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## Editors' Introduction

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We are pleased to present the 29th edition of *Res Publica*, Illinois Wesleyan University's Undergraduate Political Science Journal. The production of this journal has been a monumental task, but the outcome is one that everyone involved should be proud of. The collection of papers submitted for this year's edition of *Res Publica* was remarkable. It was no easy task for us to select papers from such a remarkable pool of papers that we were presented with this year. We want to extend our deepest gratitude to those who took the time to submit a paper for this year's journal. The 29th edition of *Res Publica* once again features the work of some of the brightest minds at Illinois Wesleyan University.

While the issues addressed in this journal vary widely, all of the papers hone in on themes of engagement with, participation in, and even the creation of political systems. These perpetually relevant themes ask readers to think critically about not only the topics selected by each author, but their own role in the political systems underlying each one. The following pages will shed light on political systems ranging from the local to the global: illicit forces possibly fulfilling the duties of failed government bodies, government programs and their effects on participation, the reality of state education spending, and the disproportionate policy influence of select groups in the United States and elsewhere. Our authors carefully crafted hypotheses that get us ever closer to understanding the relationship of both individuals and powerful groups to local and national governments. It is our hope that these thought-provoking papers will inspire readers to seek deeper knowledge of and engagement with the political systems they exist within.

Without these great authors, *Res Publica* would not be the premier journal that it is. The papers presented here required extensive time, research, and commitment to intellectual diligence and honesty. Thank you for your efforts, authors. We also must thank the Political Science Department faculty who guided us through the entire editorial process. Thank you for challenging your students to be the best scholars they can be: the dividends can be found in this very journal.

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

Chase Beitz and Melinda Burgin