

APUS Faculty Member Receives President's Volunteer Service Award

By Laura Hunter, APUS Senior Administrative Assistant, and Christina Schweiss, Faculty Member, School of Security and Global Studies

APUS School of Security and Global Studies adjunct faculty member Christina Schweiss recently received the [President's Volunteer Service Award](#). Christina received the Gold level award for her volunteer work with her nonprofit, [Hampton Roads Chess Association](#) (HRCA), as well as with the Virginia Scholastic Chess Association, Virginia Chess Federation, and United States Chess Federation.

To be eligible for the Gold award, adults must volunteer at least 500 hours in a year. Christina volunteers a minimum of 120 hours a month with this organization, as well as volunteering with state and national level chess organizations as a tournament director, tournament committee member, and board member.

HRCA brings the life benefits of chess to people of all ages and abilities. It offers core competition clubs for kids and adults, school chess programs, and programs for at-risk youth, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities, and girls.

Benefits of Chess Playing

Chess empowers and leads to improved confidence for everyone regardless of gender, age, or disability. [Studies show that chess helps kids](#), including at-risk youth, improve in school and on standardized testing. The game improves focus, impulse control, pattern recognition, calculations, decision-making, planning, overall critical thinking, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

For seniors, chess keeps the mind sharp and staves off dementia. Also, chess has been shown (empirically) [to ease symptoms of TBI and PTSD in veterans](#).

HRCA was named 2017 Chess Club of the Year for the United States. Christina works almost full-time overseeing these programs and is working to open her nonprofit's own facility within the next two years. The demand for these chess programs is incredibly high -- more than the nonprofit can handle borrowing space only at certain times.

About the Authors

***Laura Hunter** is a Senior Administrative Assistant with the School of Security and Global Studies at American Public University System (APUS). She has been with APUS since January 2011, first as an Admissions Representative and then as a Senior Communication Advisor. Laura holds an associate degree in communications from American Public University, an associate degree in paralegal studies from Okaloosa-Walton Community College (now Northwest Florida State College), and a bachelor's degree in international studies from the University of Maine at Presque Isle.*

Christina Schweiss has taught for APUS since 2009. She has served in the United States Army for more than 20 years. She was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Signal Corps in 1992 upon graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point, where she earned a bachelor of science degree in management information systems.

Her military career took her to Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Gordon, Georgia; Haiti; and Germany before returning to school to earn her master's in international affairs from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. LTC(R) Schweiss was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy at West Point for 3 1/2 years, where she taught international relations, comparative politics, European politics, conflict and negotiations, and her nationally recognized stability operations course, "Winning the Peace."

In 2005, LTC(R) Schweiss was awarded the Apgar Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy. She is co-editor of the book "Old Europe, New Security: Evolution for a Complex World" and is also the published author of three book chapters and a journal article.

LTC(R) Schweiss' final active-duty assignment was as an instructor for the Joint and Combined Warfighting School at the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia, the "southern campus" of National Defense University. Prior to that, she served as the Interagency Branch Chief at the Joint Irregular Warfare Center at U.S. Joint Forces Command.

LTC(R) Schweiss is recognized throughout the Department of Defense as an expert in interagency collaboration and was called to Iraq in 2008 to assist General Petraeus with the creation of a Joint Interagency Task Force. LTC(R) Schweiss is now the President and CEO of the 501(c)(3) Hampton Roads Chess Association.