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## Letter from the Department Chair

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## Letter from the Department Chair

### **Letter from the Department Chair**

The work you are holding in your hands, or reading on a screen, is a remarkable thing. *Res Publica* started 28 years ago as a way to provide an outlet for some of the work of our students writing about politics. Over the years this has become a truly inspirational project. As a showcase for top-notch scholarship it has highlighted transformations in world politics: the rise of social media, the Arab Spring, popular uprisings in Latin America, the expansion of the European Union, Brexit, the rise of right-wing populism at home and abroad, the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war in Ukraine, and more. *Res Publica* remains one of the very few purely undergraduate research journals in the US dedicated entirely to politics. It stands as a strong testimony to our students' intellectual curiosity, their keen insights, and their work ethic. It is no exaggeration to say that the political science faculty are tremendously proud of this project.

But perhaps more importantly, this research journal gives physical form to our students' pride in their own work. Pride for having persisted through college during a pandemic, pride for mastering a challenging curriculum, pride for growing into a generation that has so widely embraced diversity and inclusion and all that implies, and pride for their ability to assemble these pieces of research that our student editors have so carefully shepherded to this stage. As the editors point out, a common theme here is that of change. Surely, this group of students has had to learn how to adapt over the past few years, and they have done so with aplomb. Whether it is Morgan Tadish's essay on German adaptation to a new reconfigured energy environment, or Rachel William's research on the political environment surrounding the Affordable Care Act, or Itzel Mendoza's study of feminism catalyzing broader social and political change in Latin America, this year's *Res Publica* certainly reflects the dynamism of our world's challenges but also our students' ability to grapple with these difficulties.

If you are a new IWU student, take the time to read many of these essays. They will help you set your sights perhaps higher than you previously had. If you are a parent or a friend of the university, take the time to admire the product of your support. These young authors who just a few years ago were still doing battle with the dreaded five-paragraph essay have matured into substantially independent scholars. The political science faculty remains grateful to all who made this 28th edition of *Res Publica* possible. Enjoy the read!

Greg Shaw

Interim Chair, Department of Political Science