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# Letter from the Department Chair

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## Letter from the Department Chair

## LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Volume XVI of *Res Publica* has arrived! For that we can thank the hard work of its student editors, especially co-editors Amy Uden and Michael Burgess. They have chosen capitols from here and abroad and from ancient times to the present to grace the cover: an appropriate choice given their conscious effort to produce a journal offering analysis on classical and contemporary themes and featuring international and American locales.

The impressive quality and variety of papers contained in this volume reflects the students' efforts, but it also reflects the culture of academic excellence the department as a whole has developed over the years. The culture is maintained by the faculty's commitment to a particular institution, the two-course sequence beginning with research methods and ending with the senior seminar. It is in these classes that students learn to channel their intellectual curiosity about the world into researchable questions, normative frameworks, and empirical models. The department is subject to the same forces we study: institutions shape our culture and culture anchors our institutions.

A short inventory indicates the amazing array of interests our culture of intellectual curiosity has created. From the national arena to the local venue in the US, and from international institutions to values among world nations, the range and variety of the topics studied is stunning. IWU political science students in this volume explore many unexpected places from Sub-Saharan Africa to Australia – even the “dark continent” of their own backyard, e.g., the McLean County Board. In reading this journal, you will move from the influence of the public mood on the US Supreme Court, to the impact of postmaterialist values on “hung” parliaments in Northern Europe and Canada, to an understanding of what will be required for Iran to transition to democracy.

Intellectual curiosity is indeed alive and well in our department. It ranges far and wide. Please let your own curiosity do the same as you peruse these pages.

**James Simeone**  
April 2011  
Bloomington