



May 2015

Letter from the Editors

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Recommended Citation

Kistner, Mike '15 and Bergman, Sarah '15 (2015) "Letter from the Editors," *Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research*: Vol. 20

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/respublica/vol20/iss1/4>

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Letter from the Editors

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

It has been a pleasure to serve as editors for *Res Publica XX*. Throughout the course of the semester, we have had the opportunity to receive, compile, and go through the editing process with fine examples of scholarship on the topic of both domestic and international politics. The impressive quality of the work submitted to this year's issue made the selection process difficult, and we truly appreciate the time that every author spent on his or her submission. Ultimately, we believe our final collection of articles is a worthy representation of the values that *Res Publica* has sought to inculcate in students over the past twenty years. As one of the few undergraduate political science journals in the nation, we are proud of the fact that *Res Publica* has served as a place for students to expand their writing and research skill set.

What might be most encouraging about this year's submissions, outside of the high level of academic merit of each article, is the fact that each piece has something substantively important to say on the mechanisms of how our political systems operate. Austin Aldag's article links the United Kingdom's changing political climate with both The Beatles and Prime Minister Harold Wilson to illustrate the appeal, and potential pitfalls, of populist approaches to assembling electoral coalitions. Annie Kehler writes about two recent voting experiments the American states are engaging in to illuminate the effect that such institutional changes have on voting behavior. Casey Plach, meanwhile, turns to the court system in the European Union to determine how country-specific judicial practices affect the rate of asylum recognition, and her research deepens our understanding of how national judicial custom can affect real world results. Daniel Truesdale dives headfirst into a considerable theoretical debate and evaluates the determinants of individual level voting behavior to come to a strong conclusion that has broad implications for how human beings think and vote. Finally, editor Mike Kistner examines how polarization and divided government affect legislative productivity across state legislatures in order to seek definitive answers about how legislatures work (and perhaps how they might work better) in a way that is broadly generalizable. These are all important questions in politics, and the immediately following material represents some (though not all) of the myriad ways that Illinois Wesleyan students are researching and investigating the political systems that we all find ourselves situated within.

Many people had a hand in the creation of this year's edition of *Res Publica*. We would like to thank our hard-working associate editors, Austin Aldag and Annie Kehler, who offered instrumental assistance and feedback. We must also thank Karl Winter for creating the exceptional cover artwork of this year's issue. Finally, this journal would not exist without all of the wonderful professors in the Political Science Department, who have continually supported us in our development as scholars.

Thank you for reading, and we hope you enjoy this year's issue of *Res Publica*!

Mike Kistner and Sarah Bergman