U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar discussed Internationalism in the Heartland as part of the La Follette School's Spring Seminar Series. (Photo by Jeff Miller/UW-Madison)

$500,000 donated to support students

Two members of the La Follette School’s Board of Visitors took advantage of a one-to-one matching gift from Ab and Nancy Nicholas to boost funding for graduate student scholarships. Curt and Sue Culver pledged $200,000 – the largest single gift in La Follette School history – and Katharine Lyall donated $50,000. The Nicholas Match doubled the gifts for a total of $500,000 in much-needed student support. Both UW-Madison alumni, the Nicholases in 2015 committed $50 million to inspire other donors to create scholarships and fellowships for UW-Madison students. “Prospective students frequently tell us that financial aid weighs heavily in their decision for where they pursue further education,” said La Follette School Director Susan Yackee. “These generous gifts will allow us to bring some of the most accomplished graduate students to La Follette.”

Curt Culver received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in real estate and urban land economics from UW-Madison and was a guest lecturer in the Wisconsin School of Business from 1992 to 2014.

U.S. Sen. Klobuchar speaks on Internationalism in the Heartland

Serving in the U.S. Senate, Amy Klobuchar draws on her Minnesota roots and “the Midwestern belief that you are part of something bigger than yourself.” Klobuchar, the first woman to represent Wisconsin’s western neighbor in the Senate, wove that theme throughout her presentation, “Internationalism in the Heartland,” at UW-Madison on February 17. A Democrat in her second term, she recalled how several of her predecessors from Minnesota championed legislation that emphasized the important role of international relations to the U.S. economy and human rights issues.

We’re renewing our focus on staying in touch

As summer comes to the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, the La Follette School of Public Affairs is re-energizing its efforts to raise its visibility and impact. And we need your help.

This brief newsletter is jam-packed with amazing accomplishments by students, faculty, alumni, and staff at the La Follette School. Yet, there is so much more to tell. If you received the newsletter via postal mail, you already know about some of the great work being done in our school. Our faculty are dedicated to teaching and research, and our students and alumni are committed to improving the world around us.

We have known the value of the La Follette School for decades, but too many others have not. As Curt Culver
Board of Visitors passionate about La Follette School

The second meeting of the La Follette School of Public Affairs’ new Board of Visitors featured presentations by two teams of students and by Research Professor Rob Meyer. The eight-person Board met April 22 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Discovery Building.

“The presentations definitely were highlights of the meeting,” said La Follette School Director Susan Yackee. “Board members were highly impressed with our faculty and student research.”

The students shared their culminating projects for the Workshop in Public Affairs capstone course and answered questions from Board members. Teams making presentations were:

David Boardman, Chad Farley, Emma Schuman, and Demetri Vincze, An Evaluation of the Wisconsin Assisted Living Regulatory System, Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Alisha Bower, Mark Japinga, Jessica Sabin, and Amanda Ward, Long-acting Reversible Contraceptives in Wisconsin: Benefits and Costs, UW School of Medicine and Public Health

Workshop reports are posted here: http://go.wisc.edu/k5ix81.

Meyer, director of the Value-Added Research Center at UW-Madison, presented his research on measuring performance in the K-12 classroom. In addition, Associate Director Hilary Shager provided an update on new programming at the La Follette School this fall: the Wisconsin Family Impact Seminars program and Committee Connect.

Yackee also shared the School’s vision for research, teaching, and public service, and the Board began a discussion about the importance of philanthropy and student aid for meeting the school’s objectives. The next Board meeting will be in Milwaukee this October.

La Follette School Board of Visitors

Cur t S. Culver is chairman of MGIC Investment Corp. and its principal subsidiary, Mortgage Guaranty Insurance Corporation (MGIC), the nation’s leading private mortgage insurer. He received bachelor's and master's degrees from UW-Madison.

Kath erine Gehl served as the fourth-generation president and chief executive officer of Gehl Foods, a dairy manufacturing company, from 2011 to 2015. Previously, she was vice president at Bernstein Investment Research and Management, special assistant to Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley for technology and economic development, and director of information technology services at Chicago Public Schools.

Micha el Hamerlik is president and chief executive officer of WPS Health Insurance, which is based in Madison. A graduate of the University of North Dakota’s School of Law, he serves on the Board of Directors for the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Dane County. Hamerlik previously served in the North Dakota Legislature.

Herb Kohl, a Milwaukee businessman and philanthropist, represented Wisconsin in the U.S. Senate from 1988 to 2012. In 1990, he established the Herb Kohl Education Foundation, which provides scholarships to students and fellowships to teachers and schools throughout Wisconsin.

Bob Lang has served as director of the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau since 1977. A nonpartisan service agency of the Legislature, the Fiscal Bureau provides policy, program and fiscal analyses to state legislators, including the Joint Committee on Finance.

Sheldon B. Lubar, a former president of the UW Board of Regents, is the founder and chairman of Lubar & Co., a private investment and wealth management office. He was chairman and chief executive officer of the Christiana Companies Inc. until its merger with Weatherford International in 1999 and was chairman of Total Logistics Inc. until its acquisition in 2005 by SuperValu Inc.

Katharine C. Lyall served as president of the University of Wisconsin System from 1992 to 2004. Lyall, the first woman to lead the UW System, oversaw 28 campuses with 160,000 students. Under her leadership, the UW System doubled its outside funding to $2.3 billion annually, forged new partnerships with Wisconsin’s technical colleges and K-12 community, and instituted many technological innovations, including online courses and degrees.

Michael Youngman, a UW-Madison and La Follette School alumnus, is a retired executive officer of Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. As vice president of government relations, he oversaw legislative and regulatory matters at the federal, state, and local levels. He serves on the Wisconsin Historical Society Foundation’s Board of Directors.
DC visit provides career development opportunities

Twenty-two La Follette School students traveled to Washington, DC, in November 2015 for a career development extravaganza that included visits to public and private sector organizations working on domestic and international policy issues.

The La Follette in DC agenda included stops at Grant Thornton LLP, the Congressional Budget Office, the Government Accountability Office, Millennium Challenge Corp., and the Urban Institute, all of which have employed La Follette School alumni.

Agency officials and La Follette alumni welcomed the students and answered questions about internships and jobs in the nation's capital. The event also included a networking reception with dozens of DC area alumni and friends at Clyde's of Gallery Place.

At Grant Thornton, 2015 La Follette alumni Kate Austin and Scott Wood discussed consulting careers; and at the CBO, Rob Stewart (MA '95) talked about the organization’s mission and shared career advice with students.

The students also joined DC-area alumni for lunch and small-group conversations. Participants included Ulli Nischan (MIPA ’10), who works in international food policy; Michael Rodriguez (MPA ’09), who works on transportation policy; Katherine Sydor (MPA ’12), who works for the U.S. Department of Education on higher education finance; and Amanda Wilmarth (MPA ’14), who works at the Export Import Bank of the United States.

Alexis MacDonald (MPA ’08) gathered several La Follette alumni to meet students at the GAO, making sure students heard a variety of perspectives. Students met with Jenny Grover (MA ’91), Joe Thompson (MPA ’03), Ben Emmel (MPA ’15), Travis Schwartz (MPA ’15), Michele Duren (MIPA ’15), and Kevin Remondini (MA ’07). They also heard from Eric Hudson (MPA ’04), Kate Amoroso (MPA ’07), and Kate Nast Jones (MPA ’08) in Chicago; and Hilary Murrish Benedict (MPA ’02) in Colorado via video conference.

“I thought the site visit to GAO was extremely valuable,” said Nick Lardinois, a second-year MPA student.

The two-day agenda ended with a visit to the Urban Institute. Students shared a working lunch with scholar Gene Steuerle, who earned a master's degree from the La Follette School's precursor, the Center for the Study of Public Policy and Administration, before completing a Ph.D. in economics at UW-Madison.

Read more at http://go.wisc.edu/9phux7

La Follette in Milwaukee program connects alumni, students

Continued from Page 8

Kathleen Pritchard, who received her master's degree in public administration from UW-Madison, participated. Christine Durkin (MPA ’11), a management and budget analyst for the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), coordinated a tour and discussion of the Kinnickinnic River Rehabilitation and Neighborhood Plan. The MMSD, Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers (SSCHC) and other partners are giving the long-neglected natural and built environment on Milwaukee's near south side a major transformation.

Durkin was joined by colleagues Patrick Elliot, Kinnickinnic River Project manager; Moranda Medina, SSCHC's community engagement specialist; and Tomas Schlenker of the SSCHC. Steve Jacquart, MMSD intergovernmental coordinator, welcomed the group.

The final career development session of the day was a panel discussion with Kari Lerch, Melissa McGaughey, and Jeffery Roman of the Public Policy Institute.

The Milwaukee area is home to more than 150 La Follette School alumni and friends, including Board of Visitors member Michael Youngman (MA ’82), who kicked off the after-work reception with brief remarks about his career.

Marie Koko, L&S government career specialist, said the undergraduate students were primarily seniors studying political science, economics and other social sciences.

Read more at http://go.wisc.edu/z509qw
Vander Meer leads state long-term care association

As a newspaper reporter, John Vander Meer learned the impact of government policy on people’s lives.

“Whether writing about road improvements, law enforcement block grants or funding for frontline caregivers, a primary duty for any reporter is to translate the significance of policy into real human terms,” said Vander Meer (MPA ’06), who became executive director of the Wisconsin Health Care Association (WHCA) in January 2016.

That sparked his interest in how public policy was constructed and brought him back to his hometown and the La Follette School of Public Affairs, where his advisers helped him develop an interdisciplinary focus in political communications. Upon graduation, he worked on political campaigns and as a legislative staff member until 2011.

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Vander Meer’s extensive public policy, communications, and health care expertise made him the ideal candidate to succeed Tom Moore, who led the organization for more than 30 years. “The complexity of the health care system, involving so many participants, so many issues, and so many challenges for making intelligent policy fascinates me,” Vander Meer said.

While he hasn’t conducted a regression analysis or graphed producer surplus in a few years, Vander Meer said, the research methodology and critical-thinking skills that he honed at the La Follette School have been instrumental to his success. He often pays it forward by speaking and working with La Follette students and participating in Visit Day and other events.

Read more at http://go.wisc.edu/c3nhr2

Alumni news

Steve Kulig (MPA ’14) returned to his alma mater as the La Follette School’s new department administrator in April. He previously worked for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services as a budget and policy analyst with the Medicaid program.

Erika Jones (MPA ’11) facilitated a discussion about starting and sustaining a successful community supported agriculture (CSA) program at the National & International CSA Conference and Urgenci Symposium in November 2015. Jones, executive director of FairShare CSA Coalition in Madison, also spoke about developing CSA farm networks during the conference in China.

John Rohrer (MA ’87) was named director of the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison. Rohrer began his career with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as an administrative intern at the Madison VA hospital in 1986.

Ryan Schowalter (MPA ’12) was promoted to associate director, data and analysis, at The Broad Center for the Management of School Systems in Los Angeles. Schowalter supports systems and processes for data analysis, evaluation and research activities across all teams of The Broad Center. Previously, he was an evaluation manager for City Year Los Angeles.

Jennifer Vandermeuse (MPA ’11, JD ’11) is an assistant attorney general with the Wisconsin Department of Justice. She previously spent several years in private practice and served as a clerk to Judge Robert D. Martin of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Wisconsin.

Katie Maguire-Jack (MPA ’06) received a $150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to study secondary analyses of data on early care and education. Maguire-Jack, who received her doctorate in social welfare from UW-Madison, is an assistant professor at The Ohio State University College of Social Work. Co-investigator on the grant is Kelly Purtell, an assistant professor at Ohio State. La Follette School Associate Director Hilary Shager (’05 MPA, ’12 PhD) serves on the project’s Advisory Board.

Bryan Gadow (’05 MPA) returned to the Madison area as Village Administrator for New Glarus. He manages the village’s day-to-day operations, including a $5 million budget and a staff of 17. He previously served as city planner, assistant city manager, and director of planning and building for the city of Wayzata, Minn.

Rob Stupar (MPA ’15) is a policy associate in the Regulatory Affairs Department at Enel Green Power North America in Washington, DC. Stupar, who received a certificate in energy analysis and policy along with his MPA, earned his bachelor’s degree from UW-Madison in 2013.
Congratulations former Gov. Thompson

The La Follette School congratulates former Gov. and former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson on his honorary degree of laws from UW-Madison and thanks him for the inspiring keynote address at the School’s 2016 graduation ceremony.

Read more at http://go.wisc.edu/p1jk32

Klobuchar visits campus

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Sen. Amy Klobuchar

Democrats Walter Mondale and Eugene McCarthy and Republicans Rudy Boschwitz and Bill Frenzel saw businesses doing more work outside the United States and agricultural exports growing, she said. Religious communities in Minnesota and elsewhere also were advocating for global human rights during this time.

Those issues remain central to international relations today, but she said they also can affect people very close to home. As a senator, and especially in these instances, she sees her role as a neighbor — to a mother whose son died while serving in the military or to a dad whose child is on a high school trip in Guatemala where a mudslide happened.

On a broader level, Klobuchar emphasized the importance of international aid to countries in Africa and Asia. Aid to help build economies in fledgling democracies is critical to foreign policy, she said.

“If you want to have allies in the fight against terrorism … but when you step back a little and see what they’re dealing with when terrorists come into their country, you want to have partners, and you can’t have partners if their economy is such a mess,” she explained.

Closer to home, Klobuchar talked about the need for immigration reform. As the granddaughter of Swiss immigrants, Klobuchar knows well “the melting pot that we have in the Midwest.” Her father’s grandparents also were immigrants.

“This idea that we should just keep people out of our country whether it’s because of their faith or where they’re from is so foreign to me from a moral standpoint,” she said. “But the argument I would make to you when you talk about this issue is again an economic one. It’s important to see it in an economic light.”

The Office of Federal Relations, La Follette School of Public Affairs and Department of Political Science hosted Klobuchar’s visit. More than 100 faculty, staff, students, and community members attended her presentation at the Microbial Sciences Building.

Renewing our focus on staying in touch

Continued from Page 1

said at a recent meeting of the School’s new Board of Visitors: “This is the university’s best-kept secret.”

Culver, an extremely active UW-Madison alumnus, was unaware of the La Follette School until three years ago. The School’s nonpartisan and research-based focus resonated with him — a highly successful businessman and generous community member.

Given the current polarized political climate, Culver knows that the La Follette School’s fact-based approach to public policy and governance is needed now more than ever. Our faculty, students, alumni, and staff couldn’t agree more, and we are poised to share our message far and wide.

One way to increase the La Follette School’s impact and visibility is to stay in better touch with our amazing alumni and friends. As a result, look for more points of contact from the La Follette School in the future. Our new university relations specialist, Lisa Hildebrand, is mapping out a communications strategy that we’ll start rolling out later this summer.

Former honorary fellow Secchi, wife welcome baby girl

Professor Leonardo Secchi, a former honorary fellow at the La Follette School, and his wife, Aline, welcomed their first child in March. Helena Secchi was born March 17 in Brazil.

Secchi was a postdoctoral honorary fellow in policy analysis during the 2014-15 academic year. He recently was named vice chancellor for budget and planning at Brazil’s Santa Catarina State University. Secchi also is collaborating with La Follette School Professor David Weimer on translating Weimer’s book Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice into Portuguese.
Two faculty members join La Follette

The La Follette School of Public Affairs welcomed two new faculty members for the 2015 – 2016 academic year: Emilia Tjernström and Rourke O’Brien. Tjernström joined the faculty in fall 2015, and O’Brien began in January 2016; both are assistant professors of public affairs.

Tjernström is an applied micro-economist who focuses on topics in development economics. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of California, Davis. She has ongoing projects in Kenya, Nicaragua and Fiji.

O’Brien’s research interests include taxation, household finance and population health. He was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar at Harvard University and an affiliate of the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. O’Brien received his Ph.D. from Princeton University.

The La Follette School also welcomes 2003 alumna Yang Wang to its faculty in fall 2016. Wang received her Ph.D. in economics from Duke University.

Smeeding shares expertise with state Future of the Family panel

The decline of wage-labor opportunities, marriage and family stability — especially for unskilled younger adults — puts many Wisconsin families at a cumulative disadvantage, La Follette School Professor Tim Smeeding told members of the Wisconsin Future of the Family Commission.

Smeeding spoke at the inaugural meeting of the 10-member Commission, which Gov. Scott Walker charged with “identifying issues and barriers relating to the overall well-being of families in the state, developing policies that lift individuals out of poverty, and developing and recommending policies for implementation to better serve Wisconsin’s families throughout the future.” Eloise Anderson, secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, chairs the Commission.

A final report with findings and recommendations is due by December 1.

Smeeding, the Lee Rainwater Distinguished Professor of Public Affairs and Economics at UW-Madison, pioneered the Wisconsin Poverty Measure in 2008. According to the 2015 Wisconsin Poverty Report, poverty in the state increased from 10.2 percent in 2012 to 10.9 percent in 2013.

In the United States, he said, marriage and prosperity are declining for all but college-educated people; divorce is increasing among less-educated people and among those who marry at young ages; out-of-wedlock births are increasing; and work and pay are declining among people 25-29 years old.

“As the economy declines for those in the prime marriageable ages, especially undereducated men of all races, and as women’s wages rise, marriage declines — except for the college-educated who marry later,” he said, adding that young men were the most ravaged by the Great Recession and beyond (2007 – 2015) and needed to become more economically stable before marriage could be expected.

This, in turn, means less upward financial and social mobility for the children of these parents as they become adults, Smeeding added.

“Less-educated and less-skilled parents have less economic stability and provide fewer opportunities for their children,” he said. “Activities spent on literacy and other investments vary enormously by income and socioeconomic status.”

To build stronger families and increase economic prosperity, he urged Commission members to consider the four cornerstones of the report “Opportunity, Responsibility and Security: A Consensus Plan for Reducing Poverty and Restoring the American Dream” from the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) for Public Policy Research and the Brookings Institution.

- Promote marriage as the most reliable route to family stability and resources
- Promote delayed, responsible childbearing
- Promote parenting skills and practices, especially among low-income parents
- Promote skill development, family involvement and employment among young men as well as women

Smeeding concluded his presentation January 27 by emphasizing compromise as a critical aspect when developing innovative strategies to strengthen and support families — as shown by the AEI/Brookings report’s diverse authors.

Share your news
alumni@lafollette.wisc.edu
Gladfelter Award recipients honored at reception

The La Follette School of Public Affairs honored the four recipients of the 2015 Lloyd D. Gladfelter Award for Government Innovation during its annual reception for alumni and friends February 4 at the Madison Club. Established in 1999, the award recognizes creative ideas and money-saving efficiencies that address a local or statewide issue and improve public service.

While the Gladfelter Award presentations added a new dimension to the annual Madison reception, attendees clearly enjoyed building and renewing relationships -- with many lingering well into the evening.

Alumni from the past four decades and several faculty and staff members attended the informal gathering. “It was encouraging to see how many leaders in our community are alumni,” said Sara Eskrich (BA ’09, MPA ’15, MPH ’15). “We have well-trained, strategic thinkers in all areas of policymaking.”

The School received more than 40 Gladfelter Award nominations from across the state, and the selection committee chose four projects that most exemplified the intent of the award.

- Tammy Conforti for the Kenosha Dream Playground Project
- Jared Knowles for the Dropout Early Warning System
- Sarah Turner and the Barron County Community Coalition for the Teen Expulsion and Prevention Project
- Diane Rondini Harness and the StEPP committee of Matthew Giesfeldt, Richard Jones, Gina Pruski, Eileen Fredericks, Puck Tsai, Catherine Dorl and Evan Nordgren for the Student Expulsion and Prevention Project

Conforti, a special education teaching assistant in the Kenosha Unified School District, spearheaded a grassroots initiative to build an inclusive accessible playground for people of all abilities.

$500,000 donated to support students

Continued from Page 1

The Culvers also provide scholarships in the School of Business and Athletic Department.

In April 2015, Curt Culver attended a dinner with Yackee and other La Follette faculty members and was very impressed.

“I love the nonpartisan nature of what the La Follette School does – ‘here are the facts, and here are the results’ – without taking a political slant on things,” he said. “I think that’s very healthy and the only way we can solve this country’s problems.”

Culver and Lyall were two of the first people to volunteer for the La Follette School’s new Board of Visitors. A former La Follette School economics professor, Lyall served as president of the UW System from 1992 to 2004.

“We are extremely grateful to our entire Board for their help guiding and assisting the School,” Yackee said.

Gladfelter Award recipient Tammy Conforti (in blue dress) spearheaded the Kenosha Dream Playground Project, a 15,000-square-foot playground accessible for people of all abilities.

“Tammy has provided the inspiration, determination and organization over the last three years needed to raise $1 million for this project,” State Rep. Tod Ohnstad said in his nomination.

The award was established by the family of Gladfelter, a 1926 UW-Madison alumnus, who was a government reporter for the Milwaukee Journal.

Information about the 2016 award will be posted online later this summer.

Read more at http://go.wisc.edu/k5162v

Upcoming Events

Aug. 12-16, 2016: Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD)
Sept. 1, 2016: Hill Fest Welcome Picnic, 5 to 7 p.m.
November 2016: La Follette in DC and APPAM Fall Research Conference
Feb. 2, 2017: Alumni and Friends Reception, Madison Club

Details at: www.lafollette.wisc.edu
La Follette in Milwaukee connects alumni, students

The La Follette School of Public Affairs’ first day-long career exploration program in Milwaukee provided graduate and undergraduate students with opportunities to learn from alumni and others working in government and public policy organizations.

Thirteen La Follette School students and nine undergraduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s College of Letters & Science (L&S) participated in the experiential-learning opportunity March 31.

La Follette in Milwaukee – designed after similar events in Chicago, Madison, and Washington, DC – concluded with a networking reception. La Follette School Outreach Specialist Bridget Pirsch developed the program, which was supported by the Wisconsin Alumni Association and L&S’s Career Initiative and Career Services.

“We are extremely grateful to our alumni and friends who generously share their time and talents with our students,” said La Follette School Director Susan Yackee. “These events are excellent opportunities not only for students, but for La Follette staff who provide career guidance and connections throughout the year.”

The students and several staff members began the day at Milwaukee City Hall at the invitation of Mark Nicolini, Milwaukee’s budget and management director. Nicolini received his master’s degree in public policy and administration from UW-Madison.

Students learned from Nicolini and a panel of high-level city policymakers, who highlighted interesting aspects of their careers and answered questions from students and staff. Panelists were:
- Erick Shambarger (MPA ’02), director of environmental sustainability
- Eric Pearson (MPA ’94), budget and management analyst
- Joe’Mar Hooper, Milwaukee Public Schools’ director of business, community, and family partnerships
- Monique Lofton, budget and management analyst
- Sharon Robinson, director of administration, city of Milwaukee

Four Milwaukee public policy research leaders joined the students for lunch and conversation. Rob Henken, president of the Public Policy Forum, Mike Nichols, president of the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, Joe Yeado of the Public Policy Forum, and

See La Follette in Milwaukee on page 3