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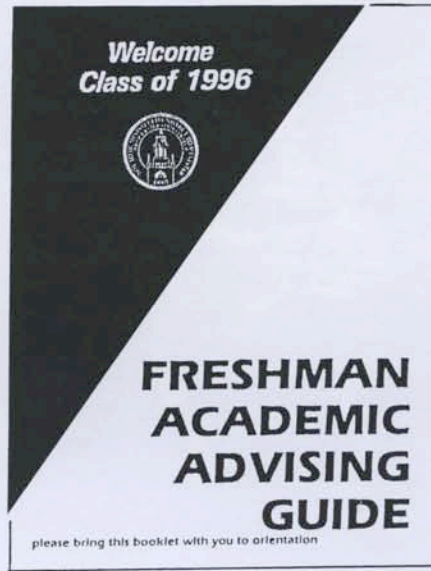
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Faculty Profile

Pauline Harrington

Pauline Harrington is one of those faculty members who, according to the old saying, wears a number of academic hats. Polly is a member of the Political Science Department and its internship coordinator. She is also one of the faculty advisors in the Academic Advising Center and the pre-law school advisor for the college. Wearing all these academic hats and balancing these responsibilities can be a distinct burden, but Polly handles her numerous duties with great ease and efficiency.



As intern coordinator, Polly supervises a number of Political Science majors each semester. Her job is to work with students to find the right intern opportunity and then follow the students through their experience, offering advice and ensuring that the workload is adequate to meet the college's standards. Over the years Polly has placed hundreds of students in intern positions from the Massachusetts State House to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Office to international organizations such as the World Affairs Council. Polly was most pleased recently to supervise the internship relationship developed with Massachusetts Representative Joseph Moakley in which the college supports a political science major for one semester as an aide in the Congressman's Washington office. Many of the students that participate in the internship program eventually find employment with the agency or organization they are assigned to, while others gain valuable knowledge about how the public sector really works. Through Polly's administration of the in-

ternship program, Bridgewater has developed good working relations with local, state, and national officials that has further strengthened the college's reputation as a center of educational excellence.

Because of Polly's fine advising skills she was encouraged to become involved as a faculty advisor in the college's Haughey Academic Advising Center. Named after its founder, the late Ed Haughey, the Advising Center is charged with assisting all incoming freshmen in making the transition from high school to the college environment and with the advising of upperclass undeclared students. As a faculty advisor, Polly handles a caseload of some one hundred and fifty freshmen who come to her for advice on course selection, tutoring, grade problems, and a whole host of adjustment concerns from how to manage time to getting along with a roommate to writing a term paper. Polly is in many respects what political scientists like to call an ombudsman, a person who solves problems in a large organization and responds to the needs of the clientele.

In her job as faculty advisor, Polly increasingly is finding out that pressures from outside the college are having an impact on students and student life. The home situation, job demands, the lack of money, and other personal issues many times affect the performance of the student. As a result, Polly has become more than an academic advisor; she is also a good listener who must be attuned to the concerns of the student of the 1990s. Because of the off campus demands of many Bridgewater students, Polly often finds herself seeking out students who are too busy, too overwhelmed or too troubled

THE NAPLA* PRE-LAW ADVISOR'S GUIDE

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to seek advice from someone who can assist them with dealing with the pressures of college life. Polly's major concern is that some students fall through the cracks and do not receive the kind of counseling that they deserve.

Serving as a faculty advisor takes a good deal of Polly's time (as much as twenty hours a week), but it is a job that is filled with personal satisfaction. To talk to students and help them get adjusted to Bridgewater or lead them toward support service that will lighten their load is most rewarding. Most students at Bridgewater give the Advising Center high marks for easing their transition into the college and serving as a place where they can get answers about the problems of adjusting to life on a large campus.

As if all this work beyond teaching political science courses is not enough, Polly agreed a few years ago to assume the responsibility of serving as the college's pre-law advisor. Polly is well suited to this task since she received her law degree from Suffolk University Law School in 1985 and is a practicing attorney. In her capacity as pre-law advisor, Polly works with the staff from the Career Planning

and Placement office, faculty members from the Writing Center and Charles Robinson of the Reading Lab to help develop programs that will better prepare students interested in pursuing a career in the law. This pre-law team approach has been most successful in answering student questions about law school selection, law school entrance exams, proper academic preparation and, of course, the opportunities for future graduates of law school.

In her role as law school advisor, Polly sees over twenty-five students a year. Polly has developed a mini-library of brochures from law schools and regularly attends meetings of the northeast Association of Pre-Law Advisors. With her expertise, Polly has been able to help students make the most beneficial choices with respect to their law career. Polly states quite openly that seeking admission into the law schools in the Boston metropolitan area is quite difficult and in many cases foolhardy since the competition is so intense. Polly regularly recommends students seek admission to law schools in the midwest and west where the opportunities are abundant. As she readily points out, many Bridgewater students have been accepted at prestigious law schools outside of Massachusetts and report back that their experience has been outstanding.

Polly has great plans for the future of pre-law at Bridgewater State College. She is currently working with faculty colleagues to enhance writing skills and in helping students prepare for the arduous LSAT entrance exams. She is encouraged by the success that Bridgewater students have attained at getting into law schools, in graduating from those schools and in passing the bar exam. Her advice to incoming students interested in the law — get a good liberal arts education with many challenging courses, enroll in a major that you are interested in, and develop your writing and reasoning skills. Polly cannot guarantee acceptance into a law

program, but if her track record is any indication, Bridgewater students should have no difficulty in pursuing a law career.

With this hectic schedule, Polly still finds time to tend to her cattle at the farm she owns in Duxbury. As a gentlewoman farmer and cattle rancher, Polly sees the work with her animals as a unique way of relaxing from the teaching and advising pace of the college. In many ways Polly is following in the footsteps of some of the early political leaders and lawyers in the United States — she blends an interest in the law and a respect for the value of public service with a love of the land. With such a combination the students at Bridgewater are well served.



Pauline Harrington