

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT | SPRING 2025

# NEWS&VIEWS



# LENDING OUR EXPERTISE

Politics and Government faculty engage the community in the 2024 election.

t is beyond cliché to refer to any presidential election as the 'most important election of our lifetime,' but certainly the November 2024 presidential election felt that way. With the importance of the election and our goal to serve as campus leaders in civic engagement, the Department of Politics and Government, with the help of many partners on campus, put together programming to educate students and members of the Illinois State University and Bloomington-Normal communities about the issues relevant to the 2024 election. Politics and Government faculty from every subfield participated by sharing their expertise, organizing events, and making connections across the University to create a multiseries program where hundreds of people turned out to learn. Members of the department worked with the Center for Civic Engagement, the Office of International Studies, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, the School of Communication, and other academic departments to carry out this programming.

The federal government requires that universities receiving federal funding engage in voter registration activities during years in which there are state and federal elections. Illinois State has a Center for Civic Engagement that organizes this work. For the 2024 election, the department sought to increase this engagement through its programming. As Bennion and Michelson (2023) note, college students become more politically engaged if they are exposed to political conversations. They argue "One of the primary purposes of higher education is to educate citizens for democracy ... current threats to our democracy make clear that colleges and universities must take proactive steps to fulfill the civic mission of higher education" (2023; 95). We worked to do so in 2024.

The first of the programming events was a series termed

#### **COMMON BELIEFS ABOUT**

### COMSPIRACY THEORIES

### ACCORDING TO DR. ADAM ENDERS

- 1. Conspiracy theories are "spreading," we are becoming more conspiratorial
  - News reports: Conspiracy theories "have never spread this swiftly" or "lodged this deeply in the American psyche," we are living in a "golden age" of conspiracy theorizing
  - 73% of Americans believe that conspiracy theories are "out of control"
- 2. Conspiracy theories spread primarily vis-a-vis internet and social media, in particular
  - 77% of Americans believe social media and the internet are to blame
- 3. Conspiracy theories motivate violence and other undesirable behaviors and attitudes







Dr. Adam Enders

"Democracy in Focus: the 2024 Election." This series was supported by the Harold K. Sage Foundation and the Illinois State University Foundation Fund.

In planning this series, faculty members provided ideas for what topics they thought would be relevant to the 2024 election. We used data from a study on registration and voting in the 2022 election to help determine which speakers might have a larger impact on the campus community. The first speaker in the series, Dr. Joe Tafoya from DePaul University, gave a research talk titled "Mobilizing the politically invisible: political participation and the unlisted Latino population in Chicago." Tafoya addressed the lack of mobilization of Latinos in Chicago, which has led to lower levels of participation among Latino men in particular.

Dr. Adam Enders from the University of Louisville gave a presentation on conspiracy theories, noting that their effect on American politics is more negligible than we might expect. In doing so, Enders explained the political psychology behind these types of beliefs. The third academic speaker in this series was Dr. Alexandra Filindra who gave the annual Hibbert Roberts Lecture titled "The Politics of Violence as a Threat to American Democracy." Filindra discussed her research on the violence that is endemic to American politics, and the ways in which local elected officials face violence and threats in carrying out their duties.

To round out the Democracy in Focus series there were two additional events. The first was a conversation with Mike Franken, a former Senate candidate in Iowa. Organized by Geeta Pasi, the Donald F. McHenry Visiting Professor in Diplomacy and International Affairs, and hosted by Dr. Meghan Leonard, this conversation examined what it is like to run for office. Franken encouraged students to get involved at the local level and to participate in politics even and especially when they are in the political minority. Also encouraging students to get involved, the student chapter of the ACLU hosted a panel with Dr. Joseph Zompetti of the School of Communication, and Ed Yonka, the director of communications and public policy at ACLU-Illinois. These panelists including Raseel Khwaiss, a political science major and a student activist on campus, discussed student protests and the First Amendment.

In addition to the Democracy in Focus series, many faculty members in the department participated in the International Seminar Series, which focused on the theme "Global Perspectives: Democracy and Elections Around the World." This three-part series examined the impact and effect of the American election on foreign policy and the international community. The first talk investigated U.S. foreign policy in this context and included participation by Dr. Ali Riaz, Dr. Michael Hendricks, Dr. Lane Crothers, and Dr. Yusuf

Sarfati. Each faculty member gave a short presentation about a part of the world they are experts in, which included South Asia, Latin America, the United States, and the Middle East, respectively. These provided attendees with some background on how the election may both change and be changed by foreign policy across the globe. In a later event, Department Chair Dr. Jim Scott described how the election of President Donald Trump was likely to impact the global economy. Scott explained how the economy may have helped the election of President Trump, noting perceptions of the economy and conomic indicators were not aligned in the U.S. and many parts of the world, leading to wide-scale rejections of incumbents globally.

Pasi also invited retired Ambassador Peter Bodde to campus. Bodde was formerly Ambassador to Malawi, Nepal, and Libya. Pasi interviewed Bodde, who shared his thoughts on, among other things, foreign policy after the election. Bodde, who has worked for the presidential administrations of both parties, suggested very little of the day-to-day work of the foreign service will change dramatically with the change in administration.

Politics and Government faculty also lent their expertise to the election film series, "Politics and the Media Machines," organized by members of the School of Communication. The series showed three films about elections and campaigns and hosted a discussion after each film. The films included A Face in the Crowd (1957), The Candidate (1972), and The Campaign (2012). Dr. Kam Shapiro participated in the discussion after A Face in the Crowd, Professor Erik Rankin participated after The Candidate, and Dr. Carl Palmer engaged in the discussion about The Campaign.

In an election where no less than the continuation of American democracy was on the line, the members of the Department of Politics and Government played an important role in helping the campus and the community prepare for these elections. Relying on our unique expertise in all subfields of political science, our faculty provided important perspectives on what to expect in the November election.

This article only touches on a small part of the way in which Politics and Government faculty participated on campus and in the community in 2024. Faculty also helped coordinate events on the environment and climate change, the criminal justice system, the Supreme Court, local politics, and much more. Dr. Noha Shawki brings students abroad for further engagement with the world. Professor Thomas McClure uses his expungement clinic to give legal studies students hands-on experience in the legal system. In the classroom, faculty have altered course offerings to include more civic engagement and Dr. Lori Riverstone has developed a course on political advocacy. Further, faculty often provided expert interviews to the media, helping the larger Central Illinois community understand politics and current events, especially the local impacts of these events. A university should train students to be active and good democratic citizens. The Politics and Government Department is working hard to do just this.

#### Chair's remarks

Welcome to this year's edition of the Department of Politics and Government newsletter. This past year has been marked by progress and change for our department community, and we are eagerly anticipating continued success and growth as we work together to



pursue our department goals. Many exciting developments underline our optimism as we enter 2025.

In this past year, our department family said goodbye to long-time faculty colleagues T.Y. Wang and Lane Crothers, who retired from Illinois State in June and December 2024, respectively. Our department's office administrator Jennifer Han also resigned to relocate to another state. I am privileged to join the department as the new chair, and to join Angie Meiners, our office administrator, Ashleigh Feger,

our new office manager, and Brittney Vietti, our excellent enrollment manager and adviser, to make up the office team. The department also welcomes Brandy Jolliff Scott as a new assistant professor who brings us additional expertise in international relations and comparative politics (Europe).

As our faculty, staff, and students work together, we continue to embrace "students-first" values that keep our focus on learning, opportunity, and success for our undergraduate and graduate students. We also continue to embrace the teacher-scholar model, with faculty committed to excellence in the classroom and in mentoring students, and to productive scholarship that contributes to our discipline and communities. This past year, members of our faculty have again received recognition and awards for teaching, and our faculty have again produced a substantial body of meaningful scholarship in the form of books, articles, book chapters, reports, and public-facing works. Through the teaching and scholarly components of our efforts, together we seek to sustain and expand our efforts toward engagement on and off campus.

I like to think of our department as committed to "front-porch" activities to connect us to our campus and communities and create opportunities for gathering and engagement, and "back-porch" elements that are designed to foster a vibrant learning environment in which our students and faculty thrive together. This past year,

our "front-porch" activities included many events for students, the campus, and the broader community such as the department's Hibbert R. Roberts Lecture, Political Science's election year series of campus lectures, and Legal Studies' evening with wrongfully-accused Alan Beaman, his attorney Jeffrey Urdangen who successfully pursued his exoneration, and journalist Edith Brady-Lunney, who covered the story over many years. Ambassador Geeta Pasi, the department's Donald F. McHenry Visiting Professor in Diplomacy and International Affairs also organized events bringing Vice Admiral Michael Franken and Ambassador Peter Bodde to share their insights with our campus community.

The department's "back-porch" activities focused on our community of students and faculty and our efforts to establish engaged learning. Our highly successful and fast-growing Legal Studies program was re-approved by the American Bar Association, further cementing its status as a leading program. Our department's rich array of experiential programs, including Model United Nations, mock trial team, Legal Studies Expungement Clinic, the Washington, D.C., trip, special travel courses, internships, and mentored research opportunities, among others, all saw success and growth over this past year. This past fall, the department began an intensive review of our curriculum to consider areas for change, adaptation, and growth to further engage with our students, foster their success, and expand their opportunities. Our students continue to thrive and benefit, with an impressive array of awards and recognitions for numerous individuals, and for groups such as our Model United Nations team, our Pi Sigma Alpha chapter, and our two mock trial teams.

Together, our front- and back-porch activities continue to position us at the core of ISU's success and efforts to "be a national leader in student-focused education connecting teaching, research, innovation, and intercultural understanding," and to do so by preparing "diverse, engaged, and informed members of society through collaborative teaching, scholarship, and service." As we do so, we continue to benefit from our amazing friends and supporters, especially our alumni, whose shining examples of success inspire our students, faculty, and staff, and whose continued commitment to our department's success and progress contributes mightily to our positive trajectory.

Dr. James Scott

#### **Editor**

Managing editor, Ashleigh Feger

### Internships by the numbers

Under the leadership of Director of Enrollment Management and Undergraduate Studies Brittney Vietti and Legal Studies Internship Coordinator Professor Thomas McClure, the department's internship programs were successful in 2024. There were 342 credit hours and 17,972 service hours logged for the public service internship, while the paralegal internship recorded 158 credit hours and 110 service hours. Public service interns worked with several political campaigns on both sides of the aisle, the Illinois Innocence Project, political offices, and non-profit organizations. Paralegal students interned at many sites including ISU Student Legal Services, Illinois Justice Corps, two different state's attorney's offices, AbbVie, Inc., McLean County Unit School District No. 5, State Farm Insurance, and a variety of private law firms in Illinois, California, and Texas.

### NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT

## Dr. Alexandra Filindra talks political violence in annual Hibbert R. Roberts Lecture

Dr. Alexandra Filindra presented her research, "The Politics of Violence as a Threat to American Democracy," on October 30, as part of the annual Hibbert



Dr. Alexandra Filindra

Roberts
Lecture.
The lecture,
organized
by the Department
of Politics
and Government, is
in memory
of Roberts,
who was
a faculty
member

in the department from 1969-92. The lecture brings a leading academic or activist to speak about their work on public policy-related issues.

Filindra explained the ways in which political violence is endemic to the American political system from the violence of the Civil War, to multiple presidential assassinations and attempts, to the insurrection of January 2021. Certain factors raise the specter of violence, including mistrust in government, elite polarization, and violent rhetoric, especially from leaders.

Filindra's research shows that almost half of elected officials have faced some sort of violence, including insults, violent threats, or harassment. Women and elected officials of color are more likely to experience violence. This violence can have negative effects on how elected officials do their jobs and on the recruitment of people to run for office. Political violence also has a negative effect on democracy.

Filindra is a professor of political science and psychology at the University of Illinois Chicago where she is a scholar and teacher of the politics of immigration, gender, and race in the United States. Filindra's work also addresses the rise of harassment, threats, and political violence against elected officials and their staff and how this affects democratic politics and representation.

## Appellate Court returns to hold oral argument at Illinois State University

The Illinois Appellate Court for the Fourth Judicial District conducted an oral argument at Braden Auditorium inside the Bone Student Center at Illinois State University on April 17, 2024. The event was co-sponsored by the Department of Politics and Government and the McLean County Bar Association.

The appellate court heard arguments in *People v. Reinking*. The defendant was appealing his conviction of unlawful delivery of a firearm. The prosecution alleged that the defendant gave his adult son, Travis, a semi-automatic rifle after Travis had been a patient in

a mental health unit within the past five years. Travis Reinking was convicted on charges of first-degree murder for the killing of four people at a Tennessee Waffle House in 2018.

The Fourth District is based in Springfield. This judicial body considers appeals filed in trial courts from 41 counties including Rock Island, Winnebago, Sangamon, and McLean counties. This court typically rules on over 5,000 appeals per year.



Outside of the Appellate Court of the State of Illinois

## Department of Politics and Government hosts 31st annual student conference

On April 24, 2024, the Department of Politics and Government hosted its 31st annual Conference for Students of Political Science. Over 100 participants presented papers and attended panels.

Presenters included undergraduate and graduate students from 29 universities across six different time zones, making this a truly global student conference.

Panel topics included International

Bargaining, Grassroots Democracy, Controversies in Public Policy, and the Politics of Fear, to name a few. Dr. Melissa Baker (University of Texas at El Paso) gave the keynote talk titled "Does

Continue on Page 6

Stress Make Us More Susceptible to Political Misinformation?" In the address, Baker discussed how stress weighs on mental health in ways that adversely affect political behavior. She noted that providing resources to reduce stress and improve mental health changes how people interact with misinformation and engage civically. Student attendees were

able to field questions to Baker, noting how important the issue of mental health is not just for student learning and success, but also for their ability to be civically engaged in today's world.

Panel discussants included faculty from Illinois State as well as alumni and professors at other institutions, including Purdue, the University of Illinois, the University of South Alabama, and the University of West Florida. Student attendees reported how encouraged they felt after presenting to continue moving their research forward. They also enjoyed discussing their work with fellow students as well as with faculty at other institutions.

# Brittney Vietti receives Extraordinary Experiential Learning Coordinator Award and is named chair of the Academic Advising Council



Brittney Vietti

Brittney Vietti, director of enrollment management and undergraduate studies for the Department of Politics and Government, has been recognized as the 2023-24 recipient of the Extraordinary Experiential Learning Coordinator award. Vietti received the award on behalf of Career Services at ISU for her role as the department's internship coordinator.

Awards are given based on student testimonies provided to Career Services. One student wrote about Vietti, "As a returning adult learner, she has made completing my degree a much smoother experience by helping me choose my classes and endlessly going over requirements and credit hours with me. She has also connected me with campus resources I needed so much."

Political science majors are required to complete an internship for credit as part of their major requirements. In addition to assisting students with seeking out internship opportunities, Vietti also teaches POL 398A01, Professional Practice: Public Service Internship.

Vietti is also serving as chair of the Academic Advising Council effective January 22, 2024. The Academic Advising Council (AAC) is an advisory council to the Office of the Provost. AAC membership represents campuswide advising constituents and works directly with the associate vice president for undergraduate education. AAC works to support effective and cohesive campus-wide advising by formulating and maintaining advising systems and procedures.

Prior to becoming chair, Vietti was involved with AAC as a department representative, has served as chair of the AAC Professional Development and Training Committee, and currently serves as a member of the AAC Mentoring and Connections Committee.

# The Department of Politics and Government holds its annual awards ceremony

The department held its 2024 Annual Awards Ceremony in the Old Main Room of the Bone Student Center on April 19, 2024. About 100 students, family members, alumni, retired faculty, current faculty, and members of the Attorney Advisory Board and of the College of Arts and Sciences attended the event. More than 30 graduate and undergraduate students were recognized in various subfields of political science and legal studies as well as for their overall achievements. The ceremony also included recognition of members of

both the award-winning Model United Nations team and mock trial team, as well as the induction of 14 new members into Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honorary society.

The ceremony also recognized faculty for their outstanding teaching. The program was jointly sponsored by the department and Pi Sigma Alpha.



Dean Heather Dillaway and Dr. T.Y. Wang with award recipients

### Legal Studies reapproved by American Bar Association

At its annual August meeting, the American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates reapproved Illinois State's Legal Studies program. This marks the third time that the ABA has granted its seal of approval on the program.

The ABA's paralegal education approval system is the only national program providing independent verification of quality.

To be reapproved, the program

submitted an extensive application, which was reviewed by ABA staff, an educational consultant, and a two-person team that visited campus earlier this year. Among other things, the ABA reviewed the educational program, assessment, library resources, faculty, admissions, student services, physical plant, and advisory committee actions.

Professor Thomas McClure, the director of Legal Studies, commented that,

"American Bar Association approval is the gold standard in paralegal education. Many law firms will not even consider applicants unless they have a certificate from an ABA-approved program. Our program has thrived since its initial ABA approval thanks to the strong support of the Department of Politics and Government and College of Arts and Sciences."

# Highlights from the McHenry Visiting Professor in Diplomacy and International Affairs

Spring 2025 was the final semester for the department's inaugural Donald F. McHenry Visiting Professor in Diplomacy and International Affairs, Ambassador Geeta Pasi, who has held the position since August 2023. This important position is made possible by a generous gift from distinguished ISU alum and long-time diplomat Donald F. McHenry (class of 1957), whose outstanding career included service as Ambassador and United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), and membership in President Jimmy Carter's cabinet from September 1979 to January 1981.

During her tenure as the first holder of this important position, Pasi made many important contributions to Illinois State students, the department, the University, and the broader community. In addition to teaching an upper-division seminar on a major international relations topic, Pasi made numerous presentations to a variety of departments, student groups, and events and series on campus, addressing such topics as the role of women as leaders, careers in the U.S. Foreign Service and other international affairs careers, and the role of communication in diplomacy and international affairs, among others. She has also contributed many public talks to community organizations around Bloomington-Normal, in Illinois, and elsewhere around the country. She provided her expertise and

insights through invited talks at other academic institutions as well, including the University of North Carolina and the Triangle Institute for Security Studies fall 2024.

Among the most important highlights of Pasi's valuable contributions as the McHenry Visiting Professor are the numerous speakers she brought to campus to enrich the academic environment, contribute to community engagement, and enhance student learning. In 2024, these speakers included former U.S. ambassador Tibor Nagy (whose multiple postings in Africa led to his assignment as Assistant Secretary of State for Africa from 2018-2021); former U.S. Ambassador Luis Arreaga (whose many assignments included service as the U.S. Ambassador to Iceland (2010-2013), Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (2016-2017), and U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala (2017-2020); Michael Ahrens, the Consul General of the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany); U.S. Ambassador Peter Bodde, whose long career in the U.S. Foreign Service included assignments as Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan (2006-2008), Ambassador to Malawi (2008-2010), Ambassador to Nepal (2012-2015), and Ambassador to Libya (2016-2017); and Vice Admiral Michael Franken, whose long military service included his final posting as deputy director of military operations for the United States Africa Command and who was the Democratic nominee for the U.S. Senate in Iowa in 2022.

The department is grateful for all the many contributions by Pasi and has benefited greatly from the opportunity to work with her as a colleague these past two years. Looking forward, we are in the process of selecting the next McHenry Visiting Professor for another two-year term and the opportunity to build on the ground-breaking work of Pasi.

### Office staff changes

**Jennifer Han** relocated to California in the summer of 2024.

**Angie Meiners** was promoted to office administrator

**Ashleigh Feger** was hired as the new office manager.

### Faculty changes

**Dr. James M. Scott** joined as the department chair and university professor in July 2024.

**Dr. Brandy Jolliff-Scott** joined the department as a full-time, tenure-track faculty in August 2024.

**Dr. Lane Crothers** retired from the department at the end of the fall 2024 semester.

### **FACULTY AND SCHOLARLY NEWS**

### Introducing the new department chair

In the summer of 2024, Politics and Government welcomed Dr. James Scott, who began his career as a visiting assistant professor in our department and now returns as a university professor and our new department chair. Scott's primary research and teaching interests are in international relations and foreign

policy analysis, with special focus on U.S. foreign policy-making (especially the role of Congress), U.S. democracy promotion, and democracy assistance and conflict. Previously, Scott served as the Herman Brown Chair and Professor of Political Science at TCU for 13 years and as department chair/head at

Oklahoma State University, Indiana State University, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney prior to that. He is delighted to return home, both professionally to the place that gave him his start in academia, and personally, as he grew up in the western suburbs of Chicago.

# Dr. Lori Riverstone awarded 2024-26 Eimermann Professorship



Dr. Lori Riverstone

Dr. Lori Riverstone in the Department of Politics and Government has been recognized as the recipient of the 2024-26 Thomas E. Eimermann Professorship.

Her research project will examine community advocacy efforts.

Riverstone graduated with a Master of Public Administration and a Doctorate in Political Science from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and joined the department in 2007. She recently received two three-year external grants (2023-2026; 2019-2022) from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support an annual publication reviewing recent efforts on the part of some states

to preempt or otherwise disrupt progressive local policies.

The Thomas E. Eimermann professorship was created through funds donated by Illinois State alum David Crumbaugh in honor of his former Professor Thomas Eimermann. Eimermann taught law-related classes for 38 years. Between 1992 and 1998, he was also chair of the Political Science Department.

# Professor Jason Cieslik publishes in *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*

On June 26, 2024, the *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal* published Professor Jason Cieslik's article, "Usurping Authority: Illinois Sheriffs Declare Law Unconstitutional." In the article, Cieslik examines the authority of numerous county sheriffs across Illinois who declared a new law limiting ownership, possession, and distribution of assault weapons, unconstitutional.

Cieslik analyzes a county sheriff's duties, including enforcement of the

law, which is codified by statute. Cieslik argues that those duties do not include declaring a law unconstitutional. The actions taken by the county sheriffs present a concerning situation to the public they are sworn to protect. This article also examines the circumstances in which an elected county sheriff could be removed absent voter approval. However, the removal of a county sheriff presents some obstacles procedurally and legally. Historically, the removal of

a county sheriff is an uncommon practice outside of an election. Regardless, some legal theories, although untested, exist that could hold county sheriffs account-



Professor Jason Cieslik

able for exceeding their authority and usurping power away from the courts.

## Dr. Ali Riaz to lead Bangladesh's Constitution Reform Commission

Distinguished Professor of Political Science Dr. Ali Riaz has been appointed to lead a commission to reform the constitution of Bangladesh by the interim

government of Bangladesh led by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus.



Dr. Ali Riaz

The appointment was announced by the government on September 18.

The Constitution Reform Commission is one of the six commissions appointed by the government to implement changes in the country's various sectors, including the judiciary, civil administration, and the electoral commission. Yunus became the chief advisor of the government on August 8, three days after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was deposed in a popular upsurge and fled the country. Hundreds of people have been killed during the upsurge. The

movement was spearheaded by students and reforming systems to prevent the rise of autocracy.

Riaz joined Illinois State in 2002. He is also a non-resident senior fellow of the South Asia Center of the Atlantic Council and the president of the American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS).

# **Professor Thomas McClure elected to ABA Senior Lawyers Division**

At its annual membership meeting, the American Bar Association (ABA) Senior Lawyers Division (SLD) elected Politics and Government Professor Thomas McClure to the SLD Council for a two-year term. McClure recently concluded a three-year stint as chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals. He has also chaired the ABA Paralegal Approval Commission for three years.

The SLD has nearly 50,000 of the most senior and accomplished members of the ABA. The division is active in providing member benefits such as magazines, e-newsletters, and webi-

nars through the expertise of its many substantive committees and under the direction of its dedicated leaders.

SLD Chair Karren J. Pope-Onwuk-we appointed McClure to a one-year term as a member of the *Experience Magazine* board. This award-winning periodical reflects the knowledge, understanding and experience that mature lawyers have amassed.

McClure was instrumental in gaining and maintaining ABA approval of the Illinois State University Legal Studies program as well as developing a legal studies major. He manages an expunge-

ment clinic as a joint venture with Prairie State Legal Services. Legal Studies students participating in the clinic prepare court documents for indigent clients who want to clear their criminal records.



Professor Tom McClure

### Scholarly activities

**Dr. Meghan Leonard** published an article "Democratic Backsliding in the American States: The Case of Judicial Independence" in *Publius: The Journal of Federalism.* Leonard also authored a book chapter "State High Courts and Horizontal Constraints" in the *Research Handbook of Judicial Politics.* 

Dr. Michael Hendricks published three peer-reviewed articles. In April, Hendricks and his co-authors published "Cultivating a Collectivist Community on a College Campus for Latinx Students" in the *Journal of Latinos and Education*. He also published, with co-authors, two articles in the *Journal of Underrepresented and Minority Progress's* special edition on Hispanics in Higher Education: 1) "Latinx College Students in a PWI: Perceptions of Inclusion,

Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA), Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction, and Access to Mentorship" and "Exploring the Pandemic's Impacts on Latinx Students' Learning." Furthermore, Hendricks received two internal grants to pursue his research. In May, he and interdisciplinary colleagues from Illinois State received \$6,000 from the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Inaugural Challenge Grant to explore IDEA in the implementation of floating gardens in the Chicago River. He presented their preliminary findings in October at the Dean's Research Challenge Symposium. In September, he received \$1,500 from the Office of Undergraduate Research's FIREBird Grant with undergraduate student Atharv Walimbe to research the impacts of international drug trafficking on individuals' decisions to migrate

from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. He shared their research at the "Governance & Violence in Latin American Migration" roundtable event that the University of Kansas' Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies hosted. In relation to this research, he also participated as a panelist at the International Seminar Series "Behind the Scenes of Global Politics" in September.

Professor Thomas McClure presented his study of the empirical consequences of there being no mechanism to prevent implicit racial bias in Illinois jury selection at the annual conference of the American Association of Paralegal Education in Alexandria, Virginia. He also taught several continuing legal education sessions, including programs to the McLean County Bar Association

Continue on Page 10



Continued from Page 9

on the law on sanctions imposed against Illinois attorneys and to the Kansas City Paralegal Association on the economic benefits of using paralegals. He instructed paralegals working for the U.S. Department of Veterans Administration, Office of General Counsel, Southeast District. Among other things, his presentation discussed the model guidelines for utilization of paralegals, the advantages of using paralegals, paralegal mental health and work/life balance, and supervisor feedback.

Dr. T.Y. Wang, university professor emeritus, has authored one book chapter titled "Critical Time: The Polarization of Partisan Politics and Democratic Backsliding in the United States" (in Chinese), and two blog posts in Taiwan Insight and East Asia Forum (peer reviewed). He also presented a co-authored paper at the 2024 American Political Science Association Annual Meeting and was a roundtable discussant at the 2024 Taiwan and Asia Program Conference and the Polish-Taiwanese Conference, respectively. Wang was invited to conduct a program review on the Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica. He continues to serve as the co-editor of the Journal of Asian and African Studies, a Steering Committee member of the Institute for Social Science Methodology and a board member of the Taiwan Research Academy.

**Dr. Lane Crothers** served as the university representative for the Faculty Advisory Council of the Illinois Board of Higher Education in 2024. He was a

contributor with "After the Insurrection: Prospects for Insurrectionary Populism in the United States After 6 January 2021," Journal of American Studies. He continued to serve as the managing editor for Populism (Brill), and reviewed manuscripts for the University of California Press and Routledge. Crothers presented "Institutionalism versus Populism: Assessing the US Government's Response to the Attack on the US Capitol, January 6th, 2021," at the American Politics Group Conference, Queen Mary University London, January 2024, and he was also invited to present "What Next?" for the McLean County League of Women Voters, November 2024, "Election Misinformation and Misunderstanding: The Power of Narrative," for the McLean County League of Women Voters, October 2024, and Election Misinformation and Misunderstanding: The Power of Narrative," for First United Methodist Church Normal, September 2024.

Dr. Ali Riaz published two books, Pathways of Autocratization: The Tumultuous Journey of Bangladeshi Politics (Routledge) and How Autocrats Rise: Sequences of Democratic Backsliding (co-authored with Md. Sohel Rana, Palgrave Macmillan) and three chapters to edited volumes—"Islamist politics in Bangladesh: The nature, scope and the pathway" in Fifty Years of Bangladesh: Economy, Politics, Society and Culture (eds. Rounaq Jahan and Rehman Sobhan, London: Routledge); "Bangladesh," in Introduction to South Asian Politics, second edition (ed. Neil DeVotta,

London: Routledge), and "Construction and Reconstruction of Identity of the Bangladeshi Diaspora," in Bangladesh on a New Journey: Moving beyond the Regional Identity (ed. Sreeradha Datta, New Delhi: Bloomsbury). He published two peer reviewed articles—"Identity, Faith, and Social Cohesion: How Bangladeshi Political Parties Approach the Challenges," and "Religion as a tool for authoritarian legitimation: The case of Bangladesh." Riaz contributed 24 commentaries in various magazines and newspapers including the prestigious magazine Foreign Affairs. He made five invited presentations at Dhaka University in Bangladesh; and Harvard, Yale, and Georgetown universities in the U.S. Riaz presented papers at the International Studies Association (ISA) and the APSA. Throughout the year, especially during the election in Bangladesh in January and the mass uprising in July, Riaz was interviewed and quoted by various international media such as CNN, BBC, New York Times, Aljazeera, and CBC on more than 50 occasions. Riaz was appointed in September 2024 as the head of the Constitution Reform Commission by the interim government of Bangladesh headed by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus. Riaz was re-elected as the president of the American Institute of Bangladesh (AIBS). In January, his book titled More than Meets the Eye: Essays on Bangladeshi Politics was endorsed by the Economist as a "must read" book on Bangladesh.

### **FACULTY RECOGNIZED**

### Dr. Michael Hendricks and Dr. Noha Shawki awarded Dean's Challenge Grant

Dr. Michael Hendricks and Dr. Noha Shawki received \$6,000 from the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Challenge Grant. They received



Dr. Michael Hendricks

this funding in collaboration with Drs. Joan Brehm (Sociology), Eric Peterson, and Alec Foster (both from Geography, Geology,

Their project focuses on the impact of floating gardens in the Chicago River, a

green infrastructure initiative supported by Urban Rivers. These gardens aim to counter climate change effects and transform urban waterways into wildlife habitats. The study monitors the community effects, considering floating gardens as green spaces for urban populations. While highlighting ecological and social benefits, it recognizes disparities in



Dr. Noha Shawki

access to green spaces, potentially exacerbated by floating garden installations. The project emphasizes the need to understand the interplay between environmental solutions and community dynamics for effective climate change mitigation and conservation. A broader goal is to promote inclusivity, diversity, equity, access, and community engagement in green space development. They will engage with communities through science communication events using participatory action research with stakeholders. They will analyze adaptable strategies for miti-

gating adverse impacts and translating research into actionable solutions for equitable and sustainable access to green spaces that resonate in all contexts. Their proposal is not just an academic endeavor; it is a holistic approach to the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change. They seek sustainable and equitable solutions, empowering communities and promoting social justice in conservation efforts and the fight against climate change.

### Dr. Michael Hendricks receives multiple recognitions

In April 2024, Dr. Michael Hendricks received the Center for Civic Engagement's Community Partner Award for his active work in the grassroots organization BN Welcoming. He was also nominated for the Center for Civic Engagement's Faculty Award. In August, Pi Sigma Alpha's Kappa Sigma Chapter received the Best Chapter Award. Hendricks has served as the faculty advisor for Kappa Sigma since the fall of 2022. Finally, in December, Hendricks received the College of Arts and Sciences Kenneth A. and Mary Ann Shaw Teaching Fellowship.

### Faculty honored at department awards ceremony

Dr. Meghan Leonard was awarded the Pi Sigma Alpha Excellence in Teaching Award, and Dr. Noha Shawki received the Hibbert R. Roberts Teaching Excellence Recognition Award.



Dr. Meghan Leonard and Dr. T.Y. Wang



Dr. Noha Shawki and Dr. T.Y. Wang



### STUDENT NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

### Mock trial team continues its tradition of success

After completing its 2023-24 season with an impressive showing, the mock trial team surpassed this success in the next season, which began in fall 2024. Two squads competed in both seasons.

### 2023-24 season (spring semester)

In January, squads 1011 and 1012 competed at the Colonel Classic Invitational sponsored by Eastern Kentucky University in Lexington, Kentucky. Squad 1011 went 5-3, and 1012's record was 2-6. Senior Trinity Allen was named Outstanding Witness with 19 ranks.

Both squads participated in the American Trial Association (AMTA) regional competition hosted by Washington University in St. Louis. Squad 1011 garnered a 6-2 record and qualified to advance to the next level of the AMTA competition. Squad 1012 went 3-5. Trinity Allen was named an Outstand-

ing Witness with 18 ranks. The tournament named Maya Brantley (19 ranks) and Ava Knapp (17 ranks) Outstanding Attorneys.

Squad 1011 competed at the AMTA Opening Round Championship Series in Geneva, Illinois. The team took two ballots from Michigan State University, split ballots with both Colorado College and Washington University, and lost both ballots to New York University. The team's record was 4-4.

### 2024-25 season (fall semester)

During the first half of the 2024-25 season, the Redbirds competed in seven tournaments against a combined field of 119 teams. The two squads competed in 36 rounds (72 ballots) over the course of three months. Squads 1069 and 1070 collectively amassed a win-loss record of 45-25-2, a win rate of 63%, with

an average of 5-3 across the season. Here's a list of the tournaments at which they placed:

1st, King of the Hill at Cornell College (7-1) 2nd, Dairyland Classic at Carthage College

(6-2)

4th and 5th, Huskie Cup at Northern Illinois University (5-2-1 and 5-3)

4th, Back to Normal Invitational at Illinois State University (7-1)

4th, The Fantastic Flyer at Lewis University (6-2)

In addition to the team awards, individuals were recognized for their outstanding performances. Senior Nick Kniebusch was named Outstanding Attorney at the Carthage College, Northern University, and Cornell College tournaments. Northern Illinois University recognized Denise Flores as an Outstanding Attorney and Jamani Reed as an Outstanding Witness. Ava Knapp was named an Outstanding Attorney by Cornell College. Lewis University honored Audrey Salamon as an Outstanding Witness and named Jake Podvrsan Outstanding Attorney with a perfect rank of 20.

Squad 1070 is composed of Grace Betts, Denise Flores, Viv Garcia, Jake Podvrsan, Jamani Reed, Audrey Salamon, and Katie Schafer. The members of squad 1069 were Leah Carcasson, Ava Knapp, Nick Kniebusch, Jackie Mykytiuk, Sara O'Dowd, Emmalie Parson, and Kyleigh Weir.

The head attorney coach is Bloomington attorney A.J. Blodgett, an award-winning member of the Illinois State mock trial team during his undergraduate career. The assistant coach is McLean County Assistant State's Attorney Spencer Chikahisa. Mock trial alum Grace Nord served as a volunteer assistant coach. Professor Thomas McClure is the educator coach.



The 2024-25 mock trial students

### Study abroad in Terra Madre

The Department of Politics and Government sponsored a study-abroad program in the fall semester of 2024. The program, involving five Illinois State students and led by Professor Noha Shawki, was organized as an indepen-

dent study project around a global event, Terra Madre. Terra Madre is a global gathering organized by Slow Food International and held in Turin, Italy, every other year.

The Slow Food movement seeks

to transform food systems into systems that are socially just, environmentally sustainable, and that produce good and healthy food for all. The Slow Food movement emphasizes the importance of preserving biodiversity in food sys-

tems and making food systems climate resilient, highlighting and centering the roles of peasant farmers and Indigenous peoples and their traditional agricultural knowledge and practices in efforts to bring about food systems transformation.

Students spent time studying the Slow Food movement and sustainable agriculture, reading extensively, writing reading summaries and reflections, and meeting to discuss what they read. These discussions focused on a variety of issues, including food sovereignty, agro-

ecology and sustainable food systems, and the philosophy and goals of the Slow Food movement. They attended a variety of events and workshops. In their free time, they explored the city of Turin. After their immersive experience at Terra Madre, students wrote reflections on what they learned in Turin, and they each completed a research paper on a topic of their choice. The topics students researched included participatory guarantee systems and Indigenous food sovereignty.



Students in Turin, Italy

# POL students attend Citizens' Climate Lobby Conference

Shyia Whiting and Becky Blood, both political science majors, as well as Kyleigh Weir, a legal studies major, traveled to Washington, D.C., in June 2024, to participate in the Citizens'

Greetings from

Attendees, from left, Kyleigh Weir, Shyia Whiting, and Becky Blood

Climate Lobby (CCL) Conference and Lobby Day. CCL is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization that engages volunteers from across the country in climate advocacy efforts. The three ISU students attended a student summit and various sessions as well as advocacy training workshops during the conference and then participated in the Lobby

Day activities on Capitol Hill. In their free time, the three students visited the National Museum of Natural History as well as notable D.C. monuments, including the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial.

Reflecting on their experience, the three students noted

that they had productive conversations at the student summit and that Lobby Day was a great learning opportunity, emphasizing that everyone they met with on Capitol Hill was open and receptive to the conversations surrounding climate policy and excited to see young people involved in lobbying.

Professor Noha Shawki, who coordinated and planned this program in collaboration with Matt Hartman, a local CCL volunteer in Central Illinois. noted that attending the CCL conference and Lobby Day provides students with learning opportunities and professional development experiences that complement what they learn in the classroom, helping them acquire valuable knowledge and professional skills. She added that the Department of Politics and Government has a longstanding commitment to providing students with immersive and experiential learning opportunities that augment their college experience and help them develop their civic skills.

### **National Model UN Team earns Outstanding Delegation**

Fourteen students from the Department of Politics and Government participated in the National Model United Nations Conference in New York City April 1-5, 2024. They represented Namibia in this international conference that brings together college students from different countries around the world. The students participants were Jack

Abraham, Jazmine Benson, Damien Broadhead, Annalise Daniels, Ash Ebikhumi, Johnnie Gordon, Allison Henrichsmeyer, Sara Jasim, Pano Kirimis, Ethan Larson, Sascha Palmer, Will Pounder, Trevor Shue, and Atharv Walimbe. They represented Namibia on seven different committees.

Prior to the conference, students

spent several months studying the history and politics of Namibia as well as the global issues discussed at this year's conference. During the conference, students spent several days discussing critical global issues and drafting working papers that addressed these issues jointly with other students in their committees. This year, these issues

Continue on Page 14

have encompassed many pressing global challenges, including the relationship



The 2024 National Model UN Team

between disarmament and development; eradicating rural poverty; the protection of the rights of children in armed conflict; environmental sustainability in the textile and fashion industry; and promoting restitution or the return of cultural property to its country of origin. On the last day of the conference, students attended the closing ceremony in the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations headquarters.

The ISU team was recognized as an

Outstanding Delegation at the end of the conference. This award recognizes students' knowledge of the issues they researched, their knowledge of the rules of procedure, and their leadership and active engagement and participation in drafting working papers that addressed these challenges jointly with other delegates in their committees. Two students, Damien Broadhead and Will Pounder, also received Position Paper Awards.

### Undergraduate student Atharv Walimbe and mentor Dr. Michael Hendricks receive FIREbird Grant

Senior undergraduate student Atharv Walimbe, along with his mentor Dr. Michael Hendricks, received \$1,500 from the Office of Student Research's Faculty-mentored Independent Research Experiences (FIREBird) Grant.

Their research explores the inefficacies of the global drug prohibition regime's inability to curtail drug supply due to persistent demand for narcotics in developed nations, particularly the U.S. The illicit nature of drugs and their high demand create a profit paradox where drug trafficking remains a lucrative, albeit perilous, enterprise. Despite stringent enforcement measures, traffickers adapt through phenomena such as the balloon effect and the hydra

effect. These factors make drug trafficking highly lootable and less obstructable. For instance, heightened U.S. pressure on Caribbean and Mexican routes in the early 2000s redirected trafficking channels to the Northern Triangle countries of Central America, exploiting their geographic proximity and weak governance structures. Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala have consequently become narco-states, characterized by political complicity in drug trafficking and stagnant economies crippled by pervasive criminality. Civil society in these nations is either complicit nor subdued by corrupt officials and criminal syndicates. The resultant socioeconomic conditions have forced many individuals to flee northwards, creating a significant narco-refugee crisis. Through collaboration with a local organization in Central Illinois, they will interview migrants from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to



Atharv Walimbe

document their migration stories and how drug trafficking and their respective narco-state governments contributed to their migration.

### STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

### POL student Jack Abraham receives Grabill-Homan Scholarship

Political Science major Jack Abraham is the recipient of the Grabill-Homan Scholarship, which is awarded by the Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies program. He is pursuing a minor in peace and conflict resolution studies.

Abraham has been involved on campus and in the broader community. As a student at Illinois State, he founded Citizens for Equitable Food Access (CEFA), a group of ISU students and

community members working to reduce food insecurity on campus. He also serves as the treasurer for Pi Sigma Alpha, the political science honors society, and is a member of the Planning Committee of the ISU chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Additionally, Abraham is an elected public official. He is an elected member of the McLean



From left, retired Chair Dr. T.Y. Wang, Jack Abraham, Dean Heather Dillaway, and Dr. Noha Shawki

County Board, representing District 6. He serves on several committees and advocates for immigrant rights, local government accessibility, and public official accountability and transparency. His activities on the McLean County

Board have also included efforts to update solitary confinement procedures in the county jail and to enhance police accountability. Additionally, he has worked to address issues surrounding housing rights and essential services. His priorities as an elected official reflect a deep commitment to peace and justice. Abraham plans to go to law school and hopes to practice public interest law.

### Kappa Sigma receives Pi Sigma Alpha Best Chapter Award

The Kappa Sigma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha (The National Honor Society for Political Science Students) at Illinois State University has been awarded a Pi Sigma Alpha Best Chapter Award for 2023-24. Kappa Sigma was one of six awarded to chapters in schools with undergraduate enrollment between 15,000 and 25,000. This is the first time Kappa Sigma has received this award.

These awards are intended to recog-

nize local chapters that are particularly active in their institutions and communities and that embody Pi Sigma Alpha's mission to stimulate scholarship and intellectual interest in political science. Pi Sigma Alpha Executive Director Dr. Tanya Schwartz said that Kappa Sigma's "commitment to meaningful engagement over the past year, even in the face of continued challenges, was impressive and serves as a model for all other chapters. I was especially impressed by the chapter's sponsorship of activities supporting student career development."

The Best Chapter Award includes a cash prize of \$500 for the chapter, as well as an additional \$200 to the chapter advisor, in recognition of their service and support of the chapter. Kappa Sigma was featured in an issue of the American Political Science Association's magazine, Political Science Today.



Members of the Kappa Sigma chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha

#### STUDENT RECOGNIZED

science honors society.

#### Sara O'Dowd named Bone Scholar

Political science and philosophy major Sara O'Dowd is the recipient of the Robert G. Bone Scholarship.

Students are nominated by their department/school to apply for the scholarship, generally in their junior year. Bone Scholars are students who combine broad and excellent academic achievement with campus and community engagement. They also demonstrate outstanding qualities of character and leadership.

At Illinois State, O'Dowd has been part of the Gamma Phi Circus, the College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, and the mock trial team. O'Dowd has also interned with the McLean County State's Attorney's Office in the civil division. In her tenure at ISU, she has contributed to our academic community, presenting twice at the Spring Research Symposium. She is also a founding member and the vice president of the Phi Sigma Tau chapter, the international Honors Society of Philosophers, has worked as a philosophy peer mentor, and is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, the political



Being designated a Bone Scholar is the highest honor an Illinois State University undergraduate student can receive. Bone Scholars receive a scholarship, commemorative medallion, and are recognized in a display in the Bone Student Center. Scholars are also formally recognized at a luncheon and at commencement.

NEWS & VIEWS

# HONORS/AWARDS Undergraduate Awards

Hibbert R. Roberts Outstanding Senior Award

Allison Henrichsmeyer

Alice Ebel Outstanding Graduating Senior Award

Riley Hickman Grace Nord

Alice Ebel Award

Freshman—Isabella Ebersold Sophomore—Brandon Yates Junior—Katie Gac Senior—Kerem Tasdan

**Thomas Wilson Internship Award** 

Myah Brantley Andrew Conley

Thomas More Scholarship in Political Philosophy

Ross Vancil

Frank M. and Hermina R. Giordano Scholarship

Tenesha Brown

Walter S. G. Kohn Award

Ash Ebikhumi

Jamal R. Nassar Scholarship

Lily Linden

John P. Freese Scholarship

Sara O'Dowd

George J. Gordon Scholarship in U.S. Public Affairs

Sophia Darnell Maria Lopez

Robert Bradley Scholarship Endowment

Sam Majka

**Equity and Inclusion Advocacy Award** 

Iazmine Benson

Dr. Frederick & Carlene Roberts Memorial Internship Fund

Antonio Campos Charlize Cramer

#### Subfield Awards

American Government

Michael Dabertin

Comparative Politics & International Relations

Mathis Chavand

**Public Administration** 

Jack Abraham

**Public Law** 

Madelyn Schutte

### **GRAD STUDENT NEWS**

### Saqlain Khurshid among winners of the Paul Simon Democracy Prize



Saqlain Khurshid

In April 2024, POL graduate student Saqlain Khurshid and fellow Redbird, Lyndsay Jones, proposed the development of an AI-driven chatbot that can answer voting-related questions, such as where to find a polling place or how to request a mail-in ballot. They were announced as project winners in May and spent the past several months developing the project. An initiative of the Paul Simon Institute of Public Policy at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, the annual prizes award funding for students to develop projects in their local communities that further the principles of democracy.

The interactive chatbot can answer a range of questions with information sourced and vetted from ISU's Redbird Voter Guide. Developing the chatbot involved collaboration with ISU's Center for Civic Engagement and Office of Technology Solutions.

The Redbird Voter Chatbot is now live on the Center for Civic Engagement website.

# POL graduate students participate in the 2024 International Studies Association-Midwest Conference in St. Louis

In November 2024, the department sponsored graduate students Vera Ackah, Imran Ahsan, Ali Ahmad, Proma Barua, and Cindy Ziem to travel to St. Louis for the annual International Studies Association-Midwest conference. In addition to attending multiple panels and paper presentations by faculty and students on cutting-edge research projects, the five graduate students also had the opportunity to network with faculty from a variety of academic programs and institutions from around the



POL graduate students at the International Studies Association-Midwest Conference

country. Highlights included their attendance at the 2024 Quincy Wright Distinguished Scholar Luncheon, where the 2024 awardee, Dr. Leah Windsor of the University of Memphis, received her award and presented a talk on the advantages of interdisciplinary research teams of faculty and students working on critical transnational problems.

### **Stevenson Center Spotlight**

Dr. Michael Hendricks, Applied Community and Economic Development (ACED) graduate student Matthew Stinson, and ACED alum Dane Myers participated in a panel discussion at the Normal Theater on November 11, 2024, regarding their experiences serving in the Peace Corps. The discussion occurred after the debut



Dr. Michael Hendricks, graduate student Matthew Stinson, and ACED alum Dane Myers along with other members of the panel

showing of *India 42: A Peace Corps Story.* Dr. Brent Simonds from the School of Communication produced the documentary that features a behind-the-scenes look at Peace Corps volunteers who served in India working with sustainable agricultural practices in the 1960s and how the experience impacted their lives. Hendricks served in Nicaragua and China, Stinson served in Rwanda, and Myers served in St. Vincent. Along with two other panelists, Hendricks, Stinson, and Myers answered questions from Simonds about their experiences serving in the Peace Corps and how their service impacted their lives.



#### **Pre-Law Awards**

Outstanding Legal Studies Student Award

Tyson Dicker

Carl Kasten Pre-Law Leadership Award

Jimmy Holmes

Tom Eimermann Outstanding Pre-Law Student Award

Megan Lowe

Barry S. Tolchin Mock Trial Leadership Award

Myah Brantley

Mock Trial Outstanding Witness Award

Austin Piercy

Michael A. Hall Mock Trial Outstanding Attorney Award

Grace Nord

#### Graduate Awards

Outstanding Graduate Student Award

Trevor Lewandowski

Graduate Student Civic Engagement Award

Terragan Brouk

Ali Riaz Graduate Student Award

Trevor Lewandowski

### Pi Sigma Alpha Inductees

Md. Imran Ahsan

Bruce Blowers

Damien Broadhead

Terragan Brouk

Tenesha Brown

Erin Gonzalez

Enrique Gonzalez

John Hall

Ethan Larson

Ben Moenning

Eduardo Monk

Carlos Morn-Toro

Sara O'Dowd

Elizabeth Schaiberger

### **ALUMNI NEWS**

### POL alum Casey Peterson awarded Bob Ady Scholarship

Politics and Government alum Casey Peterson, director of business attraction



Casey Peterson

for the Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council (BNEDC), has been recognized as an emerging leader in economic development by being selected as one of just five re-

cipients of the Mid-America Economic Development Council's 2024 Bob Ady Scholarship. Peterson earned his master's degree in political science in the applied community and economic development sequence in 2020.

The Bob Ady Scholarship Program was created to champion economic development professionals in their pursuit of professional growth and expertise. Offered to promising economic developers across 13 Midwestern states, the scholarship provides recipients with opportunities to attend conferences and receive professional mentoring from regional leaders and accomplished economic developers.

"Since joining our BNEDC in 2021, Peterson has jumped at every opportunity to assist Bloomington-Normal's local business community," said Patrick Hoban, CEO of the BNEDC. "This is an excellent opportunity for Casey and McLean County, as he will continue to develop his skills as an economic developer and promote our community at both Mid-America EDC's conferences."

"I am honored to be among the five economic developers selected for the 2024 Bob Ady Scholarship," said Peterson. "While we compete with every community across the nation for projects, the Mid-America states have a certain camaraderie due to our commonalities. I am eager to learn from my new mentors and bring more business to the Bloomington-Normal area."

### Department celebrates alums for Homecoming week

During Homecoming 2024, the Department of Politics and Government celebrated with two graduates who were honored during Alumni Day. Nora Atkins, at 2014 graduate from the department now serves as the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) senior specialist at COUNTRY Financial. In this role, she oversees DEI initiatives for COUNTRY and the Illinois Farm Bureau, driving efforts to create inclusive and equitable environments within these organizations. Jaimie Kent-Bowling received

both her bachelor's ('14) and master's ('17) degrees from the department. Kent-Bowling works for the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, an early childhood education (ECE) nonprofit that partners with stakeholders to advance equitable and quality education for all children across Illinois. As a senior instructional designer, she develops a variety of inperson and e-learning courses for early childhood professionals.



From left, POL Associate Chair Dr. Meghan Leonard, Nora Atkins, Jaimie Kent-Bowling, and Department Chair Dr. James Scott

### Alum speaks to POL students in development course

On February 21, 2024, POL alum Daniel Wagner spoke with students in



Daniel Wagner

the Department of Politics and Government's POL 296 professional development course. His discussion with students included his background, work experiences, and career and personal advice, with an emphasis on the importance of volunteering and the opportunities that volunteering can provide.

Wagner is an alum of ISU's political science undergraduate program ('89) and graduate program ('94), and he is currently senior vice president of government relations with the Inland Real Estate Group of Companies. Among other roles, Wagner is also the chairelect of the Illinois Chamber of Com-

merce and the vice chair of the Greater Oak Brook Chamber of Commerce Board, and he is a board member for the Civic Federation of Chicago and for the Chicago Farmer Association Board. Wagner is a winner of the Illinois State Alumni Achievement Award and a Hall of Fame Inductee of the College of Arts and Sciences.

### **2024 DONORS**

### Thank you!

Gifts were received between January 1 and December 31, 2024.

Bradley Allen
Craig Antas
Paul Bateman
William Bell
A. J. Blodgett
Alexander Boettcher
Robert Bradley
Bradley Bunker
Lance Ruiz Carlile
Kate Childs
Kevin Conner
Patrick Cotter
Michael De
Bisschop
James Durkin
Tom Eimermann
Carl Ervin
Bill Farrell
Hardy Figueroa
Bonnie Sue Fisher
John Foltz

Kelly Franklin		
John Freese		
Bob Freitag		
Gerald Giordano		
George Gordon		
Richard Greenfield		
Robert Hansen		
Susan Hickel		
Mark Hocker		
Jillene Hoffman		
Kenneth Janda		
Michael Jankowski		
Carl Kasten		
Martin Kasten		
Jeremy Kelley		
Kevin Hammer		
Jon Kindseth		
Scott Kording		
Mary Locke		
Bernadette Lorenzo		

David Sam
Timothy Schweizer
Roger Shoup
Bill Simpson
Avery Spranger
Harriett Steinbach
Barbara Stiehl
Taylor Struckmeyer
Ray Taseff
Rachael Toft
Michael Tristano
William Turner
Denise Vowell
Dan Wagner
Valerie Wagoner
Timothy Webster
Denise Williams
Kay Wilson
Zack Wolfe

Kimberly Wright



For more information, visit **Homecoming.IllinoisState.edu** 



Department of Politics and Government

Campus Box 4600 Normal, IL 61790-4600

This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting the Department of Politics and Government at (309) 438-8638.

An equal opportunity/affirmative action university encouraging diversity • University Marketing and Communications 25-30533

### YOUR GIFT MAKES A REDBIRD DREAM POSSIBLE!

PLEASE DESIGNATE MY GIFT TO THE FOLLOWING:	OPTION 3: Make a gift online at Giving.IllinoisState.edu.	
$\hfill\Box$ department of politics and government fund (4605254)		
☐ COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT/OTHER:	Name(s)	
GIVING OPTIONS	Address	
☐ A sustainable recurring gift in the amount of \$,	City State ZIP	
☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ semiannually ☐ annually	( ) □ mobile □ home	
$\square$ A one-time gift in the amount of \$	Preferred phone number	
WAYS TO GIVE	OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT ISU	
OPTION 1: Check. A check for my gift of \$ payable to	$\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ $	
Illinois State University Foundation is enclosed.		
OPTION 2: Credit Card:	☐ Please send me information about ways to support ISU through a provision in my will, trust, retirement plan, or other deferred gift arrangement.	
$\square$ VISA $\square$ MASTERCARD $\square$ DISCOVER $\square$ AMERICAN EXPRESS	$\hfill \square$ I have already included ISU in my will, trust, retirement plan, or other deferred gift arrangement.	
Name on card	Please mail this form to:	
	Illinois State University Foundation	
Account number CVV Expiration date	Campus Box 8000	
	Normal, IL 61790-8000	
Signature		
Fmail		