DeSales Students Shine in Moot Court

By Penny Savakis

The DeSales University team consisting of Joseph Holaska and Jennifer Pulcini, both seniors, secured first-place in the Moot Court competition held at Ramapo College in Mahwah, N.J. The two-member team also received individual honors, with Holaska, a law and society major, being recognized for Best Rhetorical Ability and Pulcini, a criminal justice major, for Best Overall Performance.

The occasion marked the first time DeSales participated in the Moot Court competition. Assistant professors in the DeSales University Department of Social Sciences Dr. Jennifer Moore and Albert Sproule, who also serves as chairperson, advised and coached the students and helped them prepare for the event.

"Jennifer and Joe took the initiative to participate in a new type of legal competition and worked hard to achieve fantastic results," said Moore. "As they both enter law school in the fall, this competition will help them achieve even greater success."

Moot Court is an appellate argument, no witnesses are called, and participants are not deciding guilt or innocence. According to Moore, in order to be successful in this type of competition, a student must have excellent oral advocacy skills and the ability to respond quickly to difficult questions.

"Moot Court competitions are typically reserved for the law school level," said Moore. "In these types of competitions, students pretend they are arguing an appellate argument on a constitutional issue before the Supreme Court of the United States."

The appeal to the Supreme Court involved two issues. The first dealt with the fourth amendment and the validity of a search. The second addressed whether or not the defendant fell under the Armed Career Criminal Act because of prior state law convictions that might constitute serious drug offenses. If so, the minimum sentence would be 15 years.

"Joe and I were able to effectively make note of comments made by the judges during each phase of the competition and then review them before the start of the next competition," said Pulcini. "This allowed us to use points the judges brought up during our argument and also to be more prepared for their questions."

Following graduation, Holaska, a resident of Allentown, Pa., plans to attend Widener School of Law to study corporate law. Pulcini, of Easton, Pa., plans to attend Quinnipiac School of Law in Connecticut.

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Psychology Students Present Research Projects

Thirteen undergraduate psychology majors from DeSales University presented their research papers at the 23rd Annual Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) Undergraduate Psychology Conference held at Lehigh University on April 19, 2008.

The students conducted research mentored by Dr. Boyce M. Jubilan, psychology professor at DeSales University. Their research projects and presentation are a required component of PS206: Applied Research Design & Analysis course offered every spring semester. The students’ studies are listed below.

Next year’s LVAIC Undergraduate Psychology Conference will be held at DeSales University.

Political Science News

Students in the political science program in the social science department were very active in the 2007-08 academic year. The DeSales Model UN Club successfully organized its 17th annual High School Model UN competition on March 29, 2008. Representing 8 regional high schools, more than 100 students from local high schools played the role of lobbyists to over 100 students from local high schools who attended this event.

Finally, political science majors participated in the “Senator for a Day” event held on October 25, 2007, in the DeSales University Center, sponsored by Pennsylvania State Senator Rob Wonserding, Vincent Coglianesi, Elizabeth Barra, and James Hirsch—representing the country of Djibouti on several General Assembly Committees dealing with topics such as Disarmament and International Security, Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues, and Decolonization.

Political science student Surdan represented DeSales University at the Model House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. in May 2008. This incredible four-day event brought together students from all over the country for a simulation of Congress held within the Halls of Congress and tutored by former members of Congress in the law-making process.

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The club also participated in the University of Pennsylvania Model UN Competition in Philadelphia from November 8-11, 2007. This was the club’s first competition since its inception in spring 2007.

Six DeSales students—Danielle Brady, Mike Bingeman, Rudy Hanna, Sama Shuhbjar, Jeff Simpson, and Gabrielle Titus—represented the country of Djibouti on several General Assembly Committees dealing with topics such as Disarmament and International Security, Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Issues, and Decolonization.

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The two new courses and appointed a new program director, Dr. Patrick McGin.

McGrain has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses since the Fall 2004 semester. He was appointed MACJ program director in August 2007, and he is the faculty advisor for the DeSales University Criminal Justice Association.

The following two courses have expanded the MACJ program curriculum: CJ515 — Topics in Criminal Justice was first offered in the 2007 summer session. The course focuses on review and exploration of compelling topics in the field of criminal justice. Throughout the course, criminal justice topics will be reviewed with guidance from professionals in a variety of criminal justice backgrounds and perspectives.

CJ516 — Criminal Profiling will run in the 2008 Fall session. This course is an overview of criminal profiling as practiced within the FBI’s framework of criminal investigative analysis and as practiced by forensic psychologists working with police departments. The course will focus on attention to case analysis and applications within the legal system.

There are faculty changes in the Department of Social Sciences coming this fall. After 13 years at DeSales University, Albert Sproule is retiring and will be stepping down as chair of the Department of Social Sciences. Although he will not teach as a member of the full-time faculty during the 2008-09 academic year, he will teach the criminal justice senior seminar during the day as well as a few ACCESS courses at night.

“Retiring from the faculty at DeSales was a very difficult decision, but it is the right time for me,” Sproule said. Dr. Katherine Ramsland will take over as chair of the department. She has been at DeSales since the fall of 2002. Ramsland is a professor of psychology and also teaches in the Master of Arts in Criminal Justice program.

Ramsland has distinguished herself at DeSales in a variety of ways—she is a prolific writer (more than 25 books), she started the Forensic Forum at DeSales, featuring nationally recognized forensic science experts, and she regularly appears on TV and in other media as an expert in her field.

The Department of Social Sciences has hired a full-time faculty member to begin teaching in the criminal justice program this coming fall. David Seip, a 25-year veteran of the Pennsylvania State Police, will teach a variety of courses related to criminal justice.

Seip brings with him knowledge and experience as a state law enforcement officer, many years of criminal investigative work, and teaching experience at the college level. Over the past several years, Seip has taught courses related to homeland security at Lehigh Carbon Community College.

Finally, Sproule wants his students, past and present, to know how much he has appreciated the opportunity to teach at DeSales. “I have great memories of watching students grow during their undergraduate years and then seeing them go on to productive and meaningful lives after graduation.”