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Political Science Students on the Conference Trail

November 5, 2019

In a world full of constant political division, Georgia Southern Honors students are making their mark by using research to gather a greater understanding of these intricacies and provide their own insights to some of today's most pressing political issues. Their work has addressed topics such as immigration policy, the influence of women in chief executive roles, and voter turnout and is well received by peers and colleagues in the larger Political Science community.



L-R: Gabrielle Peterson, Dr. Jamie Scalera, Anna Kwiatkowski, Dr. Srobana Bhattacharya,

Samuel Hobbs, Dr. Maureen Stobb, Ian Sheppard, Dr. Kate Perry

In early October, four Political Science Honors students, Anna Kwiatkowski (political science '19), Ian Sheppard (political science and philosophy, '20), Gabrielle Peterson (political science and writing & linguistics '21), and Samuel Hobbs (political science and Spanish '20) attended the International Studies Association (ISA)—South Conference in Memphis to present their Honors Thesis research on panels with other students and faculty. Through this experience, these students were able to connect not just with their Georgia Southern faculty, but with professors and students from other universities across the region as well.

Kwiatkowski, who presented her research, *Immigration Policy Reform: Higher education and International Students*, commented that her greatest takeaway from the conference was the connections she was able to make with her professors. "I really enjoyed getting to connect with the professors from my department," she said. "I got to learn more about what their research areas are and what the women in the department face as academics. I grew such an appreciation for all my professors during this conference."

Peterson, who presented her thesis, *Nurturing Democracy? Mediating Between Female Chief Executives and Voter Turnout*, also enjoyed this time spent with both her own professors as well as those from other universities in the region. “Because of my professors’ involvement in ISA’s Women’s Caucus, I was able to go to the Women’s Caucus Breakfast and Roundtable Discussion and learn what it means to be a woman in Political Science academia,” Peterson said. This opportunity allowed her to experience a supportive and uplifting environment for female political scientists in this special space they have created for themselves. Peterson continued saying, “It was really touching for me to see this type of fellowship. It makes me hopeful that the unyielding support I have received from my Georgia Southern professors exists in the Political Science departments of other schools and in the broader field of Political Science.”

Attending conferences like this one also allows them to make connections with other universities that could help them in their graduate careers. Georgia Southern Associate Professor, Dr. Jamie Scalera, shared her avid admiration for these students and their work, saying, “Our students did such an outstanding job that they have caught the attention of several graduate programs throughout the country!” She continued saying, “Georgia Southern has become a well-known presence at this conference — both due to the involvement of our faculty and for the excellent presentations from our students.”

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