proposed that people with high levels of the personality trait neuroticism are more sensitive to being socially excluded and that this explains why they prefer some left-wing policies. Neuroticism is a “stable individual difference defined by ‘negative emotionality, such as feeling anxious, nervous, sad and tense.’” Neuroticism encompasses both anxiety and emotional volatility. However, only anxiety is a predictor for support for left-wing economic policies because it is related to concerns of exclusion.

They drew their conclusions from four representative surveys in the U.S. and the Netherlands and two original experiments, surveying nearly 18,000 people.

Looking through an anthropological lens, evolved intuitions may lead people to support government policies that promise care and support because they fear being excluded, which could have led to them not surviving in the ancestral environment. In their experiments, they simulated exclusion by having subjects make a biographical post in a fake social media environment. Then the researchers manipulated

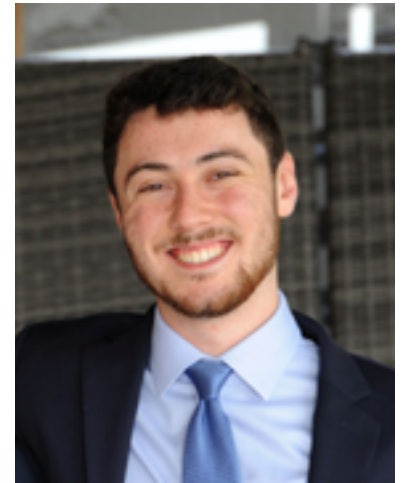
the number of likes the subjects’ posts received to signify social exclusion or acceptance.

The researchers used statistical controls to rule out the possibility that anxiety was confounded with economic hardship. They also showed that anxious people care more about policies having to do with care and resources, but not necessarily other left-wing policies, such as easing restrictions on immigration or gay marriage. Their research also showed that anxious people support left-wing policies of care and resources “even when they are not able to benefit from them.”

Overall, their most consistent results across countries and datasets were the association between anxiety and support for policies that provide care and resources.

For decades, political scientists have assumed that the most important reason a person will support or oppose specific economic left-wing policies is their economic status. But as Dr. Delton notes, their data “showed that a single personality question (are you “anxious, easily upset?”) is just as good as someone’s income at predicting whether they support redistribution.”

The full open-access research article “[Why Anxious People Lean to the Left on Economic Policy: Personality, Social Exclusion, and Redistribution](#)” was published in the British Journal of Political Science in February 2025.



Alumni Corner

Alumni Updates

*Where has your degree taken you? Let us know!
Send us your achievements and updates to
polsci_alumni@stonybrook.edu.*

Jonathan D. Salant '76 was inducted into the Society of Professional Journalists D.C. chapter's journalism hall of fame. He is a charter member of the university's chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha (Eta Theta) and won the Political Science Department's outstanding alumnus award in 2006, the year he was president of the National Press Club. He currently is assistant managing editor, politics, for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and is based in Washington, D.C., covering the White House, Congress and national politics.

Networking and Mentorship Opportunities for Alumni

The Stony Brook Career Center has adopted a new platform, **Stony Brook Mentor Connect**, to help connect alumni to one another, as well as find opportunities for alumni who wish to give back to current students. Mentoring options and availability are based on your schedule and ability to dedicate time, ranging from making yourself available to answer questions on the platform, all the way to conducting resume/cover letter views, or meeting in person to talk about career opportunities or attending industry events.

Interested alumni can register for the platform here:
<https://stonybrookmentorconnect.com/>

Questions about the platform can be directed to:
stonybrookmentorconnect@stonybrook.edu

