

GGC School of Liberal Arts Scholarship Focus

Global Politics After COVID: SLA Political Science

Faculty and Students Present at International Studies Event

GGC faculty members and students presented research at the 2021 International Studies Association South Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, October 8-9. The conference theme addressed “Global Politics After COVID.”

Seven GGC political science faculty (Yohannes Gedamu, Scott Boykin, Laura Young, Amir Azarvan, Michael Lewkowicz, Steve Jones and Dovile Budryte) attended, gave presentations, and participated in roundtable discussions.

Political science faculty also made an additional contribution: they encouraged three of their majors to present research.

The three GGC political science majors were Carlos Patino, John Wiemels, and Brittany Stancoff. According to Dovile Budryte, Chair of Faculty for POLS, “The student presenters did an excellent job covering complicated topics.”

Patino reviewed international migration, Stancoff addressed human rights and strategic interests, and Wiemels discussed U.S. foreign policy and nuclear non proliferation.

Some people might question the wisdom of encouraging students to give their research in a setting involving published faculty and even foreign policy professionals. GGC’s students disagreed, attesting to the advantages.

One benefit is that it helps hone skills. “I’ve presented in front of classes and GGC professors before but presenting at a conference was a new frontier,” said Brittany Stancoff. In addition, Stancoff suggested that the experience “solidified what I want to do in the field post-graduation: research, writing, and presenting.” The conference showed what is expected at this level of research.



GGC’s political science faculty participating in the ISA South Conference included (l-r) Drs. Amir Azarvan, Laura Young, Dovile Budryte, Scott Boykin, Michael Lewkowicz, and Yohannes Gedamu. Not pictured, Steven Jones.

John Wiemels noted another perk: interacting with a wide array of people. For example, a lunch table might include experts from all over: “The group at our table was from a varying set of institutions and the free flow of discussions was very enlightening and enjoyable,” he said.

Laura Young, associate professor of political science, observed that undergraduate students benefit from such conferences. In addition to the forum to practice their presentation skills, students are also motivated to do their best because they present their research in the same panels as professors and graduate students.

Young commented, “Students can network with future graduate schools or, in some cases, employers from the public and private sector.”

“Presenting at a conference requires that the student make a leap beyond the work expected in a class to produce a professional level study,” said Steven Varvis, who has served as a provost, dean, department chair, and professor at a West Coast university. “It requires that they make sure that their data are good, their reasoning sound and creative, and that they understand the problem or topic they are addressing in a full way, including its significance.”

The ISA website says, “The International Studies Association is one of the oldest interdisciplinary associations dedicated to understanding international, transnational and global affairs.” It was founded in 1959, and now boasts a worldwide roster of more than 7,000 members. *By Paul Grant and Richard Rawls*