

# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

## CONSTITUTION WEEK 2011

Spring 2012

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SUNY Oswego once again took time to remember what some may say is the most important document in the United States history. It represents the framework of our government and provides the basic rights and laws that we sometimes take for granted.

To remind us of such an important document and event, SUNY Oswego takes one week, September 12th—16th to coincide with the adoption of the constitution by the American Congress of the Confederation on September 17, 1787, to provide informational programs and celebratory events.

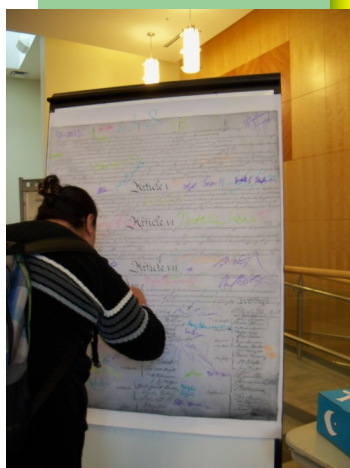
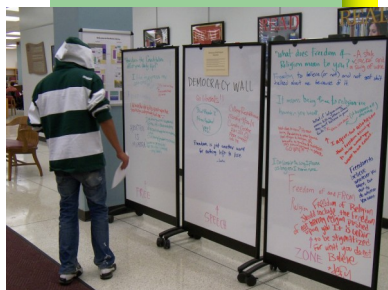
This years events followed the theme of “freedom of religion” in the first amendment of The Constitution. The weeks worth of events were highlighted by the key note speaker Zainab Al-Suwaij, Executive Director of the American Islamic Congress. Kicking off the Constitution week programs on Monday night Ms. Al-Suwaij, A political refugee from Iraq and a advocate for interfaith understanding spoke on details about her life in Iraq, experience as a refugee, and perspective on freedom of religion and free exercise. The headline event was well attended with more then 50 attendees.

To try and connect with students throughout their day, tabling was set up Tuesday and Thursday afternoon

with opportunities to provide information and chance to interact with the constitution week activates. Students were able to answer questions taken from the actual Naturalization Test to become an American citizen as well as sign our oversized copy of the constitution.

A panel presentation titled “Democracy and Freedom of Religion” was held Wednesday evening to provide information about current laws concerning religious practices and actual cases that have delved into the issues. Professors Altschuler, Zenor, Peterson were able to share their expertise concerning the free exercise clause, Native American religion, and provide a historical background of religion throughout history.

Students were able to take part in our debate on Park 51 as well as our freedom of speech white board that was placed inside Penfield Library which was preceded by preceded by an address by Dean Scharfenberger on the history of Constitution Week and other constitutional information from college administration. . Students were able to share their opinions and beliefs in what was a very well participated event throughout the week. The week culminated in a showing of the documentary “God in America” as well as “Knocking” on Tuesday and Thursday night.



## OSWEGO MAYORAL ELECTION



The Fall semester of 2011 saw the midterm elections take place. Locally the mayoral election took center stage within the City of Oswego. Republican candidate Dave White (pictured left) run against the Democratic candidate Tom Gillen. Both being born and reaised in Oswego set their sights as the mayoral position. White had 14 years experience as the supervisor of the Town of Oswego and close to 23 years of public service experience. Gillen on the other head had a life long business background with companies such as: AT&T and Bell Laboratories. Based on their background each candidate

campaigned behind their experiences. White looked towards quality of life issues including deterioration of the neighborhoods, the lack of strong code and zoning enforcement, and lack of leadership within the community. Gillen using his business background pushed for economical development where he pushed to attract technology based firms and knowledge based industries. Trying to empower neighborhoods and the community citizens. At the end of the elections Tom Gillen walked away as Oswego Mayor with close to a 2 to 1 advantage.



## UNDERSTANDING CHINA



On November 17th, 2011 the office of civic engagement organized a panel presentation to offer and introductory look at a growing super power. China, with a growing voice and power in to days world, is the United States largest trading partner with a population of 1.3 billion citizens. It currently produces 40% of American consumer goods and holds 36% of all foreign held U.S. treasury bonds. The program included a 20 min. Ted Talk by Martin Jacques providing a quick look into Chinese society and culture. Followed by a faculty led panel discussing specific

topics related to Chinese life. Professor Meijas and Professor Zenor spoke to IP law and the censorship of the internet. Professor Wan discussed basic business etiquette and information on doing business in China. Professor Peng gave a description of the education system in Mainland China and exchange student Sai Yang provided details on the differences and life obstacles concerning her stay in the United States, With over 115 attendees the program was highly successful and should lead to a growing number of international related programs.

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SUNY Oswego Civic Engagement



## Dan Grossman Warns of Global Warming

**"People are a major  
cause of the  
earth's fever... All  
the evidence shown  
proves that people  
are harming the  
planet."  
-Dan Grossman**

Dan Grossman, an award-winning science journalist and multimedia producer who has reported from every continent, came to Oswego Tuesday September 27th and addressed a crowd of 120 about global warming and its impact on the world and its remotest corners. The presentation was part of the Science Cafe series and was streamed through Oswego State's website which allowed viewers to submit questions through a Facebook widget.

Dan began to tell the chilling reality concerning the Earth's fever and global warming. He began by expressing that "In the science community there isn't any controversy... this [global warming] is a reality."

Grossman presented a graph which displayed the dramatic rise in temperature

from the 1850's onward. He attributes the rise in temperature due to the large amounts of carbon dioxide that began entering the atmosphere following the industrial revolution.

He claimed that in order to reverse the effects of global warming, carbon dioxide must be removed from the atmosphere and fuel use must be cut down.

