I am happy to report a number of exciting developments in the Department of Political Science over the past year. In addition to high quality teaching and research, faculty and students were involved in efforts to contribute to community and public service. These include a report on women executive and community leadership in Hamilton and Halton, a Water Week at McMaster, and the annual graduate student conference on Mapping the Global Dimensions of Public Policy. The year also witnessed the launch of the Clarke Prizes for projects on advocacy to help students discover the connections between theory and practice.

Our faculty continued to contribute to University governance. Dr. Michelle Dion has taken over as the President of the McMaster University Faculty Association (MUFA), and Dr. Karen Bird was elected to the University Budget Committee. Dr. Marshall Beier won the prestigious OCUFA (Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations) award for teaching, and Dr. Karen Bird received the Jill Vickers Prize for her paper presented at the 2014 Canadian Political Science Association meeting.

We bid farewell to Kathleen Hannan who provided excellent service to the Department as Undergraduate Secretary for over ten years before retiring, and was awarded the President’s Award for Outstanding Service, 2014.

Our programs are scheduled for review under the Institutional Quality Assurance Process. This is an opportunity to review existing arrangements, consider the changing landscape of higher education in the province and country, and strengthen the teaching and learning environment to meet the needs and demands of students and the community.

I wish a productive and enjoyable year to all.

Ahmed Shafiqul Huque
FOCUS ON FACULTY

NEW FACULTY

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Inder S. Marwah to the Department as an Assistant Professor. Inder is a political theorist whose research examines the ways in which different traditions of political thought respond to the fact of human diversity and pluralism. Inder obtained a PhD from the University of Toronto and was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Chicago and McMaster University. Inder is also interested in democratic theory and multiculturalism, as well as in various issues in public policy. He has taught classes in ancient, modern and contemporary political theory, democratic theory, international ethics, multiculturalism and European politics, and will teach courses in political theory, critical theory and decolonization, and cosmopolitanism.

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Joanne Heritz as an Assistant Professor (CLA) in the Department. Joanne obtained a PhD degree in Comparative Public Policy from McMaster University in 2012. Her dissertation was titled ‘The Inclusion of Atypical Minorities in Public Policy’ and field of research includes public policy and aboriginal representation. Joanne will teach courses on Canadian politics, public policy and administration.

MUFA PRESIDENT

In 2015-16, Michelle Dion, like some other political science faculty members before her, assumes the role of President of the McMaster University Faculty Association, which represents all full-time instructional faculty at the University. As Vice-President in 2014-15, she helped negotiate the joint agreement for pay equity (http://macfaculty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Joint-Statement-on-Pay-Equity-April-2015.pdf), which implemented a remedy to bring the average female faculty member’s salary in line with those of male colleagues with similar experience, rank, and credentials. In 2015-16, MUFA will continue to represent faculty interests and to promote policies that ensure McMaster maintains its reputation as a leading research-intensive, student-centred university.

NEW UNDERGRADUATE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Department of Political Science welcomes our new Undergraduate Administrative Assistant, Rebekah Flynn, who joined us in April 2015. Prior to this, Rebekah worked as an Administrative Assistant in the Faculty of Social Sciences here at McMaster University. Welcome Rebekah!

AWARDS

Dr. Marshall Beier was the winner of the prestigious teaching award from the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA). In his citation, the President of OCUFA stated: “Professor Beier treats his students as colleagues and collaborators, and excels at integrating his students into the research enterprise.” Marshall was earlier recognized as a 3M National Teaching Fellow.

Dr. Karen Bird won the Jill Vickers Prize for her paper titled ‘Challenges to Intersectional Inclusion: Institutional Dynamics of Ethnic Quotas and their Impact on Ethnic Minority Women’. The paper was presented at the 2014 Canadian Political Science Association meeting at Brock University.

Kathleen Hannan won the President’s Award for Outstanding Service, 2014. This is a well-deserved recognition for Kathleen’s contribution to the Department and McMaster University. Congratulations to Kathleen for her excellent work and accomplishment, and we wish her all the best in retirement.
The inaugural 2014 McMaster Water Week convened researchers, students, and partners working at the intersection of water science, policy, and technology. The format featured a mixture of distinguished lectures, student showcases, networking events, field tours, and high level dialogues aligned with flagship projects related to water and climate change, public health and sustainable development. Over 400 people participated in 11 events that showcased the breadth and depth of water research and teaching, while shaping and responding to the regional and global water agenda for science, policy, and enterprise. McMaster’s Department of Political Science was also involved through a RIPS session on Governance in the Great Lakes. The 2nd annual McMaster Water Week will be held October 5-9, 2015 and is being led by Dr. Dustin Garrick and an interdisciplinary leadership team of faculty and students from the McMaster Water Network.

Dr. Karen Bird and PhD student Samantha Jackson collaborated with scholars from Western and Bishop’s University to analyze results from the Toronto Election Study survey. The project examined voter choice in the heavily contested 2014 Toronto mayoral election and accompanying ward races, with a focus on understanding who votes for women and racialized candidates in a non-partisan municipal context. Dr. Bird and Ms. Jackson presented their findings at the ECPR Standing Group on Gender and Politics annual meeting in Uppsala, Sweden in summer 2015.

The fourth graduate conference on Mapping the Global Dimensions of Public Policy got off to a tough start last February 2nd when a rare closure of the university was ordered in the face of a winter snowfall. Some of the Day 1 participants had already arrived, others had stayed home, and Day 2 participants wondered if they should change their plans and cancel. In the face of all this, the graduate students on the conference organizing committee did a magnificent job in contacting everyone, rescheduling all paper givers from the first day who were able to stay on for sessions on Day 2 of the conference, and rebooking the always popular reception at the Phoenix from the first to second day.

As a result, a slightly shorter but intense program made for a very successful conference on February 3rd. Guest speakers included Dr. Angela Carter from University of Waterloo and Dr. Patrik Marier from Concordia University. As usual the highpoint of the conference was the graduate papers presented by MA and PhD students from across Canada. Themed sessions were held on the Welfare State, Development, Finance, Trade, and the Environment. A concluding roundtable on Cutting Waste or Wasting Cuts had to be cancelled to make space for rescheduled papers, but was held as a separate event in March.