

Political Science Professor Tina Zappile Named New Hughes Center Director

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NOTE: Tina Zappile is available for media interviews on local, state and national politics. Please contact Mark Melhorn, associate director for News and Media Relations at mark.melhorn@stockton.edu to schedule.

Galloway, N.J. — You could say politics and public policy runs in Tina Zappile’s blood because it literally does.

The new director of the [William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University](#) is the great-granddaughter of Malcolm Nichols, who was the mayor of Boston from 1926 to 1930.

“So, I kind of came to this job naturally in some ways,” she said with a laugh.

Zappile, who’s also an Associate [Political Science](#) Professor at Stockton, was named the center’s new director on July 1, after longtime leader John Froomjian retired earlier this year.

“It’s really coming back to my roots in studying public policy,” Zappile said. “All along it had always been part of what I studied, what I taught. I study international organizations and rules for the world. Public policy is the most important thing that impacts people’s lives.”

The Hughes Center was dedicated at Stockton in 2008 and named after William J. Hughes, of Ocean City, whose political career included 20 years as New Jersey’s 2nd District representative in Congress and three years as the United States Ambassador to Panama. He also was a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton.

The center serves as a catalyst for research on public policy and economic issues facing southern New Jersey and has also provided a forum for public discussion to engage citizens and policy makers.

“I see the Hughes Center as leading the way in terms of research on public policy issues that people in the region really care about, whether it’s immigration, energy policy or the cannabis industry, for example,” Zappile said.

Zappile wasn’t always interested in political science. She attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas as an undergraduate because she was interested in hotel business management.

“But then I took a political theory class with a great professor, and I thought, ‘Oh, this is how the world works, who sets the rules for the world, who implements them, who

benefits, who doesn't, who has power,'" she said. "They were just all interesting things that drew me away from pursuing business (as a major)."

She graduated from UNLV with a bachelor's degree in 2001 and a master's in 2004 in Political Science. She went on to get her master's in International Economics from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2007 and a Ph.D. in Political Science/International Relations at Nebraska in 2011.

She took a teaching position at Stockton in 2012 because she loved how the university encouraged faculty to be innovative and interdisciplinary. Since then, she has become the co-facilitator for the Stockton Critical Thinking Institute, the faculty advisor for [Model United Nations](#) chapter and the coordinator for the [Diplomacy Lab](#), a U.S. Department of State program that gives students, faculty and staff opportunities to solve real-world problems and inform policymakers.

All of which fits very well with the Hughes Center's locally focused mission, Zappile said.

"I've always thought that local issues are connected to state and international concerns," she said. "I don't see a difference between the different levels. It's just a matter of how we are implementing some of the policies that other people around the world are also concerned about."

In addition to continuing the center's roles as hosting local government debates and being a source for media to discuss politics, Zappile would like to strengthen the bonds between the center and Stockton's faculty beyond just political science.

"How do we meet the center's mission? We get there by increasing the research component and include more faculty from different disciplines," Zappile said. "We are going to be putting out calls for more research beyond just political science."

Other initiatives that Zappile wants the center to take on include bringing back a speaker series to the Galloway and Atlantic City campuses, restarting the legislator-in-residence program where politicians would come to classes, providing a home and reenergizing the Diplomacy Lab, and strengthening students' civic engagement.

The center, under the leadership of Research Associate Alyssa Maurice, will also continue to publish polls about issues affecting New Jersey. This year, the center released studies on legalizing medicinal mushrooms and oversight of artificial intelligence.

"In our mission to educate and engage stakeholders about important policy issues, we want to make sure New Jerseyans have a seat at the table. Our polling allows us to amplify the voices of residents in these discussions," Maurice said. "Tina brings her unique perspective and background to the center, and we're excited to continue our work as a forum for research and civil discourse under her leadership."

PHOTOS (credit: Susan Allen/Stockton University)

Tina Zappile, the new director of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, has taught at Stockton since 2012. Zappile hopes to create more research opportunities for faculty and students at the center, bring a speaker series to campus and continue to publish the center's polls about issues affecting New Jersey.

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Stockton University

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