

## Highlights of MIW Fall 2008—Winter 2009 Semesters

The 2008 general election campaign for President and the Inauguration of Barack Obama in January 2009 made for a uniquely exciting school year for the Michigan in Washington participants and faculty. Those who were admitted for fall of 2008 found it frustrating trying to find internships during the summer because many in Washington were either preoccupied with the campaign or they were in a state of office limbo, waiting for the new administration. This caused some anxiety for some of the fall-term students, and three of them had to wait until they arrived in Washington just before Labor Day to pin down their internships. Happily, all the students found interesting internships and that made the semester worthwhile.

Tension was also high for those coming in January 2009, and a number of Washingtonians took a few weeks vacation after the election in November and did not get back to students applying to internships until December and January. Besides the typical internships in government offices, not-for-profit organizations and law firms, MIW students also found work at less typical venues. One worked at a not-for-profit organization that sponsors academic research on hip-hop culture and music. The organization publishes an academic journal whose authors are sociologists, anthropologists, and ethnologists. MIW had its first law enforcement intern, who worked at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. In Winter 2009, one MIW student helped coordinate promotion and publicity for the movie *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian*. This MIW student worked in the public relations department for the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History and stayed to work there throughout the early summer as well. She delighted others with stories about meeting Hollywood directors and movie stars. Several students worked in national news rooms including C-SPAN and ABC's *Nightline*. While our student was at *Nightline*, the TV industry buzzed about the possibility that ABC would woo Jay Leno to its network after his contract with NBC was up. As we know now, Leno is staying with NBC and *Nightline* is still being produced. Our student at C-SPAN was the one and only intern permitted to go on the C-SPAN tour bus in the Northeast. One student used her proficiency in French to good use by getting an internship at a not-for-profit organization that put on an international conference in Paris, and the MIW student spent a week in Paris in November translating and organizing seminars for the conference participants. Needless to say, we now field inquiries along the lines of, "Do I get to go abroad if I get into MIW?"

### Students

The Fall 2008 semester brought a wide array of majors to Washington, including our first Statistics major. Nine of the 20 were Political Science majors, three were English, and two were Communications Studies majors. We also had one in each of the following: Public Policy, Human Rights, Economics, and the Political Economy of Crime. There was one double major in Political Science and Economics. Fourteen of the students represented the senior class of the University of Michigan, while six of the students were of junior standing. There were six seniors and 20 juniors in the Winter 2009 cohort. Of the 26 students in Winter 2009, nine were Political Science majors and three were Public Policy majors. The remaining 14 students were an assortment of majors, including Education, English, and Business. MIW had a number of double majors who combined the following: Political Science, Classic Civilization, Organizational Studies, Spanish, History, Program in the Environment, Economics, Communication Studies,

Psychology and Philosophy. Two students were triple majors. One studied History, Economics and Political Science, and the other studied Organizational Studies, Economics and Italian.

### **Internship Placements**

The 46 MIW students worked in 39 different employers' offices in the past school year. Below is a list of those employers.

<p><b>U.S. House and Senate</b></p> <p>Senate Judiciary Committee Sen. Debbie Stabenow Sen. Edward Kennedy House Judiciary Committee Rep. John Dingell Rep. Gary Peters Rep. Mark Schauer House Select Committee on Energy Independence</p> <p><b>Executive Branch</b></p> <p>Federal Trade Commission Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Department of Justice, Community Relations U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom</p> <p><b>Law Firms</b></p> <p>Dykema Gossett, PLLC Olsson Frank Weeda, PC</p> <p><b>News Media</b></p> <p>ABC Nightline C-SPAN</p> <p><b>Museums</b></p> <p>Smithsonian Natural History Museum</p>	<p><b>Think Tanks, Professional Organizations</b></p> <p>Brookings Institution International Law Institute American Bar Association Atlantic Council Center for American Progress Environmental Law Institute Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Association for American Universities</p> <p><b>Consulting Firms</b></p> <p>The Dewey Square Group The Winnvale Group The Dershowitz Group Chemonics The Downey McGraph Group Community Wealth Ventures, Inc.</p> <p><b>NGOs, Not-for-Profit</b></p> <p>Amnesty International Innovation in Civic Participation Word.Beats.Life Congressional Management Foundation J-Street Genocide Intervention Network</p> <p><b>District of Columbia</b></p> <p>Office of D.C. Attorney General</p>
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## Speakers

As usual, the MIW students had many opportunities to hear leading government figures and knowledgeable cultural authorities on a host of topics throughout their semesters in Washington. The variety of speakers and field trips was especially wide and topical this past school year. As the banking and credit crisis peaked, MIW was fortunate to host a UM alumnus and MIW Board member who is a key decision maker. John Dugan, Comptroller of the Currency, soft-spoken and plain-spoken, led 80 Michigan, University of California and University of Pennsylvania students through an hour's discussion of the monumental changes and challenges in the U.S. financial system on November 17, 2008. Mr. Dugan discussed in detail what had happened since August 2007, and using a three-page hand-out, showed the students how the cascade of events started. Although Mr. Dugan wondered if anyone would ask any questions, the students overwhelmed him with queries and stayed 25 minutes after the session ended.

Some students were intrigued by Mr. Dugan's career path, from a bachelor's in English literature at Michigan to Harvard Law School, private practice, Capitol Hill, the Treasury, to the Comptroller of the Currency. His answer was, "Start at the bottom." Take a chance (and a pay cut); leave private practice and start at Square One as a Hill staffer. Sit in on relevant classes and study everything about the topic, while working with excellent staff members. Use the same ability analyzing poetry to analyze statutes about financial regulation. Transfer the same skill from one subject to another.

Michigan alumni Dr. Thomas Mann, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and Dr. Norman Ornstein, Resident Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, told the students in September 2008 that Barak Obama would probably win the presidency, even though the excitement generated by Sarah Palin for the Republican ticket was still new at the time of the talk. Drs. Mann and Ornstein also discussed the range of possibilities for electoral success for Democrats and how that might translate into policy success, especially if Democrats passed a health care bill and withdrew troops from Iraq.

Students heard from speakers on international affairs as well as domestic policy. Dr. Aaron David Miller, Woodrow Wilson Center scholar and University of Michigan Ph.D. in Middle East history, interwove comments about his 25-year career in the State Department with advice to students about what they may want to do in their careers. Dr. Miller was frank in his criticism of Democratic and Republican Administrations' foreign policy in the Middle East, and he criticized his own performance as well. Among the many points he made to the standing-room-only audience were that the United States continues to misinterpret the deeply held beliefs of the parties in the Middle East conflicts, and our national experience of relative peace throughout U.S. history does not help us to understand the fear for personal and national security that people who live in that part of the world grow up with and think about daily. Dr. Miller will be teaching a course on Middle East history and policy as an elective for Michigan, Berkley and Penn students in Fall 2009.

Dr. Miller's comments were fortuitously timed to coincide with Professor Ari Roth's theater classwork that centered on a multi-theater series of plays and readings about Middle East life and conflicts, presented at the Kennedy Center and Theater J, where Professor Roth is artistic director. The various plays and presentations examined a multitude of aspects of Middle East

life and the relationships among Arabs and Jews worldwide. Some of the students found the plays riveting, while others professed a profound sadness after watching the presentations.

Students were introduced to ancient Middle East art as well. Former Smithsonian Institution Islamic Art Curator Esin Atil talked to the Michigan, U-Cal, and Penn students October 27th, showing those assembled slides of magnificently decorated bronze, glass, wood, and pottery *objets d'art* from three periods in Islamic Art. Dr. Atil received her M.A. in European art and Ph.D. in Islamic art from UM, and she spent her career at the Smithsonian's Freer and Arthur Sackler Galleries of Asian art.

Islamic potters created lustrous ceramics with a sheen other regional potters were unable to match until centuries later. Glass makers exported their wares throughout southwest Asia, China and Europe along the Spice Roads. Caliphs seemed to be in an eternal competition with one another across the ages in commissioning spectacular mosques and accompanying ornamentation.

Some of the questions she fielded after her presentation were about representations of the Prophet Mohammed in historical, religious and cultural pieces. Although the Prophet Mohammed's face or figure is usually not shown in religious pictures out of respect, some artists have crafted a likeness of him in their non-religious work; however, Dr. Atil said that no description or representation of the Prophet has survived, so no one really knows what he looked like. She compared Islamic and Christian art in general, pointing out that Christians tended to represent their stories and theology through pictures of people in specific events; however, Islamic artists used the words of the Koran itself, developing calligraphy, as decoration for inspiration in mosques. Later, Islamic artists adopted intricate floral patterns interwoven with or in place of calligraphy.

Other speakers this past year included: Ralph Nader, political activist; *Washington Post* reporters Anne Kornblut and John Cohen; House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Chief of Staff John Lawrence; Newsweek magazine columnist Howard Fineman; and former CBS News Anchor Dan Rather.

For the first time, students participated in the *George C. Marshall Plan Conference: The Citizen as Diplomat*, sponsored by the United States Diplomacy Center, U.S. Department of State, in conjunction with the George C. Marshall Foundation. Students in the Winter 2009 semester spent four hours on a February Friday morning attending three of a possible six sessions hosted by historians and diplomats hoping to educate students on the role of diplomacy in national and international governments. Among the topics were how to use the Internet as a tool for democracy and citizen participation; how consumer choices can affect U.S. and other countries' behavior; and a simulation designed to engage students in negotiating a solution to end the crisis in Darfur, Sudan. The students were delighted to receive small gift bags that included a Plexiglas paper weight of the world and a globe rubber ball used either to increase one's strength or decrease one's worries.

The University of Michigan Washington D.C. club graciously hosted the winter semester students to the annual legislative breakfast with the Honorable John Conyers, Jr., who discussed the challenges the State of Michigan and the City of Detroit face. The University of Michigan

President Mary Sue Coleman recognized the Michigan in Washington students and Professor Goldenberg in her welcoming remarks.

George Dong, MIW participant in Fall 2008, spoke at LSA graduation in April 2009. An English major, George interned at the Association at American Universities while in Washington and has entered Teach for America in Chicago.

### **Classes**

MIW continued to cooperate with the University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Merced, and University of Pennsylvania on elective courses. This cooperation doubles or triples the number of electives available to students in each of the three programs. MIW offered the Theatre of Politics: The Politics of Theatre by Professor Ari Roth in both semesters, and as noted earlier, the second semester's theme revolved around plays about the Middle East. Professor Sally Katzen, former Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for the Clinton Administration, offered, "A Window into How Washington Works." This course describes how regulations are developed, amended, or appealed and how the federal government affects its citizens through taxes spending and regulation. Professor Katzen took her class to the United States Supreme Court to meet Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, after listening to oral arguments. Justice Scalia was frank and forthcoming in answers to students' questions, many of which were about his disdain for judicial activism. Justice Scalia was gracious and warm and did not mind posing for pictures with the whole class after the meeting. Professor Katzen also took her class to the Old Executive Office building to meet with Ms. Susan Dudley, Professor Katzen's successor at OIRA. Ms. Dudley explained her responsibility to keep all parts of the Executive Branch meeting their budget expectations and not going over them. She emphasized the need for fiscal discipline and the role that regulation plays in the budget process. She emphasized that government and business must strike a balance, in order to provide safety and fair play in society, but not inhibit business ventures unnecessarily.

In Winter 2009, MIW offered a sociology course titled "Museums and Society: The Power of Display in Washington DC," by Dr. Sita Reddy, a research associate at the Freer and Arthur M. Sackler Galleries of Asian Art. Dr. Reddy's class discussed how museum curators mount an exhibition and how their explanations of the objects affect people's understanding of history. The class visited the Hirshhorn, Natural History, and Holocaust museums, as well as the National Library of Medicine and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Curators at each museum led the students on behind-the-scene tours and answered questions about how they decided which objects to display and how to display them.

UC-Berkeley faculty offered courses in "Public Economics, Environmental Regulation and Policy," and, "Islam and Democracy in the Modern Age." Penn faculty offered electives 'Congressional Elections', "The Politics of International NGOs", and, "American Foreign Policy." UC-Merced's Professor Marc Sandalow offered a course, "Political Journalism and the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election." Professor Sandalow was the Washington Bureau Chief for *The San Francisco Chronicle*. He grew up in Ann Arbor, where his father was the dean of the UM School of Law.

## **Conclusion**

Of all the adventures the students had this past school year, none surpassed their experiences on Inauguration Day, when the frigid weather tested even the native Michigianians. Some students worked at their internships on Inauguration Day, distributing buttons or leaflets to the crowd around the Capitol or on the National Mall. Some spent the day indoors at watch parties and receptions. One managed to become the official photographer for an elite gathering at the Willard Hotel, located just across the street from the White House. A few others were unable to get to their assigned locations because of a widespread inauguration ticket mix-up, which was investigated by some members of Congress later. Even those who spent much of the day shivering and craning their necks to see what was on the JumboTrons, all of them were impressed with the majesty of the ceremony, the enthusiasm of the crowd, and the general camaraderie in the nation's capital.

--Margaret M. Howard  
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