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The Importance of Research

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After countless hours of reading entries, copy editing, and proofreading, the first issue of *Res Publica* has just rolled hot off the presses. The first political science journal to honor the work of undergraduates at Illinois Wesleyan University, *Res Publica* is the product of students who are not afraid of hard work. The editing team as well as the students whose work is presented in the journal learned first hand that although conducting quality research and then compiling it in a journal is a time-consuming process, victory in the end is sweet.

The professors encourage students to publish their original work. "I like to see it," commented Dr. Robert Leh. "Submitting papers is a good indicator of a student's ability or interest to do graduate work." Dr. James Simeone noted that students who produce journals like *Res Publica* learn about perseverance and have the opportunity to see a project through to its final stages. Moreover, students whose submissions are chosen for entry in a journal "are forced to step back and take a broad look at their work." Dr. Simeone argued that students cannot fully analyze their findings until they take the time to refine their work and then present it publicly. Dr. Kathleen Montgomery concurred. "You cannot cut corners. You have to go through the entire research process. After choosing a topic, you must choose a research strategy, do the research, and make time to write rough drafts. The best papers students have given me are those that they have read to their peers. This gives students a chance to get input on their work."

Producing quality research as an undergraduate often helps students gain entry into law schools, graduate schools, or the job market. "The journal should bring prestige to our department and students," said Dr. Tari Renner. Professor Frank Boyd remarked that students' ability to conduct research in any field can help them to be successful in a future career. "It demonstrates that students have the ability to engage in original thinking and research on an issue."

Members of the political science department encourage more students to submit entries for next year's journal. "Students have to go out for themselves and conduct their own research in the real world," said Dr. Leh. So, for all those interested in submitting to the *Res Publica*, start your research now and don't be afraid to "just do it."

Jamie Ingle