Happy Summer! It is hard to believe that graduation is already several weeks in the past. We graduated 40 POLSters and three MA/MPP students in a beautiful ceremony under the trees next to The Oval. Graduation is a time when alumni are naturally on our minds because we just created a new set. As we watch our students leave us and enter into the next phase of their careers, we are eager for news from past graduates.

The pace certainly slows down in the summer, but Emi and I never stop working on enhancing and improving the POLS experience. We are making course requirements both more flexible and more meaningful by emphasizing a variety of coursework experiences rather than specific content. Starting with the class of 2017, students will build their programs based on courses that provide knowledge, theory, and skills for leading educational organizations. By emphasizing types of learning and allowing more choice on content, our hope is that students will be more satisfied with their programs of study and well-rounded in their perspectives on education.

I hope you enjoy this edition of POLS Newsletter and pay particular attention to some
terrific opportunities for alumni to become involved in creating the POLS experience for the Class of 2017.

POLS Projects and Talks 2016
Depending on the year you graduated, you might have had no capstone experience, created a POLS Project presented in a poster session at the end of the year, or presented a condensed version of your POLS Project as a POLS Talk. The tradition continues with POLS Talks 2016. According to David Labaree, a recognized expert, the POLS Talks get better and better each year. Topics in 2016 ranged from improving the dining experience for middle school students in the San Francisco Unified School District to enhancing community engagement at Stanford to integrating a middle school magnet program into the school’s overall culture. You might like to take a look at the video of these and other POLS Talks.

Sincerely,
David

POLS Talks 2016
Don't miss the Second Annual POLS Challenge

I would like to invite you to join us on October 21, 2016, for the second annual POLS Challenge. Last year we had a great experience with our inaugural event. The POLS Challenge is a problem-based learning activity that brings current POLS students together with alumni in a simulated pitch experience. POLS students present an education reform idea to a panel of alumni who in turn give them feedback on their presentation and idea. This year's Challenge is timed to correspond with Homecoming Weekend. I hope you can join us. The activity will take place from 8:30 a.m. to after lunch here on campus. Please email me at Kuboyama@stanford.edu if you are interested in participating.

Emi Kuboyama
Associate Director
Registration in now open for the 2016 Stanford EdCareers Internship Fair on October 3

If you want intelligent individuals who are passionate about education and interested in contributing to your organization, please consider offering an internship to a current student. Employers who post their internship opportunity and register for the Internship Fair by August 24th will have their Internship Fair registration fee waived. For further information, please visit the Internship webpage or contact Loida Feliz at 650-723-0555 or at loifeliz@stanford.edu.

Reflections from the POLS Class of 2016

Katie Buetow

Throughout my career as a student, my typical attitude toward finishing a class was akin to that of a child finishing a model plane: satisfied, I set my newly acquired knowledge aside and, while I might tinker absentmindedly with it in the future, it would eventually collect dust on a shelf alongside half-forgotten memories and French verb conjugations. I was surprised, then, to find how differently I have come to regard my classes as a Stanford student. The knowledge I have gained about leadership, equity, and reform demands action. I can no longer afford to let what I have learned sit idly on a shelf. It is too timely, too relevant, too packed with the imperative to change.

My time as a student in POLS has been marked by a steadily growing sense of urgency. When I applied to the program, I was a third-year teacher at a liberal arts charter school yearning for a more expansive picture of the American K-12 system. I came to Stanford seeking understanding, and I found it alongside other rich rewards that I never thought to look for. My official program of study has allowed me to travel far beyond the bounds of pedagogical and organizational knowledge. I’ve studied history, psychology, and the law and learned how they are inextricably linked with educational equity. I’ve questioned the most fundamental purposes of government and confronted the ugliest—and
the most beautiful—human impulses. Through it all, the voices of my classmates have provided a plethora of wisdom and experience that has helped me to grow in conviction and compassion.

With the prospect of only one more term left between my life as a student and my re-emergence into the world outside the university, the action imperative implicit throughout my studies has become even more prevalent. I will savor these next ten weeks with the mingled regret and excitement of a traveler leaving a beautiful place and setting out for an unexplored one.

**Stephanie Frenel**

The aspect of POLS that attracted me the most was the level of autonomy in the program. I appreciated that Master’s students would have a year-long project at a site we could choose on our own. The POLS Project also gave us the autonomy to identify the problems and offer a solution-based action plan based on data we collect and published research. Autonomy is further reflected in our course selections. As someone who aspires to be a school leader, I am glad I can focus my graduate studies on classes that are more practical and have a direct application to my future career. For example, I have really enjoyed Gay Hoagland’s School-Based Decision Making class. We learn both theoretical and practical knowledge about the ways in which school leaders have worked to create effective schools. All of the weekly speakers are current principals, and their stories of their resilience and passion have been inspiring. Gay is also an amazing lecturer who pushes her students to realize that although there are specific factors that all school leaders must consider when managing a school, there is not one correct way to create a learning institution that addresses the needs of its students and embodies a positive school culture. The autonomy embedded in the program has given me the ability to create the POLS experience that I came here to get.
The POLS Class of 2017

We look forward to welcoming 30 POLSters into the Class of 2017. The incoming class includes:

- 30% (8) Underrepresented Minorities
- 10% (3) First Generation College students
- 13% (4) MA/MPP students
- 7% (2) International students (Australia & Hungary)

Alumni Updates:

Please submit alumni updates to kuboyama@stanford.edu

Maddie Orenstein, POLS Class of 2015

Hi Stanford family, I want to share a little bit about what I have been up to this year because so much of it is inspired from POLS! Leadership Public Schools (LPS) Richmond was named in the top 1% of schools in the country by US News and World Report, top 30 schools in CA, and the top high poverty school in the state!

The class that I teach at LPS, Senior Thesis Seminar, came out of alumni data that indicated a lack of preparation in certain areas. It is an honors class dedicated to teaching the college skills of reading dense texts, discussing, and practicing writing papers often. The topic of the class is Education Justice and the essential question is, What is the cause of the achievement gap? (Thanks Denise Pope!). Our students read Kozol, Delpit and Paul Tough. They are learning about the research process this semester and are doing their "POLS Projects" on Ed Justice topics presented in papers and presentations at the end of May.

In my role as Alumni Coordinator, I have been working with a rock star group of alumni at LPS Richmond to have them be community interpreters for our parents here in the community. This year's work culminated in a powerful event where ALL of our senior parents and students came together in round table conversations with the alumni to talk about the role of family in college. So much of this came out of my independent study with Guadalupe Valdes and tricks I learned from Gay.
And the last part of my role at LPS is to help students go on summer programs. This is so connected to college readiness! Exploring new things and meeting new people and just getting out of their comfort zones is vital to our students being able to handle the culture shock of college.

Thanks for reading all this!!! Much love, miss you all.