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A Note from the Chair

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A Note from the Chair

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Illinois Wesleyan University's Department of Political Science and our Pi Sigma Alpha Chapter are pleased to publish *Res Publica*, a journal of original undergraduate research. Our editorial board selects from among the submitted papers which appear to make the most substantive contributions to the discipline.

This publication reflects our Department's increasing emphasis upon developing each student's analytical and research skills. We have made great strides toward these ends in recent years by restructuring our curriculum, in particular the Research Methods and Senior Seminar courses. As part of the requirements in the former course, for example, students are involved in all phases of a survey research project analyzing public opinion and attitudes. This includes survey development, design, sample selection, implementation (students do all of the calling), data presentation, and data analysis.

In order for our students to observe contemporary political scientists present their latest research, the Department requested and received from Provost McNew a separate budgetary line-item for student travel to professional conferences. As a result, more than a dozen of our majors have attended the Midwest Political Science Association's annual meeting over the last two years.

Another shift toward the development of professional research skills has come from faculty involving students in their own research projects. Most recently, our students have worked with us in collecting data examining the impact of the line-item veto upon fiscal policies in American cities, party behavior in the Hungarian parliament, and Congressional incumbent vote margins in the 1992 and 1994 elections. In fact, a graduating senior this year (Anne Peterson) has co-authored an article with the Department Chair on municipal police and fire department personnel policies and expenditures in the *1996 Municipal Yearbook*, published by the International City/County Management Association.

The direct involvement of students in ongoing research will be even more pervasive in the future as a result of the Department's receipt of an external grant to evaluate and monitor the court-ordered mediation program in Illinois' Eleventh Judicial Circuit.

We are pleased with our recent progress and look forward to the continued development of an outstanding and innovative undergraduate political science program.

Tari Renner
Department Chair