



THE D.C. AREA PHI BETA KAPPA ASSOCIATION

Founded on December 6, 1913

www.dcpbk.org

NEWSLETTER

suggestions@dcpbk.org

March 2022

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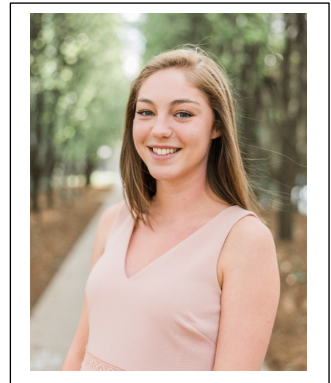
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New Mentorship Network Coordinator!

Elena Helmers-Wegman

We are delighted to welcome **Elena Helmers-Wegman** to our DCPBK leadership as our new **Mentorship Network Coordinator!** Elena is a senior associate at the Milken Institute Center for Strategic Philanthropy. She works on the Center's biomedical research team, where she advises family foundations on fusing scientific strategy with effective giving practices.



Her current portfolio includes management of the Misophonia Research Fund grant program, a multimillion grantmaking entity infusing research dollars into a nascent field of study. She also supports functions across the team, including programming,

event logistics, and publication. Prior to joining the Milken Institute, Helmers-Wegman studied English and biology at Wofford College, equipping her with scientific knowledge and writing skill for science communication and scientific grant management. She also has experience in the field of institutional advancement, strategically raising and directing funds for nonprofit organizations to meet impactful end goals. We are thrilled to have her on the board and leading our mentorship program!

Rebecca DeSantis-Randall, MPA, CAPM
President, DC Area Phi Beta Kappa Association (DCPBK)
rdesantis2@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

March Spanish Language Group Meeting

The DC Area Phi Beta Kappa Association (DCPBK) will host its next Spanish Language Group meeting on **March 21st at 6:00 PM EDT via Zoom** and it continues to be open to all skill levels. The meetings will be conducted in Spanish, so a basic conversational level is recommended in order to be able to participate in the discussion.

Click below to register. Once registered, you will receive a confirmation message with details on how to join the event. We look forward to speaking with you on **March 21st at 6:00 PM EDT**.

<https://dcpbk.org/events/#!event/register/2022/3/21/march-spanish-language-group>

This group aims to be a reflection of its members, so we will remain flexible and attentive to your interests and capacity.

Please contact Hadley Ashford (hadley.ashford@alumni.unc.edu) if you have any questions about the group or have trouble registering.

A German Happy Hour—Die Plauder-Stunde

March 24, 6:30-7:30 PM

As members of PBK, many of us have had the opportunity to learn different languages and immerse ourselves in other cultures. However, between the pandemic, careers, and the normal hustle and bustle of life, how often do we have a chance to sit down with friends to have a fun and relaxed conversation to practice our language skills and share stories of adventures abroad?

DCPBK will once again be hosting opportunities to practice German language skills in an informal, virtual setting. If you are interested in joining us to “*plauder*” about German culture, food, current events, politics, sports, US-German transatlantic relations, literature, music, or anything else, we welcome you to register [using this link](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to Kenny Sobek (jksobek@gmail.com) and Christel McDonald (ChrisJohnMcDon@aol.com).

Young Professionals (YP) Network

It’s really exciting that so many people are transitioning to in-person meetings, and YP wants to try that, too. We haven’t set up anything for March, but look for an in-person event for April, on the website and in the next newsletter. Also, if you are someone who has lots of good ideas for the DC YP Network? Or a cool event you think we would enjoy, please let us know!

If you are interested in getting involved with the DC YP network, or if you have any other questions or ideas for the future, please contact Hunter Hamrick (hunterhamrick@gmail.com)

International Health and Development Salon

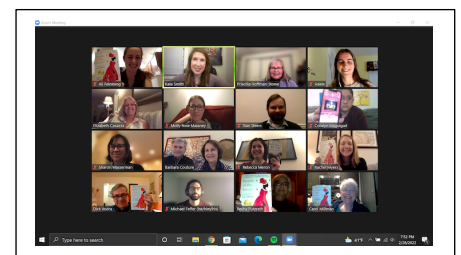
Our next quarterly Salon, to be held at noon on a Sunday in Spring, will unpack the latest trend in public and private development known as **ESG**. The acronym stands for **Environmental, Social, and Governance** dimensions in organizations. What standards are needed to ensure that we live in a world that is sustainable and just? Please check monthly newsletters, your emails, and our website at dcpbk.org for the date and joining instructions. Meanwhile, feel free to email **Dr. Deirdre LaPin** at dlapin21@yahoo.com for topic suggestions, information or questions.

Book Club News and Reviews

February Meeting Recap:

Parable of the Sower

The Spring series is off to a roaring start, with some of our highest attendance numbers since 2020 these last two months, despite



remaining in the Zoom format. It's surely a testament to our excellent selections, including Octavia Butler's dystopian and timely ***Parable of the Sower***. Published in the 1990s and set starting in 2024, many of our members found the tale a cautionary and plausible one, set in California amid lawless competition for natural resources and goods, a devastating drug epidemic, political apathy, and harsh survival in a world ravaged by climate change. Characters alternately yearn for a return to better times, deny the depths of their reality, and try to forge new socio-religious contracts as a means of survival and a reimagining of humanity's destiny. As in her book *Kindred*, which the Book Club read semi-recently, the smallest details of daily life depicted in ***Parable*** prove the most haunting. Other discussion topics included the influence of Buddhism on the text, the importance of memorials for mass death and destruction (both in the novel and in the real world), and the decision to set the novel in California, inextricable from America's frontier narrative.

I've posted our regular March meeting on the 30th to discuss ***The Silence of the Girls*** by Pat Barker. We are also meeting for a bonus March 15th meeting on ***The Handmaid's Tale*** by Margaret Atwood. Quite an intense pair, (believe it or not) inadvertently placed during Women's History Month.

Please see below for the remaining selections for the Spring 2022 Series:

- **April: *Until the End of Time: Mind, Matter, and Our Search for Meaning in an Evolving Universe*** by Brian Greene (Nonfiction, 384 pages)
- **Mid-May Bonus: *Fathers & Sons*** by Ivan Turgenev (Classic, 244 pages)
- **May: *The Skin of the Sea*** by Natasha Bowen (International, Nigeria/West Africa, 336 pages)
- **June: *The Sentence*** by Louise Erdrich (Fiction, 387 pages)

The Book Club will remain virtual through April, with consideration of in-person, or dual format offerings, starting in May.

I hope to see many of you there!

Sincerely, Kate Smith
Book Club Coordinator

Recent Events

Coffee & Conversation Series with Dr. Melissa Deckman

On March 10, a dozen or so Phi Betes and friends enjoyed a fascinating talk by **Dr. Melissa Deckman** on "**The Political Future is Female: Gen Z, Gender and Political Engagement**," which examined, in part, the significant impact that Generation Z women (18-25 years old) are beginning to have on American politics, and more broadly the impact of gender and religion on public opinion and political behavior. Her meticulous research, detailed in a statistics-laden Power Point format, showed clearly how younger women are becoming more "activist" in many areas, including gender equality, the impact on poor women of inadequate education and employment opportunities, reproductive rights, LGBTQ issues, government missteps, and more. While men are statistically more engaged than women in the areas of politics, business and the economy, these trends are also changing, with more women than men voting in the 2020 election. These younger women are also encouraging women to run for public office, and they admire such women at Stacey Abrams, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and (predictably) Judge Jackson. The illuminating and thought-provoking presentation was followed by a lively Q&A period.



Dr. Deckman is the Louis L. Goldstein Professor of Public Affairs and Chair of the Political Science Department at Washington College, as well as chairing the board of the Public Religion Research Institute, a non-profit research institute that studies the intersection of religion, politics, and culture.

If you have any suggestions for possible speakers, please don't hesitate to reach out to Dan Rosenberg at dmborg8@gmail.com.

Announcements

Mentorship Network News

We have new mentors joining our **Mentorship Directory**! If you are looking for career support, check out our lists of mentors by logging into the DCPBK website and reviewing our Mentorship Directory!

We are continuing to seek mentors! Currently, we have a need for mentors in political advocacy or non-profits, natural sciences (biology, chemistry, etc.), public policy, education, finance, and law. We are also looking for more mentors of all career stages and industries; young professionals who can support recent graduates, mid-career professionals who can help members become a supervisor for the first time, and retired members who can support members in seeing the big picture in their careers. Everyone has the ability to become a mentor! In addition, by signing up with the **DCPBK Mentorship Network** as a mentor, you will get access to resources and workshops that will help you develop your coaching skills and boost your mentor confidence!

Becoming a mentor for our Mentor Directory is a very low-time commitment! Mentors and mentees, once connected, can meet together on their own terms—virtually, in-person, once a week, once every two months, whatever they decide! To join the Mentor Directory, simply log into your account on dcpbk.org, click on “Profile,” and select “Check below if you would like to be a mentor.” Answer a few questions, click “save,” and you’re all set! To learn more about the new Mentorship Network, please visit <https://dcpbk.org/programs/mentorship>.

Rebecca DeSantis-Randall
DCPBK President
rdesantis2@gmail.com

Open Volunteer Position

Are you looking to get more involved with DCPBK? Our Board is currently putting together numerous committees to help organize events, raise funds, and engage with our membership, as well as getting more members involved who may be interested in growing into leadership roles. We are currently seeking applications for the office of **2nd Vice-President**.

2nd Vice-President

The **2nd Vice-President** is an officer of the DCPBK board and is responsible for coordinating the Association’s monthly programming for general membership, in collaboration with event sponsors. The 2nd Vice-President is NOT responsible for overseeing the programming related to the Young Professionals Network, the Book Club, or the Mentorship Program. Other duties and responsibilities include:

- Coordinating monthly programs for general membership. Examples include tours of museums, lectures, and parties. In particular, the 2nd Vice-President is responsible for helping to plan the two largest annual events for general membership: the Annual Holiday Party in December, and the Spring Fling.
- Marketing and promoting the monthly programs, which includes collaborating with the newsletter coordinator to populate the monthly newsletter with content, with the social media coordinator to

publicize events on social media channels and setting up RSVP portals for events through the website.

- Developing budgets and managing costs for programs when necessary, and helping to arrange transportation/directions when necessary.
- Attending quarterly meetings of the DC Area PBK Board
- Other duties which may be assigned from time to time by the President.

Applicants for this position should be members of DCPBK in good standing, and should have experience in outreach to community members, community engagement, utilization of social media platforms for outreach, and web-designing skills. If you are interested in this position, please visit our website at www.dcpbk.org/volunteer-positions or send an email to volunteer@dcpbk.org

DCPBK Spring Board Meeting

Our quarterly board meetings are open to any DCPBK member in good standing. The Spring board meeting will be on **Saturday, April 9th at 10:00 AM** on Zoom. You can register for the meeting here: <https://dcpbk.org/events/#!event/2022/4/9/dcpbk-april-board-meeting>.

DC Area Phi Beta Kappa Association Board

2021-2022 Officers

PRESIDENT: Rebecca DeSantis-Randell (Washington College, 2016)
1ST VICE-PRESIDENT: (Jim Stricker, George Washington University, 2015)
2ND VICE-PRESIDENT: OPEN
SECRETARY: Hadley Ashford (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2018)
TREASURER: Pat Cascio (Denison University, 1969)

At-Large Executive Committee Members

Breann Watt (University of California, Riverside, 2011)—Past President
Nina Kuo (Duke University, 2012)—Past President
Carol Bontempo (University of Connecticut, 1962)—Newsletter Editor
Liz Marshall (Lawrence University, 2009)—Past President
Kate H. Smith (Boston University, 2010)—Book Club Coordinator
Dan Rosenberg (George Washington University, 2014)—Member Engagement Coordinator

Advisory Council

Deirdre LaPin (Agnes Scott College, 1967)—Past Vice-President
Christel G. McDonald (George Washington University, 1986)—Past President
Paul Lubliner (University of Oregon, 2006)—Past President

Additional Volunteers

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COORDINATOR: Hunter Hamrick (Florida State University, 2015)
HIGH SCHOOL AWARDS COORDINATOR: Mackenzie Fusco (George Washington University,
MENTORSHIP NETWORK COORDINATOR: Elena Helmers-Wegman (Wofford College, 2019)



Love of Learning is the Guide of Life