Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. spoke at Steele Main as part of Deliberation Day. His talk was on the environment, with an emphasis on rivers.

We’ve added two more faculty members to the department! Dr. Clarissa Confer, who is currently an adjunct here, and Dr. Craig Smith, from Missouri State.

Dr. Derrick McKisick has been hired to teach at Fairfield University. We are proud of his accomplishments, and will miss him dearly.

Dr. James Wood has officially announced his retirement. His last class will be POS 229 over the summer. He is another person who will be dearly missed. For more information about his career and plans, check out the article inside.

In June and July, Dr. Mohamed Yamba will be delivering two papers. The first will be at the All Bank Conference on Developing Economics in Cape Town, South Africa and will be on the “Sociocultural Dimension of HIV Prevention in Africa”. The second, “Contemporary European Attitudes Toward Immigrants: Popular Sentiment or Mazarinades” will be delivered at New Europe at the Crossroads in Munich, Germany.

Dr. Melanie Blumberg will be presenting on the Deliberative Polling Initiative at the American Democracy Project annual meeting in June, and will be discussing her role as State CAP Chair at the APSCUF Leadership Institute.

Dr. Paul Crawford has been very busy; he chaired a session at "Remembering the Crusades: Myth, Image and Identity," a crusade-related conference hosted by the Center for Medieval Studies at Fordham University in March. He also had two articles come out, "The Military Orders and the Last Decade of the Thirteenth Century," in Annual Review [Epeteris] of the Cyprus Research Centre 33 (2007) and "The Trial of the Templars and the University of Paris" published in The Military Orders: History & Heritage.

Dr. Andrae Marak will be going to Laguna Niguel to continue his research on Tohono O’odham women and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the early twentieth century.

Cindy Lynn Speer’s first fantasy novel, Blue Moon, finally hit the shelves this February, and can be found on Amazon or at the college bookstore.
Dr. James Wood is retiring after 23 years at California University. He started his career at Cal as an adjunct professor in the fall of 1985. In 1986 he started full time with the Department of Social Science, which included Political Science, Anthropology and Sociology. Dr. Wood achieved tenure in 1990 and served as the Department of Social Science chair for 7 and a half years. In 2000, the Political Science Department merged with the History Department, and Dr. Wood has been a part of it ever since.

Dr. Laura Tuennerman, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts describes the “legendary Jim Wood” as being one of her most significant mentors. She says that he was always supportive of her in a “low-key way”, and that her fondest memory of Dr. Wood was when he won the Presidential Gala Award for Teaching— “with departmental coaching.” Dr. Joseph Heim, Professor of Political Science, recalled some funny stories about Dr. Wood. “He was teaching a lesson about John Locke ‘fencing off Royal authority’,” says Dr. Heim, “and some of his students asked where John Locke’s fence was located.” Dr. Andre Marak, Department Chair of History and Political Science describes Dr. Wood as the “go-to guy when there’s issues,” and that he’ll miss having the opportunity to “lean on” Dr. Wood when he’s gone. He recalls Dr. Wood taking him out for a beer after his interview with the university and taking him to a Pirates game after his hiring.

Dr. Marak goes on to describe a trip he and Dr. Wood took to Boston to present a paper on the impact of blogs on elections. “We went to the two most important places in Boston—Fenway (Park) and Harvard. We went vacation book buying at Harvard.” Dr. Sean Madden, California University Provost, “can’t envision this place without (Dr. Wood). I never thought he’d retire.” He goes on to say, “While he may have played a role in my hiring, I know I’m playing a major role in his retirement.” Dr. Madden claims that due to “inexplicable travel situations, I’ve spent more nights in hotels with that man than anyone…” other than his wife—who is a great lady and is way better than he deserves.” He goes on to say that during his interview with the university, Dr. Wood’s most pressing question to him was about baseball. “He is one of the brightest on his feet thinkers I know and has a no-holds-barred approach to engage his students.”

Dr. Wood plans on enjoying some peace and quiet for awhile after retiring, but does have plans. In May he is traveling to the Gulf Coast. In June he will be going to the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon, and is looking forward to the “biggie”, as he puts it, going to Hawaii. Dr. Wood is also a freelance writer with articles appearing in various publications such as Travel and Leisure. He plans to continue writing during his retirement. If there is a common idea shared by his students and colleagues about Dr. Jim Wood, it’s that he truly is a mentor, a man who “knows his stuff”, and an all-around great person. The California University community will miss Dr. Wood, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Recently, Cal U students have been inspired to learn the arts of competition and classical fencing. This semester the new fencing club held two well attended events. In February, the Society for Creative Anachronism conducted a heavy weapons and fencing demonstration, bringing books, art, weapons. Since, several students have taken advantage of their offer of free classes every Thursday.

Fencing Club: Off to a great start!

Also, John Lennox and Chris Franklin, fencers from Art of Combat, visited our campus in April. They demonstrated several styles of classical fencing and held an all day series of hands on workshops for students and faculty. The fencing club is open to anyone with an interest in fencing. Next year they plan to hold weekly classes in both competitive and classical fencing, and in July several members of the club will visit ISMAC, a well known sword fighting conference.
Across the United States, February is celebrated as African American History Month. During this month the history and accomplishments of African Americans are examined and analyzed, but at Cal U, Black History Month has been expanded. Last newsletter, we mentioned the monthly talks that Dr. Edmonds put together, and this semester was no different.

As usual, celebrations were kicked off with the Soul Food Dinner. This year the dinner was held at Jozarts studios and was well attended by the students and community of California. With nearly one hundred guests, Jozart’s was packed with hungry people and soon emptied of good food.

One of the more innovative presentations was by Dr. Taunya Tinsley of Cal’s counselor education department. “I Am Not My Hair” was a buzzing success. Students were asked to volunteer their time and hair to be styled. Some volunteered because they wanted a new look to wear around campus, while one young woman volunteered herself because of a wedding which was taking place later that week.

Each Tuesday in February, a brown bag lunch was held. Student such as Belinda King (“Manifest Destiny and the Haitian Revolt”), Steve Stout (“The Historical Role of Athletes During National Crisis”), Thurman Le Vere and Jeffrey DeZwaan (“What Does the Confederate Flag Mean?”) and Mary Brunner (“Culture in Allied Health Professions”) were presenters. With pizza nourishing the body and history enriching the mind, the student brown bag lunch was one of the truly inspirational events during black history month.

One of the key events was the hip-hop conference. During the day, Dr. Jeffrey Ogbar, Dr. Tracy Sharpley-Whiting, and Brett Wilkinson all delivered presentations. During the evening key note event, Black Thought, Joan Morgan and Talib Kweli (pictured, with Dr. Kelton Edmonds) spoke to a crowd of over 250 students.

Thanks to the students and the many offices and departments on campus who offered their help, once again Black History month was a great success.

---

Are you a believer or a questioner? Although many people think they are well versed in public issues, most have a limited knowledge of key public issues. California University of Pennsylvania was one of 16 campuses across the country selected to participate in the 2008 Deliberative Polling Initiative. Deliberative Day was devoted to providing students with information on public issues and gauging their change of opinion based on the information provided by academic and policy experts. Dr. Melanie Blumberg of the History and Political Science Department is the campus director of the American Democracy Project, which sponsored the event. Working with the ADP, the New York Times and the Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University, this day-long event is sure to have a lasting impact on Cal U students.

March 31 was a day filled with discussion on a variety of environmental issues, with a special emphasis on river health. Over 800 students participated in an online survey about the environment. More than 200 students volunteered for a full day of small group discussions and plenary sessions that featured Dr. David Argent, Associate Professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences at Cal U. Dr. Carol Bocetti, Assistant Professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences at Cal U, Dr. Terry Collins, director of the Institute of Green Oxidation Chemistry at Carnegie Mellon University, Mr. Robert Ferguson, president of the Science and Public Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., Dr. Kyle Fredrick, Assistant Professor of Earth Sciences at Cal U, Ms. Lisa Schroeder, executive director of Riverlife, and Dr. Willie Soon, an astrophysicist and geo scientist at the solar, stellar, and planetary division of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

Both panels addressed the audience by providing information on river health, river pollutants, and aquatic life. After hearing from the experts, students returned to their groups to discuss what they learned. Answers to a second survey they took should show changes in how they view these environmental issues, as they were now armed with balanced information. The goal of the project is to foster an informed citizenry.

The day ended with presentations by Dr. James Fishkin, director of the Center of Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University, and Mr. George Mehaffy, AASCU Vice President of Leadership and Change and national director of the American Democracy Project.
Alumni News

Kristopher White, ’99, is working on his Master’s in Military History at Norwich University.

Antoinette "Nettie" Palmieri, ’01 and ’03, has been living in Arlington, VA since 2004. She is currently pursuing a sommelier certificate and continues to have her art work exhibited at The Torpedo Factory in Alexandria VA.

Fr. Mike Barclay, ’79, went on to complete two Master’s Degrees, an M.A. in Communication/Writing at Cal and an M.Div. at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. He served as the Parish Priest in West Brownsville until 1994, and is now pursuing his Ph.D. He has published several articles and poems, and teaches at various local universities. Anyone interested in reconnecting with him can contact him at pombo-barclay@msn.com.

Amy Fowler Nash, ’04, received her Master of Science in Legal Studies and Public Policy. She married fellow Cal U alum Jason Nash, ’99, and together they have two children, Alex and Hannah Grace. While in school she worked for the PA House of Reps.

Jeff Barnes, ’72, and his wife Debra met here at Cal U, and now own a successful business in Charleston, WV. Check it out here: www.barneslearning.com.

Terry Dunlevy, ’79, and Christine (Cernuska) Dunlevy, ’83, are the proud parents of three children, Ryan, who has recently joined the Marines and will be going to basic training in May, TJ, a junior at LSU and Kelly, a high school freshman. Terry is a partner in the Baton Rouge law firm of Roedel Parsons, Christine is Executive Director of Port City Enterprises, Inc., a social services agency in the Baton Rouge area.

Ebony Bates, ’05, is the recipient of a U.S. Department of State Critical Languages Scholarship, and will study Urdu in Lucknow, India this summer. The program is part of the National Security Language Initiative, which seeks to increase the number of Americans with critical foreign language skills.

Brandi Kennedy, ’07, is employed by NJPIRG Student Chapters to educate and train students how to mount their own grassroots issues campaigns. Based at Rutgers University, she helps students fundraise and organize events. Students hope to raise $10,000 for a Homeless and Hunger Clean-up project, with proceeds going to the Middlesex County Interfaith Transitional Home for Women, the National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness, and supplies for Darfur refugees. Every year, Rutgers students win four-star awards for their efforts to help eradicate hunger.

David Orochena, ’80, retired from federal service in 2006 after serving in the US Army, Federal Aviation Administration (DOT) and Transportation Security Administration (DHS). For a short time, he was the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Compliance at TSA and before that was the Director of International Operations. He is now working for a defense contractor called SM Consulting, Inc. which is being acquired by SAIC.

Bethany Hoag, ’05, is a business manager at Woltz and Wind Ford. Currently she has been enjoying time in the garden, and fixing up her 80 year old home in Dormont.

Brad Geyer, ’04, took the oath of office in Jan ’08 for his 2nd term on the Connellsville City Council. Brad was first elected in 2004 when he was a Senior at Cal U.

Mike Colosimo, ’04, is currently working at U.S. Steel on the South Side, and is branching out from customer service to graphic design. He is still doing Civil War Re-enacting and TV/Movie work. If you are quick of eye, you can catch him on HBO’s John Adams. April 27th, the National Geographic Channel will play a program he worked on about the battle of Wilderness focusing on the 146th NY Zouaves and the 20th Maine, and sometime this summer the History Channel will have a program on the battle of Gettysburg where he played the part of Wesley Culp.

Rachel Kimble, ’06, is working for Wright Contract Interiors, and is the Vice President and co-founder of Beaver County Young Professionals. She is also the PAC/Legislation chair of the Beaver Valley chapter of Business and Professional Women.

Charles Holman, ’05, has earned a MA from The Patterson School, University of Kentucky.