

DLS Welcomes 14 New Candidates

Upon their acceptance in the spring of 2007, 14 new students entered the Doctoral of Liberal Studies (D.L.S.) degree program. These scholars join the program's 22 current students in pursuing the first Doctorate of Liberal Studies degree in the United States and Canada. Their personal backgrounds and proposed research demonstrate the broad appeal of the Liberal Studies program, the diversity of its student body and the current-day relevance of a values-based education. Biographical sketches of the new candidates, arranged alphabetically, follow.

Massimo Ambrosetti

was born in Padova, Italy. He graduated cum laude with degrees in Law and Political Science from the university in his hometown. He also attended courses at the University of Bologna, Karl-Albrecht Universitaet in Kiel, Ecole Nationale d'Administration in Paris and at the British Civil Service College (Oxford). In 1991, he joined the Italian Foreign Service. As a career diplomat, after three years at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Asia-Pacific desk, EU-external relations desk), he was posted to Beijing (1994-1999), NATO-Brussels (1999-2002). In the 2002-2006 period, he worked as Counselor in charge of the parliamentary relations in the Cabinet of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 2005, the Alma Graduate School of the University of Bologna offered him the position of Professor of European History. He is now First Counselor (political affairs) in the Italian Embassy in Washington. His D.L.S. research will focus on the shaping of contemporary China's national identity in the perspective of the new international global role of the Asian rising power.

Nina Assefi

resides in McLean, Va. A U.S. citizen of Iranian descent, she has spent much of her adult life in London and Washington, D.C. She takes pride in being a life long advocate for the rights and well-being of the mentally challenged. Nina holds a B.A. in business administration and economics from Richmond College in London and earned a M.A.L.S. degree from Georgetown University. Her research focused primarily on the role of religion in public affairs which led her to concentrate on the capability of religion as a factor in conflict and conflict resolution. Her D.L.S. research interests lie in examining the interaction of diplomacy and theology in the contemporary era. She is particularly interested in exploring the contemporary role of religion in international law, in the defense of human rights, its dedication to the pursuit of social justice, and its influence in nonviolent movements across the globe.

Howard D. (Dave) Belote, a colonel on active duty in the U.S. Air Force, currently serves as the Chief, Combating Weap-

ons of Mass Destruction (CWMD) Division, Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate, Joint Staff, Pentagon. He provides oversight of strategic guidance, plans, policies, and doctrine relating to Department of Defense CWMD activities and represents the Joint Staff in CWMD-related interagency and international venues. A native of Virginia Beach, Va., Dave has commanded at squadron and group level. He holds a B.A. from the University of Virginia and master's degrees from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Air University, and National Defense University. He has published articles on military strategy, airpower theory, space policy, and civil-military relations in a number of professional journals, and will focus his D.L.S. research on governmental organization and cross-cultural communication in the current geopolitical environment.

William (Bill) Costanza is a Chicago native who received his B.S. degree in psychology from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. He received his M.A. in international relations from American

Members of the D.L.S. classes of 2005 and 2006 welcomed the class of 2007 at an introductory session and reception on June 22 at the Alumni House.



University in Washington, D.C. He formerly served as an operations officer in the Directorate of Operations of the Central Intelligence Agency for over 24 years before retiring in 2004. As an operations officer, he designed intelligence collection strategies in the areas of counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, weapons of mass destruction, telecommunications and strategic technologies. From 1996 to 2004, he served as a counter-terrorism officer, which included assisting foreign governments in enhancing their indigenous counter-terrorism capabilities. He has lived in Central America, Latin America and Central Asia. He currently works as a national security consultant with the Abraxas Corporation. He is also an award-winning playwright whose plays have appeared in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles and Texas. His D.L.S. research plans to focus on a cross-cultural examination of the psychological and sociological factors that influence an individual's susceptibility to recruitment by terrorist organizations.

Bob Dodds is a native New Yorker who now lives in Washington, D.C. He is a graduate of Yale College and Yale Law School. He also holds a master's degree in taxation from NYU Law School. After a brief stint on Wall Street, he spent his entire professional career as an international tax lawyer with Mobil Corporation. He has traveled extensively abroad engaging in commercial negotiations and dispute resolution with various government entities, particularly in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In the process, he has gained considerable insight into the cultures of various developed and developing nations, as well as the roles of large multi-national corporations. Since retirement, he has been enrolled in the M.A.L.S. program, fulfilling a life-long dream of returning to academia and immersing himself in the literature and art of the ancient Greeks and Romans. His doctoral thesis is expected to examine the reception of the Roman poet Ovid as a portal into Medieval and Renaissance worldviews.

Ben Gustafson, a native of Buffalo, N.Y., currently resides in Arlington, Va. He holds a B.A. in history from Georgetown, and master's degrees in education (University of Rochester), public administration (Syracuse University), and international relations (Syracuse University). Mr. Gustafson is currently the Senior Health Development Officer in the Office of HIV/AIDS at the U.S. Agency for International Development, and has spent the past six years as a senior policy analyst in a number of federal agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, and the White House Budget Office. Prior to his federal career, he worked as a social studies teacher in Rochester, N.Y., an English as a Second Language teacher in Seoul, South Korea, and a Director of Education in Raleigh, N.C. His research interest lies in exploring the emergence of evangelical Protestantism as a major American political force in the 1970s and assessing the relationship between strong religious conviction and the tenets of democratic government.



Jonathan R. Harding received a B.S. in business administration in accounting from Loyola College in Maryland, an M.S. in professional writing from Towson University, and an M.F.A. in creative writing from Goddard College in Vermont. In addition to teaching business writing, composition, and literature at Penn State University and York College of Pennsylvania, Mr. Harding has served as the President of Progressive Development Consulting, which raised millions of dollars for important artistic and social enterprises. Today, he is the Assistant Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations at Loyola College in Maryland, working secure funding in support of the College's \$80 million capital campaign. As part of his D.L.S. study, Mr. Harding hopes to broaden the definition of modern rhetoric to include the language of the arts by investigating the relationship between message and media and examining the rhetorical effects of story from a linguistic perspective. More practically, he hopes to articulate how artists can use the rhetoric of pain as agents for social justice, as

tools to counterbalance the rhetoric of the power class.

Robin Kline has more than 25 years' experience with coalition-building activities, including academic and international program management and public affairs. Currently a senior program specialist with the U.S. Department of Transportation, she administers a multi-million dollar R&D grant program to 60 institutions. Ms. Kline spent ten years with USIA/State Department working with institutions in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Republics and Africa that were developing their economics and business programs, and has traveled extensively throughout Albania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. She served tours of duty with the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement as a policy coordination officer, and with the Carnegie Commission for Preventing Deadly Conflict, where she developed an international dissemination strategy for the Commission's final report.

Ms. Kline earned a M.A.L.S. from Georgetown in 1998. Her D.L.S. dissertation will focus on how national environmental policy is being affected by the collaborative partnership forming between the science and evangelical communities.

Brian Murphy is originally from Alexandria, Va. He graduated from the College of William and Mary with a B.A. in government and holds a master's degree in Islamic studies from Columbia University. He was commissioned as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. He left the Marines in 1998 to become a special agent with the FBI and was assigned to the FBI's New York Field Division. After initially working on more traditional criminal matters, he switched his focus to counterterrorism in September of 2001. His master's thesis focused on how and why groups like Al-Qaeda are able to make in-roads into Muslim communities. Among the reasons he addressed was the economic disparity that has persisted in many

Muslim countries. He focused on the historical ties between Al-Qaeda's leaders and ideologues and historical Muslim activists that championed economic concerns. He is currently assigned to FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he continues to work on terrorism matters. He has had the opportunity through work and vacation to travel to a number of countries in the Middle East.

C. Richard Pfitzinger is the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation (FCSIC), a government-controlled independent entity that manages a \$2.3 billion insurance fund that insures the \$134 billion of debt securities issued by the Farm Credit System Banks. As a member of the FCSIC management team, he ensures the financial integrity of the insurance fund and brings more than 24 years of experience in government, banking, finance, and insurance to this position. This includes oversight of FCSIC's investment portfolio and administration of other financial activities. Mr. Pfitzinger holds a B.S. in finance from Mar-

quette University and an M.S. in management (summa cum laude) from National Louis University. He has also completed the Program for Senior Managers in Government at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Originally from Wauwatosa, Wis., Rick currently resides in McLean, Va. He intends to continue studying rural policy in the D.L.S. program with a special emphasis on immigration issues.

Elizabeth W. Shelton recently finished a 27-year career as a Foreign Service Officer at the Department of State, with overseas assignments in Thailand, Malaysia, Nigeria, Turkey (twice), the U.N., Azerbaijan, and Albania. As an economics officer interested in economic development, Elizabeth followed the commodity markets in Southeast Asia, oil, debt and development issues in Nigeria, financial markets globally, market liberalization in Turkey, oil and development issues in post-Soviet Azerbaijan, and a reawakening to the world from a three-generation isolation in Albania. At the U.N., as in all assignments, Elizabeth was

active in trade and commercial issues, particularly business development. She was the recipient of the Department of State's prestigious Cobb Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development. Elizabeth earned a B.A. in history from the University of Michigan, an M.A. in international development from American University, and an M.S. in National Security Strategy from the National War College, National Defense University. An historian at heart, Elizabeth has a keen interest in 19th century American Protestant missionaries in Anatolia and their influence on U.S. foreign policy.

David Vaina, a native Floridian, is a research associate at the Pew Research Center. He earned his B.A. degrees in English literature and classics from Miami University. He then graduated with an M.A. in English literature from University College London. While working as a survey research analyst for a Democratic polling firm, he earned an M.A. in government from Johns Hopkins University. His thesis examined media coverage during the Senate confirmation hearings

of Judge John Roberts and was awarded honors for his work. At Pew, he studies and writes on network television and online media. His writings have appeared in a number of online and print publications, including CBSNews.com, the Huffington Post, the St Louis Journalism Review, and the Online Journalism Review. His doctoral thesis will focus on the historical underpinnings of blogging.

Karen Wilhelm, originally from Ohio, currently resides in Alexandria, Va. She is pursuing the doctorate in liberal studies following a career of almost 33 years in the U.S. Air Force. She holds a B.S. in military history from the Air Force Academy and her advanced degrees include an M.S. in logistics management from the Air Force Institute of Technology and an M.A. in history from Louisiana Tech University. As an Air Force officer, she held a wide variety of flight line, command, and staff positions as an aircraft maintenance officer. She has also served on the Joint Staff as a strategist and speechwriter for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and

on the faculties of the USAF Academy and the National War College. Her doctoral research will examine the concept of mobilizing for war in the 21st century, given that the language of mobilization is an artifact of 20th century industrial warfare.

Bridgette Weitzel is the Vice President of Organization and Talent Development for Fannie Mae in Washington, D.C. In this role, she is responsible for working with the company's senior management to design and implement approaches to enhance the people and organization capability for this Fortune 20 company. She has over 20 years experience in leading the organization and executive development efforts for a variety of high tech, biotech, and telecommunications companies, including Dell, Genentech, Celera Genomics, the MITRE Corporation, and MCI. Focus areas include leadership assessment and development, succession, retention, team development, and all aspects of organization development. She earned her B.A. in business from University of Phoenix, a M.S. in organizational studies

from the University of Pennsylvania, and an Ed.S. in human resources development from George Washington University. Her research for the D.L.S. will focus on approaches to strengthening critical thinking in corporate leaders.

