



April 2016

## Letter from the Editors

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### Recommended Citation

Aldag, Austin '15 and Guzman, Melissa '15 (2016) "Letter from the Editors," *Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research*: Vol. 21

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/respublica/vol21/iss1/4>

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## Letter from the Editors

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Many milestones happen during the life of an academic journal, and *Res Publica* just passed an important one. It can finally legally order a drink! Throughout the course of the past semester, we have had the gratifying opportunity to receive, compile, and go through the editing process with great examples of undergraduate scholarship. These papers took on a wide variety of topics, from an in-depth examination of congressional committees to a study of the linkage between online and offline activity, and much more.

Each and every one of our authors took contemporary problems, analyzed them, and wrote an article of high academic merit. While each of them analyze and propose answers to particular subject areas, the common thread running through all of them is the desire to share valuable and pertinent assessments of the world around us as well as solutions to the problems we find most relevant. Maggie Zeisset's article examines a particular area that has made headlines all throughout the country and the world. She derives an empirical model to determine the factors to xenophobia in an unlikely part of the globe. Lindsey Alpert writes about the institutional framework of the United States Senate and asks the simple question, is it fair? From that simple question, a masterful analysis of malapportionment arose. Associate editor Molly Willeford, too, asks an important question regarding whether or not women in politics in Sub-Saharan Africa truly are representing women's interests. In her analysis, Willeford ties together an impressive amount of literature and derives an original measurement methodology for woman-friendly policies. Preslav Mantchev dives headfirst in examining Belarus after the fall of communism and examining where contemporary Belarus falls in the rapidly changing international arena. Nicole Jovicevic creatively explores the linkage between offline student activism and online political engagement, a topic that resonates well with many college students. Lastly, Madalyn Browning-Perry applies Keith Krehbiel's theory of congressional organization to measure the successes of some of Congress's most prestigious committees. These are all important and contemporary empirical questions, and the following articles represent a small subset of the many ways Illinois Wesleyan students are researching and trying to conceptualize the political world that surrounds us everyday.

*Res Publica XXI* would not have been possible without the many people who were involved at every step along the way. We would especially like to thank our diligent associate editors, Molly Willeford and Sam Kasten. Both offered thoughtful feedback on every paper they reviewed, and additionally lent a hand when needed with the overall editing and publishing process. Also, we want to send a special thanks to Justice Macklin for creating a visual for our cover that ties together the variety of topics featured in this year's journal. It really helps bring the words on the pages to life! Student Senate allocated the funds for this journal, and for that we are grateful. Last, but surely not least, we must thank the phenomenal professors in the Political Science Department, who have continually supported IWU students as young and emerging scholars.

Thank you for reading, and we sincerely hope you enjoy *Res Publica XXI*!

**Austin Aldag and Melissa Guzman**