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Note from the Department Chair

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Note from the Department Chair

A Note From the Chair

Illinois Wesleyan University's Department of Political Science and our Pi Sigma Alpha Chapter are pleased to publish Volume IV of *Res Publica*, a journal of original undergraduate research. Paper nominations require a faculty sponsor from within the Department. The Editorial Board selects, from among the nominations, those which appear to make the most substantive contributions to the discipline. The works in this volume examine several important questions in Political Science using a variety of methodological approaches.

This publication reflects the Department's increasing emphasis upon developing students' analytical and research skills. We have made great strides toward these ends in recent years by restructuring our curriculum generally, and Research Methods and Senior Seminar, in particular. The latter course, for example, requires all students to apply what they have learned in Methods by completing an original research project. The research design and final product are publicly presented to their peers for evaluation and discussion.

Another shift toward the development of professional research skills has come from faculty involving students in their own research projects and student participation in professional conferences. In the past year, students have assisted faculty or served as co-authors, on a wide variety of topics. These include public opinion surveys of voter attitudes, differences in American state political party platforms, changes in voting behavior and political parties in the American South, the impact of a court-ordered mediation program in Illinois' Eleventh Judicial Circuit, legislative seat shifts in Hungarian Parliamentary elections, and executive-legislative bargaining in Bolivia and Ecuador. In addition, students have presented their research with faculty co-authors at the annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association and the Southern Political Science Association.

We are pleased with our recent successes and look forward to the continued development of an outstanding and innovative undergraduate Political Science program.

Tari Renner
Department Chair