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## A Note From the Chair

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Illinois Wesleyan University's Department of Political Science and our Pi Sigma Alpha Chapter are pleased to publish *Res Publica*, a journal of original undergraduate research. Our editorial board selects from among the submitted papers which appear to make the most substantive contributions to the discipline.

This publication reflects our department's increasing emphasis upon developing each student's analytical and research skills. We have made great strides toward these ends in recent years by restructuring our curriculum, in particular the Research Methods and Senior Seminar courses. As part of the requirements in the former course, for example, students are involved in all phases of a survey research project analyzing public opinion and attitudes. This includes survey development, design, sample selection, implementation (students do all the calling), data presentation, and data analysis.

In order for our students to observe contemporary political scientists presenting their latest research, the department sends students to professional conferences. These include the Midwest Political Science Association's annual meeting in Chicago and the national conference of the Center for the Study of the Presidency in Washington D.C.

Another shift toward the development of professional research skills has come from faculty involving students in their own research projects. Most recently, our students have worked with us in collecting data examining the impact of the line-item veto upon fiscal policies in American cities, party behavior in the Hungarian parliament, and state and presidential voting patterns.

The direct involvement of students in ongoing research will be even more pervasive in the future as a result of the department's receipt of an external grant to evaluate and monitor the court-ordered mediation program in Illinois' Eleventh Judicial Circuit and the opening of the new Center for the Liberal Arts which will include a social science research lab.

We are pleased with our recent progress and look forward to the continued development of an outstanding and innovative undergraduate political science program.

**Tari Renner**  
**Department Chair**