

Department newsletter, February 2020  
Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

The first part of the 2019-2020 academic year has brought with it some exciting, and some sobering, developments in the life of the Department of Government.

**New faculty members.** We have had an excellent hiring season, with two new faculty members to show for it (and a third, we hope, on the way). I introduce them briefly here; details about them and their scholarship is further below.

[Mashail Malik](#) comes to us from the graduate program in Political Science at Stanford University. She works on ethnic politics, with a regional focus on South Asia. Mashail will be joining us next academic year on a post-doctoral fellowship; she will take up her position as Assistant Professor in the 2021-2022 academic year.

In addition, Mashail Malik's partner, *Carl Gustafson*, will be moving here with her. Carl is a fifth-year graduate student in the Department of Political Science at Stanford University, specializing in American Politics, Formal Theory, and Quantitative Methods. This coming academic year Carl will be finishing his dissertation here; in the next two academic years he will be a post-doctoral fellow here, teaching a course a year.

[Peter Buisseret](#) will leave his position at the Harris School at the University of Chicago to join us. Peter is a formal theorist with a strong interest in political institutions. Peter will be joining us as an Assistant Professor in the coming (2020-2021) academic year.

[Christoph Mikulaschek](#) has been offered a position as an Assistant Professor in the Department. Christoph has been a post-doctoral fellow here for the past two years, teaching popular courses on international law and international organizations. We are optimistic that he will join us for the coming (2020-2021) academic year.

The Department has more possibilities on the hiring front. There is a campus-wide search for four scholars of Ethnic Politics, with a focus on "themes related to Asian-American, Latinx, and/or Islam in America Studies." The multi-disciplinary committee working on this has identified a political scientist in whom they are interested (out of 11 total scholars), and whom we have invited for a campus visit. He is *Taeku Lee* (UC

Berkeley), who specializes in Asian-Americans in politics. The appointment would be in the Department of Government, and this is an excellent opportunity for us. A campus visit is being arranged.

**Developments in the undergraduate program.** The Government concentration at the undergraduate level currently has two “tracks,” on Data Science and Tech Science; it is developing two new ones. These tracks are optional routes through the concentration designed to help students develop a coherent plan of study and to build expertise within specific areas of political science.

The *Data Science* track allows students to acquire advanced skills in quantitative methods, and to learn to apply them to questions of social science and public policy. Students on this track can take their command of statistics to the graduate level and can also learn how to work with survey research, geographical information systems, big data both in general and on the internet and social media.

The *Tech Science* track focuses on public interest technology, an emerging field of study at the intersection of Political Science and Computer Science. Students study the consequences of technological change, and ways to resolve conflicts between technology and society. The track helps motivate and train a new generation to apply technological knowledge and skills to public service in civil society, government, and technology companies.

The two tracks currently in development are in Political Economy and Public Policy. The proposed Political Economy track would focus on the intersection of politics and economics, including the study of inequality, development, globalization, and macroeconomic policy. The planned Public Policy track would encourage students to develop skills in political analysis and ethics, as well as to choose a specific policy focus, such as education or environmental policy. This year we have already added a new undergraduate “Public Policy Practicum” course that combines reading academic research on policymaking with group research projects commissioned by non-profit organizations, state governments, and city governments.

And now, on a less positive and more somber note...

**Followup on sexual harassment in the Department of Government.** On February 3, 2020, four of the women who first came forward with stories about sexual harassment by Jorge Dominguez spoke on campus about their experiences and their views of Harvard’s response. The four are [Terry Karl](#), a former faculty member; [Suzanna Challen](#), a former graduate student; and [Nienke Grossman](#) and [Charna Sherman](#),

former undergraduates; the original story (which quoted the first three) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* is [here](#).

The event, a video of which can be viewed [here](#), gives a vivid sense of the great and lasting damage done by decades of inappropriate behavior by a member of the Department of Government's faculty [*Crimson* article [here](#), *Harvard Magazine* article [here](#)]. The fact that this went on for so long, and that so many of the victims suffered in silence because they felt that they could not rely on the Department for support, is an indictment of the atmosphere then prevailing in the Department.

I cannot speak for the University, or for all of my colleagues. However, everything I have seen, including the very limited information that the University has made public, leads me to the conclusion that the Department bears some responsibility for the persistence of the problem. As has been reported in previous newsletters, and as I report below, we have tried to address this conclusion with a thorough-going review of the climate in the Department. Nonetheless, this does not take away from the debt I feel the Department owes to the women whose lives and careers were affected, sometimes profoundly, by the sexual harassment they experienced.

I for one am deeply sorry that so many women were subjected to sexually inappropriate and degrading behavior by one of our colleagues, and that the Department was unable to provide them with the safe and secure environment necessary for a productive academic experience. I believe that the victims of sexual harassment in the Department of Government deserve our thanks for their courage and persistence in pursuit of justice for themselves and fair treatment for all.

**External Review Committee.** You may also know that the Department's faculty and graduate students were insistent that the University needed to establish an independent committee to review the circumstances in which the sexual harassment problem was permitted to fester. That committee was established in September 2019 – a *Harvard Magazine* article about it is available [here](#) – and it has met with some faculty, graduate students, and staff. Its report is expected at some point in the coming months. I hope that the report will provide the University community with significant and substantive information and recommendations to address our failings in this area.

**Changing the Department's climate.** As mentioned above, and as you know, in the aftermath of the revelations concerning sexual harassment by Jorge Dominguez, we went through a year of serious contemplation and consideration of how best to improve the climate in the Department and create a welcoming, safe environment in which all members of the community can realize their full potential. This effort was led by a

Climate Change Committee, chaired by Steve Levitsky and staffed by faculty, students, and staff. A survey of the climate in the Department helped inform the Committee's work and is available [here](#). The final report of the Committee is available [here](#) and contains both an analysis of what needs to be changed and recommendations about how to start the changes.

We have spent much of this academic year implementing the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee, all of which were adopted by the Department's faculty. Among these I would mention most prominently the appointment of Iain Johnston as our Title IX Liaison, to serve as "an accessible point of contact to whom students, staff, and faculty may turn for information and advice regarding behavior or practices that affect their ability to pursue excellence in teaching and learning regardless of background." More information on the Liaison is [here](#). Iain has been extremely active in meeting with students, staff, and faculty, organizing and helping with seminars and workshops, and giving advice to many members of the Department community.

On other fronts, graduate students now serve on all Department committees where this is permitted by University rules (which preclude their having access to confidential letters of recommendation). We have worked to improve and increase our mentoring of junior faculty and graduate students, and now hold regular town hall meetings for the Department community. We are setting up a new Standing Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, to carry forward the effort begun last year on a continuing basis. I have established a Standing Committee on Targets of Opportunity that will, with the assistance of a new Data Fellow, work to ensure that the Department is able to take advantage of hiring possibilities that present themselves.

I wish you all a healthy and happy spring and summer.

Jeff Frieden