

A-State hosts Congress to Campus event

RACHEL RUDD

NEWS EDITOR

The Political Science Department hosted Congress to Campus, an event where two former members of Congress spoke about their experiences, on March 14. The event took place in the Humanities and Social Sciences building where the representatives spoke on Zoom while students met in person.

Arkansas State University is the first college in the state to host an event like this. Shane Broadway, the Vice President for University Relations, contacted the university with interests in hosting a bipartisan event to teach students about negotiation and the legislative process and design. The event was made virtual due to COVID-19 concerns during the time of planning in January.

The two speakers were former House Representatives Robert Goodlatte and Stephanie Herseth Sandlin. Goodlatte was a Republican member from Virginia, serving 13 terms and chaired the Agricultural Committee and the Judiciary Committee. Sandlin was a Democratic member in South Dakota's single house district for three terms and served on the Agricultural Committee and was the senior whip for the Democratic Party.

"It's always so important for the students to absorb and listen to all opinions," Butcher said. "We got to spend an hour with these people asking questions. (It) shows students more of a human relational aspect."

Before the event began,

students wrote their questions and submitted them to Dr. Jordan Butcher, an associate professor of political science. The students asked questions about one's own political views in regards to lawmaking, difficulties with the Senate and bipartisanship.

The students and speakers focused on bipartisanship and listening to constituents. They said a representative should put their own feelings aside and vote according to their constituents' desires. Sandlin, who supports climate change policy and healthcare reform, voted against bills containing these issues because she felt they didn't benefit her constituency. However, they stated one should not completely ignore their own conscience as well.

"I would vote my conscience but I also had to answer for those issues during my campaign when I first ran, and during reelection," Sandlin said. "I found that when you were honest with your voters about why you voted a certain way, you were more likely to earn their respect."

The speakers also placed an emphasis on bipartisan relationships. Sandlin and Goodlatte worked together on committees and remain friends to this day. Both stressed the importance of making allies across the political aisle, as it aids in bills being passed.

"(It is important to build) deep relationships and friendships, primarily with people on your committee, regardless of partisan affiliation, because so much of the work of Congress is done in the

subcommittee and committee structure," Sandlin said.

Goodlatte, who served on the House Judiciary Committee, said that his committee covered controversial topics such as gun control, abortion, immigration and constitutional amendments. He said working with people with differing opinions was critical to success and passing substantive bills required finding common ground.

"If you couldn't do that, you were not going to get the floor time to pass the bill through the House. You certainly wouldn't get it through the Senate, where the rules generally require having a supermajority to pass the legislation," Goodlatte said.

Goodlatte and Sandlin also spoke about the differences between the legislative rules of the House and the Senate. In order for bills to pass in the Senate, they must receive a supermajority of the vote, which is 60 of the 100 senators. In addition, senators have unlimited speaking time through the filibuster, which can also only be ended through a supermajority. They said it makes getting bills through the Senate more challenging.

The Political Science Department plans to host more Congress to Campus events in the fall. They are planning on hosting a two day event where former representatives would talk to classes in a question-and-answer format. The event would also have a forum that would be open to the public. The dates for this event are currently unknown.



Photos by Rachel Rudd | News Editor

Goodlatte and Sandlin answer questions provided by students. Butcher moderates the conversations.

A-State presents "Der Schauspieldirektor" opera

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LIFE EDITOR

The Arkansas State University Orchestra and Opera Theatre presented "Der Schauspieldirektor" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on March 8 and 13. The opera describes the experiences of Herr Frank, a theater manager, who is trying to assemble a company and interview actors and singers for the show. As the opera continues, there is a minor feud between Madame Herz, a seasoned French singer,

and Fraülein Silberklang, an aspiring professional singer.

The one-act comic opera gave students the opportunity to present the opera in its entirety. The March 8 show featured students playing the significant roles, while the March 13 show (originally scheduled for March 11 and postponed due to inclement weather) features Crystal Kachevas, adjunct voice faculty, and Dr. Marika Kyriakos, head of the department of theater, for the roles of the rival sopranos in the show.

"Coming off of three

semesters of COVID, I have to admit that getting to have a full production on an indoor stage was a huge breath of fresh air," said Rebekah McAlister, the director of the opera and instructor of opera, "Putting on this kind of show is hard work right up to the end. I tried to keep pushing everyone to never stop improving."

The music coaching was split between Kyriakos, Kachevas and McAlister. They also spent extra time instructing students with the same singing roles.

"This has been a wonderful

collaboration with the orchestra and theatre department," said Kyriakos, assistant director of the opera. "We had great fun learning from each other as actors and as singers, and working on the accents in French and German."

The March 8 production featured the following cast: Allison Jones, sophomore theater major from Jonesboro, as Herr Frank; Ian Thomas, junior vocal music education major from Conway, as Buff; Madison Wilson, junior vocal music education major from Paragould,

as Frau Eiler; Holly Henson, junior vocal performance major from Paragould, as Madame Herz and Papagena; Genghong Cai, senior vocal performance major from Zhaoqing, China, as Monsieur Vogelsang; Ally Summers, a senior vocal music education major from Jonesboro, as Fraülein Silberklang; Taylor Watkins, senior vocal performance major from Brookland as Papageno; Crystal Kachevas and Marika Kyriakos making special appearances. The personnel included Tia Duvall, Little Rock, as stage

manager, Dr. Marika Kyriakos as assistant director and Paydon Bradley for set design.

The March 13 production featured the following cast: Jones as Herr Frank; Watkins as Buff; Wilson as Frau Eiler; Kachevas as Madame Herz; Cai as Monsieur Vogelsang; Kyriakos as Fraülein Silberklang. The personnel were the same as the March 8 showing.

A livestream of both showings is available on the A-State Department of Music Facebook page.



Photo by Jordan Hearring | Life Editor

Jones (left) and Watkins (right) playing Herr Frank and Buff during the first act.



Photo by Jordan Hearring | Life Editor

Kachevas (left), Cai (middle) and Kyriakos (right) playing Madame Herz, Monsieur Vogelsang and Fraülein Silberklang singing a piece from the show.