

# The Declaration

FALL 2016

## OU PUBLIC AFFAIRS & ADMINISTRATION SENIOR RECALLS WHITE HOUSE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

by *Chelsea Childs* | September 30, 2016

In spring 2016, Alexis Apodaca, a senior double-majoring in human relations and public affairs & administration, was selected for one of the most competitive internship opportunities in the country—the White House Internship Program.

This program requires students to live in Washington D.C. for at least 13 weeks— 18 in Apodaca's case—and is not for those lacking motivation. According to a White House blog post by Macon Phillips, former Director of Digital Strategy, students supplement their learning experience by attending a weekly lecture series hosted by White House staff, as well as participate in White House social events and community service projects.



APODACA POSES ON WHITE HOUSE GROUNDS

Apodaca served as an intern in the White House Personnel sub-office of the Office of Management and Administration from January 11, 2016 to May 20, 2016. Apodaca's position was laid within the vital tracks of people keeping the White House running on a daily basis. She explained that White House Personnel focus on supporting staff members, and handle everything from employee onboarding and off-boarding, to the management of multiple professional development programs, to special events like Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day.

"I would have to say that my favorite part was the work itself—knowing that I was able to be the first person a new White House staffer meet," Apodaca said.

Apodaca said it was gratifying to take part in facilitating a leadership development event that served hundreds of White House staff members, and mentioned that the hardest part of her position was adjusting to the speed and scope of her work.

"The pace of the White House and the large responsibility that interns are given can create some challenges in adjusting to the work environment, but it created a great opportunity for me to learn and grow," Apodaca said.

As far as memories, Apodaca won't be short of them. From meeting the President's family dogs, Sunny and Bo, to getting tickets to the White House Easter Egg Roll for her family just before the event started, there is not a moment she will not cherish.

"It was such a special experience to see [my family] light up as they stepped onto the South Lawn, and to be there when they saw the President in person for the first time," Apodaca said.



APODACA SITS WITH PRESIDENTIAL PETS, SUNNY (L) AND BO (R).

When asked about her plans after graduation, Apodaca said that before applying for this internship, she was under the impression that being successful in government meant one had to eventually reach expert status in an area of policy. But now, with her final semester just around the corner, she has changed her mind.

"After not only doing work that I love at the White House, but also seeing others with a similar background as me being successful and fulfilled, I realized that my previous assumption was wrong," Apodaca said. "There is a real need in government for people with my interests and skills, and I am hoping to move back to Washington, D.C. once I graduate to go back to the federal government."

Apodaca expressed her love for her country's capitol after adding up the eleven months of her college career spent there.

"I was fortunate enough to spend last summer there working as a Volunteer Services Intern at the American Red Cross National Headquarters, and got to stay at the White House this summer as an Associate," Apodaca said. "I am counting the days until I can move back!"

# VENTURING OUTSIDE OF THE UNIVERSITY BOX: MOBILE

by *Chelsea Childs* | October 12, 2016

There is no doubt this election year has sparked the interest of first-time voters across the country, and with The University of Oklahoma pushing towards a Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, there has never been a better time for a mobile survey lab.

Three assistant political science professors, Dr. Mackenzie Israel-Trummel, Dr. Ana Bracic, and Dr. Allyson Shortle, have developed OU's first mobile survey lab. The Community Engagement Experience Lab (CEEL) is a new data-collecting resource for the Department of Political Science, and is designed to bring students closer to their community.

"The mission of universities is to do research and expand knowledge, and this allows for original data collection in a way that previously was much more expensive," Dr. Israel-Trummel said. "[The lab] is a way for the university to collect new data, do research, and learn new things about how citizens think about government and the world around them."

CEEL utilizes 40 Asus tablets with offline survey software that's easy for students to use in the field, and as of this fall, is accompanied by an exit polling course, which filled up with 53 students from a variety of majors within the first week of its debut.

"People are still asking me if they can enroll," Dr. Bracic said.

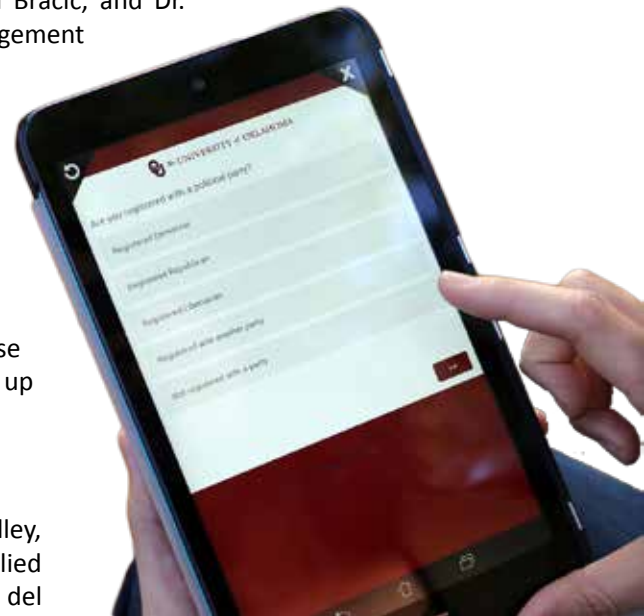
The tablets have already been put to use as the professors partnered with Dr. Joy Pendley, a political science professor of practice and research scientist at the Center for Applied Social Research. Dr. Pendley's students surveyed a community Latino festival, El Dia del Nino, in south Oklahoma City about disaster preparedness in OKC and recent changes in policy.

"With other methods, say a survey online, you're not going to capture certain parts of the population," Dr. Bracic said. "People will answer their door unlike not answering your question on the internet. When students show up, they're wearing OU t-shirts and saying, 'We're doing a survey for OU,' and people are excited to see OU students actually engaging in their community."

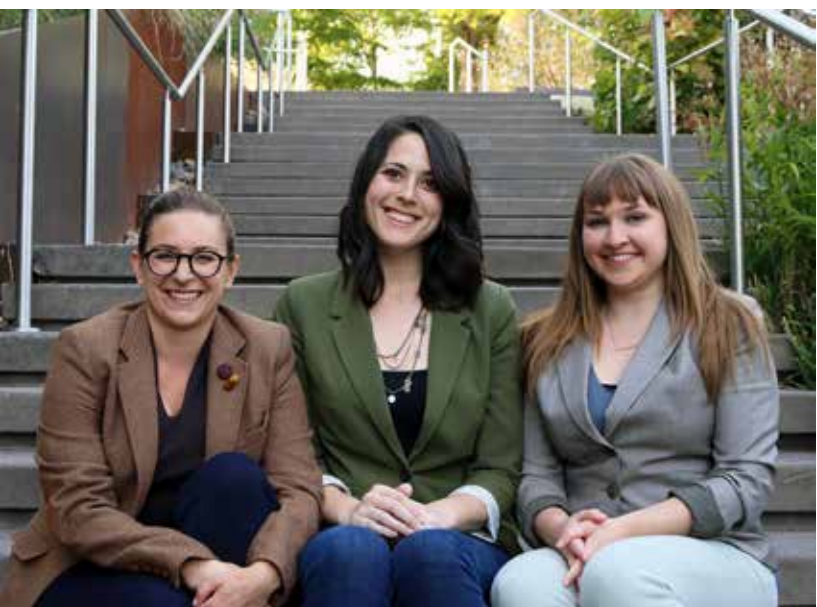
According to Dr. Shortle, a Latina woman at the festival questioned Dr. Pendley about the possibility of her high school daughter applying to OU.

"We care about research that can have a positive impact on our community," Dr. Shortle said.

"And that particularly applies to South OKC where OU doesn't go very often," Dr. Israel-Trummel said. "It's a population with lower college attendance, and more recent immigration. So we're really building a positive image of OU students."



ASUS TABLET SHOWING SURVEY SOFTWARE



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: DR. ANA BRACIC, DR. ALLYSSON SHORTLE, & DR. MACKENZIE ISRAEL-TRUMMEL

The professors say one of their biggest goals is to build a student respondent pool, as well as accumulate people from the community to participate in exit polling and other research projects in the future. However, the underlying focus will always be giving students formal training for conducting research with human subjects.

"They will get a certification that shows they have practical experience in actually running research," Dr. Bracic said.

When it comes to the job market, the professors agree that their students have a leg up because, on top of learning appropriate conduct for the field, students are included in the process of creating the survey questions—which leads to their second project.

Dr. Israel-Trummel said their students will be exit polling and interviewing first-time voters about their histories.

This project is a collaborative effort with the Carl Albert Congressional Research Center in order to collect qualitative voting data that will be reviewed as freshman students reach their senior year at OU—the next presidential election.

# SURVEY LAB SENDS STUDENTS INTO THE COMMUNITY

However, there are a few concerns the professors share. One is making sure students follow their strict training about federal voting laws while exit polling. Restrictions such as maintaining distance from the voting location or incorrectly identifying themselves could result in disgruntled voters—and a visit from the sheriff.

The other concern lies within the mobile tablets.

“We’ve spent so many hours in the lab perfecting how we use these tablets, so that when we get into the field they’re working seamlessly,” Dr. Shortle said.

Dr. Shortle said that software updates are constantly needed. And it doesn’t help that the online survey software is slightly different in function compared to its offline mobile app.

“That’s like any field research,” Dr. Shortle said. “Stuff goes wrong all the time, and you have to adapt and be prepared.”

The professors say their students will be equipped with paper surveys and visits from a charging car driven by volunteers who will provide lunch and water for the exit pollers. These students will be located at eight precincts throughout OKC on election day.

All in all, the professors are excited to see students go outside of their university comfort zone and simultaneously bring new access to information to their community.



## CONNECT WITH CEEL



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## All-Star Alumni

It is with great pride that the Department of Political Science announces that Class of '11 M.P.A. Alumni, Matthew Stiner officially took his post as Director of Veteran and Military Affairs in the White House in February of this year. As the federal liaison for our men and women who have served, we wish him and his family the very best.



STINER WALKS TO THE RIGHT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA

## DR. JOE RIPBERGER JOINS PSC AS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH FOR CRCM



After receiving his Ph.D. in Political Science at OU in 2012, Dr. Joe Ripberger became a Postdoctoral Research Associate and then a Research Scientist at the Cooperative Institute for Mesoscale Meteorological Studies. At the institute, he worked with the National Severe Storms Laboratory and the National Weather Service on severe weather policy.

Now, Dr. Ripberger is back full-time on OU's south campus. His research is focused on risk and public policy with emphasis on weather, climate, and water policy. He has a number of projects that include climate variability and human adaptation in Oklahoma, social responses to changes in complex river systems, and a systematic assessment of the watch, warning, and advisory system in the U.S.

Dr. Ripberger was brought on our faculty team to teach research methods, public policy, and graduate courses focused on the analysis of political and administrative data.

## NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IS A NEW OPTION AT OU TULSA

The Nonprofit Management Graduate Certificate is a 15-hour credential designed to give Tulsa graduate students the opportunity to earn nonprofit management experience without being required to complete an entire master program.

With working adults in mind, this program is comprised of courses offered on nights and weekends. From management to fundraising, law and policy, this program is packed with nonprofit know-how. Practitioner-taught courses in workshop format provide engaging hands-on learning that out-performs the lull of traditional lecture formats.

While this certificate can stand on its own, students are not allowed to be enrolled in a separate graduate program at the time they pursue the certificate. They must apply for the certificate track and meet the standards of the Graduate College. If needed, the hours earned can be applied to our Master in Public Administration degree or up to 12 credit hours can be applied to other programs within the College of Arts & Sciences.

To find out more, visit [mpa.ou.edu](http://mpa.ou.edu)

## INTRODUCING JENNIE HILL, MSW: THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



With a Master in Social Work and two previous Executive Director positions at nonprofits advocating for children, Jennie Hill is passionate about student well-being and the nonprofit sector.

Since her arrival this fall, Hill has taken part in the creation of an on-campus student food pantry after a study showed that at least 17 percent of undergraduate students find themselves food insecure. This program is set to be in full swing by spring 2017, and Hill says that campus and community volunteers are always welcome.

Hill's other responsibilities lie within the bounds of the Nonprofit Program, which has been housed in the PSC department since 2015. Hill's goals are to bring more nonprofit internship opportunities to students through a reboot of student organizations--such as the Nonprofit Student Leadership Association--and coordinate an annual internship fair for the spring.

Hill also says she is planning a Nonprofit Lunch & Learn, where she will invite professionals to participate in workshops taught by OU faculty. These workshops are focused the nonprofit sector, fundraising, and how to go about hiring interns.

**To learn more and sign up for the Nonprofit Lunch & Learn or to sign up as a volunteer for the OU Food Pantry, please email Jennie Hill at [jennie.hill@ou.edu](mailto:jennie.hill@ou.edu)**

# R&R: RECENTLY RETIRED

## Dr. Gary Copeland

In grateful recognition of Professor Copeland's 36 years of dedicated service to the University of Oklahoma (1980-2016).

A front-runner in the field of American Politics, Dr. Gary Copeland inspired his colleagues and students through his dedication to research, education, and service. A leader prepared for the challenges of administration, he was director of the Carl Albert Congressional Research Center from 2000 to 2005. In various years, he was president of the Southwestern Social Science Association, the Southwestern Political Science Association, and even the Norman Public School Board. He was a University of Oklahoma Student Association Outstanding Faculty Member in 2001 and a Fulbright Scholar in 2008. With over 50 professionally presented papers, 40 published articles and book chapters, along with eight books, he is most certainly one of the most diligent individuals in his field. His colleagues would attest to his genuine laughter and approachable character, and those he taught will never forget his devotion to mentorship.



## Dr. Don Maletz

In grateful recognition of Professor Maletz's 37 years of dedicated service to the University of Oklahoma (1979-2016).

Empowering as department chair from 1988 to 1994 and assiduous as a political science faculty member thereafter, Dr. Don Maletz illuminated the minds of his colleagues and students through his research, teaching, and service. An accomplished political theorist, he was a distinguished Fulbright Scholar before landing at the University of Oklahoma, where he was consistently recognized as an outstanding educator. Within the Department of Political Science, he published exceptional works on Tocqueville's ethical and political philosophy, all of which were recognized in leading journals. He was a man of service who influenced many committees throughout the university, department, and community. His most acclaimed role was his seat on the Oklahoma State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights from 1985 to 2009. Those who interacted with him would attest to his politeness, stoicism, honesty, and honorable character as a colleague and a human being.





The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA®  
Department of Political Science  
455 W. Lindsey St., Room 205  
Norman, OK 73019-2001  
122-724300

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# NEED AN INTERN?

We might know a few people...

HIRE  
INTERN!  
~

Email us today & find out more  
about hiring one of our students!

Jeff Alexander  
Graduate Programs Coordinator  
[jjalexander@ou.edu](mailto:jjalexander@ou.edu)

Jamie Vaughn  
Undergraduate Academic Counselor  
[jvaughn@ou.edu](mailto:jvaughn@ou.edu)