

April 2017

Volume 10, Issue 8

Individual Highlights

Campus Food Pantry:
Update 4

Coming Events 4

President's Higher
Education Community
Service Honor Roll
Member With
Distinction



Carnegie Foundation
Elective Classification in
Community Engagement



Not Politics as Usual

Campus Political Clubs Seek to Promote Civil and Constructive Debate

As with the country in general, politics on campus has become a polarizing topic. The political climate is vibrant – sometimes contentious – but it sparks learning and offers opportunities for students to become engaged.

Harold Levy, a former chancellor of New York City's public schools, remarked that "There's a renaissance of political activism going on, and it exists on every major campus."

issues. The PSA believes that these events are especially necessary with such a politically polarized society.

Kevin Whelan, a Political Science major and President of the Political Science Association, stated that SUNY Cortland "has lessened the effects of political polarization on our campus, it has shown how open we are to other opinions. Our club and others have held a number of events that have allowed students to



NYPIRG members in Albany, lobbying for support of higher education. March 2017

In addition to NYPIRG, there are several campus organizations in which students can learn about issues, find a vehicle for expressing their views, and engage in activities that influence public policy.

The Political Science Association (PSA)

is a non-partisan club that deals with a wide variety of political issues and campus events. It promotes interaction with the campus community by featuring guest speakers and by hosting debates and discussions on current

express their concerns regarding both the campus political atmosphere and the political climate at the national level.

"We don't necessarily focus on any one issue alone, but instead hope to cover a number of them over the course of a semester as events unfold and different issues take priority" said Whelan.

From presidential debate watch parties to forums with politicians to discussions on

Continued on page 2.

Not Politics as Usual continued from page 1



issues, there are many opportunities for students to be politically involved.

The PSA provides opportunities for members to be involved on the state and local levels because political activism is important in supporting our democratic institutions.

When asked for his opinion of the new administration, Whelan cited the president's tendency to push the term "fake news" to describe news outlets that he doesn't like. Whelan commented, "It seems like an attempt to delegitimize certain media outlets while praising others who have published favorable reviews."

Whelan continued, "The media can be thought of as the 'Fourth Branch' of government when it comes to checks and balances, and we even have a specific clause in the First Amendment that protects the media from government influence because they are so essential to our constitutional democracy."

One of President Trump's policies that Whelan found favorable was an early push for Congressional term limits, pointing-out that the topic needs further debate because term limits would leave almost half of Congress without jobs, but he still sees it as step in the right direction for fighting political corruption.

The political Science Association meets Thursdays at 7:00 pm in Sperry Center, room 106.

Stephanie Gentile, a Communications Major, has been active in establishing a **Young Democratic Club** on campus with the intention of creating a comfortable space for young progressive students to come together, discuss issues, and raise funds for democratic causes.

Commenting about the political climate on the SUNY Cortland campus, Gentile said, "a large amount of students are definitely interested, excited, and motivated about being politically active, but do not feel they have an outlet to help make the changes they want to see. We hope that our club can change that."

Gentile continued, "We really hope to become involved with other clubs that support our values. Our main goal is to create a united force of young, progressive people to come together so we can defend our core beliefs."

The club is using social media to spread the word about its focus. The club will organize events that are open to everyone on campus. "We want anyone that wants to fight our fight to fight it with us, united as one," said Gentile.

The Young Democrats Club's main focus is to make sure no fundamental rights are taken away. Gentile further identified women's rights and race relations as issues of concern under the current president and administration.

When asked about the Trump administration's performance so far, Gentile is not encouraged. She identified the immigration ban as unfortunate for our country: "It was done to discriminate against an entire population based on religious ideology. This goes against the principles this country was founded on," she said.

Morgan Goldstein, Professional Writing major and president of the **Republican Club**, said that the Republican club's goal is to start a campus-wide conversation. Sensitive to the polarization of the political climate associated with the recently completed election cycle, Goldstein noted that it is

Continued on page 3.

Not Politics as Usual, continued from page 2.

important to keep the conversation open in a civil and moderated fashion.

Goldstein noted that the club seeks to bring a voice to the Republican/ Conservative sector of the campus population, and show that there is a contemporary Republican Party that does not confine itself to the traditional stereotypes of conservatism.

“At the moment, our biggest concern is educating others on campus on how to engage in civil conversation regarding politics, whether on the sidewalk or in the classroom – more importantly the latter,” Goldstein said. “The second biggest concern would be other groups that think we are going to ‘corrupt’ the campus with the Republican ideal, when our overall goal is the exact opposite: education.”

Goldstein thinks that the political climate on campus is a relatively closed one, but that the Young Americans for Liberty have already done a spectacular job of starting discussion, and the Young Republicans wish to add to that dialog.

When asked about what he saw as the most positive and negative actions so far from the Trump administration, Goldstein said, “It may be biased, but my personal favorite was included in Trump’s executive order regarding crime in the US, which offers law enforcement officers more protection on the legal level.”

Goldstein continued, saying that “The most negative or concerning thing to happen so far is the reinstating of the gag-rule that regulates foreign aid dollars for abortions, as it has the potential to lead to an increase in unsafe abortions in underprivileged areas outside of the US.”

Michael McDonough, a sophomore, and History major, leads the **Young Americans for Liberty** (YAL) club on campus.

McDonough became interested in politics in high school and sought to see what he could do politically once he arrived on



campus. He started by attending the presidential debate parties and joined the efforts to start the Young American’s for Liberty club on the SUNY Cortland campus

McDonough has participated in, and helped with, a number of YAL events and managed the set up and execution of the 22nd congressional district candidates’ interviews on campus.

Responding to the question about the political climate on campus, McDonough commented, “In spite of a hostile political climate, we can still have productive intellectual dialogs. Although it is not as bad here as with some universities (there is no real fear of violence), it is still hard for some students to speak out because they are uncomfortable expressing their views. There is some fear of retaliation, like getting yelled at, receiving lower grades, or other backlash from fellow students.”

McDonough went on to say that right now the Young Americans for Liberty members are focused on general activism and causes such as free speech.

YAL meets every other Wednesday at 6pm in Corey (room tba).

Young Americans for Liberty and the Young Republicans clubs began in fall 2016; Young Democrats began in spring 2017. The Republican and Democratic clubs expect to announce details of their meeting schedules soon.

It appears that a desire for respectful and constructive dialog among all who wish to be politically engaged is a common theme among clubs on campus.



Contact Information

Mary McGuire, Director.
(607) 753-4806 or
Mary.McGuire@cortland.edu

John Suarez: Office of Service Learning Coordinator.
(607) 753-4391 or
John.Suarez@cortland.edu

Cynthia Guy: Community Innovation Program Coordinator.
(607) 753-4271 or
Cynthia.Guy@cortland.edu

Sponsors

The Office of the President
The Office of the Provost
The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
The Cortland Fund
The Cortland College Foundation
The Division of Institutional Advancement
Bringing Theory to Practice

Connect with us!

 /GetInvolvedCortland

 @CortlandICE

 /CortlandICE
cortland.edu/get-involved

Campus Food Pantry

In November, a group of students, staff, faculty, and alumni formed the Campus Food Pantry Team. Their goal is to create a food pantry for food-insecure SUNY Cortland students.

Team members have met with Pierre Gagnon (Executive Director, ASC), and they have emailed with Karen Gallagher (Director, Financial Aid), both of whom are very supportive.

Students in Professors Alexis Blavos' and Page Dobbs' spring 2017 *Community Health* (HLH 203) classes are conducting a Campus Food Pantry needs assessment.

The HLH 203 students have been conducting a lit review, identifying resources that are already available in the community, and surveying students about their needs.

The HLH 203 students are also creating a map of the food pantries in Cortland as part of a resource document that includes bus routes and walking distances to those pantries.

Some Team members attended the "Starting a Campus Pantry" webinar, which was conducted by Clare Cady, Founding Director of the College and University Food Bank Alliance. The Webinar generated the idea of an honor-based Campus Food Pantry, which the Team is now exploring.

Some Team members will join the Cortland Hunger and Homeless Coalition meeting on May 3 at the Cortland County Community Action Program. Representatives from a variety of agencies will share their work. The goal is to improve these projects' effectiveness and efficiency.

Coming Events

All of these events are free and open to the public.

- *Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards Reception*, Thursday, April 27, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. in Brockway Hall's Jacobus Lounge. Contact john.suarez@cortland.edu.
- *How to Spot Fake News and Combat It with CRAAP*. Thursday, April 13, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Cortland Free Library, 32 Church St. Sponsored by the Cortland League of Women Voters. Contact Alison King, President. 607-836-6675.
- *Tickling Giants*. Tuesday, April 25, 7:00 – 9:30 in Old Main's Brown Auditorium.
 - The movie recounts the work of dissidents in Egypt to win freedom of speech. The movie has parallels to current events in the US.
 - The session includes time for discussion.
 - Contact john.suarez@cortland.edu.
- *Service-Learning Corps Interns: Reflections, Revelations, and Recommendations from the Field*.
 - Monday, May 1, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. in the Fireplace Lounge.
 - Wednesday, May 3, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. in Jacobus Lounge (Sandwich Seminar).
 - Wednesday, May 3, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. in the Fireplace Lounge.
 - Contact john.suarez@cortland.edu.