

Political Science at the Mecca

Welcome from the Chair



Dear Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Friends,

As we move into the middle of the semester, I want to take a moment to encourage all of our students, faculty, and staff to stay focused, stay encouraged, and continue pushing forward with purpose. Mid-semester is often a demanding time, but it is also a valuable opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made and recommit ourselves to the goals we set at the start of the term.

March also gives us the opportunity to celebrate Women's History Month, a time to honor the many women whose leadership, scholarship, activism, and public service have shaped politics and democracy across the globe. In Political Science, it is especially important that we continue to study and teach the role of women in politics—not just as a matter of representation, but as a matter of understanding power, participation, and political change. While there has been important progress, the data remind us that there is still much work to do. According to the Pew Research Center, women made up 28.5% of the U.S. House of Representatives, 25% of the U.S. Senate, and 32.7% of state legislatures in 2023—far better than in previous decades, but still far from parity. Pew also reports that 53% of Americans say there are still too few women in high political office in the United States. These numbers reinforce why Women's History Month matters: not simply as a celebration of individual “firsts,” but as a reminder of the importance of sustained study, advocacy, and institutional change in political life.

I also want to celebrate the tremendous success of the 70th Charter Day Celebration of the Gamma Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha. The event was exceptionally well attended and served as a powerful reminder of the strength, legacy, and excellence of our Political Science community. It was a wonderful opportunity to honor the chapter's long history while also celebrating the leadership and accomplishments of our current students. I extend sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to making the event such a meaningful success.

Looking ahead, I am especially excited about our first Political Science Research Day, which will take place during Research Month on April 9, 2026. This event will showcase the outstanding intellectual work of our students and highlight the importance of undergraduate and graduate research in the department. I encourage everyone to come out and support our superb Political Science students as they share their scholarship and ideas.

Finally, we also look forward to celebrating our graduating seniors at our Senior Send-Off on April 30, 2026. This is always a special moment in the life of the department, and I am eager to honor the hard work, growth, and accomplishments of our students as they prepare for the next chapter.

Thank you all for your continued commitment to the Department of Political Science. I wish you a productive and successful second half of the semester.

Lakeyta M. Bonnette Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Department of Political Science
Howard University

Political Science at the Mecca

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT / Tria Stallings

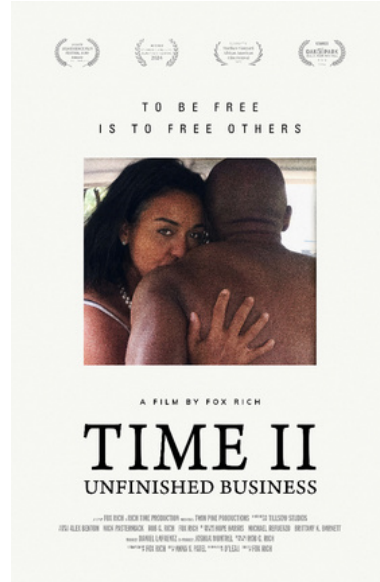


Tria Stallings graduated from Delaware State University with a B. A. in Political Science in 2016 where she served as Miss Delaware State University and a M. A. in Political Science from Howard University in 2018.

Ms. Stallings continues to make great strides in the political arena as she has worked for several members of the Congressional Black Caucus, served on the 2020 Joe Biden for President campaign, was appointed by President Joe Biden to serve as a Political Appointee to the historic Biden-Harris administration, and served on the 2024 Harris-Walz campaign as the National Women's Engagement Deputy Director. Tria recently served in the Office of the Governor of Delaware as the Deputy Director of Boards and Commissions.

She currently serves as Deputy Organizing Director for the Pennsylvania Democratic Party overseeing organizing efforts in the City of Philadelphia to reelect Governor Shapiro and Democrats down the ballot.

*Alumni Spotlight / TIME II: Unfinished Business
A Campaign for Freedom Re-Release*



The film not only documents a family's unwavering commitment to justice but also serves as a call to action through its "Campaign for Freedom," offering audiences tools for advocacy and education. TIME II: Unfinished Business is set to re-release with a self-distribution campaign on Juneteenth, aligning its message of liberation with the historic celebration of Black freedom, and reinforcing Montrel's mission to merge storytelling with social impact.

Political Science at the Mecca

Meet our Assistant Professor, Dr. Zainab Alam



Zainab Alam is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Howard University whose research sits at the intersection of comparative politics, human rights, and digital media and technology, with a regional specialization in South Asia. Broadly, she is interested in how democratic institutions erode and who bears the cost of that erosion. Her work examines digital censorship, gendered political exclusion, and the ways illiberal norms are reproduced through media, populist movements, and state power in Pakistan.

Her forthcoming book, *Unpacking Illiberal Democracy in Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press), develops a new typology of censorship to explain how Pakistan's democratic institutions have been hollowed out over time, and how nationalism is weaponized to foster illiberalism. Using India as a comparative case study, she pays particular attention to the political marginalization of women and minorities in both physical and digital public spaces. This research agenda is reflected in publications appearing in the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* (2025), the *Sage International Encyclopedia of Politics and Gender* (2025), the *Palgrave Handbook of Fashion and Politics* (2024), the *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict* (2021), and *Perspectives on Politics* (2020).

Dr. Alam brings her research on democratic erosion and human rights directly into the classroom, emphasizing a global-to-local connection through courses ranging from South Asian politics to international law. She has also recently been selected as a Subject Matter Expert for the ASCEND-AI Faculty Learning Community at Howard University.

Political Science at the Mecca

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT : Full Professor, Dr. Keesha Middlemass



The Department of Political Science is proud to spotlight Dr. Keesha Middlemass for her continued leadership in public scholarship and research on democracy, justice, and institutional reform.

Dr. Middlemass is serving as a co-lead of a new Brookings series, *Uprooted: Rediscovering America*, an important initiative that centers the voices and lived experiences of communities across the United States. The series highlights how the promise of the American dream is most equitably realized through collective action, resilience, and a fuller understanding of the communities and histories that have too often been overlooked. As part of this work, Dr. Middlemass leads the area of Inclusion and Cultural Politics, which focuses on the narratives, values, and community norms that shape democratic life and influence policy and political conversations. Her leadership in this national initiative reflects her deep commitment to elevating scholarship that is both intellectually rigorous and socially meaningful.

In addition to this exciting public-facing work, Dr. Middlemass also presented at the 57th Annual National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS). Her paper, “Sealing Criminal Records – An Institutional Mess,” examines the implementation of clean slate laws—policies designed to shield, though not erase, criminal records from background checks. Focusing on Virginia’s forthcoming clean slate law, scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2026, Dr. Middlemass’s research investigates how the institutions tasked with implementing these laws may, in practice, create significant barriers to relief for the very individuals these statutes are intended to help. This important work is supported by a grant from the Clean Slate Initiative.

Through both her Brookings leadership and her cutting-edge research, Dr. Middlemass continues to demonstrate the power of political science scholarship to shape public debate, expose institutional inequities, and contribute to more just policy futures. We congratulate Dr. Middlemass on these impressive accomplishments and are proud to celebrate her work in the department.

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Student Opportunities



WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL
DIPLOMATIC ACADEMY

Washington International Diplomatic Academy are accepting applications for their 2026 summer training program. Selected applicants have the opportunity to earn a scholarship! [Learn more...](#)



Bernita Carmichael is looking for dedicated students to intern during her campaign to become the first woman elected to represent Ward 5. This commitment is 4 hours weekly and consists of reaching out to voters, petitioning signatures, and organizing events. [Email](#) to discuss this opportunity!



The Diane Bernstein Fellowship in Child and Youth Advocacy is for emerging or experienced community advocates, undergraduates, recent graduates, or graduate students who wish to address structural racism through public interest advocacy. [Apply here!](#)

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Student Opportunities Continued...



The Future of Democracy Prize, presented by Democracy Defenders Fund, invites young Americans (ages 18–30) to share bold ideas for strengthening democracy in the decades ahead. Selected finalists will receive a \$1,000 honorarium, and winning submissions will be published in a national anthology. Submit your vision for the future of American democracy.

[Apply Here...](#)

Interdisciplinary Migration Studies Institute University of Missouri

Call for Papers
Undergraduate and Graduate Student Conference on Migration

Crossing Borders: Diaspora, Identity, and Belonging in the Digital Age

Conference Dates: April 29-30, 2026

Location: University of Missouri–Columbia

As digital platforms collapse geographic distance while intensifying new forms of surveillance, nationalism, and exclusion, diasporic subjects navigate complex landscapes of memory, language, race, gender, and political belonging. This conference seeks papers and/or poster presentations that examine how identities are constructed, performed, contested, and reimagined transnationally. We welcome interdisciplinary approaches from the humanities, social sciences, arts, and related fields, and encourage work that engages critical frameworks such as postcolonial theory, migration studies, media studies, queer and feminist theory, and critical race studies. By centering student scholarship, this conference aims to foster dialogue about the evolving meanings of home, nation, and community in an increasingly digitized and interconnected world.

The 21st century has been defined by large-scale global change, shaped by migration, exile, border reconfigurations, political upheaval, and shifting power dynamics—all of which have profoundly shaped debates surrounding human rights, identity, culture, and belonging. Questions related to these key themes are relevant not only to international or global studies but also to fields such as linguistics, medicine, environmental sciences, literary studies, cultural studies, queer studies, public health, and many others. As migration exceeds traditional territorial frameworks and is deeply woven through many disciplines, this IMSI Student Conference on Migration Studies invites undergraduate and graduate students from diverse fields of study to the University of Missouri–Columbia to discuss urgent issues surrounding borders, mobility, and migration, and we note that presentations are not limited to discourse on digital media, as “digital” here designates the aforementioned historical period rather than a specific technological apparatus. We welcome discussions from diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives, with possible topics including but not limited to:

- Artificial Intelligence and Immigration
- Artificial Intelligence and Technologies of Surveillance
- Climate Migration and Environmental Displacement



- Cultural Representations of Migration in Film, Literature, and the Arts
- Diasporic Identities and Transnationalism
- Labor Migration, Economic Precarity, and Social Mobility
- Queer Migrations and Forced Exile
- Migration and Border Securitization in the Digital Age
- Migration and Education: Access, Barriers, and Policies
- Migration and Language: Linguistic Adaptation, Loss, and Preservation
- Migration and Public Health: Access, Exclusion, and Disparities
- Migration and Security: Terrorism, Xenophobia, and Radical Discourses
- Migration and Social Movements: Activism, Advocacy, and Resistance
- Migration Governance, Policies, and International Law
- Migration Narratives in Literature, Media, and the Arts
- (Post)Colonial Studies: Culture, Language and Mobility
- Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality in Migration Discourses
- Refugee Crises and Humanitarian Responses
- Statelessness and the Legal Limbo of Undocumented Migrants

Submission Information & Guidelines

- Only current undergraduate and graduate university students are eligible to submit their abstracts for consideration.
- Abstracts should be a maximum of 300 words.
- Academic bios should be no more than 100 words.
- Accepted submissions should be individual papers. Collaborative papers are welcome, but only with fellow undergraduate students and/or graduate students.
- We welcome poster presentations, especially from undergraduate students.
- Following the conference, awards will be given to the top presentations.

Submission Deadline: March 20, 2026

Submit your abstract via Qualtrics:

https://missouri.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8GMjRaD8Laf6fQK

For inquiries, please contact: imsistudentconference@gmail.com or IMSI's Associate Director, Dr. Don Joseph (don.joseph@missouri.edu)

EVERSHEDS
SUTHERLAND

2026 ES Scholars Program

Program Highlights

The ES Scholars Program is offered at no cost to participants and includes:

- Introductory courses in contracts, legal writing and blue booking taught by an Emory University School of Law professor;
- Industry and career path insight through the perspectives of our attorneys and guest speakers;
- Panel discussions including topics such as:
 - Practical advice on navigating law school from law school administrators
 - A practical approach to assignments, tackling reading, and studying strategies
 - Insight into large law firm recruitment processes
 - Tips on resume preparation
 - Financing law school and legal career planning
 - The importance of networking
- A professional networking community through the ES Scholars alum network!

A Proven Track Record

Since its inception, the ES Scholars Program has helped over 450 aspiring law students build the foundational skills essential for success in law school and has helped inform our ES Scholars about what to expect once they start practicing.

Accolades

In 2025, the American Bar Association Council for DEI awarded us the ABA Alexander Legal Ambassador Award, an acknowledgment of our commitment to increasing diversity in the legal profession by expanding opportunities and supporting the success of underrepresented

students. In 2017, the program received the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) George B. Vashon Innovator Award for excellence in innovative practices and dedication to assisting diverse attorneys.

Questions? Email us at esscholars@eversheds-sutherland.com.

Application & Program Dates

Early decision deadline: Friday, April 17th, 2026
Final application deadline: Friday, May 1st, 2026
Virtual Sessions: June 1st – June 12th, 2026
In-person Sessions: June 15th – 18th, 2026



Apply now!

Apply 



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[Apply Here...](#)

[Apply Here...](#)

Political Science at the Mecca

Upcoming Events



DEPT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE PRESENTS
RESEARCH DAY 2026

Please join us for a department-wide showcase and celebration of research
Oral Presentations-Poster Sessions-Networking
All Presenters RSVP by April 7, 2026

THURSDAY | APRIL 9, 2026

DOUGLASS HALL, ROOM 221
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROVIDED

CONTACT US ☎ 202-806-6256 ✉ polschair@howard.edu



Political Science
Class of 2026
**Senior
Sendoff**

Time to Celebrate!
Join us for a
Buffet Luncheon
Recognitions
and More!

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026
12:00 - 2:00 PM
DOUGLASS HALL, ROOM 221
ATTIRE: CASUAL

HOSTED BY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

RSVP

Congratulations!!!



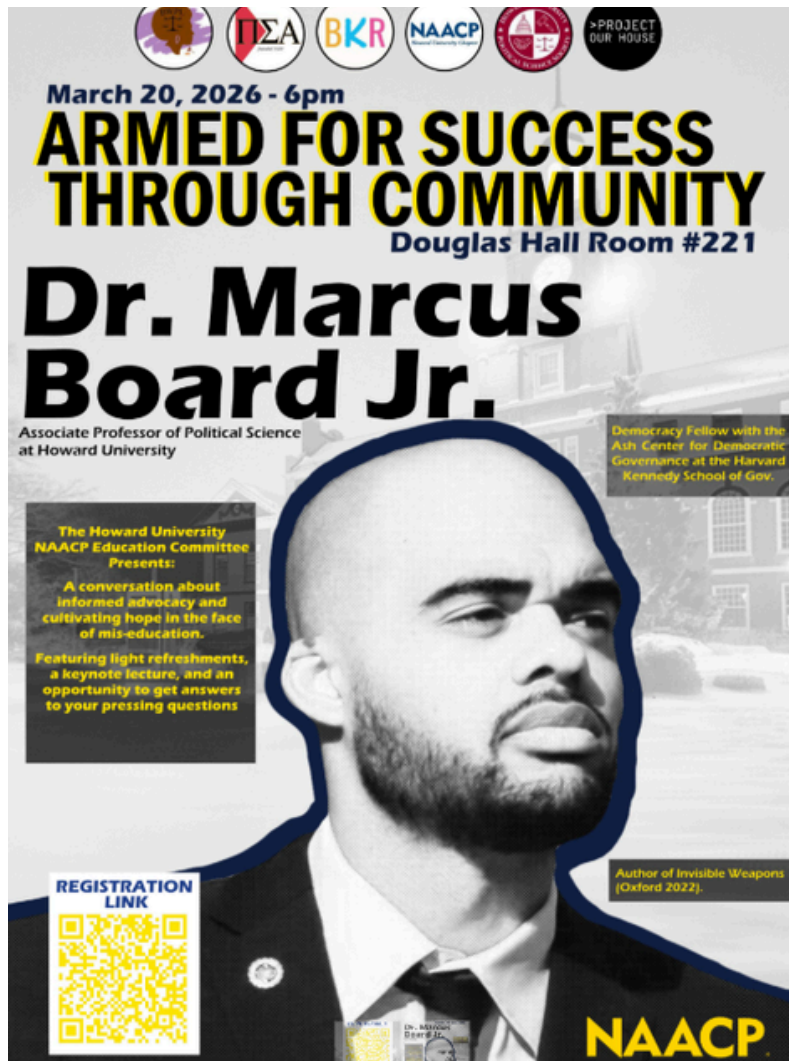
Dr. Keneshia Grant, 2026 Excellence in Truth and Service Award recipient of the Colleagues Mentoring Colleagues Award



Dr. Marcus Board, 2026 Excellence in Truth and Service Award recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award

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Faculty Outreach



The Howard University NAACP Education Committee hosted a conversation with Dr. Marcus Board Jr. and Pi Sigma Alpha about informed advocacy and cultivated hope in the face of mis-education. This event created an open space for students to discuss their perspectives on advocacy and civic awareness with Dr. Board. We want to thank everyone who contributed and participated in this event. It was such an amazing turnout!



Dr. Norman B. Sandridge discussed the question “Can we truly lead without the Humanities?” on a podcast at McGill University. [Listen here...](#)



Read the latest op-ed from Dr. Clarence Lusane entitled “[Another Thing Trump and Epstein Share: White Supremacy.](#)”

Political Science at the Mecca

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: HOWARD POLITICAL SCIENCE AT
NCOBPS 2026



The Department of Political Science proudly congratulates *Dr. Elsie Scott*, Director of the Ronald W. Walters Leadership & Public Policy Center and member of our Political Science faculty, along with our outstanding undergraduate students, for representing Howard University at the 57th Annual National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) held at the University of Maryland, College Park, March 18–21, 2026.

We are especially proud of the Howard panel, “Where Do We Go From Here: Perspectives from the Class of 2026,” which brought together student voices to thoughtfully reflect on the state of American democracy, civic engagement, and the future of political participation through the lens of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s final book. The panel featured Moderator Katia Papailler, Howard University sophomore; Monet Swann, Howard University senior, presenting “Prioritizing Justice over Satisfaction and Community Over Divide”; and Jayda Gray, Howard University senior, presenting “The Precipice of American Democracy: Strengthening Through Civics Education, Community Power, and Intentional Joy.” The panel also benefited from the engagement of Discussant Willie J. White III.

This panel reflected the very best of Howard Political Science: intellectually engaged students, thoughtful public scholarship, and a commitment to examining the pressing political questions of our time. We commend Dr. Scott for her continued leadership and mentorship, and we celebrate our students for representing the department with excellence, insight, and Bison pride. Their participation reminds us that the future of Black politics and democratic leadership is bright.

Political Science at the Mecca

*DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT: HOWARD POLITICAL SCIENCE AT NCOBPS
2026 Continued...*



The Department of Political Science proudly congratulates our outstanding faculty, students and alumni for representing Howard University at the 57th Annual National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) held at the University of Maryland, College Park, March 18–21, 2026.

Howard University has long held a distinguished and enduring place in the history of NCOBPS, an organization that remains one of the most important intellectual and professional homes for scholars of Black politics, public policy, race, and governance. That legacy continues today through the leadership, scholarship, and mentorship of Howard faculty and alumni who have helped shape both the organization and the discipline of political science. We are especially proud that this year's NCOBPS 43rd President, Dr. Pearl K. Dowe, is a Howard University Political Science alumna, a powerful reminder of Howard's continuing influence on the national and global study of Black politics and political life.

This year's conference once again highlighted the depth of Howard's contribution to the field through faculty research, student participation, and intellectual engagement across a wide range of panels and conversations. Our department's presence at NCOBPS reflects the department's longstanding commitment to producing scholarship that not only advances knowledge, but also speaks directly to the political realities and futures of Black communities across the diaspora.

Political Science at the Mecca

Celebrating 70 Years of Excellence: Gamma Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha



The Department of Political Science was proud to celebrate the 70th Charter Day Anniversary of the Gamma Chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, a milestone that highlighted the rich legacy, intellectual tradition, and enduring excellence of our honor society. The celebration drew an outstanding turnout from students, faculty, alumni, and supporters, making the event a meaningful reflection of the strength and vibrancy of our Political Science community.

A special highlight of the evening was the participation of The Honorable Marie C. Johns, a distinguished business and civic leader, former Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, and longtime Howard University trustee and honorary degree recipient. Ms. Johns was inducted as a member of Pi Sigma Alpha alongside our student inductees, adding even greater significance to this historic occasion. Her presence and participation served as a powerful reminder of the leadership, service, and excellence that Pi Sigma Alpha seeks to cultivate in its members and that Howard University continues to produce.

The anniversary celebration not only honored the chapter's long-standing history but also celebrated the remarkable achievements and promise of our current student inductees. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to making the event such a memorable and successful commemoration.
