

Urban and rural students from all over the country gathered in Chicago for the Bridging the Divide Conference.



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CHICAGO  
**INSTITUTE  
OF POLITICS**



# Annual Report

## 2023-24



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# Executive Summary

The Institute of Politics occupies a rare place in American higher education: nonpartisan, extracurricular programming offering students pathways to engage in politics and public service.

The Institute of Politics does this through four main programs:

- The **Career Development Program** offers students hands-on opportunities to create meaningful impact through more than 300 paid internships across the country and around the globe each year in a wide range of fields related to politics and public service.
- The **Civic Engagement Program** mobilizes student engagement through its leadership development groups that allow students to explore ways in which to participate in civic life.
- The **Pritzker Fellows Program** connects students with leading practitioners from politics, public service, government, journalism and advocacy organizations. Fellows provide invaluable lessons, insights and mentorship through small-group discussions and office hours.
- The **Speaker Series** hosts hundreds of prominent figures from across the ideological spectrum each year, making the IOP a vital center for civil discourse about the most important issues of our day.

In a year where college campuses were hotbeds of political tension, the IOP leaned into its highest calling: modeling civil discourse that presented nuanced views on thorny topics and training students how to approach difficult conversations.

Throughout the year, IOP programming centered on bridging divides, examining the roots of polarization, strengthening journalism, preparing students for the upcoming national elections, increasing voter registration and advocating for marginalized groups.

During the Spring Quarter, the IOP hosted “**Bridging the Divide: Forging the Ties Between Urban and Rural America**,” a three-day conference where students, policymakers, academics, government officials, journalists and advocates explored practical ways to address polarization and find common ground between rural and urban communities on shared policy challenges. More than 200 students from colleges from across the country participated and were trained in bridging divides.

Now more than a decade old, the Institute of Politics has solidified itself as a place where students discover a path to living lives in service of others. IOP alums hold office in state legislatures, cover pressing issues for national news organizations, advocate for social justice in their hometowns, develop tools to make government more transparent, serve in leadership roles for improved educational outcomes and craft policy to improve the lives of the less fortunate.

The work we do at the IOP compounds on itself with each student that walks through our doors. Their enthusiasm for progress and their resolve serve as an inspiration and a roadmap for each incoming class.

All we do is provide the spark.

Thank you to the University of Chicago, the Board of Advisors and community partners. Above all, thank you to the students whose energy, talent, and passion inspire us every day. On the pages that follow, The Institute of Politics is pleased to share some highlights of the 2023-24 academic year.



The nonpartisan Institute of Politics is committed to fostering in our students a passion for public service, meaningful dialogue and active engagement in our democracy







Scenes from the 2023 - 2024 academic year at the Institute of Politics.



Hundreds of students came to the IOP Winter Fair to find out how to get involved.



**4,550**

Speaker Series  
Attendees

**300+**

Internships Funded

**570**

Pritzker Fellows  
Seminar Attendees

**707**

Highly Engaged  
Students







# BRIDGING THE DIVIDE CONFERENCE



Rural and urban students visit the University of Chicago Medicine Trauma Center as part of the Bridging the Divide conference.



# The Conference

Over three days in April, the IOP hosted **300+** policymakers, government officials, journalists, advocates and **more than 200 students** as part of the Bridging the Divide conference. Guests from 35 states met in Chicago to participate in a series of conversations and community site visits to examine how to break down ideological barriers that exist between people from urban and rural backgrounds – communities who have historically thought of themselves as worlds apart. The conference also examined policy solutions to shared challenges such as economic disinvestment, food insecurity and epidemics of loneliness.

The conference – an outgrowth of the IOP’s signature **Bridging the Divide youth leadership program** that brings student leaders from urban and rural backgrounds together to break down ideological barriers – started with **five site visits** around Chicago with students taking an inner-city bus tour, visiting a medical trauma center, a nonprofit food incubator, a philanthropic business incubator and a community garden. Students also participated in a half-day civil discourse training, learning how to lead across differences.



Students toured the Southside neighborhood of Englewood during Bridging the Divide.

**Darlenie Ramirez**, a student at Arrupe College, was on the bus tour of the Southside Englewood neighborhood. At the start of the tour, students were asked if they had ever been warned to stay away from the Southside of Chicago. Nearly everyone raised their hands.

“When people think of the south and west sides of Chicago, they think our communities are full of criminals and victims, nothing more, nothing less,” Ramirez said. “As a Chicago native, I can tell you that that’s not the case. Our communities are much more than that.”



The disconnect between the two types of communities is a relatively recent phenomenon, according to **Nicholas Jacobs** and **Daniel Shea**, co-authors of “The Rural Voter: The Politics of Place and the Disuniting of America.”

Their research shows islands of rural red and urban blue only began to form in the early 1990s.

These political divides are only 30 years old,” Jacobs explained. “They’re not inevitable. They’ve been constructed over the last 30 years, which means that they can be deconstructed.”

**Garrett Simmons**, a student from the small town of Chillicothe, Ohio, attended the conference because of his interest in countering polarization in his local community. Panelists consistently emphasized the importance of approaching tough conversations with a spirit of goodwill. This resonated with Simmons.

“I have trouble with this at times, especially when someone says something I fundamentally disagree with, but I feel like internalizing this lesson can help us continue to build bridges in the future and throughout our lives,” Simmons said.

Throughout Bridging the Divide, discussions featured conversations on urban-rural interdependence, the slow death of journalism, food deserts and the loneliness epidemic.

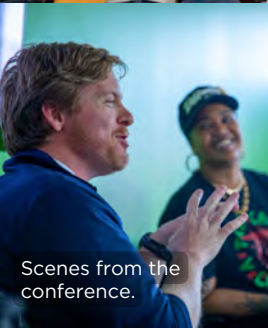
During one panel discussion moderated by NPR’s **Mary Louise Kelly** and featuring **Sarah Smarsh**, author of “Heartland” and rapper and humanitarian **Che “Rhymefest” Smith**, the musician shared his experiences traveling around rural communities in the U.S. and meeting with student activists, community organizers and political extremists.

“I know how to talk to extremists because I know how to talk to my uncle at the Thanksgiving dinner table,” Smith said. “What does that actually look like?” Kelly asked. To which Smith replied: “It looks like grace.”

The conference continued with insights from Democratic U.S. Senator **Joe Manchin** of West Virginia; U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture **Xochitl Torres Small**; former Republican U.S. Senator **Rob Portman** of Ohio; journalist **Tim Alberta**; **Ertharin Cousin**, former executive director of the World Food Programme; **Eboo Patel**, founder of Interfaith America; **Beth Macy**, author of “Dopesick”; CNN Congressional Correspondent **Manu Raju**; Americorps CEO **Michael Smith**; IOP Director **Heidi Heitkamp**; IOP Founding Director **David Axelrod** and more.

The conference ended with a keynote panel featuring Senators Manchin and Portman discussing how lawmakers can find common legislative ground in polarized times.

Students and policymakers left the conference energized by the conversations. As the only such Institute in the Midwest, the IOP plays a unique role as a gathering place for students nationwide. IOP staff are exploring ways to scale this work, including a hometown internship program, another student gathering in 2025 and other partnership opportunities.



## Is the Urban-Rural Divide Real?

Daniel Shea and Nicholas Jacobs, Authors of "The Rural Voter: The Politics of Place and the Disuniting of America."



## Transforming Narratives:

What We All Get Wrong About the Urban-Rural Divide

Mary Louise Kelly, Host of NPR's All Things Considered; Rhymefest, Humanitarian and Songwriter; Sarah Smarsh, Author of "Heartland."



## We Need Each Other:

Urban-Rural Interdependence

Institute of Politics Director Heidi Heitkamp; Doug Ducey, former Governor of Arizona; Xochitl Torres Small, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture; Tony Pipa, Brookings Institution.



## The Great American Loneliness:

Health Disparities and Deaths of Despair in America

Abby Goodnough, *The New York Times*; Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Sinai Health System; Beth Macy, Author of "Dopesick;" Dale King, Owner of PSKC CrossFit.



## What Realities Are We Reading:

Local News Deserts and Polarization

Institute of Politics Founding Director David Axelrod; Silvia Rivera, Local News Program at the MacArthur Foundation; Tim Marema, *The Daily Yonder*; Jeff Zeleny, CNN.



## Should Economists Care About Place?

A Policy Debate

Matt Yglesias, *Slow Boring*; Samuel Hammond, Foundation for American Innovation; Brad Hershbein, Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.



## Politics as Religion:

### The Role of Faith in a Secularizing America

Tim Alberta, *The Atlantic*; Eboo Patel, Interfaith America; Russell Moore, *Christianity Today*.



## We Are What We Eat:

### The Urban-Rural Food System

Monica Eng, Axios Chicago; Lamar Moore, Bronzeville Winery; Ertharin Cousin, World Food Programme; Janie Hipp, Native Agriculture Financial Services.



## The Power of Place and Particularity:

### When We Trust the Virtual World Over Our Own Backyard

Benya Kraus Beacom, Lead for America; Grace Olmstead, Author of "Uprooted."



## Our Fraying Common Purpose:

### Rebuilding Democracy One Neighborhood at a Time

IOP Executive Director Zeenat Rahman; Stephen Heintz, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; Whitney Kimball Coe, Center for Rural Strategies; Michael Smith, AmeriCorps.



## From Divide to Solidarity

### Changing the Narrative at the Grassroots

Michael Strautmanis, Obama Foundation; Benji Backer, American Conservation Coalition; Whitley Yates, Indiana Republican Party; Manu Meel, BridgeUSA.



## Finding Common Legislative Ground in Polarized Times

Manu Raju, CNN; Joe Manchin, U.S. Senator from West Virginia; Rob Portman, Former U.S. Senator from Ohio.







Scenes from the Bridging the Divide conference.



“Prior to attending Booth, I co-founded and grew **Lead For America**, a national service nonprofit that supports talent in returning and reinvesting in their hometowns across the country. Through it, I moved back to my family’s rural hometown of six generations: **Waseca, Minnesota**. Our work began with a bunch of college graduates, each seeking ways to return to and serve in our parts of ‘flyover country.’ Six years later, we had grown it into an \$8 million annual operating national nonprofit with 500 and counting alumni across 40 states. Even *The Wall Street Journal* flew out to cover the movement we were building; in 2021, the front page of the Sunday morning WSJ paper featured a glamor shot of me standing in the middle of Waseca’s main street, with the headline: ‘Small Town Natives Are Moving Back Home.’

By Fall 2022, I was enrolled at the University of Chicago Booth as a Neubauer Civic Scholar, and moving to Chicago.

As I shared during my panel with **Grace Olmstead** at the **Bridging the Divide conference**, I felt like such a fraud. My whole first year at Booth I was pitching funders and motivating our class of 100+ fellows on the virtues of homecoming and contributing to the rural renaissance – all from an apartment in Hyde Park. In the evenings, I attended classes analyzing real estate deals that could be financed by a \$1 billion personal guarantee. Meanwhile, I had come to Booth to figure out how to redevelop a \$1.2M building on Waseca’s main street. I felt straddled between two completely different worlds, trying to convince myself that an investment in my education would ultimately benefit the community I came from. However, I felt deeply isolated and overwhelmed as I tried to cross-translate between an elite education and the rooted knowledge of my rural neighbors. As a citizen of Chicago and Waseca, I felt intensely pulled at the cultural crossroads between rural and urban America, unseen by the narratives each had of the other.

How deeply meaningful it was then, to be invited by Sen. Heitkamp and Zeenat to join their team in planning IOP’s Bridging the Divide conference. Since October, this team entrusted me with significant creative autonomy – from developing the initial concept note and core thematic sessions to selecting our 20 higher-ed institutions for student delegations to centering rural practitioners and cultural leaders in every single programming bloc. The opportunity to see a *New York Times* reporter genuinely engage, on equal footing, a CrossFit social entrepreneur veteran from Portsmouth, Ohio, on a main stage panel featuring sitting senators, rappers and my own neighbors from Waseca, was an embodiment of the purpose that drew me to the University of Chicago in the first place.

UChicago IOP gave me a platform to bridge the dualities of my own life together, to make sense of how this UChicago education could bless not just my own economic and social mobility, but also that of the places which have shaped me. For me, and for the many students and speakers who are caught between this painful and paralyzing urban-rural divide, this gathering was like a homecoming – a reminder that sustaining faith in our democracy requires faith in all of us, and in all of the places we call home.”



Former Arizona Governor Doug Ducey (right) debates former U.S. Representative Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL) (center) in an immigration debate moderated by *The New York Times* journalist Jonathan Weisman (left).



This academic year, the IOP built upon its Counterpoint series – public conversations designed to expand on the Institute’s culture of free expression through honest and thoughtful debates between people who disagree strongly on major policy issues.

During the Winter Quarter, the IOP hosted a conversation on immigration between two IOP Pritzker Fellows: **Doug Ducey**, former Republican governor of Arizona, and former U.S. Representative **Luis Gutiérrez** (D-IL).

Spring saw a Counterpoint between two journalists who argued over whether liberals had become illiberal, featuring **Osita Nwanevu** of *The New Republic* and *The Guardian* and **James Bennett** of *The Economist* in a debate moderated by **Franklin Foer** of *The Atlantic*.

“One thing that surprised me about the IOP is that we really strive toward civil disagreement. The Speaker Series team really likes and encourages students to ask tough questions of speakers. It is so cool to see disagreement being directly encouraged, especially because it can be hard for students to question political leaders. One of the highlights of my year was asking a punchy question to **Governor Doug Ducey** at our Immigration counterpoint. I was really nervous, but I was taking a class on immigration policy and writing a 30-page paper on Operation Lone Star at the time. Other people were also asking challenging questions, so I felt emboldened to do the same. I ended up getting great content for my paper, and I was able to talk with Governor Ducey about something I care about as a Texan. I definitely wouldn’t have asked such a bold question earlier in the year.”



**Neha Modak**  
AB '26

# Dialogue Dinners

Dialogue Dinners are student-led conversations that allow for productive dialogue and principled disagreement in a welcoming setting. The dinners match students with **Pritzker Fellows** and are organized around pressing issues of the day.



**Layne Friedman**

AB '24

"We're often told to go out and talk with people with different opinions, but we're rarely equipped with the skills needed to do that successfully. Actually breaking apart what skills are needed to have civically engaged, democratic dialogue is something I was thinking a lot about in my time at the IOP.

"I planned and organized the first Dialogue Dinner, which was a conversation about democracy with **Anna Galland**, former executive director of MoveOn. I was tasked with facilitating the discussion, and I wanted to dig deep into what democracy actually means for people. We asked each other, 'What's our stake in democracy? Why do we value it? Should we value it?'

"At the beginning of spring quarter, I started working at the **Institute for Strategic Dialogue**, a non-partisan 'think and do tank' that works to counter extremism and disinformation. Bridging divides, protecting democracy and human rights, civil dialogue — these are all connected, and they're at the heart of our mission."

After graduation, Layne will continue to focus on civil dialogue to bridge political divides and strengthen democratic institutions.



Pritzker Fellow Matt Gorman meets with a student during his time at the IOP.

During one dinner with Pritzker Fellow and republican political strategist **Matt Gorman**, students discussed the different ways young people consume media and what motivates them to vote.

"We all started off with some sort of idea about what it means to follow politics. Knowing your senator or representative is not the definition everyone subscribes to. Matt was able to readjust our expectations about what that definition is for all of us."

**Mina Ivkovic - AB '24**

# THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT ON CAMPUS

As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict played out on campus, IOP staff thought deliberately about how to address it. Instead of inflaming tensions further, it was important to stay true to the ethos of the IOP and model productive dialogue. IOP programming choices this year reflect that. In November, at a time when many panels were reflecting only one side of the conversation, the IOP hosted a discussion called **Israel, Palestine, and Gaza: A Painful Inflection Point**, a discussion that provided students with a baseline knowledge of the region and Israeli and Palestinian people of all faiths.

With students reporting a lack of space for dialogue on campus, the IOP convened an off-the-record meeting with students from **Hillel** and the **Arab Student Association**. During that discussion, students relayed frustration at the lack of nuance in public conversations. IOP staff welcomed their leadership and programming ideas and will end the year with another such discussion.

In the spring, the IOP hosted two visiting fellows for student-only, off-the-record conversations. Israeli journalist **Noga Tarnopolsky** opened students' eyes to the political realities on the ground in Israel. **Samar Ali**, a Palestinian American lawyer modeled how civil discourse could lead to a better understanding of the issues.

Through public events, the IOP covered topics including **Journalists on the Front Lines: A Year of War and Conflict**, an event on the limits of free speech titled, **Is it Hate Speech or Do You Hate Speech?** and an event examining the impacts of the **Houthi militia**.

The IOP also focused heavily on preparing students for leading these conversations. In February, staff hosted a **leadership retreat** where 40 students received training on civil discourse and engaged in practice sessions discussing Israel and Palestine activism on campus. In partnership with the **Parrhesia Center for Public Discourse** and the **Neubauer Collegium**, the IOP hosted a student workshop helping students engage in conversation about organizing for justice and peace in Israel and Palestine.

The IOP's work on the conflict made clear that the Institute plays a critical role in fostering a culture of free expression and civil discourse on campus – work that has never been more important.





## POLICY CHALLENGES

Twice a year, the Institute of Politics challenges students from every corner of campus to propose solutions to major policy puzzles that vex local, national and global leaders.

This fall, students tackled the **affordable housing crisis** across America. In total, **43 students** across **12 teams** participated. The students represented a diverse cross-section of campus including The College, the Harris School of Public Policy and the Divinity School.

The winning team, **“ADUnlock: Accelerating ADU Access,”** recommended establishing a federal program which allows states to access grants, conditioned on the removal of barriers to constructing additional dwelling units in those states. The team won \$500 each and will have a chance to present their proposal to a group of housing experts.

For the winter and spring policy challenge, students were asked to act as state lawmakers

or a nongovernmental organization and develop a plan to address a policy area (healthcare, child care, food access, the opioid crisis or economic disinvestment) that benefits both **rural and urban communities**. Each team had the opportunity to meet with a professional practitioner who worked in bridging political divides in the United States.

The winning team’s proposal **“Carrots, Not Sticks: Behavioral Incentives for Healthy Eating in Illinois”** proposed a statewide cash-back program on fruit and vegetable purchases for users of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The proposal provides 20% cashback, reloaded on Electronic Benefit Transfer cards, when consumers spend on produce, with an additional 10% cashback for produce grown in Illinois.



# IOP 24



Students visit the media room in Des Moines, Iowa, during the Iowa Caucus Trek.



# IOP 24

## All Things Elections

IOP 24 is a suite of programming and internship opportunities designed for all students — from those casually interested in the 2024 elections to those seeking to work on a campaign, support a cause or run for office themselves.



## FELLOWS SEMINARS

Pritzker Fellows **Jeff Larson**, who ran the 2016 Republican National Convention, and **Lynn Sweet**, Washington bureau chief for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, described party primaries and roles of conventions.



## ASK HEIDI/ASK DAVID

Current and former IOP directors **Heidi Heitkamp** & **David Axelrod** held office hours to mentor students interested in running for office or working on campaigns.



## SUPER TUESDAY WORKSHOPS

A series of hands-on workshops that started with the theme of “**Know Your Why**” unpacking motivations for getting into politics and moved to “**Know Your How**” to learn the tactics and skills needed to win.



## IOWA TREK

Twenty-seven students bore the coldest ever **Iowa Caucuses** for a three-day trek to the state that makes or breaks presidential campaigns.

## UCHIVOTES & NONPARTISAN VOTER ENGAGEMENT

IOP students keep getting out the vote through **UChiVotes** — our student-led, nonpartisan initiative created to boost voter turnout on campus — and our student-led **voter education workshops at Cook County Jail**.



## THE DNC AND RNC CONVENTIONS

Students will intern for **media organizations** and **host committees** in Milwaukee and Chicago for the party political conventions. The IOP is also sending a cohort of students to the **RNC** and will host students from all over the country to witness history in person at the **DNC** in August.

# SUPER TUESDAY WORKSHOPS

**Candid Career Advice with Gov. JB Pritzker's Chief of Staff Anne Caprera**



**Winning Over Voters Across the Aisle with former Gov. Larry Hogan**



**Pitching Yourself as a Candidate with Republican Consultant Jeff Larson**



**Running for Office as a Woman with IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp & Former Gov. Kate Brown**



**Running for Office in Your 20s with UChicago Alums Christian Mitchell & Adam Zabner**



**Organizing and Message Development for Campaigns with Democratic Strategist Waleed Shahid**



**Using Research and Models to Craft Polls with Democratic Pollster Jason McGrath**



### Mock White House Press Briefing with Republican Comms Consultant Matt Gorman



### Voter Protection and Field Organizing with IOP Alum Caroline Hutton



### Dialing for Dollars and the Grind of Fundraising with Former White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney



### Life On and Lessons From the Campaign Trail with former Gov. Chris Christie



### Using Data for Targeted Messaging with Republican Consultant Amanda Iovino



### The “Dark Art” of Campaign Oppo Research with Democratic Strategist Rachel McGovern



## In Their Own Words

“As a first-year student, I have found Super Tuesdays at the IOP incredible experiences – both in how accessible they were but also as an extraordinary introduction to the IOP due to the clear passion and expertise shown by the guests. I have loved the ability to dive deeper into topics that intrigue me, but I’ve also found within these Super Tuesday sessions new subjects and concepts to consider. I’ve found that Super Tuesdays have not only deeply enriched my understanding of politics, but they have also pushed me to reconsider my aspirations in my career and personal journey.”

**Autumn Rivera AB ‘27**



Students observed a caucus site, toured the Iowa State Capitol and attended a Trump rally during the Iowa Trek.



## Iowa Trek

Every four years, the Institute of Politics takes students on an **Iowa Caucus Trek** to observe one of the most unique nominating processes of the presidential election cycle.

This year, **27 students** selected from nearly 90 applicants joined **IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp** and staff on the three-day trip, where they met with a **corn farmer** to debate the politics of ethanol, discussed possible caucus outcomes with Des Moines political reporter **David Yepsen** and *The New York Times* writer **Jonathan Weisman** and toured the Iowa State Capitol with IOP alum **Adam Zabner**, the youngest Democrat ever elected to the Iowa Legislature.

The group started Caucus Day at **Trump headquarters**, where they got an up-close look at the campaign's revamped digital get-out-the-vote operations. Later, they met with a **pork lobbyist** to discuss the outsized role agriculture plays in state politics.

A few hours before the caucuses started, students sat down with the **Church Ambassador Network** to learn about how religious leaders balance faith responsibilities with their politics before having dinner with nationally acclaimed political pollster **J. Ann Selzer**.

Students finished the day by spreading out across the region to watch the caucuses in person before attending **campaign rallies** as nonpartisan observers of the Trump, Haley and DeSantis campaigns.

Other highlights of the trip included braving sub-zero temperatures for three days, freeing a stuck Uber from a snowbank, visiting the world's largest truck stop and taking selfies with Republican presidential hopeful Nikki Haley.



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watch sizzle reel](#)



# Iowa Trek

## Student Perspectives



Demetrius Daniel (second from right) poses with other students at the Iowa State Capitol.

First-year student **Demetrius Daniel** was among the students who got the opportunity to witness the 2024 Iowa Caucuses, one of the most important electoral events on the road to the presidential election. The trek included stops at Trump's headquarters, the Iowa Capitol, the convention center, a Trump rally and an opportunity to witness the caucuses in action. "Going to the Iowa Republican Caucus is different than what I would normally be comfortable with, but because it was something I did not have experience with, it was all the more valuable for me."

Demetrius has since been inspired to work in Congress one day. "This has been a once-in-a-four-year opportunity to add context to something that I would never be able to experience anywhere else."



Chloe Chiles Troutman (right) and Alyssa Manthi (left) on the bus to Iowa.

One of the big reasons **Chloe Chiles Troutman** applied to the University of Chicago was to get involved with the IOP. The IOP's trek to the Iowa caucuses offered the chance to see how voters like herself are portrayed and targeted in elections. "I'm a rural student, so I was particularly interested in how the Iowa Caucus represents a wide variety of rural voices."

On the trek, Chloe got to hear from farmers, pollsters, campaign strategists and caucusgoers. From farmers who supported Ron DeSantis because of his pro-ethanol policy to waitresses who backed Trump, she met Iowans across the Republican political spectrum. "Most people I talked to thought that things were better under Trump."

Going to Iowa showed Chloe how voters perceive the economy and the critical role it will play in the next election. As she continues to go to IOP events, she is connecting her Iowa experience to what she learns about the wider political process and the upcoming 2024 elections.





## Chris Phillips

AB '25



## Davis Turner

AB '26

"I had never been to the Iowa caucus (or to the state of Iowa, for that matter). The trip offered a perspective that diverged sharply from the IOP's typical on-campus programming. The political skew of the event itself served as a positive for me personally, but I believe that hearing from so many conservative voices, along with the personal nature of most of our meetings, likely also benefited my liberal peers, albeit in different ways.

Despite my political conservatism, I found myself largely surrounded by liberal peers. Having grown up in Southern California and presently attending a predominantly liberal institution, this is not a situation with which I was unfamiliar, but the circumstances of the 2024 caucus being an entirely Republican event allowed the trek to become a catalyst for meaningful conversations. On campus, I often feel as though I do not have access to enough events from the IOP and other entities that are tailored to my political interests, but this trek provided me with the opportunity to engage in activities that resonated more closely with my political inclinations.

Though I tend to find the IOP's mantras regarding compromise, bipartisanship, and unity a bit unrealistic for the present political moment, I must recognize that this trek showed the critical importance of at least understanding where the other side is coming from"

"Having never been to Iowa before, I was very surprised with the political passion we encountered in such a small state. **Farmer Lance** shocked me with his passion for agriculture. I loved Lance's methodology for supporting candidates. He spoke of Gov. DeSantis' ability to connect with him on a personal and emotional level and attested to the governor's willingness to advance policy in Florida that intersects with his agricultural goals. This showed me what informed voting looks like, and I aspire to feel that way about my preferred candidate in any election going forward.

I was equally surprised by the **Trump HQ** tour and the depth of knowledge the staff had. Perhaps cynically, I was expecting the Trump team to dive into conspiracy theories, but within five minutes of their remarks, I knew that no other campaign – Republican or Democrat – was as prepared as theirs was for the 2024 general election.

Additionally, I thoroughly enjoyed the capitol tour with **State Reps. Zabner and Nordman**. During the tour, the pair emphasized the importance of bipartisanship in Iowa politics, and seeing two politicians on opposite sides of the aisle be cordial to one another was extremely refreshing. It was also neat to hear about how Rep. Zabner's UChicago education and connection with David Axelrod inspired him to run for office, which I'm also considering as a potential career path."



UChiVotes member distributes voting information to students on UChicago's campus.

**The Institute of Politics** and the **GenForward Survey** are collaborating to produce an original survey ahead of the November 2024 elections sampling millennials and members of **Generation Z** – oversampling young people of color within those cohorts.

Generation Z, like Millennials were before them, are more racially diverse than any previous generation. These younger cohorts inhabit a different social and economic context than prior generations. For example, they are more educated than previous generations while also being more indebted. Importantly, however, these younger cohorts are not a monolith: their experiences vary considerably along lines of race and ethnicity.

Many of the most pressing issues in the U.S. today – public education, gun violence, mass incarceration, immigration and even the right to vote – disproportionately affect young adults, especially those of color. To fully understand where our country is and where it is headed, we must understand the varied lived experiences and political attitudes of millennials and Generation Z.

The IOP/GenForward survey will be conducted nationally and will examine young people's attitudes around the most pressing issues of the day. We expect the IOP/GenForward survey to generate news stories providing nuanced representations of young adult priorities and insights into their decision-making. We hope the data collected will guide policymakers to craft policies and political agendas prioritizing young adults.

# REFLECTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

“This year, college campuses have been at the center of American politics. To meet the moment, students must equip themselves with the knowledge and communication skills to facilitate productive conversations with those holding diametrically opposing views. Leaders at the IOP, students and staff alike, have consistently risen to this occasion. I’m especially proud of how the **Student Advisory Board** has brought new voices to the Institute, fostered a sense of community among its regulars and advised senior staff as they thoughtfully navigated this tumultuous political climate.

SAB’s flagship program, **Spin Room**, creates opportunities for students from across the political spectrum to engage with each other and form friendships that supersede partisanship. Some accompany Speaker Series events like **JB Pritzker** and **Bill Barr**, while others highlight key electoral events like the **Republican Primary Debate** and **Iowa Caucuses**. We’ve been attentive to the interests of the broader student body and hosted discussions on topics ranging from activism on college campuses to criminal justice reform.

As Co-Chair, I’ve treasured the chance to mentor younger students as they begin their IOP journey. From our frozen bus on the Iowa Trek to breakout sessions at the Bridging the Divide Conference, the students I’ve met will not only lead future SABs but also flourish as leaders in politics and public service.

At the **2024 Obama Democracy Conference**, the former President stressed the importance of “a new generation of heroes to strengthen our bonds of trust.” Surveying the determined faces of my peers beside me in the audience, I felt the weight of his words rest on our shoulders. At the same time, I could see how the IOP had equipped each of us with the skills necessary to take on that mighty challenge.

American politics may be deeply polarized, but I couldn’t be more optimistic about the IOP’s mission, the people who call it their home on campus, and those who carry its spirit with them into their lives after graduation.”



## RJ Czajkowski,

Co-Chair of the Student  
Advisory Board, 2023-24  
The College Class of 2024,  
Political Science and  
Economics



Students Chloe Chiles Troutman (left) and Alyssa Manthi (right) pose with IOP alumni Caroline Hutton (second from left) and Jackie Rosa (second from right) during the IOP's inaugural Launch leadership retreat.



# CIVIC ENGAGEMENT





UChiVotes leader Tania Pena Reyes puts up yard signs around campus ahead of the 2024 Illinois primary election. [uchivotes.com](https://uchivotes.com)



Christian Johns (right) leads a trek to The Resurrection Project to discuss the impacts of Chicago's migrant crisis.

The **Civic Engagement** program serves as a “democracy learning lab” where students have the opportunity to practice and develop citizenship and leadership skills. From boosting voter registration on campus to facilitating civic education workshops with incarcerated individuals to bridging the urban-rural divide, the Civic Engagement program provides myriad opportunities for students to practice democratic engagement.

A critical focus for the Civic Engagement team this year was to invest in student leaders through skill development and leadership training, including piloting a new student leadership retreat and adding more skills-based programming for new students. This programming offered students opportunities to practice civil discourse and build a stronger sense of community.

This year, staff also thought deeply about how to forge deeper connections

between students and the city of Chicago. This programming started with four days of learning about Chicago’s social and political landscape as part of the **Chicago Bound** Cohort. In collaboration with the **University Community Service Center**, this program equips **30 students** each year with tools to engage in politics and public service both on campus and in Chicago at large. Noteworthy this year were student-led service projects with local nonprofits and a conversation with **IOP Pritzker Fellow Che “Rhymefest” Smith**.

Additionally, in partnership with the **Center for Effective Government**, the Civic Engagement team organized **four local treks** throughout the city focusing on migration, the municipal budget and the history of political conventions. Each trek provided compelling opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with Chicago, interact with journalists, elected officials and nonprofit advocates and discover avenues for civic and political engagement.



# LAUNCH

## An IOP Leadership Retreat

In response to student feedback that the Institute of Politics can be a daunting place, the Civic Engagement team established the **Launch** program to provide an easy on-ramp into IOP programming. Over three days in Woodstock, IL, students learned leadership and communications skills, reflected on the values and experiences that drive their interest in politics and got better acquainted with the IOP's offerings.

**Leila Brammer**, director of outreach and instructional development at the **Parrhesia Program for Public Discourse**, trained students on how to facilitate civil dialogue and navigate difficult conversations. Then, students used the skills they learned to participate in small group discussions about campus activism, safety and policing and the Israel-Palestine conflict.

"When we imagine our future career in public service we tend to focus on the mechanics of our work without thinking about the reason why we have chosen this path. I rarely get the opportunity to step back and evaluate how I can use my personal story to become a better citizen, not just a better worker. Civic Engagement allowed us to engage with each other in a profound way and learn more about ourselves in the process."

- **Arecely Flores-Ramirez, AB' 2025**

"It's easier to feel more like a community when everyone is in the same place. We shared meals together and attended the same programming, which felt really conducive to building community. I also think there is value in getting away from UChicago. It made it easier to focus just on the retreat."

- **Isabella Dowgiallo, AB '26**





Students at Leaders of Color's People of Color mixer.



Students at Launch.



UChiVotes student leaders in front of the IOP House.

## TECHTEAM

TechTeam creates websites, builds apps and designs digital tools for community organizations and local government. TechTeam also puts on events focused on civic tech and provides tech and skill-building workshops.

## BRIDGE

Bridge brings volunteers into Cook County Jail and the Illinois Youth Center to provide creative writing workshops and voter education for incarcerated individuals. Bridge also puts on events focused on criminal justice.

## W+

W+, Women and Gender Minorities in Public Service, works to create a space that empowers female, nonbinary and trans students to explore and cultivate their passion for public service.

## LEADERS OF COLOR

A student-run leadership development program for undergraduate students of color.

## SPECTRUM

A group for queer people who are interested in public service, queer political and policy issues and building leadership skills.

## THE GATE

The Gate, UChicago's political newspaper, publishes long-form articles on university, local, national and global politics.

## UCHIVOTES

A student-led, nonpartisan voter engagement initiative created to boost voter turnout and engagement on the UChicago campus.



## Abby Yuhan

AB '24

As a pre-med student, Abby Yuhan isn't the typical IOP student. When Abby found **Leaders of Color (LoC)**, a student-run leadership development program for students of color, it stood out to her compared with other student groups on campus. "From a person of color perspective, there is no other group on campus hosting discussions between different people of color."

To help broaden the organization's reach on campus, Abby and her peers created the People of Color Mixer, a collaboration between LoC and other student organizations on campus. These events attract around **150 students** each year, which Abby says fosters community and an entryway to LoC.

She credits her IOP involvement for sparking her interest in health equity and policy. "The IOP ended up intersecting with my career interests more than I'd imagined."



## Nish Sinha

AB '24

As director of clients for **TechTeam**, a student group that provides web solutions and tech-oriented consulting to nonprofits and government agencies, Nish Sinha has led efforts to modernize the tech needed to better local Chicago communities.

Some of Nish's previous projects include working with the **Cook County Assessor's Office** and **American Veterans for Equal Rights Chicago**, a nonprofit supporting LGBTQ+ members of the armed forces. With TechTeam, Nish helped these organizations connect with their community members, present and visualize information and streamline internal data processes. "I got to explore the things I am hopeful about. There is something immensely rewarding in creating solutions that make a direct positive impact."





## Christian Johns

MPP '24

Born and raised on the South Side of Chicago, Christian Johns always knew he wanted to pursue a life in public service. This year, as a Civic Engagement graduate assistant, Christian led groups of 25 students on **treks** exploring the city's challenges related to housing, migration and transportation as well as the upcoming **Democratic National Convention**.

Christian's political drive centers around rooting out injustices and developing policy proposals that are pragmatic and community-driven. "I want to learn more about how policies work so that I can understand how it affects communities and what policies we can tweak or scrap altogether."

Christian plans to remain intimately involved in Chicago and Illinois politics during this time when, as he puts it, "people are eager for change but not sure what change actually looks like."



## Jessica Hooper

MPP '24

Through the IOP's **Bridge** program, students volunteer in **Cook County Jail** and **the Illinois Youth Center** to deliver creative writing workshops and voter education training to incarcerated youth and adults. Civic Engagement Graduate Assistant Jessica Hooper helps facilitate the programs at both facilities. Making sure students are prepared to answer any voting-related questions is a big part of her role.

"Going inside the jail, people don't have access to their phones, so students need to be well-equipped with the information before they enter." This summer, the group will pivot toward getting ready for the upcoming fall elections, making sure that they can connect incarcerated individuals with the resources they need to vote.

When Jessica first started this work, she was nervous about the potential emotional weight of working with incarcerated children. "No matter if they are children, adults, men or women, they are people in a tough situation. Just approaching them as you would any other person is the best way to connect with them."

# SPEAKER SERIES



Hundreds attend a panel featuring Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal and IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp.



Each year, the Institute of Politics holds dozens of public events exploring the most pressing issues of the day and providing students and community members direct contact with guests spanning a vast spectrum of ideological, professional and geographical backgrounds.

This year, Speaker Series events tackled many of the issues facing the nation and world today: from the fight over America's funding of the war in Ukraine, democracy in Africa and recent labor union actions to conversations about anti-trans legislation, the war in Gaza and the continued threats to democracy here and abroad.



Illinois Governor JB Pritzker in conversation with Sabrina Siddiqui, *Wall Street Journal*.



Fall 2023 Pritzker Fellow and former Oregon Governor Kate Brown (right) in the audience at the event, "Election Preview with David Axelrod."



Students line up to ask questions at an IOP speaker event.

# Calendar of Events

Fall Quarter 2023

## Meet the Fall 2023 Pritzker Fellows



## Trump's Legal Woes: What's the Skinny From Those In the Know



## Election Preview with David Axelrod



## JB Pritzker: Progressive Governorship



## New Faces of Labor: From the Hollywood Writers Room to Staten Island Amazon Warehouses



## Should the U.S. Support Ukraine?





### Politics, Policy & Pragmatism: An Hour with Governor Gretchen Whitmer



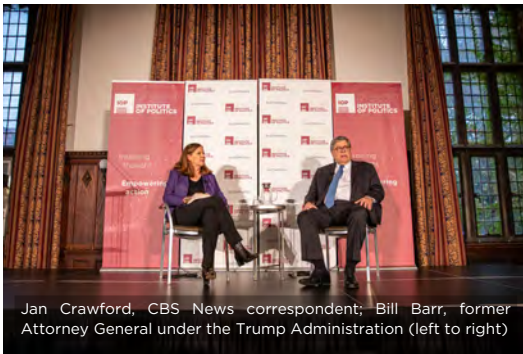
Kate Brown, former governor of Oregon and IOP Pritzker Fellow; Gretchen Whitmer, governor of Michigan (left to right)

### Risk, Failure & Big Bets: Two Leaders Explore How To Change the World



Paul Alivisatos, president of The University of Chicago; Rajiv Shah, president of The Rockefeller Foundation (left to right)

### Former Attorney General Bill Barr: His Journey and the Law



Jan Crawford, CBS News correspondent; Bill Barr, former Attorney General under the Trump Administration (left to right)

### African Democracy in the Balance



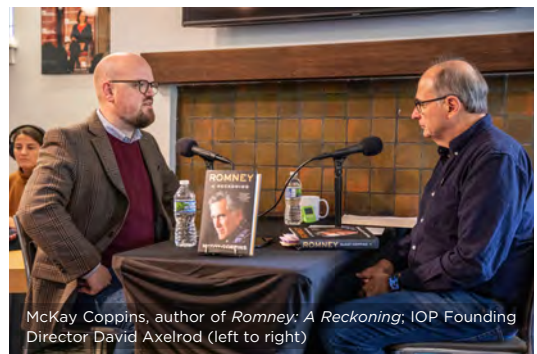
Mvemba Phezo Dizolele, the Center for Strategic and International Studies; Yinka Adegoke, Semafor Africa reporter; Geeta Pasi, former U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti; James Robinson, director of the Pearson Institute (left to right)

### International Policy Program: The State of U.S. China Relations



Ryan Hass, director of the John L. Thornton China Center and Senior Foreign Policy Fellow

### Mitt Romney's Truth: A Conversation Between McKay Coppins & David Axelrod



McKay Coppins, author of *Romney: A Reckoning*; IOP Founding Director David Axelrod (left to right)

## Anti-Trans Politics: How We Got Here & Where We Are Going



Hanna Rosin, *The Atlantic* reporter; Andrew Flores, American University professor; Chase Strangio, ACLU; Jennifer Williams, Trenton City councilwoman (left to right)

## Among the Braves: A Narrative History of Hong Kong's Pro-Democracy Movement



Timothy McLaughlin, *The Atlantic*; Shibani Mahtani, *The Washington Post* (left to right)

## Cassidy Hutchinson: Her Time In the White House and Its Costs



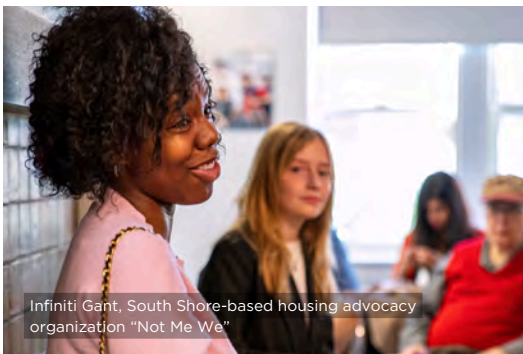
Cassidy Hutchinson, former top aide to Mark Meadows - Trump's former chief of staff; Stephanie Murphy, former U.S. Rep. (D-FL) and IOP Pritzker Fellow (left to right)

## Israel, Palestine & Gaza: A Painful Inflection Point



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP director of the Speaker Series & Pritzker Fellows Program; Arle Dubnov, George Washington University history professor; Laila el-Haddad, Palestinian author and social activist from Gaza; Yousef Mugayyer, writer and political analyst; Roberto Mazza, historian and executive director of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* (left to right)

## Tax the Rich, End Homelessness? Chicago's New Proposal to Combat Housing Insecurity



Infiniti Gant, South Shore-based housing advocacy organization "Not Me We"



# Calendar of Events

Winter-Spring Quarter 2024

## The Imperiled Incumbent: Biden on the Ropes



Reid Epstein, *The New York Times*; Sarah Longwell, Republican strategist; Waleed Shahid, Democratic strategist; Amy Walter, publisher and editor-in-chief of *The Cook Political Report* (left to right)

## Inside the Progressive Prosecutors Movement



Emily Bazelon, *The New York Times Magazine*; Kim Foxx, Cook County State's Attorney; Chesa Boudin, former San Francisco District Attorney; Wesley Bell, St. Louis County Prosecuting Attorney (left to right)

## Better Elections, Better Politics?



IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp; John Arnold, philanthropist; Ben Ginsburg, GOP attorney; Susan Kennedy, former top aide to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (left to right)

## Meet the Winter-Spring 2024 Fellows



IOP Pritzker Fellow Mick Mulvaney engages with students

## Endless Wars, Weapons & Force: But is there another purpose for the American military?



Ben Kesling, *The Wall Street Journal* reporter & Marine Corps veteran; Thom Shanker, *The New York Times* former Pentagon reporter (left to right)

## Houthi Who? An Inside Look at the Militia Disrupting the Globe



Salih Noor, UChicago Harper-Schmidt Fellow (left); Stacey Filbrick-Yadav, chair of International Relations at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (virtual); Eric Schmitt, *The New York Times* lead Pentagon reporter (virtual); Jennifer Steinbauer, IOP director of the Speaker Series & Pritzker Fellows Program (right)

### Southeast Asia in an Era of Strategic Competition



Paul Heer, former national intelligence officer for East Asia; Dr. Prashanth Parameswaran, global fellow at the Wilson Center's Asia Program and CEO of ASEAN Wonk Global (virtual)

### Free Trade in the Balance: A Discussion with U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai



Bethany McLean, journalist; Katherine Tai, U.S. Trade Representative (left to right)

### Church & State: Christianity and American Politics in 2024



IOP Executive Director Zeenat Rahman; Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson, Children's Defense Fund; Sister Simone Campbell, IOP Pritzker Fellow; Dr. Russell Moore, *Christianity Today* (left to right)

### Who Votes in 2024? Literally half the world



Sadia Sindhu, Center for Effective Government; Nicole Bibbins Sedaca, Freedom House; Crystal Orderson, South African journalist; Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., former commander of the U.S. Pacific Command (left to right)

### Illinois Bails on Cash Bail: Public Safety Beyond Jails



Quinn Rallins, civil rights attorney and scholar; Briana Payton, director of policy and advocacy at Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts (left to right)

### Denmark-US Relations and Climate Diplomacy



Jesper Møller Sørensen, Danish Ambassador to the U.S.



## Is Congress Obsolete?



Manu Raju, CNN (virtual); Patrick McHenry, U.S. Rep. (R-NC) (virtual); Gerardo Bonilla Chavez, IOP Pritzker Fellow; Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP director of the Speaker Series & Pritzker Fellows Program

## Immigration & Asylum: Opposing Views



Jonathan Weisman, *The New York Times*; Luis Gutiérrez, former U.S. Rep. (D-IL); Doug Ducey, former governor of Arizona

## Jane Fonda Talks Intergenerational Climate Action



Shannon Osaka, *The Washington Post* climate reporter; Tyler Massias, Earth Guardians; Jade Begay, former director of policy and advocacy at NDN Collective; Jane Fonda, activist and actor (left to right)

## All Hail the Chief (of Staff)!



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP director of the Speaker Series & Pritzker Fellows Program; former Chiefs of Staff Andrew Card, Bill Daley, Mack McLarty and Mick Mulvaney (left to right)

## Night at the Coliseum: A History of Political Conventions in Chicago



IOP Founding Director David Axelrod; Jonathan Alter, journalist; Don Rose, political consultant; Ron Grossman, *The Chicago Tribune* columnist; Bill Daley, former U.S. Secretary of Commerce (left to right)

## Burning Tech: The Master Speaks!



Mark Leibovich, *The Atlantic*; Kara Swisher, author of "Burn Book: A Tech Love Story" (left to right)

## Live Taping of the AxeFiles with Sister Simone Campbell & David Axelrod



IOP Founding Director David Axelrod; Sister Simone Campbell, IOP Pritzker Fellow (left to right)

## Caged Dreams (Short Film Screening and Director Q&A): The Trauma of Chicago's Migrant Crisis



Johannes Favi, deputy director for the Illinois Community for Displaced Immigrants (right)

## The Future of Modi's India



Emily Schmall, *The New York Times*; Shuja Nawaz, The Atlantic Council; Safiya Ghorri-Ahmad, APCO Worldwide; Paul Staniland, UChicago professor of political science (left to right)

## Journalists on the Frontlines: A Year of War & Conflict



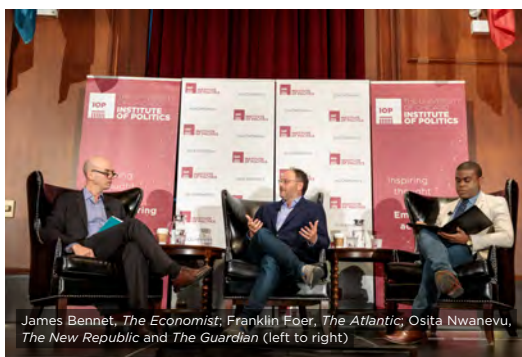
Lydia Polgreen, *The New York Times*; Marcus Yam, *Los Angeles Times* foreign correspondent & photojournalist; Noga Tarnopolsky, freelance journalist & IOP Visiting Pritzker Fellow (left to right)

## Resilience and Reconstruction: A Conversation Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal



Denys Shmyhal, Prime Minister of Ukraine; IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp (left to right)

## Are Liberals Now Illiberal?



James Bennet, *The Economist*; Franklin Foer, *The Atlantic*; Osita Nwannevu, *The New Republic* and *The Guardian* (left to right)



## Roadmaps Toward Better Discourse: A Palestinian American's Perspectives on Transcending Divides



Samar Ali, CEO of Millions of Conversations & professor of political science and law at Vanderbilt University Law School

## Does the Truth Still Matter: In Conversation with Chris Christie



Leigh Ann Caldwell, *The Washington Post*; Chris Christie, former governor of New Jersey (left to right)

## IPP: Careers in International Policy



Greg Moszkowski, contract specialist at F-35 JPO (virtual); Emily Boening, special assistant in the Office of the Secretary of State (virtual)

## Hate Sp\*\*ch?



Summer Lopez, PEN America; Nico Perrino, FIRE; Laurie Zoloth, professor of religion and ethics at UChicago; Ahmed Rehab, Chicago branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations; Casey Newton, founder of Platformer (left to right)

## Frank Bruni: The Age of Grievance (A Live Taping of the AxeFiles)



IOP Founding Director David Axelrod, IOP; Frank Bruni, *The New York Times* (left to right)

## I Find You Dangerous: Sharing Space in a Diverse Society with David Brooks and John Inazu



David Brooks, *The New York Times*; John Inazu, professor of law and religion at Washington University in St. Louis; IOP Executive Director Zeenat Rahman (left to right)

## Justice in 2024: A Conversation with Vanita Gupta



Evan Perez, CNN; Vanita Gupta, former Associate Attorney General (left to right)

## Chicago Style: We Are the Culture: Black Chicagoans on Black Chicago's Influence on Everything



Che "Rhymefest" Smith, IOP Pritzker Fellow; Arionne Nettles, author & Chicago journalist (left to right)

## IPP: South Africa's Energy Crisis



Crystal Orderson, South African journalist (virtual)

## How Chicago Shaped Barack and Michelle Obama



Alicia Sams, filmmaker; Adam Green, UChicago Associate Professor; Susan Sher, former chief of staff to Michelle Obama; IOP Founding Director David Axelrod (left to right)

## IPP: India in the 21st Century - Policy, Progress, and Prospects



Milan Vaishnav, director and senior fellow of the South Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

## Countdown to November: The Race for the White House



IOP Founding Director David Axelrod; Amy Walter, publisher and editor-in-chief of The Cook Political Report; Tim Alberta, *The Atlantic*; Claire McCaskill, former U.S. Sen. (D-MO); Howard Wolfson, Democratic political strategist; and Stephanie Murphy, former U.S. Rep (D-FL)



# In Their Own Words



“Being from West Virginia, we don’t necessarily receive the most exciting political coverage on the national scale. Almost all of the races are predetermined, so there aren’t a lot of campaign events. I was following elections online, but I wasn’t engaged to the extent that I would have liked.

As a first-year or someone new to the IOP, working as an event ambassador is the best way to get involved. It is so incredible to know that all of these important figures, especially to an election nerd like me, are accessible and friendly. If you are determined to meet someone here at the IOP, you will get that opportunity.”

**Carter Herron, AB ‘27**



Ukrainian students meet backstage with Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyal.





Scenes from IOP Speaker Series events.





# PRITZKER FELLOWS

The Pritzker Fellows Program brings practitioners in politics, government, journalism, advocacy and the nonprofit and policy worlds to campus to share lessons from their distinguished careers. Through weekly seminars and office hours, Fellows offer students invaluable insights and mentorship.



## Fall 2023 Pritzker Fellows

### **Kate Brown**

#### **Former Democratic Governor of Oregon**

Brown examined her tenure to show how Oregon was a petri dish for prescriptive policy solutions for the most intractable problems in American life, including housing shortages, drug abuse, political extremism, rural-urban divides and criminal justice disparities. With bracing honesty about her own misgivings, failures and achievements, Brown, the “accidental” governor, packed her weekly seminars.

### **Jeff Larson**

#### **Veteran Republican Consultant**

In the lead-up to the 2024 election cycle, Larson – who has been closely involved in Republican campaigns for three decades – walked students through all things primaries, caucuses and conventions in precise and illuminating detail. He shared wisdom from the 2016 GOP convention, which he ran, and provided a healthy side dish on the role of money in campaigns and conventions.

### **Stephanie Murphy**

#### **Former U.S. Rep. (D-FL)**

Murphy, a refugee from Vietnam raised in a trailer park in rural Virginia, used her seminars to make the case that the two pillars that make America great are its governance system of democracy and its economic system of capitalism. Murphy explored the changing dynamics of the American electorate and took students through a rigorous tour of American policies around infrastructure, China, ESG and more.

### **Che “Rhymefest” Smith**

#### **Humanitarian and Grammy-Award Winning Hip-Hop Artist from Chicago**

Each Wednesday afternoon, the IOP House would come alive with music; a DJ would provide the backdrop while Rhymefest kicked off his seminars with rapping and spoken word performances. He examined how culture impacts societal systems, institutional curriculum, commerce and political movements. Rhymefest wrapped up his seminar series with an hour-long performance played to a packed audience in the IOP living room.



# Winter-Spring 2024 Pritzker Fellows

## **Gerardo Bonilla Chavez, Former Chief of Staff for U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY)**

The son of migrant farmworkers from Mexico, Bonilla Chavez has had a lifelong interest and work experience in progressive grassroots organizing and provided students with an accessible and inviting introduction to how these movements work. His congressional simulations – particularly a contentious conference meeting over an immigration bill – were among the highlights of the quarter.

## **Sister Simone Campbell, Co-founder of Nuns on the Bus**

Sister Simone Campbell, a religious leader, attorney, author and recipient of a 2022 Presidential Medal of Freedom, was a calming weekly presence, pressing students to think through ways in which they can bridge differences and find hope in spite of their own anxieties about the political moment.

## **Matt Gorman, Senior Advisor to Tim Scott for America and former Communications Director for the National Republican Congressional Committee**

Matt Gorman has served in numerous roles in Republican politics, most recently as a senior advisor and spokesman for Senator Tim Scott during his White House run. Gorman shared a spirited behind-the-scenes look at what it means to be a campaign communicator in today's political landscape.

## **Lori E. Lightfoot, 56th Mayor of the City of Chicago**

Lightfoot revisited the toughest and most consequential period in the city's modern history, which featured the near end of machine politics, the biggest city budget deficits in history, a prolonged teachers' strike, a pandemic and massive public protests. She walked students through the policy changes she enacted to address them all.

## **Mick Mulvaney, Former U.S. Rep. (R-SC) and White House Chief of Staff**

Mulvaney, who has served in half a dozen positions in the federal government, including Chief of Staff to President Donald Trump, repaired to a chair at the front of the IOP living room and regaled packed rooms with his stories from Washington, complete with perfect Trump impersonations.



## **Jackie Speier, Former U.S. Rep. (D-CA)**

Speier walked students through how the personal has shaped her politics, from her harrowing early career experience of being shot and left to die at the Jonestown cult of the People's Temple in Guyana to recounting her medical need for an abortion on the House floor to her years of watching harassment and pay inequity in Congress, the military and beyond.

## **Lynn Sweet, Washington Bureau Chief for the Chicago Sun-Times**

On the eve of the 2024 Democratic Convention in Chicago, Sweet brought her skills as a journalist to the IOP living room as she grilled officials on how they landed the Democratic National Convention and what it will mean for Chicago, Democrats, donors, stakeholders and President Joe Biden.



## Visiting Fellows

### **Larry Hogan , Former Governor of Maryland (R)**

Hogan, who became a conservative governor in bright blue Maryland in 2014, explained how he navigated the partisan dysfunction and incivility that has stained politics nationally and in other states. Throughout his time on campus, he worked with both Republican and Democratic student organizations to help them find paths toward more civil disagreement.

### **Chase Strangio, Deputy Director for Transgender Justice with the American Civil Liberties Union**

With debates over the rights of transgender people engulfing the nation, Strangio, a lead lawyer at the center of the most high-profile legal battles and the leading architect of challenges to bills governing restrooms, sports and health care, oriented students around the history of trans rights, trans bodies and trans justice and the cultural and political background of this moment.

### **Doug Ducey, Former Governor of Arizona (R)**

Arizona's 23rd governor walked students through how he managed opposition from entrenched interests, even within his own party, and the coalitions he needed to build to get things done. He made the case that states, not the federal government, are where prescriptive policy is being made.

### **Crystal Orderson, South African journalist**

Orderson — who grew up under apartheid, voted for the first time in 1994 and grew up to cover the Nelson Mandela presidency — critically reflected on post-apartheid South Africa on the eve of its closely watched election. Her insights into the continent were fascinating and important, and she brought many new students into the IOP, many of whom she continues to correspond with.

### **Noga Tarnopolsky, Israeli journalist**

Noga's career as a freelance, independent journalist has taken her from Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan to the Vatican and Argentina, but her greatest expertise lies in the American interface with the Israeli-Palestinian arena, and in recent years, the inner workings of Israel's increasingly fragile political structure. Her seminars and public event challenged many students' conceptions of the region and its extant conflict.

### **Samar Ali, Co-Chair of the Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy**

Ali - a lawyer and educator who grew up in Tennessee as the daughter of Palestinian and Syrian parents - spent two days going deep on the "scare script" we tell ourselves about the other and offered practical tools to fight off the "hate-industrial complex."

### **Vanita Gupta, former United States Associate Attorney General**

The most recent third-ranking official at the Department of Justice rounded out the academic year with her candid, moving and at times amusing take on what it means to fight for justice and civil rights in polarized Washington and American society.



# Fellows In Their Own Words



## Mick Mulvaney

Former Acting Chief of Staff in the Trump Administration

"I enjoyed every minute of my fellowship (well, that's a lie: the day it was 35°F and raining was miserable, but thankfully it was just the one)!"

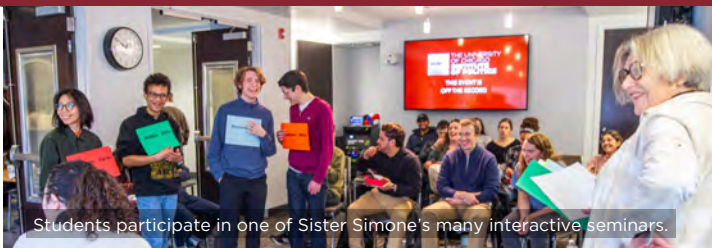
I hope the students got at least some insight into how what they see, hear and read might not always be 100% true. And that we always need to be able to modify our opinions when we get new (true) facts, or discover that we have been using old (false) ones. If you never plan on changing your mind on anything at age 18-22, then you are probably wasting your time in college.

I also hope they discovered that they might actually enjoy engaging with people who see the world differently than they do, and that those sorts of relationships can be some of the most fruitful and rewarding.

For me, I will come away from my time at the IOP happy to know that there are at least pockets of not only free speech (real free speech, not the harassment-masquerading-as-free-speech on many college campuses these days) but also respectful intellectual engagement in at least one institution of higher learning in this country. That gives me a good bit of hope."

## Sister Simone Campbell

Co-founder of Nuns on the Bus



Students participate in one of Sister Simone's many interactive seminars.

"I really appreciated the opportunity to reflect on my work and gain some perspective from the fresh views of college students. I loved the seminar exchanges and learned a lot about different student perspectives. I think one of my favorites was the rural-urban conversation and how UChicago students from rural communities risked talking about the 'stretch challenges' of coming to an urban university. I think we all learned that day to have a deep respect for these unseen struggles.

An additional benefit of the fellows program was being with the other fellows! Lynn Sweet was a great instigator of connecting and collaborating. The women fellows had a night out together and then informal conversation. Such a treat!

I hope students realized that there is always something new to learn and that we need to explore the ordinary in each of our lives so that we can welcome in the new. It isn't just academic class material, but it is also being able to relate across geographic and cultural divides. What a great opportunity at UChicago!"

# Fellows In Their Own Words



**Crystal Orderson**

South African Journalist

“I am at a loss for words following my amazing trip to Chicago. From the music to the seminars, panel discussions, student meetings and different engagements, Chicago was everything I dreamed of and so much more. I have been receiving so many beautiful emails from students, and I hope to continue engaging with them on Africa and South Africa-related issues. The IOP is a special place and will always be dear to my heart. You left a lasting impression on me.”



**Matt Gorman**

Republican Consultant

“When I was in college, I yearned for the ability to put what I was learning about political theory into practice. Each week, I tried to give students a simulation involving a real-life example related to that seminar’s topic that would get them actively thinking and problem-solving. The first time I did it, I was floored by how clearly they understood the mission and incentive structure of the roles they were playing.

I loved my time as a Pritzker Fellow. I came to Chicago each week excited to meet with students who wanted to engage and learn. I spent much of 2023 living out of a suitcase, rushing around from campaign stop to campaign stop. This fellowship was a perfect opportunity to reset and share my experiences with young people who were hungry to see how campaigns are run and leaders are elected”.





# 570

Pritzker Fellows  
Seminar Attendees

# 335

Hours of Office Hours  
with Pritzker Fellows

Scenes from IOP Pritzker Fellows seminars.



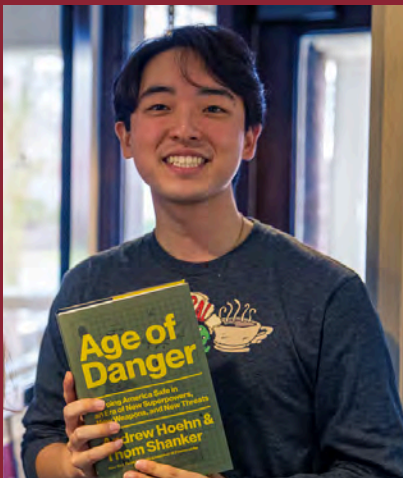
## Hannah Gaffney

MPP '24

As a Pritzker Fellows ambassador, **Hannah Gaffney** helped former **Rep. Beto O'Rourke** (D-TX), *New York Times* reporter **Astead Herndon** and **Sister Simone Campbell** connect to the greater UChicago campus and understand what policy challenges students are grappling with.

Hannah recognizes that taking that first step can be intimidating, but on the other side, there are so many opportunities. "I often use office hours to workshop my own policy ideas, which is something really special." This year, she had the chance to talk with **Rep. Jackie Speier** (D-CA) to learn about what a career in public service might look like. "Rep. Speier asked me what I envision for my life, the type of work I want to do and how that might fit into the bigger political picture. She made unique suggestions about places where I might find fulfillment that I hadn't considered before."

In understanding that not every one of our fellows has gotten it right over the course of their careers, Hannah has encouraged her peers to challenge fellows about past decisions. "Just because people have an impressive resume doesn't mean they did a good job. What does the data say?"



## Chris Lee

AB '24

"It's incredible that we get to have casual conversations with so many highly accomplished people," Chris Lee said about the IOP's Pritzker Fellows program.

"As a Christian, my faith strongly informs my politics and my interests in issues like climate change and social justice. My conversations with fellows in office hours such as former Oregon Governor **Kate Brown** and **Sister Simone Campbell** have really impacted how I think about my values in action."

Seminars, due to their small size and informal nature, create intimacy between fellows and students. "Students have gotten the most out of fellows when they are honest and comfortable." They also offer something that classes at UChicago often lack. "Classes are often very theoretical, but in seminars, you see how things are actually put into practice. These people have worked in the system."



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT



IOP students interning in Washington, D.C. gather for our annual Summer in Washington reception.





Academic year interns socialize during one of our intern receptions.



Civic Engagement group W+ cohort hosts a career workshop with the Career Development team.



Students on the career development exploration trek to Washington, D.C. pose outside the Capitol.

The Institute of Politics funds approximately **300 internships** each year across the country and around the world. These opportunities offer students the chance to do meaningful, often life-changing work in a wide variety of fields related to politics and public service.

Career Development staff and interns also hosted multiple **career workshops** during the academic year focused on preparing students to apply for internships and enhance their résumés, cover letters, knowledge of public service careers and networking skills. Staff and interns also held more than 200 individualized, one-on-one **career advising sessions** with undergraduate and graduate students.

- The IOP funded **230 summer internships nationwide and overseas**, with more than 100 students working in Chicago and 70 students interning in Washington, D.C.
- The IOP supported **70 paid internships in and around Chicago** in the Office of Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, the Consulate General of Mexico, the Illinois Policy Institute, Advance Illinois, Chicago Public Media WBEZ, the League of Women Voters, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Chicago Public Schools and more.
- The IOP returned to **Washington, D.C., for a trek with 25 students** to explore career opportunities by engaging with elected officials including U.S. Senator **Richard J. Durbin**, congressional staff, journalists, and think tank policy experts. Students also met with alums and friends of the IOP at a holiday reception in the offices of IOP board member **Ed Gillespie**.



# D.C. Intern Spotlights



Our interns tackle the most pressing issues of the day through substantive internships in politics and public service. Click on the photos or scan the QR code to see our students in action.



**The Impact of Civil Legal Aid** - Elsa Batalden, AB '26, Summer Intern at Legal Services Corporation



**The Media Battle Over LGBTQ+ Rights** - Alex Oder, AB '26, Summer Intern at Precision Strategies



**The Social Security Administration's Deadly Backlogs** - Graham Harwood, MPP '23, Summer Intern at the Committee on Oversight & Accountability



**Addressing the Urban-Rural Divide in the U.S. and Germany** - Emily Adams, MPP '24, Summer Intern at the Brookings Institution

# Summer 2023 Internships

## Elected and Political Office

- Alex Bores NY State Assembly Office
- Chicago Mayor's Office of Business, Economic & Neighborhood Development
- City of Chicago Treasurer
- Executive Office of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer
- Kane County Government
- New Democrat Coalition
- Office of Illinois State Rep. Kimberly du Buclet
- Office of Illinois State Rep. Lindsey LaPointe
- Office of Illinois State Sen. Robert Peters Office
- Office of US Rep. Brad Wenstrup
- Office of US Rep. Jonathan Jackson
- Office of US Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi
- Office of US Sen. Chris Murphy
- Office of US Sen. Chuck Schumer
- Office of US Sen. Richard Blumenthal
- Office of US Sen. Tim Kaine
- US House Committee on Oversight and Accountability

## Nonprofit/Advocacy

- Abortion Access Front
- ACLU Foundation of Northern California
- Advance Illinois
- African American Mayor's Association
- American Society of Anesthesiologists
- Aspen Institute, Religion & Society Program
- Aspen Institute, Community Strategies Group
- Ballotpedia
- Braven
- Bursara Center
- Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice
- Chicago Appleseed for Fair Courts
- Chicago Community Loan Fund
- Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights
- Children's Home & Aid
- Coastal States Organization
- Conservation X Labs
- Cooperative Development Fund
- Country First
- Economic Innovation Group
- Education Reform Now Advocacy
- enFocus Inc.
- Environmental Law & Policy Center
- Far South CDC
- Firebird Community Arts
- FirstRepair
- Forging Opportunities for Refugees in America
- Free the Bird
- Growth Teams
- Hazleton Integration Project
- Heartland Alliance
- High Atlas Foundation
- High School Law Review
- Hispanic Federation
- Holistic Birth Collective
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Illinois Community College Trustees Association
- Illinois Justice Project
- IMAGO Global Grassroots
- Impact Social Consulting
- Indian Institute of Technology
- Institute for Justice Clinic on Entrepreneurship
- International Research & Exchange Board (IREX)
- Invisible Institute
- Justice is Global
- Legal Aid Chicago
- Life Span
- LIFT-Chicago
- Maine Equal Justice
- Mexican Red Cross
- Mobilización de Mujeres Negras por el Cuidado de la Vida y Territorios Ancestrales (Black Women's Movement for the Care of Life and Ancestral Territories)
- National Abortion Federation
- New American Welcome Center - University YMCA
- Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
- Northwestern Pritzker School of Law
- Partnership for College Completion
- People's Action Institute
- Powered by People
- Project Unloaded
- Reform for Illinois
- Results for America
- Rise
- Southern Illinois University School of Medicine Department
- of Population Science and Policy
- Southern Africa Institute for Policy and Research
- Southside Together Organizing for Power
- Sunrise Movement Chicago Hub
- Telpochcalli Community Education Project
- TurnUp Activism
- University of Chicago Institute of Politics - Charles H. Percy Summer in Washington Program
- University of Chicago Office of Federal Relations
- University of Lucerne - Institute for Legal Foundations and
- Center for Law and Sustainability
- University of Nigeria Nsukka
- Urban Juncture
- Young Invisibles
- B'Art Contemporary



## Media

- ABC News
- El Paso Times
- The Axe Files
- The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter
- The Dispatch
- WisPolitics.com

## Intergovernmental/ Nongovernmental Agency

- Equal Innovation
- HealthRight International
- Rai Govind Shyam Trust
- The World Bank Group
- The World Bank Group, DIME
- UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- UN Habitat, Programme Development Branch
- UN System

## Think Tank

- Brookings
- British Institute of International and Comparative Law
- Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan
- Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- Chicago Project on Security and Threats
- Delta Health Alliance
- European Policy Centre
- German Marshall Fund
- Greater Chatham Initiative
- Hoover Institution
- Hudson Institute
- Institute for Governance Reform

## Civic Technology

- Worthy Minds
- CrimeVision Technologies, LLC
- JusticeText
- Trilogy Interactive

## Government Agency

- Chicago Department of Public Health
- Chicago Public Schools
- Chicago Public Schools, Chief Education Office
- Chicago Public Schools, Enterprise Architecture Business Analysis
- Chicago Public Schools: External Research Team
- Chicago Public Schools: Office of the CEO Strategic Planning
- City Colleges of Chicago
- City of Chicago, Office of Budget and Management
- Cook County Sheriff's Office
- Cook County State's Attorney

- Digital Agency for Public Innovation
- Energy & Environment Lab
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Florida Executive Office of the Governor
- Forest Preserves of Cook County
- Illinois Department of Human Services
- Illinois Finance Authority, Climate Bank
- Illinois Finance Authority, Climate Bank
- Law Offices of Los Angeles County Public Defender
- Legal Services Corporation
- Missouri State Public Defender
- Nebraska Hospital Association
- New York County District Attorney's Office
- US Commission on Civil Rights
- US Department of Education
- US Department of Energy
- US Department of Energy, Clean Energy Deployment and Innovation
- US Department of Energy, Secretary's Office
- US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Center for Health Center Innovation
- US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- US Department of State
- US Department of the Treasury
- US Department of the Treasury, Office of International Affairs

## Political Consulting/Strategy

- AL Media
- Axis Research
- Black Rock Group
- Blockchain Association
- Bully Pulpit Interactive
- Dobson DaVanzo & Associates, LLC
- Federal Hall Policy Advisors
- Ferox Strategies
- Grassroots Analytics
- Grove Climate Group
- K.O. Strategies
- Langenfeld & Associates
- Magnify Strategies
- Mercury Public Affairs
- Mission Control Inc
- NEJ Consulting
- New Heights Communications
- Precision Strategies
- Public Opinion Strategies
- Public Strategies Washington
- Seven Letter
- The Frost Group
- Tiger Hill Partners

# Academic-Year Internships

- Advance Illinois, Higher Education Policy Intern
- AL Media
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- Axe Files
- Blackroots Alliance
- Chicago Housing Authority
- Chicago Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice
- Chicago Public Media WBEZ
- Chicago Public Schools, Chief Executive Office, Board of Education Liaison
- Chicago Public Schools, Chief Executive Office, Strategy
- Chicago 2024 Host Committee
- Chicago Votes
- Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
- City Clerk's Office
- City Colleges of Chicago
- City of Chicago Department of Housing, Chicago Housing Trust
- City of Chicago Mayor's Office: Business & Neighborhood Development
- City of Chicago, Alderman Desmon Yancy, Ward 5
- City of Chicago, Alderman Lamont Robinson, Ward 4
- City of Chicago, Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), Policy and Advocacy
- City of Chicago, Office of Budget and Management
- City of Chicago, Office of the Mayor, Policy Team
- City of Chicago, Treasurer's Office
- Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI)
- Consulate General of Mexico in Chicago
- Cook County Commissioner Anthony Quezada, District 8
- Cook County Sheriff's Office
- Cor Strategies
- Disability Lead
- Genesys Works
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR)
- Illinois Department of Human Rights, Office of Public Affairs
- Illinois Department of Human Services, Associate Secretary's Office, Poverty Commission
- Illinois Finance Authority
- Illinois Justice Project
- Illinois Office of Broadband
- Illinois Policy Institute
- JusticeText
- League of Women Voters
- LifeSpan
- LiftUp Enterprises
- Magnify Strategies
- Mercury LLC
- Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD)
- Office of Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton
- Office of U.S. Rep. Jonathan Jackson (IL-01)
- Partnership for College Completion
- Paulson Institute
- People's Action
- Progressive Turnout Project
- Reform for Illinois
- Shriver Center
- Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP)
- Sunrise Movement
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Energy & Environment Lab)
- US Department of Health and Human Services
- World Business Chicago
- Young Invincibles





## In Their Own Words

When **Ben Weathers** first arrived at UChicago, he was determined to pursue a career in either investment banking or consulting. “I come from a civically active family, but I never thought of politics as a path I wanted to pursue. But in my first year, I heard from political strategist **Sarah Longwell**, who sparked my interest in political communications.”

Ben has held four different IOP internships, each allowing him to explore a different avenue into public service. During his first internship with the **Save the Children Action Network**, he tracked relevant media coverage and contributed to research projects supporting their country-wide advocacy efforts. Last summer, with **Seven Letter**, a strategic communications firm in Washington D.C., Ben helped organizations from major sports leagues to small nonprofits effectively position ideas and issues to reach new audiences.

This summer, Ben is heading back to Washington, D.C. for an internship in the **White House’s communications department**. “In what will surely be a busy summer in the West Wing, I know the skills and experiences I gained from my previous internships will serve me well as we work to promote the president’s agenda.”



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