By Jason Lupatkin ’13

On Wednesday, May 4th, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman spoke to the Stanford community in a talk entitled “Democracy and Energy: The View from Tahrir Square.” In front of a full audience of undergraduates, graduates, professors, and members of the community, in Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Friedman explored the evolution of Western attitudes towards the Middle East and the unintended consequences resulting from such attitudes. Echoing the tenor of his May 3rd piece “Farewell to Geronimo,” Friedman discussed the effects that “treating the Arab world as a collection of big gas stations” had on the development of social movements across the world. Drawing from his personal experiences while in Egypt during the February revolution, Friedman offered some hope for the future of the Middle East, describing his astonishment at seeing, for the first time, “martyrs for freedom” celebrated for sacrificing their lives, not to fight against Western institutions or governments, but to fight for the future and well-being of the Egyptian people. He went on to discuss the role of Israel in the politically volatile region and explored the relationship between food and oil prices and the stability of the Middle East. Mr. Friedman then took part in a discussion with Professor Larry Diamond and concluded by answering audience questions.
A Year to Remember

By Valentin Bolotnyy ’11, 2010-2011 Chair

As the academic year draws to a close, it is heartening for me to look back on all that SIG has accomplished.

We pushed the boundaries on the programming side of our operations, working closely with our advisors and with other student organizations to bring three Big Speakers to campus and to host a panel on Life in North Korea (see “Panel Discusses Life in North Korea” on page 4). We hosted a record number of policy lunches with guests who ranged from the former Chairman of the President’s Council of Economic Advisers to a geophysicist who investigated the Deepwater Horizon explosion. We also sharpened the mission of our work in the community, focusing on the civic education of grade school students in Palo Alto and East Palo Alto through partnerships with community organizations.

Our fellowships once again saw record application numbers as we evaluated and strove to improve existing placements while expanding into areas where we saw unmet demand. Our state and local fellowships saw the biggest changes, with the introduction of five environmentally-focused fellowships in cities like San José, Oakland, and Sacramento and the discontinuation of two San Francisco fellowships. We strengthened our partnership with the Omidyar Network, whose support allowed us to have fellows at Global Integrity and the Sunlight Foundation last year, by establishing a fellowship with the Project on Government Oversight in Washington, D.C. Another connection was made with the U.S. Campaign to Save Burma which will see its first SIG Fellow this summer. The biggest addition, and one of SIG’s proudest accomplishments this year, was the establishment of a partnership with the Brookings Institution’s Doha Center in Qatar (see “SIG’s International Presence” on page 8). Our announcement of the fellowship made the front page of The Stanford Daily and generated applications from students with advanced knowledge of Arabic and the region.

SIG’s development of the public service stipends program also has to be at the top of the list of our proudest accomplishments. The process of evaluating student demand, devising the exact structure of the program, and working with Haas and university personnel to bring the project, first conceived two years ago, to the fundraising stage required the utmost thoroughness and perseverance (see “SIG Unveils Internship Stipend Proposal” on page 5). The work done on the project this year by SIG’s Operations committee, with Alexander Berger ’11 and Lina Hidalgo ’13 in the lead, has been nothing short of extraordinary and has brought us very close to the project’s realization.

In its first year of activity, the Jeanne Wahl Halleck Fund allowed SIG members to pursue a project that they would have otherwise not been able to undertake. Galvanized by Adriana Rojas-Echenique ’14 and her passion for women’s issues, SIG organized the first Conference on Women’s Political Empowerment (see “SIG Presents the Inaugural Stanford Conference on Women’s Political Empowerment” on page 6). The conference brought together local and national women leaders with Stanford students in an effort to increase dialogue on the reasons behind the severe gender imbalance in US politics.

Continued on Page 4
Jared Cohen on Technology in Politics

By Adrienne Bryan ‘11

Jared Cohen ’04 (History and Political Science), a former member of the State Department’s policy planning staff, current director of Google Ideas, and one-time SIG international fellow, visited Stanford on January 12, 2011. In a packed Cubberley Auditorium, Cohen shared his ideas with the student body about 21st-century statecraft and the intersection between technology and politics. Drawing a crowd from diverse academic disciplines, students listened as Cohen tapped into his experiences meeting with youth and others who use technology to promote democracy around the world. He cited his SIG summer internship at IDASA, South Africa as contributing to his success, and he reminisced about how that experience encouraged him to pursue his passions in international interactions and democratic development.

Cohen argued that populations living in oppressed societies are more creative with technology: cell phones, Twitter accounts, and Facebook are often used to organize rallies, protests, and demonstrations. One such demonstration was a rally in Bogotá against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Organized on Facebook, the rally attracted millions of supporters, becoming the largest the capital had ever seen. When Cohen met with its principal organizer to talk about his strategy for attracting this large group of people to organize around a single cause, he was surprised to find that the man was an ordinary tradesman. Attributing the turnout to the power of technology, Cohen emphasized that ordinary people can change the political landscape.

Continued on Page 7
Note from the Chair

Continued From Page 2

The Halleck Fund was also instrumental in helping SIG honor a beloved mentor and friend. The passing of Professor Stephen H. Schneider last July was a blow to both the university and to SIG, compelling us to lead an effort to establish a memorial bench in his honor. Professor Schneider was one of four “generations” of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) authors honored for their work when the IPCC shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with former Vice President, Al Gore. With the combined efforts of numerous student groups, faculty, and staff, we were able to raise the funds necessary for its installation. The last steps of this process are currently underway, and the bench should be dedicated in the Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden, Professor Schneider’s favorite place on campus, in the next few months.

In handing the reins to a new and impressive SIG Board of Directors, I see a bright future for SIG. SIG’s accomplishments this year and over its now 48-year history would not have been possible without the selfless dedication of its members, advisers, and alumni, and this will be all the more true in the future. SIG will undergo a major transfer of institutional knowledge as Suzanne Abel, its treasured adviser of 16 years, steps down and Megan Swezey Fogarty, the Haas Center’s Director of Fellowships and Postgraduate Public Service, takes on the SIG advising role. With this change and with SIG’s expansion as a result of the public service stipend program, our support network — from the Haas Center to SIG’s alumni — will be crucial to its success. In recognition of this fact, all of this year’s graduating SIG members have donated either to SIG or to the Haas Center, pledging to be SIG’s backbone for many years to come.

I am immensely proud to have been a part of an organization that transcends any existing notions of “student group” and that defines Stanford as much as Stanford defines it. It has been an honor to work with some of the brightest and most driven students Stanford can boast, and to serve the Stanford community. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity.

Panel Discusses Life in North Korea

By Michel Lee ’12

What is life really like in North Korea? On April 17, SIG and the Korean Students Association (KSA) co-hosted “Beyond the Last Iron Curtain: Life in North Korea,” a panel discussion focused on exploring life in the most isolated and censored country in the world.

The event featured three panelists — Mr. Sung-Joo Han, who defected from North Korea in 2004 and now heads an activist organization of defectors in South Korea; Pastor Sun-Man Kim, a Seventh Day Adventist who has taught modern farming techniques in Kumgangsan and Sakhalin; and Professor Siegfried Hecker, co-director of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) and a regular visitor to North Korean nuclear facilities. The wide array of perspectives on North Korea was deftly moderated by Mr. Sang-hun Choe, a New York Times journalist and current Korean Studies Program Koret Fellow at Stanford.

“I cannot really remember my parents’ birthdays,” said Mr. Han. “But if you asked me anytime what Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il’s birthday’s are, I could say it even in my sleep.” Panelists drew attention to indoctrination, the stinted economy, and severe punishment and violence inside North Korea. This panel, attended by 150 people, represents SIG’s priority focus on expanding programming in diplomacy and human rights issues in East Asia.
SIG Unveils Internship Stipend Proposal

By Lina Hidalgo ’13

Since last spring, the SIG Operations Committee has been working on a new initiative to increase public service involvement on campus. In March, SIG Chair, Valentin Bolotnyy ’11, Vice Chair of Operations, Alexander Berger ’11, and I, as Director of Expansion Planning, presented the proposal for a new internship stipend program to the National Advisory Board of the Haas Center for Public Service.

The proposed stipend program is unprecedented in scope and will fund otherwise unpaid summer internships in public policy and politics for those who would not typically be able to participate in them due to lack of resources. The presentation to the National Advisory Board followed months of planning with Haas staff and SIG leadership, as well as with Chuck Ludlam ’67, a longtime SIG supporter. The project proposes a pilot expendable fundraising goal to support 10-25 stipends of $5,000 during the summers of 2012, 2013, and 2014. Once alumni of the stipend program can attest to the impact of their summer experiences, the goal is to build a program endowment, leveraging SIG’s 50th anniversary in 2013 and its large alumni population of prospective donors.

Based on nearly 150 applications for 39 SIG summer fellowships and a survey of undergraduates, the Operations Committee determined an overwhelming demand for this new SIG program. Out of 498 respondents to a winter quarter 2011 survey, over 200 (40.6%) answered “yes” to the question “If you had been offered a stipend for a self-arranged internship in public policy or politics, would it have changed your plans last summer?” Almost 80% of respondents who applied for, but did not receive, a Haas or SIG summer fellowship reported not taking a public service internship at all; the unmet demand is clear.

For many Stanford students interested in public policy and politics, unpaid internships simply are not an option, and paid opportunities are too few. There are students who are interested in public policy, but who are not competitive for existing opportunities because of their choice of major, the demands of extracurricular activities, or simply their youth. Since the few available paid summer internships in public policy and politics are highly competitive, students whose resumés do not reflect their interests in public service may not qualify. By offering a more accessible selection process, the stipend program will ensure that Stanford students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to pursue internships and, we hope, careers in public policy and politics.

For some students, pursuing unpaid internships can represent a significant financial hardship. Students on financial aid are expected to contribute roughly $5,000 towards their educational expenses each year. Many who might have considered careers in public policy or politics end up working in the private sector because for-profit companies are better able to afford recruitment campaigns and offer attractive pay for summer internships.

The proposed stipend program attempts to address this difficulty by enabling students to take unpaid or nominally-paid public service internships that can lead to entry-level positions after graduation. While not all students who earn a stipend will, in the end, seek a career in public policy, they will develop a more sophisticated understanding of how their interests relate to the work of the public or independent sectors. In the long term, generations of capable students exposed to public policy and politics as undergraduates will have a significant impact on the nation and the world, no matter which sector they choose for a career.
SIG Presents the Inaugural Stanford Conference on Women’s Political Empowerment

By Adriana Rojas-Echenique ‘14

Currently, women comprise only 16.8% of seats in Congress, 24.5% of state legislatures, and 1.2% of the nation’s governors. From an international perspective, the United States’ political makeup is by no means atypical, but as 72nd in the world in its share of women in the lower house of its national legislative body, it ranks only in the middle range.

No society can afford to squander the potential of half of its talent pool. Not only is having women’s distinct skills and priorities fully reflected in decision-making positions essential to creating a more productive and collaborative political system, it is also an important step in promoting the diversification of political leadership, bringing about a redefinition of cultural standards about women and leadership, and empowering the next generation of women political leaders in the United States and around the world.

Tapping new resources from the Jeanne Wahl Halleck Fund, SIG organized the Stanford Conference on Women’s Political Empowerment on May 7, 2011.

Continued on Page 8
Prince Moulay Hicham Ben Abdallah
Gives Fresh Perspective to Revolutions in the Middle East

By Britta Ellwanger ’13

Winter quarter, SIG was honored to host Prince Moulay Hicham Ben Abdallah for a campus-wide policy lunch about the prospects for reform in the Middle East. The grandson of the late King Mohammed V of Morocco, Prince Moulay is a visiting scholar at The Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, at the Freeman Spogli Institute, where he focuses on the Arab world and the politics of transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

Drawing from his own roots and academic expertise on the Middle East (BA in Politics from Princeton; MA in Political Science from Stanford), Prince Moulay provided a realistic framework for recent events and detailed a few case studies to illustrate the differences among countries undergoing revolutions.

Continued on Page 9

Jared Cohen

Continued From Page 3

Another well-known example of the positive force of technology is that of the Iranian elections in 2009. Twitter, the principal instrument of the opposition, had scheduled maintenance on the day of the Iranian election. Cohen found out about this and convinced Jack Dorsey, the founder of Twitter, to reschedule the planned work. As a result, the opposition was able to use Twitter as a vehicle for communicating unfolding events during the Iranian elections to the world.

Cohen then encouraged students to work creatively to encourage democracy. Immediately following the event, SIG students had an opportunity to ask him questions and engage him in dialogue at the reception in the Donald Kennedy Room at the Haas Center.
This one-day conference was open to students, faculty, and the community, and brought together relevant experts, academics, and political leaders to speak on critical issues in women’s political leadership in the United States. Guests included Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, California State Senator Elaine Alquist, and California Attorney General Kamala Harris.

Through this initiative, SIG raised awareness and engaged the Stanford community in advancing women’s policy issues, breaking down institutional barriers to women’s success in local and national politics, and designing effective and innovative strategies for empowerment.

Continued on Page 9
Prince Moulay
Policy Lunch

Continued From Page 7

Prince Moulay began the discussion by presenting what he believed were the two key points to understand about the Middle East revolutions: first, the case for Middle Eastern democratic exceptionalism is being completely rewritten at present; and second, current events are by no means an indication of imminent success in the transition to democracy. Contrary to the many connections being drawn between the recent explosion of political unrest in the Middle East and the fall of the Eastern Bloc in 1989, Prince Moulay urged us to compare recent events to smaller uprisings like the 1967 French Youth Revolution and the 1848 European Revolutions. The youth-led revolutions that have recently swept across the Middle East are only the first push against a long-established trend of authoritarianism. The future political landscape of the Middle East is still largely uncertain.

When asked about the variance in the socio-political framework of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, Prince Moulay responded that one key lay in the role of the army. From Egypt’s highly socio-politically embedded military to Tunisia’s largely apolitical one, the army plays a significant role in defining the course of revolution and future government.

Prince Moulay pointed to Turkey as an example of a transitioning Middle Eastern democracy in which the army continues to try to separate itself from the political sphere. Noting that the army remained a present force in many countries because of its organizational abilities, he emphasized that a lack of such organization and leadership amongst the young protestors would be the next problem that would need to be addressed. If the protestors who began the revolution were going to successfully end it, they would need to clearly define their political demands.

International
Presence

Continued From Page 8

The creation of the new Brookings Institution Fellowship is thanks to a large number of people; SIG members who proposed the fellowship; Dr. Shadi Hamid, Director of Research at The Brookings Doha Center and a former fellow at The Stanford Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law (CDDRL); Dr. Lina Khatib, Program Manager for the Program on Good Governance and Political Reform in the Arab World at CDDRL, who provided extensive help in coordinating with Brookings; and CDDRL for financing the fellowship’s first year. Other contributors include Professor Larry Diamond, who asked Dr. Khatib to work on the project and authorized the funding; Suzanne Abel of The Haas Center; and Megan Pierson in the Office of General Counsel, who worked on a legal memorandum of understanding that solidifies a longer-term partnership. SIG would like to recognize these individuals and organizations for their invaluable contributions towards creating this exciting new opportunity for Stanford undergraduates.

From selecting a new group of extraordinary candidates, to resuming two fellowships after a hiatus, to creating this new placement in Qatar, SIG is happy to offer Stanford students uncommon opportunities to study abroad, work on thesis-level research, and challenging personal and pre-professional experiences.
CCP Wraps Up Youth Council Leadership Workshops

By Andy Nguyen ‘12

Beginning in Fall 2010, SIG’s Campus and Community Partnerships Committee (CCP) started offering bimonthly leadership workshops to a group of 15 high schoolers from the Palo Alto Youth Council (PAYC). PAYC works closely with the Human Relations Commission and the City Council of Palo Alto to share information on issues relevant to youth. PAYC also studies problems, activities and concerns of youth, holds forums on these issues, and implements new community programs.

The set of workshops was developed by drawing on the expressed needs of PAYC and the expertise of CCP members, who have backgrounds in organizing, youth leadership and development, and nonprofit work. Each workshop was developed by an individual CCP member, reviewed by the rest of the committee, and presented to the PAYC off-campus.

To date, CCP has completed three one-hour workshops on the topics of Active and Appreciative Listening, Leading a Social Change Project, and Leadership Styles and Dynamics. As the 2010-2011 academic year comes to a close, CCP looks forward to receiving feedback on its leadership workshops program, to laying plans to continue working with PAYC, and to extending the program to other local youth councils and commissions.

Next year’s director Amy Showen, ‘12, will build upon the successes of this year’s programming to further empower Stanford’s surrounding community.
Letter from the New Chair

By Otis Reid ’12

Dear Friends,

I am very honored to have been named SIG Chair for this upcoming year. I joined SIG as Director of Communications my sophomore year and am currently a member of the International Fellowships team, which I was asked to join after I returned from Stanford in Washington in the fall. As both a Public Policy and Economics major, I have always been impressed with the breadth of work that SIG does across a variety of policy areas. The fact that this work is driven by students is what makes SIG such a special organization. Having been involved in a variety of student groups, I have consistently been amazed by the dedication of SIG members, including not only its leadership, but also its committee members. As SIG’s 50th anniversary is only two years away, this is an exciting time to be guiding SIG, and I look forward to the chance to continue and improve on its past successes.

SIG’s programming for next year will continue to offer great value to the campus. Public Policy Forum has already planned several major speaker events to kick off the school year and will bring major policymakers to campus throughout the year. These events will offer students exposure to the highest levels of government in a wide variety of areas. Campus Awareness will build on this year’s success by engaging students with professors and policymakers in an intimate setting, providing students with opportunities to speak informally with faculty. Campus Community Partnerships will increase SIG’s engagement with the broader community; with a presidential election coming in 2012, it will spearhead voter registration and education drives both on and off campus.

SIG will maintain its impressive collection of 39 existing fellowships, while continuing to look for exciting new opportunities. SIG also hopes to inaugurate its new program of public service stipends aimed at bringing students into public service from outside traditional paths. Fundraising for this effort has just begun, and we’re optimistic that we will be able to identify the resources to make it a reality. We hope that SIG alumni will be among the donors who help to fund this new public service initiative.

SIG will maintain a strong organizational culture through the efforts of the Operations Committee, which will offer a broad variety of community-building events, as well as providing crucial communication and budgeting functions. Communication between SIG members, the Stanford community, and our alumni will be essential to the continuation of SIG’s success, especially as the 50th anniversary celebration approaches. SIG will also continue to work closely with the Haas Center for Public Service. I want to wish Suzanne Abel, SIG’s Haas advisor who is stepping down after many years of valuable service, all the best in the future and to say that we are excited to begin working more closely with Megan Swezey Fogarty, who will be stepping into Suzanne’s (very large) shoes as our new advisor.

SIG has been an organization that I’ve loved since I was first introduced to it at the New Student Orientation activities fair. I’ve loved every minute of my involvement since that moment. I’m thrilled to be taking the next step and hope to continue to lead SIG in the extraordinary directions my predecessors have marked out. I’m passionate about public service and about how SIG fits into the public service sphere at Stanford. I look forward to continuing to shape SIG and to engage with each of you. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me as I begin my term this summer. I’m looking forward to a great year.

Sincerely,

Otis Reid
oreid@stanford.edu
Stanford in Government is grateful for the generous contributions from donors and alumni who support SIG programming, fellowships and other opportunities that help increase political awareness on campus. We hope that you will consider supporting SIG in its mission to engage students and faculty in a broader civic dialogue and to connect students with opportunities in public service. If you would prefer to support SIG online, please see our new donations page at sig.stanford.edu.

Yes, I’d like to support Stanford in Government’s programs! Enclosed please find my check (payable to Stanford University with “Stanford in Government” on the memo line) in the amount of:

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