

Thursday, October 30, 2008

OU's Political Science department in the spotlight

By Dawn Pauli, staff writer

Members of Oakland University's political science department are in demand this election season, sharing their expertise on politics and campaigns with students and community members. Faculty members are participating in numerous activities – from debates to discussions – surrounding the upcoming elections, as well as responding to media calls from Time Magazine, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Detroit News, Detroit Free Press and Fox News.

Four panel discussions were organized by the Center for Student Activities during September and October, focusing on the presidential campaign and related issues, such as foreign policy and the role of women in the election. The panels, held in the Oakland Center, were open to students and the public, and led by political science professors.

"The purpose is to give students a chance to participate in serious discussions about serious topics," said Peter Trumbore, associate professor of political science, a participant in three of the discussions.

Trumbore said Democratic nominee Barack Obama's campaign effort to reach young, new voters was reflected in the attendance at the panels. "Like what we've seen at the national level, the overall level of enthusiasm is higher for Obama with students, but the die-hard Republican supporters come out too," he said.

The League of Women Voters conducted a debate on OU's campus between the candidates running for the 9th Congressional District, including Joe Knollenberg, Gary Peters, Doug Campbell and Jack Kevorkian. Roger Larocca, assistant professor of political science, was on the debate panel with the editorial page editors from the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press. The debate was moderated by Chuck Stokes, editorial director of WXYZ-TV, and can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

"This is one of the top races in the country and it was great for OU to be engaged in the process," said Larocca. "The candidates were questioned about the financial crisis and the impact on student loans."

Approximately 65 students gathered to watch the second presidential debate at a watch party organized by Terri Towner, assistant professor of political science, and sponsored by the political science department, Pi Sigma Alpha, the Women's Issues Forum and Phi Alpha Delta.

"The goal was to energize political discourse on Oakland's campus by gathering students to watch a presidential debate in an informal, fun setting," said Towner. "Presidential debates give candidates the opportunity to speak directly to students and to the nation about their goals on critical issues. It's important to provide students with opportunities to encounter and engage with these political ideas."

David Dulio, associate professor of political science, visited the Older Persons' Commission in Rochester to discuss the presidential election and topics ranging from fundraising and money in the election, the Electoral College, television advertising and the candidates' strategies.

"This is a very engaged group, they asked very good questions in all areas and wanted to probe important topics like what the candidates are saying in their TV ads, who the candidates are raising money from, reforms to our system, and many others," he said. The question and answer period lasted an hour over the scheduled time.

Dulio also spoke at the President's Colloquium Oct. 27 with Peter Trombore, associate professor of political science, presenting "The Battle for Power: Issues, Politics and Strategy in the 2006 and 2008 Elections."

Dulio and Trumbore discussed the role that issues, partisanship, campaign strategy and other dynamics of the 2006 election that will impact the 2008 presidential election results.

The pair also presented "Issues, Advertising and Strategy in the 2008 Presidential Campaign" at an event hosted by Northern Trust Bank. The topic focused on how candidates determine which issues to emphasize in their campaigns. The event was attended by community leaders and Oakland University supporters.

SUMMARY

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