

Rebecca Cristante, Dr. John Vanzo Serve on Panels

BC Student, Professor Featured at State Conference

Bainbridge College student Rebecca Cristante had the rare honor of presenting a research paper at this year's annual conference of the Georgia Political Science Association – the only undergraduate on a panel of professors and one graduate student. Her professor, Dr. John Vanzo, also presented a paper and chaired a panel concerning challenges in U.S. foreign policy.

About 200 leading political scientists in the state and scholars from around the world attended the meeting in Savannah. Ms. Cristante was assigned to the panel on Asian Studies that included scholars from Ghana, Pakistan and Australia. Dr. Vanzo's paper, "A Geopolitical Analysis of a Balkanized Iraq," examined the political, economic and military viability if Iraq were to be divided into separate ethnic/religious regions. He had presented an earlier version of it at the 2005 American Political Science Association Conference in Washington, D.C., where it evoked strong interest from academic and governmental analysts, he said in an interview for a Bainbridge College (BC) publication.

In her paper, "The Political Cult of Personality in North Korea," Cristante examined the "enormous discontent between North Korea's democratic-sounding constitution and the reality of a totalitarian communist dictatorship," she said. Of special interest to the audience was her description of the "cult of personality" surrounding North Korea's dictator Kim Jung-il.

Along with her examination of cult-sociology and propaganda, she noted in her paper the almost Christ-like miracles attributed to the "fatherly leader," including walking on water and turning sand into rice.

"It's incredible that these stories are taught to the Korean people as historical facts," Cristante said. "What's even more incredible is that, apparently, the stories are believed."

What makes Cristante's accomplishment more impressive is the fact that is extremely unusual for an undergraduate paper to be selected for presentation at a state conference, Vanzo said. "It's sometimes hard for professors to get papers accepted to these conferences, and it's considered a great honor for a graduate student to have one accepted," he said. "For an undergrad like Rebecca, having a paper accepted is just amazing. We are all so very, very proud of her," said Vanzo, assistant professor of political science and geography.

The cost of Cristante's trip to the Nov. 10-12 confer-



Above: BC student Rebecca Cristante (at right) talks about politics in North Korea's at Georgia Political Science Association's conference. She was the only undergraduate on the panel.



Inset: Dr. John Vanzo, BC political science professor, chaired a panel on challenges in U.S. foreign policy and presented his paper, "A Geopolitical Analysis of a Balkanized Iraq."

ence, was fully underwritten by Bainbridge College, which has a strong commitment to fostering students' scholastic excellence and professional development. Last year, BC student Jessica Schneider coauthored a paper with Assistant Professor Wynton Hall which they presented at a conference in San Antonio, Texas. Earlier this year, Assistant Professor Craig Burnside used Bainbridge College and federal funds to enable BC student Jennifer Fulghum to attend a marine research expedition off the coast of Galveston, Texas.

"The size of Bainbridge College is great for allowing one-on-one interaction between teachers and students, which makes it easier for students to fulfill their potentials," Cristante said. "The lines are never too long, and I like that. It's just a good school to get things done."

Cristante, who had her first "one-woman" exhibit of paintings at BC's Library this semester, is completing her first work of fiction, a novel, *Your Shoes Should Get Worn before Your Hat Does*. She plans to further her education of cultural affairs at Georgia State University in 2006.