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Letter from the Department Chair

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Letter from the Department Chair

LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

It is entirely fitting that the cover of *Res Publica* Volume XVII features a portrait of Marcus Tullius Cicero. After all, Illinois Wesleyan University is a liberal arts college, and Cicero was the quintessential citizen scholar.

Indeed, there was a time when every American liberal arts graduate would read Cicero as part of their general education program. Most learned Latin by reading Cicero's letters to his friend Atticus. But they learned far more in the process. The letters document Cicero's personal and public life, especially his heroic battles to save the republic and the Roman Constitution from the Cataline conspiracy and Caesar. Many students would have gone on to read his philippics against Cataline, his dialogues *De Oratore* and *Tusculanae Disputationes*, and his masterpiece *De Re Publica*. Through these readings, they would have encountered the precepts of the Stoics and Cicero's natural law philosophy, which revised Aristotle by forcefully arguing for the existence of a universal human law grounded in natural equality. Above all, they would have learned about the civic commitments of a cosmopolitan patriot who sacrificed his life to the cause of maintaining *res publica*, the public good.

Editors Lauren Contorno and Laura Gaffey have been faithful to Cicero's ideals in preparing the 2012 edition of *Res Publica*. They have acted as exemplary citizen scholars. They have sacrificed by spending many hours in the research lab producing this undergraduate journal of original political science research. They and their co-editors, TJ Luby and Sarah Latshaw, have selected papers seeking answers to pressing public-spirited questions, such as: How do negative campaigns impact voter turnout? How will the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* opinion change elections? Are cosmopolitans or patriots more likely to support green policies? Where is Waldo? What determinants drive legislators' votes on environmental issues? Is ideology related to personality type? Can the "security dilemma" delineated by international relations scholars explain nonviolent ethnic conflict?

The faculty in the department of political science applaud the efforts these students have put forth and the results they have achieved. Each of these papers was first drafted in the fall semester senior seminar class. Each has since undergone multiple drafts and revisions. Like Cicero, the authors have sacrificed for something larger than themselves, and like Cicero they deserve our appreciation. They did not have to die for the cause, but because of their efforts our world is a little more understandable and a little more tractable for us as citizens.

James Simeone