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Letter from the Department Chair

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LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

In this, *Res Publica's* nineteenth issue, we encounter a fine collection of some of the best work produced by our students this year. Sponsored by the IWU chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, the national political science honor society, this *Res Publica* showcases the incisive thinking and very capable writing of students who each, in her or his own way, address various intersections between attitude formation – or in some cases big ideas – and political practice. Topics include the potential tension between the ideas of modern democracy and the ancient ideas of Confucianism, the political salience of second-hand smoke, the impact of economic conditions on violence in Northern Ireland, the dance between right-wing populist parties and European voters, the efficacy of family value frames as ideological metaphors, and U.S. Supreme Court justices' annual parry with one another and public opinion as they selectively assert their institution's role as the dark horse in American politics. These are thoughtful, challenging, and indeed delightful essays to read. This year's issue of *Res Publica* truly deserves a broad audience, so we hope once you have read it you will share it with friends, family members, and colleagues. We are quite proud of our students' accomplishments are thrilled to share some of those with you here.

Each year the curriculum in the Department of Political Science greets new members of our community with a series of introductory courses as they acclimate to college life. From there students branch out to explore a wide variety of areas running along the major dimensions of our discipline, from institutions and behavior, to American and international topics, employing qualitative and quantitative tools. By their senior years, many of our students have sampled broadly from this rich array of topics and experiences. As they undertake their senior research seminars – the source of most of these essays – they apply what they have learned. At their best, they produce the work you hold in your hands. The maturation of their analytical skills is truly remarkable over four years, and we are excited about the students' prospects as professionals and, importantly, as citizens. There is, of course, a bittersweet quality to the impending graduation of most of these authors, though as we see them go we dwell on the sweet, knowing they will take with them into a complicated, inter-connected, competitive, and (as Patrick Cavanaugh reminds us) dangerous world the knowledge, values, and skills they learned during their time at Illinois Wesleyan. The faculty members are grateful for their coming, and their going.

A particular thanks goes to *Res Publica's* lead editors, Nick Desideri and Ryan Winter, ably assisted by associate editors Lauren Burke and Patrick Cavanaugh. From start to finish *Res Publica* is a student production. We are proud of them for what they have done here, ' producing and sustaining what we believe to be one of the few undergraduate political science journals in the nation for nineteen years running. We also look forward to hearing about their outrageously successful careers and lives in the years to come.

Thank you for reading.

Greg Shaw