

THE VIEW FROM OLD MILL

The Official Newsletter of the UVM Political Science Department

A Message from the Chair

Another semester has ended and we bid farewell to the amazing class of 2025! The first class to join us after the university returned to in-class learning at the end of the pandemic, these students absolutely flourished at UVM—helping to restart the Political Science Club, winning national awards and fellowships, completing a record number of theses, undertaking intensive internships, and enriching our teaching with their hard work and engagement. Well done!

We remain committed to providing our students with rich and impactful learning experiences. This semester, we continued to offer important public lectures, in particular welcoming the renowned Professor Corey Brettschneider to discuss the power of citizens in the face of over-reaching executives. We also took three students to the Pi Sigma Alpha Student Research Conference in Washington, DC, where they presented their work. And this summer, we are once again doing our summer book club with students, faculty, and alumni!

Speaking of alumni, we are proud to feature three of our former students who have gone on to undertake important work directly tied to the health of American democracy. Zach Despart and Anabel Sosa are journalists who have done important reporting on policies, legislative politics, and law enforcement. Lydia Bates, on the other hand, has been working for one of the most important civic organizations in the country.

We bid farewell this semester to our cherished colleague Bob Taylor, who is retiring after nearly four decades at UVM. Bob has embodied the spirit of excellence in teaching and scholarship that is at the heart of our department. Bob has had a huge impact on students and will be deeply missed.

Please read more in the pages that follow and, as always, do not hesitate to be in touch!

Best,

Peter VonDoepp, Chair
pvondoepp@uvm.edu

CONTENTS

Faculty Feature
PAGE 2

Student Spotlight
PAGE 06

Department News
PAGE 16

Grads Do
Amazing Things!
PAGE 21

Stay Connected
PAGE 24



FACULTY FEATURE

Professor Bob Taylor Retires

This May, the department bids farewell to **Robert Pepperman Taylor**, who joined UVM in the fall of 1986. Bob is a renowned scholar, a passionate and highly effective teacher, dedicated mentor, and adored friend to many. He will be deeply missed, and we wish him well as he begins this new chapter in retirement.

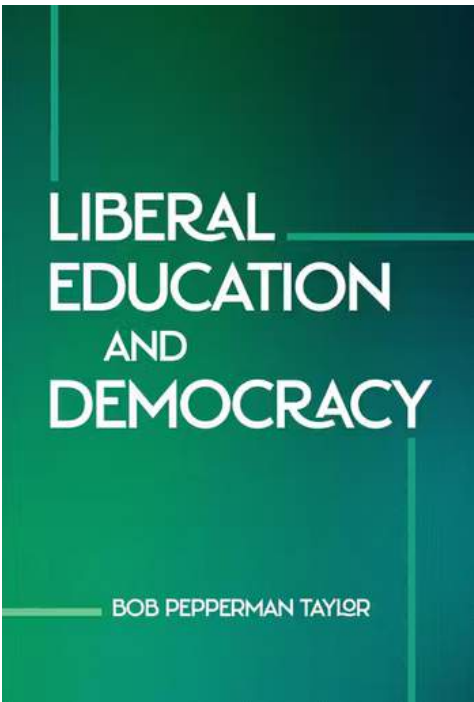
Bob's reputation as an outstanding scholar is richly deserved. Working in the subfield of political theory, he is the author of seven books, the most recent of which, *Liberal Education and Democracy*, was published this year. While the number of books Bob has written is certainly impressive, even more

striking is how well regarded his work is. His 2020 book, *Lessons from Walden: Thoreau and the Crisis of American Democracy*, for example, won the highly prestigious best book award from the American Political Science Association section in American political thought. And this year, his book, *Citizenship and Democratic Doubt: The Legacy of Progressive Thought*, first published in 2004, was released in paperback with a new preface, as well as re-issued online. As recognition of his truly amazing record of scholarship, Bob was named University Scholar in 2016. In 2019, he became the Elliott A. Brown Green and Gold Professor of Law, Politics, and Political Behavior.





Bob is also a legendary teacher who has enriched the lives of his students in innumerable ways. The testimonials on the following page offer a view into the kind of impact he has had on students. In 1995, Bob was awarded the Kroepsch-Maurice Teaching Award, which recognizes faculty members for their excellence in teaching undergraduate courses. Bob also served as the first dean of UVM's Honors College, an institution that embodies the university's commitment to student growth and success. In so doing, Bob established the foundation for the ongoing development of the Honors College, which today is considered one of the best in the country.



Throughout all this, Bob has been a cherished member of our department and dedicated mentor. He has supervised dozens of theses and served as the head of our departmental honors program. In the latter capacity, he established our tradition of travelling with students to the Pi Sigma Alpha student research conference in Washington DC. And he has been an amazing mentor to his junior colleagues, patiently reading and commenting on their work and encouraging them as they ventured on their own scholarly journeys.

Patient, kind, dedicated, and deeply devoted to the pursuit and growth of knowledge, Bob has represented the best of the UVM community of faculty and our department. Congratulations on a brilliant career and warm wishes for the journey forward!



Thank You Professor Taylor!

Some notes from others (from LinkedIn)

“Kudos. A professor who changed my life. Probably taught me more about being a good person than anything else.”

-Scott Pavak UVM '16, '22



**Scott now works as a
Substance Use Policy Analyst**



**Hayley now works as a Senior
Manager at CNN**

“Congratulations, Professor Taylor! I can echo Scott’s sentiment above, Prof Taylor encouraged and contributed to both academic and personal development with his students. He will be missed greatly!”

-Hayley Kinne UVM '16

“Congratulations Prof. Taylor! His engagement with students was enormously important for my development at UVM. Many thanks for everything”!

-Will Gochberg UVM '06



**Will now works
as a technical
climate policy
analyst after
earning his
Ph.D.**

“Congratulations to Professor Taylor! My senior seminar with him was one of my favorite classes at UVM. He hosted our small group at his house for dinner at the end of the semester. Truly a wonderful advisor and teacher.”

-Kristen Hamilton UVM '13



**Kristen now works as an Agreement
Associate II at Mass General Brigham**



Scenes from
Professor Bob
Taylor's
retirement
party on May 1



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Political Science Awards

Nearly 100 political science majors received their diplomas at the May 18 graduation ceremony. It has been our privilege to work with these students, who came to us in the fall of 2021 and are now on their way to promising futures. Congratulations, please keep in touch with us, and best of luck with your next steps!

We also congratulate our graduating seniors who were awarded departmental prizes:

- Elliott A. Brown Award for the Outstanding Senior in Political Science: **Aidan Harty**
- Alan Wertheimer Award for Outstanding Senior Thesis: **Veronica Iredale**
- Warren and Mildred Austin Prize in International Relations: **Veronica Iredale** and **Carolena Bellini**
- Frank M. Bryan Award in American Politics: **Ali Palmer**
- Departmental Award in Comparative Politics: **Zoe Bertsch** and **Leilani Krusoe**
- Departmental Award in Political Theory: **Charlie Reynolds**

We are also very proud that ten of our majors and minors were elected to Phi Beta Kappa this year: **Caroline Forrester, Bailey Getlik, Veronica Iredale, Leilani Krusoe, Lily Kutcher, Ollie Leibovich, Ethan Mello, Ali Palmer, Shelby Raymond, and Charlie Simmons.**



Pi Sigma Alpha Induction Ceremony

On May 16th, the following political science majors were inducted into the Chi Nu Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society:

- **Levon Artemus Applin**
- **Wiley Barzelay**
- **Carolena Bellini**
- **Zoe Margaret Bertsch**
- **Caitlin Britt**
- **Jack Burman**
- **Sebastian D'Amico**
- **Caroline Vail Forrester**
- **Bailey Gabrielle Getlik**
- **Liv Goebel**
- **Stephanie Gould**
- **Aidan Harty**
- **Veronica Grace Iredale**
- **Leilani Mae Krusoe**
- **Gisela Olejniczak**
- **Alexandra Palmer**
- **Ekaterina Raikhovski**
- **Shelby Anne Raymond**
- **R. Charlie Reynolds**
- **Isadora Rosselli**
- **Benna Yates Trachtenberg**
- **Aubrey Weaver**
- **Zane Zupan**



Aidan Harty, winner of the Elliot A. Brown award for outstanding senior in political science



Veronica Iredale, winner of the Alan Wertheimer prize for outstanding senior thesis



Celebrating the
Class of 2025!





Pi Sigma Alpha National Conference

This spring, three seniors attended the Pi Sigma Alpha National Student Research Conference in Washington, D.C. All three attendees, **Charlie Reynolds**, **Sebastian D'Amico**, and **Zoe Bertsch**, have recently defended their senior theses. At the conference, they presented their research on panels gaining presentation experience and learning from their peers in the process. They also received comments from the Ph.D. students moderating their panels and had the chance to discuss their research with peers in similar fields of research.

Senior **Zoe Bertsch** presented her research on the implementation and destruction of communist theory over time, stemming from her interest in the Soviet Union. For Zoe, getting outside eyes on her thesis and presenting her research helped her to prepare for her defense.





Sebastian D'Amico

Senior Sebastian D'Amico spent this past year conducting research on the role of national identity in shaping the political development of Georgia. Along with Political Science, Sebastian studied Russian and spent a semester abroad in Georgia during his junior year. While there, he witnessed the impacts of Russian culture on Georgian communities and developed a keen interest in Georgian politics. The conference gave him the chance to hone the theoretical aspects of his research and think about formulating his defense months in advance. He was able to refine the examples he used to explain complex theoretical frameworks and learned about his fellow panelists' research on nationalism in Ukraine and China.



Charlie Reynolds

Senior Charlie Reynolds spent the past year delving into the ideological and moral arguments for and against slavery that took place at the 1863 Maryland Convention, where slavery was officially outlawed in the state. Through a deep dive into the Bible and natural rights philosophy, he explored the arguments made on both sides during the abolition period. While preparing to present his research at the Pi Sigma Alpha conference, Reynolds received advice from Professor **Alex Zakaras** and his peers that helped refine his final presentation. Ultimately, presenting at the conference helped Reynolds shape his research into an engaging presentation for both political theorists and non-field experts.

UVM Student Completes Boren Scholarship Program

Junior **Alana Bauer** spent the entirety of the 24-25 academic year in Morocco as part of the Boren Scholarship program. Boren Scholarships provide opportunities for American undergraduate students to study less commonly taught languages and subjects in regions critical to U.S. national interests. Alana independently designed a year of study focused on both Traditional Arabic and local Moroccan dialects. She was the only American at the Language Center in Marrakech where she studied, and without an American cohort, she was forced to fully immerse herself in Moroccan language and culture.

Although Alana had visited Morocco two years earlier on a travel scholarship through the State Department, her knowledge of Arabic was limited to the alphabet when she left for her year abroad. Since then, she has advanced to a high-intermediate level of comprehension in traditional Arabic and has gained a near-complete understanding of various local dialects. Her rigorous study schedules included fifteen hours per week of formal Arabic instruction and six hours per week of independent dialect study. In addition, Alana lived exclusively with Arabic

speaking families to maximize her language exposure.

During her stay, Alana came to greatly appreciate Morocco's deeply hospitable and community-based values. Even when she couldn't fully understand conversations in local dialects, she was consistently met with warmth and inclusion. By pushing herself out of her comfort zone, Alana discovered that navigating language barriers while traveling independently forced her to bridge cultural divides. While sometimes uncomfortable, she has grown to believe that this is an experience all English speakers should strive for at some point in their personal education.

Coming back from Morocco, Alana is jumping headfirst into her senior thesis on rural politics in Northern Africa. She is already considering jobs after graduation that could bring her back to the Language Center in Morocco to help other students work through programs like her own. For any younger students thinking about going abroad, Alana recommends pushing oneself to go somewhere where cultural immersion is non-negotiable.



Busy Anderson Wins the Daniel-McCarter Award

The Daniel-McCarter Award, presented by the program in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, honors outstanding scholarly and creative coursework on LGBT/queer topics by undergraduates. This year, co-recipient (and political science major) **Busy Anderson** was recognized for her research on transgender athletes in women's sports. Busy's submission was a paper she wrote in Professor **Leigh Raymond's** Spring 2024 class, "The Politics of Fairness." In this political science seminar, Professor Raymond assigned *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt through which Busy learned about "moral foundations theory". This framework served as the foundation for her research on "fairness" as related to transgender athletes in women's sports.



Busy has been involved in sports her entire life. After playing sports throughout childhood, she transitioned to sports journalism. In her spare time, she acts as Sports Editor for the *Cynic* and plans on spending this summer reporting on the Vermont Green semi-pro soccer team. Learning about fairness in Professor Raymond's class, and being asked to reflect on it, led her to thinking about LGBTQ issues in women's sports. As this is a relatively new topic, Busy faced challenges while conducting research. Thus, she relied on current discourse and policy to look for answers.

We want to recognize Busy for being selected for this award amidst a record applicant year and applaud her for continuing to push for conversations surrounding the rights of all in athletics.



Political Science Students Study Abroad

Brooke Dietrich

Senior Brooke Dietrich has taken French since elementary school, and after deciding to pursue a minor in French along with her political science major, she decided to complete a French immersion semester in a small town outside of Paris. She learned to buy groceries, communicate with her landlord, and ultimately exist in a space where English was not an option. Along with her French classes, Brooke took classes in French politics and European law. Brooke's time in France helped her reframe her understanding of work-life balance and how small-town politics function.



Upon her return, she started an internship with the Burlington City Council. Through this internship she got to apply newfound understandings of small-town politics and quickly caught up with what she missed in Burlington while abroad!

Grace Devlin

For senior Grace Devlin, studying abroad in Accra, Ghana, reshaped her understanding of individualism and collectivism in communities. Before going abroad this past fall, Grace took African Politics with Professor VonDoepp, which helped solidify her interest in Middle Eastern and African politics. During the first weeks of her program, Grace and her cohort visited many local nonprofits. During these rotations, Grace was introduced to “Basics International,” a local nonprofit focused on supporting the education of students in the small fishing village, Chorkor. For the remainder of her stay in Ghana, Grace spent time almost daily at Basics International, even stepping in as a teacher for the young students. Basics

International is run by community members Grace’s age who went through the programs themselves. These co-workers became Grace’s closest friends and through them she got to experience the impact of the national election in Ghana that occurred during her stay. On December 7th, the opposition party won the national election and Grace got to celebrate alongside her new friends. Overall, her internship helped her become immersed in the language and community, and she cannot wait to go back and visit her friends at Basics International.



Wren Tetreault

This past fall, junior Wren Tetreault studied abroad in Tanzania through the School for Field Studies. The focus of the classes was wildlife management, however, her environmental policy class was also highly relevant to her political science major. She learned about the different types of wildlife management areas and the government’s role in conserving wildlife. She learned that to create positive change in smaller rural Tanzanian villages, it is paramount that villagers are not only aware of the projects and policy objectives, but also involved in the planning, execution, and enforcement of said projects. Following her time in Tanzania, Wren spent spring semester studying in Washington, DC and working as a congressional analysis intern for The Sunwater Institute through the “Semester in the City” program.



Tommy Waldman

This spring, junior Thomas Waldman studied abroad in Seville, Spain, through Academic Programs International. An exchange student at the Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Thomas' favorite class was contemporary Spanish politics. In this course he studied Spain's democratic transition, political structure, and current political debates. For their final project, the class engaged in a mock electoral debate during which teams of students represented and spoke on behalf of prominent Spanish political parties. Thomas lived with a local host family in Seville, allowing him to achieve near fluency in Spanish and immerse himself in the strong Andalusian culture. Some of his semester highlights have been Semana Santa, F eria de Abril, tapas culture, and connecting with local students through his university's "intercambio" program, where foreign students are matched up with a local partner.



DEPARTMENT NEWS

Corey Brettschneider delivers Donald R. Brown Lecture

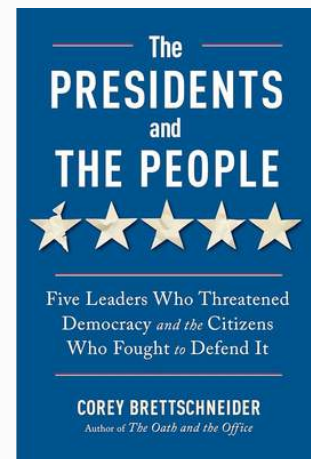
In March, we were honored to host Professor **Corey Brettschneider** for the most recent talk in the Donald R. Brown Lecture Series. Professor Brettschneider holds a J.D. from Stanford Law School, a Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University, and currently teaches both constitutional law and political theory at Brown University. Outside the classroom, he is both a podcaster and a critically acclaimed author. His most recent book, *The Presidents and the People: Five Leaders Who Threatened Democracy and the Citizens Who Fought to Defend It* (2024), follows the release of his earlier book, *The Oath and the Office: A Guide to the Constitution for Future Presidents* (2018).

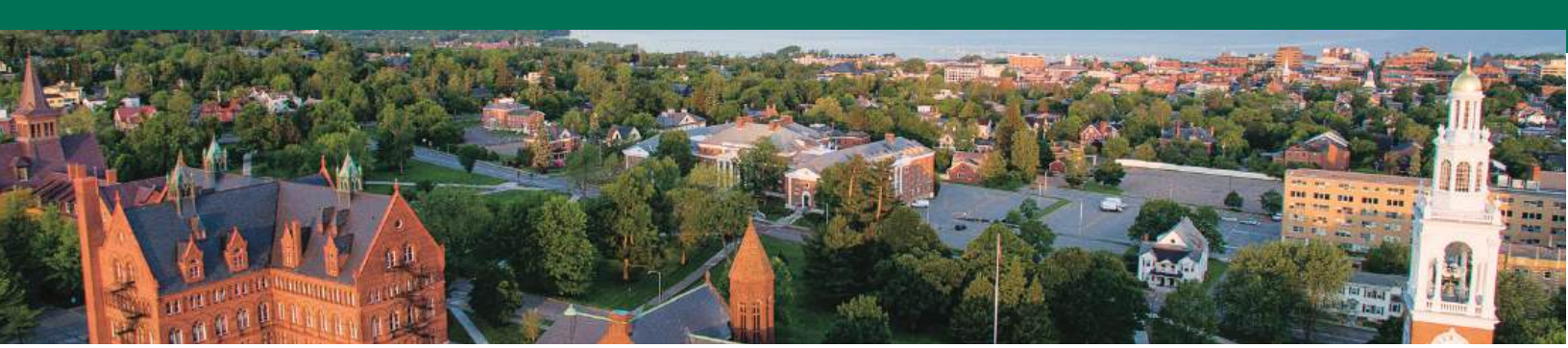
During his talk, Brettschneider urged audience members to put aside their preconceived notions about the checks and balances afforded by America's three different branches of government. The

legislature and judiciary are not equal to the executive and can thus offer only feeble checks on the president. Instead, he argued that the only check to the executive is the people themselves. Through the power to elect leaders, the populace exercises the greatest "check" of all on the federal government. Throughout history, reform has been driven by citizens themselves, not their representatives or the courts.

Brettschneider walked the audience through the heroic cases of Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Daniel Ellsberg, and others who helped instigate change in prior moments of uncertainty.

We would like to express our gratitude to Professor Brettschneider for joining us, and to the supporters of the Donald R. Brown Lecture series for enabling us to host topical speakers who offer new insight into today's political discourse.





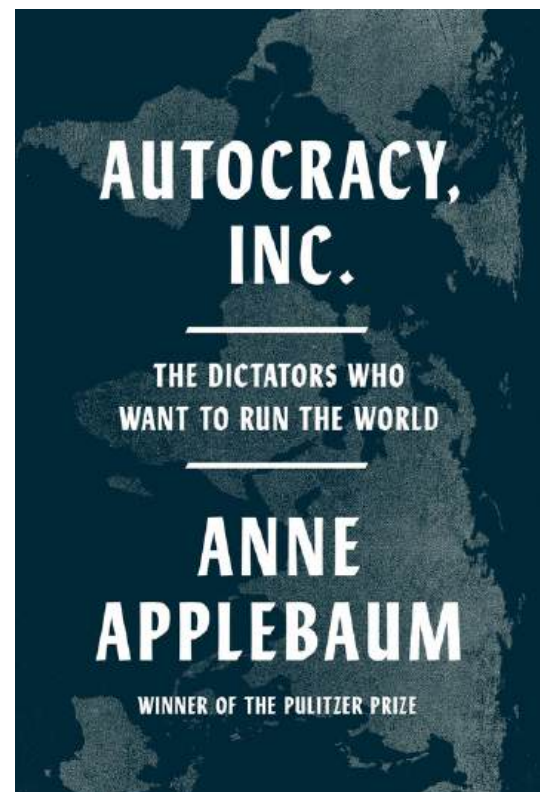
The Summer Book Club is Back (Alumni Welcome)!

We are delighted to announce that we have once again organized a book club that will bring together faculty, students, and alumni! This summer, we will be reading *Autocracy, Inc.* by Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Anne Applebaum**.

This important book describes how autocracies work together to undermine democracy, and how to organize to defeat them. Small groups will meet over pizza at the start of the fall semester to discuss the book. Nearly 100 students have signed up to participate and already have copies, with thanks to the Rosen Lecture Fund!

Any alum of the department who would like to join the book club can request a free book and we will send you a copy. There is a suggested donation of \$50 to the Political Science Department Fund for anyone who is able. We plan to utilize donations to increase paid internship opportunities for our majors.

Here is the link: [UVM Foundation and Alumni Association](#)



“Everyone assumed that in a more open, interconnected world, democracy and liberal ideas would spread to the autocratic states. Nobody imagined that autocracy and illiberalism would spread to the democratic world instead.”

ANNE APPLEBAUM



Drucker Pre-Law Program Continues to Grow

The Department of Political Science serves as the hub for pre-law activities in the College of Arts and Sciences at UVM. With the generous support of POLS alumnus **Richard A. Drucker**, the department organizes alumni panels, sponsors speaker events, advises pre-law students, and supports students seeking law-related internships and entry-level professional opportunities.

This program benefits tremendously from the involvement of our alumni. In November, **Tori Staley** returned to campus to speak with students about her work on asylum cases and in public defense. A pre-law information panel in January featured UVM alumni **Matt Greer** and **Sohier Perry**, who spoke about their paths from UVM to law school and beyond. In March, UVM welcomed **Ben Stockman** to campus. During his visit, a group of pre-law students were invited to have lunch with Ben, to discuss his career and work. Our students benefit from, and greatly appreciate networking with alumni working in legal

fields, and we look forward to continuing our collaborations with alumni in providing these opportunities in the future.

Looking ahead, faculty involved in pre-law advising work in the Political Science Department are cognizant of the changing nature of the law school application process. This year, our students and alumni have been navigating a challenging admissions cycle, as applications to law school have increased dramatically, compared to recent years. We strive to give our students the best programming and advice possible as we move through this period and are encouraged to see that our students are having great success in the application process this year, even given the competitive climate.

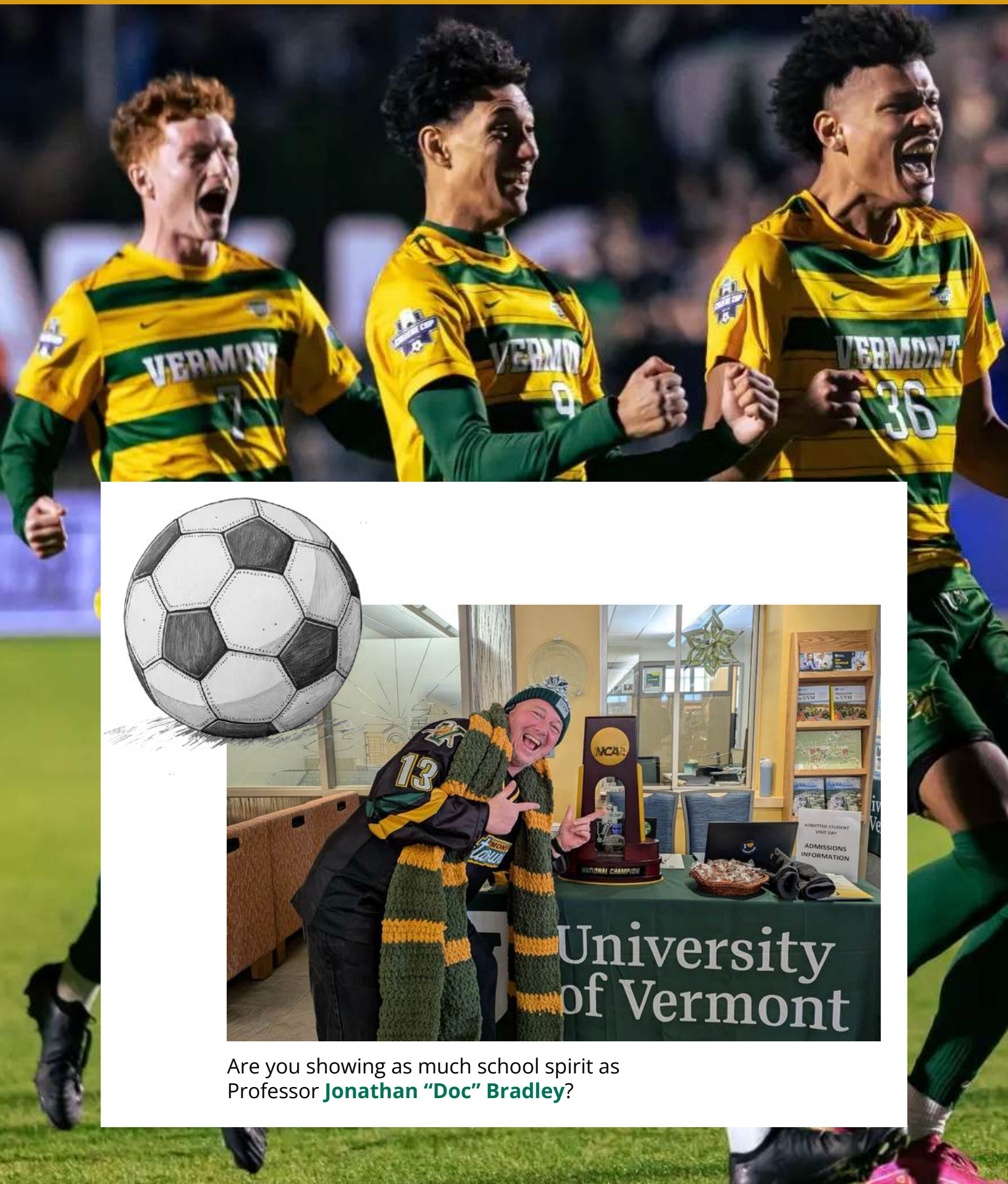
In the coming year, the Drucker Pre-Law Program will focus on an initiative to expand our ability to connect current students and recent alumni to professional opportunities. Every year we have excellent students who are looking for law-related internship experience. We also have graduating pre-law students who seek entry-level professional work in Vermont or elsewhere. Any alumni who have relevant positions to advertise and would like to circulate those announcements to our students and recent alumni are invited to contact Drucker Pre-Law Program Director **Lisa Holmes** (Lisa.M.Holmes@uvm.edu). Thank you to all the UVM alumni who have reached out this past year. Your interest in and support of our current pre-law students is appreciated!



Political Science Club Spring Programing

The Political Science Club has been busy this semester with a schedule packed with programming. Besides their regular meetings, the club hosted several notable events. In February, they hosted a Burlington City Council candidate debate where candidates discussed their policy plans, and voters and students had the chance to interact directly with candidates and inquire about issues. **Professor Christopher Brooks** and Political Science Club President **David Delaney** co-moderated the panel and asked about topics spanning from housing affordability and public safety to improving Burlington's impact on the environment. Candidates **Allie Schachter**, **Jennifer Monroe Zakaras**, and **Kathy Olwell** joined the panel.

More recently, the Political Science Club hosted Vermont **Lieutenant Governor John Rodgers**, for a discussion. During this meeting, David Delaney interviewed the Lieutenant Governor in front of the club and then members had the opportunity to ask questions. Every semester the Political Science Club outdoes itself with new events to enrich the experience for students interested in Political Science. We look forward to seeing what they have in store this coming fall!



Are you showing as much school spirit as Professor **Jonathan “Doc” Bradley**?



GRADS DO AMAZING THINGS!

Lydia Bates (Class of 2014)

I graduated from UVM in 2014 with a major in political science and minors in history and studio art. For the bulk of my four years there, I knew I wanted to find a career in some type of peacebuilding work. Whether that was through a large international NGO, U.S. government position or local non-profit, I wasn't quite sure.

Nonetheless, the political science courses and professors at UVM provided me with a malleable foundation off of which to build the career I have at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) today. However, I think the greatest value-add I learned at UVM was balance.



While I enjoyed the reading, writing and discussion-based content of my political science and history courses, my various art classes in Williams were what kept me grounded. While I was reading John Stuart Mill, attending talks on Russia invading Crimea, and discussing sociopolitical dynamics in the Middle East, the art studio was where I always came back to for respite.

In my 8 years at SPLC, the importance of this balance is regularly reified. My current work focuses primarily on developing research-based resources to provide communities with the information and tools they need to help young people remain resilient against far-right extremist ideologies and manipulation.

Oftentimes, this work is hard to turn off at 5 PM. Without concerted effort, it can seep into other aspects of my personal life. My time at UVM helped me understand that building explicit time to return to a creative outlet and intentionally unplug from the pressures of work and political life is imperative for my overall well-being.

I am an investigative reporter for the *Texas Tribune*, where I cover political power—who wields it, how, and to what ends—in the second-largest state.

UVM does not have a journalism program, which may seem like a drawback for someone who wants to pursue a career in the field. But what I've found is that the single-best preparation for journalism is a broad-based education that equips you with the ability to think critically, problem-solve creatively, and adapt quickly.

A lot of liberal arts majors fit the bill, but for me, someone who has covered government my whole career, political science was the perfect background. This was admittedly a happy accident. I didn't realize I wanted to be a journalist until I wrote for *The Cynic* and interned for the *Burlington Free Press*.

I have reported on government at every level, from selectboards in Vermont to state agencies in Texas to the U.S. Capitol. In every role I've had, I've used the knowledge of political systems I first learned at UVM to translate complex government functions in a way everyday readers can understand. As an investigative reporter, I spend months researching stories, conducting interviews and reviewing source materials, so I can write authoritatively about a particular issue. This work has been demanding and meaningful. Last year our team were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting for our series on the flawed police response to the Uvalde school shooting. We were also awarded the Collier Prize for State Government Accountability, which we accepted at the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

My political science education from UVM has also become more important as we've recently turned more focus toward this fragile moment for our democracy. So many of the conversations I have in communities revolve around repairing trust between residents and officials and reversing declines in civic engagement—the building blocks of republican government.

Zach Despart (Class of 2012)



Anabel Sosa (Class of 2018)



My intellectual curiosity was sparked during my undergraduate years, where I gravitated toward courses in political theory and American politics. Studying under the backdrop of the 2016 election and the onset of the first Trump presidency, I found myself increasingly drawn to questions of governance, power, and policy. The morning after Trump was elected, I recall walking into my first politics class of the day, where my professor attempted to answer our urgent questions around what the country could look like under his administration. These formative experiences not only shaped my academic interests but also laid the foundation for my professional path.

After earning my bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Vermont in 2018, I began my career working for a private investigator, where I edited mitigation videos for clients navigating the criminal justice system—many of whom were directly impacted by the policy shifts of that era. This work deepened my understanding of the tangible effects of political decisions on individual lives.

I later transitioned into journalism, initially covering crime and police in New York City, where I was raised. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic marked a turning point, leading me to pursue graduate studies at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. There, I focused on investigative reporting, which led to a role covering California's statehouse for the *Los Angeles Times*.

Today, I serve as the Senior California Politics Reporter for *SFGATE*, where I report on the state's political landscape and explore how California's policies reverberate across the nation.

STAY CONNECTED

We would love to reconnect with our amazing alumni community. If you are interested in being part of the UVM Political Science alumni network, please complete this form via this link:

[I WANT TO BE INVOLVED](#)



Are you interested in supporting the UVM Political Science Department with a donation? Your gift can support student internship and research experiences, enhance faculty research, help to bring in high-quality speakers, and more.

[GIVE TO UVM
POLITICAL SCIENCE](#)



How about supporting our amazing students in the UVM Political Science Club! Your donation can help to buy food for meetings, support educational trips for the club, and much more!

[SUPPORT THE UVM
POLITICAL SCIENCE CLUB](#)



Please consider joining UVM Connect, our UVM career and networking community. Similar to LinkedIn—but specifically for UVM alums, students, staff and faculty. It's free and easy to join!

[JOIN UVM CONNECT](#)



Follow us on social media