Brianna Gavigan

Dr. Chad Murphy

Department of Political Science

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*State Policy’s Effect on Homosexual Residency Patterns*

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 After creating a project in Political Science 391: Research and Writing, I wanted to continue through the spring semester with similar research. The instructor of the course, Dr. Chad Murphy, advised me to continue working with my initial examination of minority residency patterns. I chose to look specifically at homosexual residency patterns and the influence that state policy has on migration. After obtaining demographic statistics on homosexual populations in all 50 states, I formed a set of three competing hypotheses. Based on previous research, culture/identity and economics serve as determining factors of residency. I test these theories and also include policy as a factor that can influence residency. Conclusively, among many findings, we see that states with restrictive policy towards homosexuals deter homosexuals from living there. States with the most restrictive policy toward homosexuals had a significant decrease in the homosexual population from 2000 to 2010.

 After obtaining intriguing results from my set of three competing hypothesis, I submitted my abstract to the Virginia Social Science Association. I was accepted and was able to attend the conference in Norfolk, Virginia on March 24, 2012. The majority of my expenses came from lodging, which was just over $100 for the night. Because the conference registration fee included lunch, I was only responsible for the remaining meals, as well as gas to and from the conference.

 Being able to present at the Virginia Social Science Annual Conference was an honor. I was amongst some of the brightest and most successful political scientists in the state of Virginia. My presentation was brief, which required me to choose the most relevant pieces of my research to present. Effectively summarizing a large piece of work is an important skill. With Dr. Murphy’s assistance, I was extremely prepared and gave a very professional presentation. I happened to be the youngest presenter on my panel, but that did not pose a problem. The other presenters were professors and graduate students, and they were intrigued by my research, and also provided me with useful feedback.

 Because I was able to attend and present at the conference, I am now a member of the Virginia Social Science Association. I connected with several people at the conference whom I hope to contact in the future with recommendations for my research, which is the most I could have asked for out of the weekend.