

# Celebrating 10 Years

THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CHICAGO  
**INSTITUTE  
OF POLITICS**



## Annual Report 2022-23

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) visits the IOP during Women's History Month.



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# The Year at a Glance







**680**

**Highly Engaged  
Students**

**316**

**Internships Funded**

**5,200**

**Speaker Series  
Attendees**

**20%**

**Increase in Student  
Attendees at Speaker  
Series Events**

**92**

**Pritzker Fellows  
Seminars**

**551**

**Students Participated  
in Civic Engagement  
programming**

# A New Director



IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp moderates alumni panel during 10-year anniversary celebration.

## In January 2023,

former U.S. Senator Heidi Heitkamp, an IOP board member and former Pritzker Fellow was named the Institute's new director.

"The Institute of Politics is a special place. Each time I talk with our students, I'm energized by their passion for public service and drive to shape the world around them.

One of the best decisions I have ever made was joining this thoughtful and insightful community of bright, young minds."

Heitkamp succeeded David Axelrod who announced in February he was stepping down as founding director to transition into a new role as senior fellow and chair of the Institute's advisory board.



# Inspiring thought. Empowering action.



Students learn about program offerings during Politipalooza, the IOP's annual welcome event.

The nonpartisan Institute of Politics (IOP) celebrated its 10th anniversary during the 2022-23 academic year – a year that saw the arrival of U.S. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp as the new director and the transitioning of Founding Director David Axelrod into a new role as chair of the Institute's senior advisory board.

Despite these seismic changes, the community of students, staff, Hyde Park neighbors, alumni and campus partners that make up the IOP family came together to ensure another successful year working toward the IOP's mission – igniting in young people a passion for living lives in service of others through politics and public service.

The Institute of Politics does this through four main programs:

- **The Civic Engagement Program** mobilizes student engagement through its leadership development groups through which students explore ways in which to participate in civic life.
- **The Career Development Program** offers students hands-on opportunities to create meaningful impact through more than 200 paid internships across the country and around the globe each year across a wide range of fields related to politics and public service.
- **The Speaker Series** hosts hundreds of prominent figures from across the ideological spectrum each year, making the IOP a vital center for earnest debate and discussion about the most important issues of the day.
- **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 challenges we face around the world and as a nation magnify how critical young people are to the future of democracy and underscore the mission of the Institute of Politics.

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 2022-23 academic year.



# Our Mission

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





# Public Service in Action

U.S. Navy veteran and fourth-year student Ricky Holder came to UChicago on a mission to develop the skills to one day help reform the nation's foster care system. Once on campus, he quickly took to the IOP's programming and found a role as one of the Institute's most highly engaged students. He represents public service in action.



Student Advisory Board Co-Chair Ricky Holder speaks at an event on child welfare.





“

I arrived at the University of Chicago seeking an education that would allow me to accomplish three goals: to ensure that no family suffers the same fate as mine; to create the conditions so that no child would have their future dictated by luck; and to utterly transform the child welfare system in the United States.

Fortunately, with the help of the Institute of Politics, I believe I've acquired that education. I was born in San Bernardino, California in the summer of 1992. Four weeks later, my father abandoned my family, leaving my mother to raise five boys on her own. She struggled. As such, we spent the majority of my childhood in abject poverty. This poverty knew no bounds. We lived in a decaying home bereft of running water, electricity, and plumbing. But then our home burnt down, which initiated an odyssey around the city and marked the beginning of the end for our family.

We lived in abandoned buildings, far-flung campgrounds and public parks, motel rooms and minivans, and more often than we'd've liked, the streets. At one point, we even briefly returned to the burnt shell of our former home, for even in its most dilapidated state, it was there we felt safest. Eventually, my mother was arrested. My older brothers were placed in group homes, and I was placed with a foster family. From there, our lives would take dramatically different paths. My older brothers were my childhood heroes, which is why it was heartbreaking to watch them fulfill the statistical destiny that often awaits former foster children: criminal justice system involvement, poverty, homelessness, and addiction. After multiple group homes, the child welfare system transformed the bright-eyed boys of my youth into broken men. Simply put, they were failed by the very system designed to serve them.

Meanwhile, I would spend a decade in the foster care system. I had dozens of social workers and six different families. My mother was incarcerated eight hours away in Chowchilla, California, and I rarely saw my brothers. I would move schools and communities so abruptly that I rarely had a chance to say goodbye. In addition to the daily injustices I experienced and the systematic shortcomings I witnessed, this was an incredibly lonely decade for me. Two months before graduating high school, I became confronted with what every long-term foster kid must eventually face: “aging out.” From my earliest days in the system, I had been told the “black bag” story over and over again. The story was simple: when you turn 18 and graduate high school, you would come back from graduation to find all your belongings stuffed in black bags and sitting on the curb. Having witnessed each of my brothers and so many other foster youth emancipate from the system and become instantaneously homeless, I sought to avoid that fate. So I enlisted in the US Navy.

I served in the US Navy for six years as an Information Systems Technician, first in Norfolk, Virginia, and then aboard a guided-missile cruiser ported out of Yokosuka, Japan. It was while I was deployed aboard this warship that I began to grapple with what had occurred during my childhood. Night after night, lying awake in my “coffin” rack, I began to ask myself some



some difficult questions: Why was I serving my country while my entire family was serving time in prison? Why did so few foster youth make it out of the system in one piece? Why did I make it out? These questions, and so many more, led me to one unmistakable conclusion: I was lucky. While I won't cite them, the statistics were damning, and collectively they communicated to me that if my life was replayed 100 times, 97 times I wouldn't be serving my country but would've been destroyed by a system that destroys so many. From this realization, I derived an unshakeable sense of purpose, and it is this sense of purpose that so motivates the goals I outlined before.

So I separated from the U.S. Navy in 2017 and enrolled in a community college in the San Francisco Bay Area. I didn't take very long to channel my sense of purpose into action. Shortly after beginning my studies, I launched a statewide legislative advocacy campaign designed to abolish the age restriction on the Chafee Grant, California's chief financial aid resource for former foster youth. I found that this policy was not only poorly designed (97% of foster children do not graduate college by age 26, precisely the age at which the Chafee Grant is no longer accessible), but terribly unjust as well: the trauma the foster care system inflicts is permanent, yet the benefits foster youth were entitled to receive are not. To rectify this injustice, I cobbled together a statewide coalition of former foster youth, community college faculty, and non-profit organizations. We wrote hundreds of letters and met dozens of lawmakers around the state, both in their district offices and in the state Capitol. Our year-long effort ultimately culminated in a bittersweet victory: legislation was passed that expanded access to the Chafee Grant but maintained its age restriction.

Shortly after this campaign concluded, I transferred to the University of Chicago as part of the first-ever cohort of student veterans. Given my interest in public service, I immediately became involved at the Institute of Politics. And I am so glad that I did, for my involvement augmented the world-class education I received in class. Whether it was interning with the Illinois Lt. Governor or with the Children's Defense Fund, or taking advantage of office hours to bounce my child welfare policy ideas off of Pritzker Fellows, or listening to policymakers at Speaker Series events, or traveling around the state of Illinois as a participant of the Bridging the Divide program, or serving as the Co-Chair of the Student Advisory Board, these past four years has expanded my capacity for public service. All of these experiences were instrumental to my earning the 2023 Marshall Scholarship, which I will use to pursue an MPhil in Comparative Social Policy from the University of Oxford starting this fall. I intend on studying the child welfare systems of multiple advanced countries, from Japan to Germany, searching for insights into how to construct a child welfare system that preserves families, protects children, and strengthens communities.

I do not know exactly what the future holds, but I know it'll involve me attempting to accomplish the goals I outlined above. Armed with the transformative education I earned through the IOP and guided by its mission, I am confident in my ability to do so."

**Ricky Holder**

**AB' 23, Student Advisory Board Co-Chair**





# Celebrating 10 Years



IOP alumni pose for pictures during the IOP's 10-year anniversary celebration.



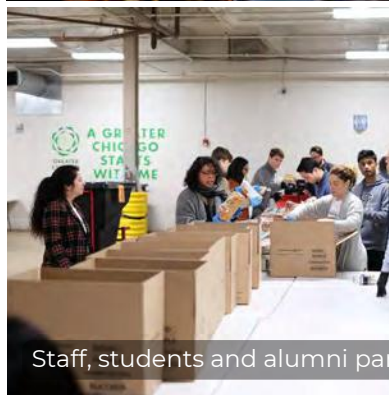
**In January,** the Institute of Politics marked its 10-year anniversary over a weekend that served simultaneously as an alumni reunion, a welcome for incoming Director Heidi Heitkamp and a sendoff to IOP Founding Director David Axelrod, who transitioned out of the director's seat to a new role on the Institute's senior advisory board.

The weekend included a panel of five alumni sharing the different paths they took into public service moderated by Heitkamp and a keynote conversation between Axelrod and former Pritzker Fellow and current U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The IOP's commitment to public service was underscored on the second day of the weekend as alumni and staff took part in two service projects – helping clean up a local community center and volunteering at a food pantry.



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken reflects on his life in public service.



Staff, students and alumni participate in local service projects.



IOP's Board of Advisors convene winter 2022.



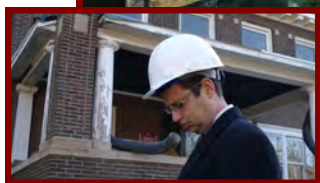
IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp moderates alumni panel with Abdul Dosunmu, Maira Khwaja, Devshi Mehrotra, Erin Simpson and Dylan Wells.

Scenes from the IOP's 10-year anniversary celebration.



# Our 10-Year Journey

2012



## The Institute of Politics Announcement

David Axelrod approached then-University of Chicago President Robert Zimmer with an idea to establish a place on campus where students could engage in politics and public service. The University launched the joint venture in 2012.

2013



## Institute of Politics hosts Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Renovations at 5707 Woodlawn Ave are completed and the IOP house opens for student activities.

# TECHTEAM

## First Civic Engagement groups founded

TechTeam uses digital tools to support and strengthen the impact of local non-profit organizations.

New Americans, created to help community members pass the U.S. Citizenship Test, later branched out from the IOP to become a registered student-organization on campus.

## First Student Advisory Council

Student leaders have been an integral part of the Institute of Politics since its founding providing student perspective to IOP programming.



## Inaugural Pritzker Fellows Cohort: Amy Walter, Ramesh Penuru, Miguel Silva, Vin Weber, & Robin Carnahan

The first cohort of Pritzker Fellows established an infrastructure for students to engage with distinguished policymakers and practitioners.

2014

13

## The IOP embarks on its inaugural student treks: A domestic trek to D.C. & an international Trek to China

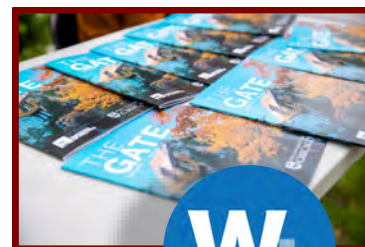
Treks help students expand their professional horizons and explore public service opportunities through meetings with prominent elected officials, journalists, policymakers and activists.



## Two new Civic Engagement groups established

*The Gate* is UChicago's independent political and policy review and allows students opportunities to sharpen their journalism skills.

W+ was established to allow women and other gender minorities opportunities to explore public service.







### The Iowa Project

Dozens of students flooded Des Moines, Iowa working for local media outlets and presidential campaigns in advance of the Iowa Caucuses.

2015

### First Campaign Journalism Conference

A two-day boot camp for journalists and pollsters sharing best practices for covering presidential elections.



### Leaders of Color Launched

Leaders of Color is established for students of color to explore career and leadership opportunities across campus and in the public sector.



### UPReP (Urban Policy and Research Program)

An academic-year internship program is founded to focus on public service opportunities in the greater-Chicago area.

2014

### The Axe Files Podcast is launched



### First Summer in Washington Program launched

The IOP sponsored a summer cohort of students to explore career paths on Capitol Hill and the surrounding Washington, D.C. metro area.

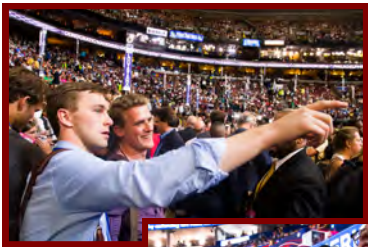
2015



2016

### Democratic National Convention & Republican National Convention Treks

The IOP sponsored two student cohorts to travel and work alongside the national Democratic and Republican presidential campaign operations.



### The Institute of Politics launches Bridging the Divide

A public service leadership program bringing urban and rural students together to listen and learn from each other, challenge each others' perspectives, and find shared solutions to the issues each respective community faces.

### The IOP launches UChiVotes

UChivotes is an intensive, student-led, campuswide voter engagement initiative created to establish the University of Chicago as a national leader in voter registration and turnout.



### IOP students launch Bridge Writing Workshop

Bridge students lead peer-to-peer creative writing workshops at Cook County Jail. The program has grown and now students also deliver voter education seminars at the jail and writing workshops at the Illinois Youth Center.



### The Institute of Politics celebrates five years

President Obama visits UChicago.

2018

2019

### ChiElect

An Institute of Politics initiative to help students take an active role in Chicago's mayoral and other local elections.





# 10 Years

The Institute of Politics celebrates its 10-Year Anniversary

## MARGIN of ERROR

LESSONS FROM 2020 POLLING

### Margin of Error

The Institute of Politics hosts the virtual Margin of Error Conference, a three-day convening of national experts to discuss the past, present and future of political polling

## 2022

### IOP Alumna Returns

Erin Simpson, a UChicago alum and founder of TechTeam, returns to campus as the first student-turned-Pritzker Fellow.



## 2021



### Ideathon

A student-led hackathon hosted by TechTeam with the aim of bringing students together to address issues at the intersection of technology and society.



### Disinformation and the Erosion of Democracy

A three-day conference co-hosted by The Atlantic, explores the organized spread of disinformation and the danger it poses to democracy.



## 2023

### IOP Transition

Founding Director David Axelrod transitions to chairman of the board and senior fellow. Former U.S. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp is named IOP director.

## 2020

### The IOP Launches Spectrum

A student group created to connect and empower LGBTQ+ students with opportunities to expand their leadership skills and passion for public service.





# Special Projects



Kenzi Bustamante, AB '24, talks with American Enterprise Institute's Emma Brock during the IOP's Washington, DC Spring Break Trek.

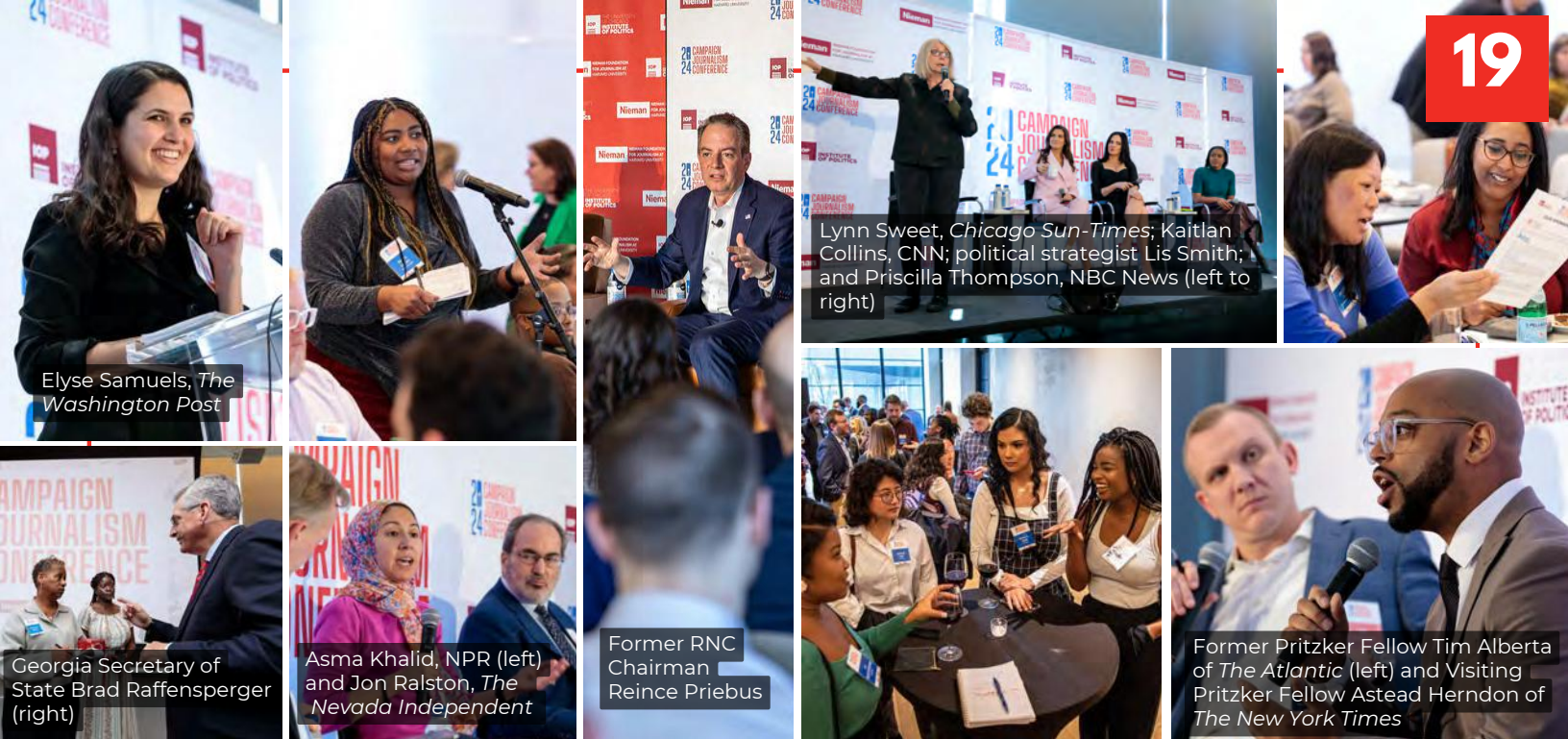


# 2024 Campaign Journalism Conference



Ana Ceballos of *The Miami Herald* (left) and Stacey Barchenger of *The Arizona Republic*, share campaign experiences during the 2024 Campaign Journalism Conference.





Elyse Samuels, *The Washington Post*

Lynn Sweet, *Chicago Sun-Times*; Kaitlan Collins, CNN; political strategist Lis Smith; and Priscilla Thompson, NBC News (left to right)

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger (right)

Asma Khalid, NPR (left) and Jon Ralston, *The Nevada Independent*

Former RNC Chairman Reince Priebus

Former Pritzker Fellow Tim Alberta of *The Atlantic* (left) and Visiting Pritzker Fellow Astead Herndon of *The New York Times*

Local and national journalists from across the country convene for the 2024 Campaign Journalism Conference.

In April, the IOP convened its third **Campaign Journalism Conference**. This year's iteration, held in partnership with Harvard University's Nieman Foundation for Journalism, served as a boot camp to equip journalists with practical tools to cover elections.

Dozens of the nation's most seasoned reporters, editors, producers and subject experts came together to share their wisdom and practical techniques with local reporters newer to the profession.

Throughout the conference, experts and attendees unpacked consumers' mistrust in news organizations, emphasized the importance of local coverage and offered instruction on the use of data and voter voices to report. Journalists left the conference with a deeper understanding of election law, campaign finance, disinformation in the artificial intelligence era and voting mechanics at a critical juncture in election campaign reporting.

Given the IOP's mandate to support and promulgate democracy, and given the proliferation of disinformation, gearing this conference toward local media and smaller outlets was a key goal.

The conference drew journalists from 103 newsrooms in 33 states and Washington D.C., 53 percent of them from local or non-profit outlets.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors – The Joyce Foundation; The McCormick Foundation; the Emerson Collective and The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation – the IOP was able to sponsor nearly 60 journalists who would otherwise have been unable to attend what one reporter called “A brilliant crash course in the evolving landscape of election coverage.”



# Policy Challenges

This year, the Speaker Series team offered students opportunities to address critical public issues by designing policy solutions that could realistically pass legislative muster. In total, nearly 40 teams participated in an IOP policy challenge this academic year.



Rena Schwartz, AB '24 (left) and Ashanah Gayden, AB' 24 present their policy proposal during the final round of "Solving World Hunger: A Student Policy Challenge."



### The \$1.6 Trillion Question

During the Fall Quarter, students were asked to **craft student loan legislation** as an alternative to the Biden Administration's plan to cancel student debt. In their winning proposal, Emily Barnett, MPP '23, Robert Callahan, CIR '23 and Graham Harwood, MPP '23 sought to realign incentives and remove the moral hazards of the current student loan system. The team called for all federally administered student loans to be administered at zero interest, shift to an income based repayment program, expand a public service loan forgiveness program and require universities to forgive some remaining debt. Their proposal was shared with members of the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

### Rerouting: Creating Public Transportation for All

For the second challenge, students were asked to **find equitable and efficient solutions to Chicago's troubled transit system**. The winning team called their plan Chica-GO-GO. In the plan, Vera Chaudhry, AB '26, Kate Davis, AB '25, and Isabelle Russo, AB '23, called for the creation of two zero-emission bus rapid transit corridors that will total 24.7 miles and provide transit options for south and west side residents, particularly in Black and brown communities. In May, the team presented their proposal to more than 50 employees of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Regional Transportation Authority, two major regional transportation agencies that offered praise and feedback.

### Solving World Hunger: A Student Policy Challenge

The third policy challenge prompted students to **address hunger around the globe** – from conflict zones to the UChicago campus – drawing on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In their winning proposal, known as Sustain-A-Bite, Fernanda Garcia Moreno, AB '25, Hanna Ho, AB '24, and Faith Kumi, AB '25, sought to create a food pantry bus that would use wasted food from Illinois-based grocery stores as charitable donations to help communities throughout the state that are most affected by food insecurity. The plan, inspired by France's law against food waste, which diverts 46,000 tons of food a year, would begin in Cook County before expanding to the rest of the state. When students return in the fall, the plan is to have them present their proposal to an appropriate government agency.



Students present their policy proposals.

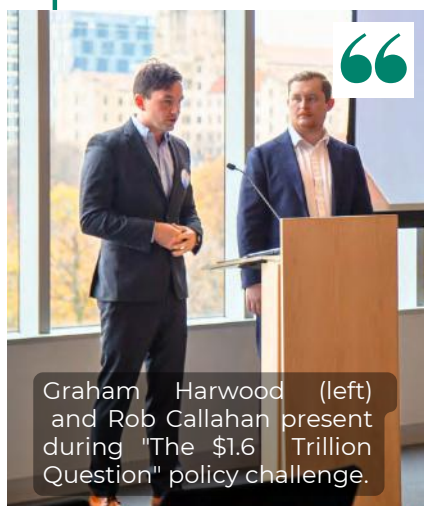


Policy judges provide feedback on student presentations.





“



Graham Harwood (left) and Rob Callahan present during "The \$1.6 Trillion Question" policy challenge.

“



Davis Turner shares his team's policy proposal addressing inequities in Chicago public transit.

“



Kate Davis (left) and Vera Chaudhry present at the final round of the public transportation challenge.

Classroom work provides a theoretical background and ample discussion for idealized policies and political theory, but the combination of policy competitions and access to practicing policymakers has magnified the value of my experience at the University of Chicago. In the policy competition, we started with a list of best-case scenario solutions focused on root causes that spanned every idea from free public college to pre-k, basic income to bussing, but given the constraints of the competition we had to find a solution that would address the problem and pass the congress. Focusing on the audience of the pitch and the passage process made us tailor our positions as a professional practice beyond just ensuring a good grade. It allowed me to sharpen my policy ideas with input from practitioners and hear what they had tried.

### Graham Harwood, MPP '23

I was inspired to participate in the first one as a challenge for myself and a good exercise in teamwork, tackling a policy issue I seldom spend time thinking about. I knew that coming up with a good solution would require high-quality research and well-written analysis. Writing out a proposal with other thoughtful students and ultimately presenting it to Senator Heidi Heitkamp was extremely rewarding. I was super excited to see that the second policy challenge was on transportation, a topic I've spent ample time thinking about and have previous working experience with. While our solution didn't do as well as we hoped, it was very enriching to hear 15 completely different solutions to transportation problems in Chicago and broadened the ways I think about transportation. Ultimately, I've gained a tremendous amount of respect for those who write policy who have to understand complex nuances and minutiae; diving into such complexity has been really valuable to me as a student of policy and has improved my writing and research skills greatly.

### Davis Turner, AB '26

When I heard about the policy competition, I was really excited about the challenge of making a policy idea feasible for implementation in a major city like Chicago. It was really exciting to work with peers who were as excited about the project as I was and had different ideas and experiences – especially because we all were in different years and had different combinations of majors. As we began our research, we understood just how large the problems facing Chicago transportation were and the importance of solving these issues right now – to address not only longstanding inequalities but also the challenges that resulted from low-ridership during the pandemic. Our winning solution was Chica-GO-GO, a bus rapid transit network that addresses the inequitable connectivity crises facing the south and west sides of the city while helping Chicago transition to net zero emissions. Participating in the policy challenge was an incredible experience – I learned how to build a proposal with feasible considerations for financing the project and responding to stakeholder needs. And with each round of the competition, questioning from the judges and conversations with field experts challenged us to thoroughly understand each nuance of this issue. Post-policy challenge, I think we all feel more prepared to be policymakers in the future and are excited to propose our solution to city officials.

### Vera Chaudhry, AB '26



# D.C. Trek

Juan Leal Mendoza, AB '25 (left) and Gabriel Kertesz, AB '25 tour the U.S. Capitol as part of the Washington, D.C. Spring Break Trek.



Each year, the Institute of Politics travels to Washington, D.C. to give students an in-person view of the important work being done in the nation's capital. Students explore career paths, learn more about key policy issues, and develop professional networks as part of the trek.

Students met with more than 40 people working in a variety of public sectors. Events in the nation's capital included a breakfast with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, as well as meetings in the Pentagon and the State Department with prominent federal officials.

Students learned about think tank research opportunities at the American Enterprise Institute, political consulting and polling careers with Pritzker Fellow Neil Newhouse at his firm Public Opinion Strategies, labor policy at the AFL-CIO headquarters, life on Capitol Hill with congressional aides, the pressures of working in the White House with Reema Dodin, deputy director of the White House Office of Legislative Affairs, and journalism jobs with reporters from the New York Times.

Students also toured the White House, met with IOP board member Amy Walter of the Cook Political Report and attended a dinner hosted by former Pritzker Fellow Laura Dove. The trip's capstone was a moving tour of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.





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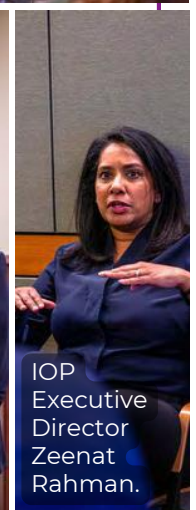
“Being from rural Missouri, I’ve always felt far removed from all the events and decisions made on Capitol Hill. Now, having visited DC and the opportunity to make connections with such successful people, a path toward my own involvement in government seems more attainable.

I especially enjoyed the opportunities to connect with UChicago alumni and enjoyed socializing with others and learning about their various accomplishments so far and their future ambitions. I felt that I walked away with lots of advice regarding various career paths, and I met a surprising number of fellow conservatives throughout these interactions.”

### **Kenzi Bustamante AB ‘24**

"One of the biggest things that I hoped to gain out of attending this trek was getting exposure to different kinds of jobs that one could pursue—besides the well-known positions like becoming an elected representative. I definitely learned about the numerous other jobs that are available in DC that are not spoken about as much (consular, political analyst, lobbyist, campaign reporters) but play equally significant roles as elected representatives in shaping the decisions made in DC. One specific moment that stuck out to me was when I was able to specifically see how a degree like political science could be used during our discussion at the Pentagon. Living in an environment like UChicago that highly emphasizes the academia pathway with many social science degrees, and being someone that is not at all interested in this pathway, it was great to see how one of my degrees can be practically useful for someone devising military strategy decisions at the Pentagon. Now being in a national strategy course this quarter, our visit to the Pentagon has given me a lot more reassurance that if I continue pursuing this degree, it does not necessarily condemn me to a career in academia!"

### **Esmeralda Cerritos-Martinez AB ‘25**



Scenes from the Washington, D.C. Spring Break Trek.



# St. Louis Trek

IOP students visit the Gateway Arch on the St. Louis Spring Break Trek.





Nearly 10 years after a police killing that helped usher in the country's current national reckoning on race and justice, the IOP took 12 students to St. Louis to understand the underlying factors that sparked the Ferguson protests and to explore what's changed since Michael Brown's killing.

The trek started with students and staff retracing Michael Brown's last steps on August 9, 2014, from the neighborhood market to the spot on the road where he was shot and his body lay uncovered for the world to witness on social media.

Over the course of several days, students met with activists, prosecutors, journalists, top law enforcement officials, current and former mayors, advocacy groups and U.S. Representative Cori Bush (D-MO).

The trip culminated with an in-depth discussion with former St. Louis County Circuit Attorney Bob McCulloch, the controversial prosecutor who empaneled the grand jury that chose not to indict Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson over the killing.





Prior to this trek, my understanding of the criminal justice system came from news articles that circulated online and discussions with my fellow progressive friends. What I really appreciated about the people we got to meet through the trek was that they represented the spectrum of perspectives on the criminal justice system and the city's racial reckoning. We met with journalists, activists, government officials, police leadership, and prosecuting attorneys, each with their own world views and along with that, their own beliefs in what was the greater good for St. Louis. It wasn't just the conversations with the speakers that really pushed me to find the limits of my beliefs, but the conversations I was able to have with the other students who attended the trek.

Coming back from this trek, I feel like I have a starting point for investigating what my belief system is. As someone who is interested in researching health disparities and race, what I learned on this trek is fundamental to

understanding our nation's history with race. Coming out of theoretical microeconomic and econometrics coursework these past two quarters, it was grounding to be reminded of what my values are in the first place. I learned about the concept of systemic and institutionalized racism from my undergraduate coursework in sociology, but was moved to pursue public policy because I saw policy as the avenue to create change. What this trek instilled is that sometimes the law alone cannot save us. Law is not objective, and it's possible to make a principled argument for anything, making law a tool for powerful interest groups. In thinking about my future research evaluating existing policy interventions and studying what optimal policy might look like, this trek, and the fellow students I met through it, is a reminder to also consider the limits of policy and how we can truly achieve the outcomes we want to see."

**Daisy Lu**  
PhD '27

"In our society, we have a tendency to oversimplify issues like racial justice and the role of policing. People tend to group people into two categories: those who support a cause or are against it. However, meeting with a variety of different people in diverse fields helped me understand the complexity of the issue of racial and criminal justice. Even though a majority of people we met were passionate about creating systems that do not harm black people in the way they currently do, every organization had different ways they framed that issue and varying ideas on how to approach the problem. While I was more convinced by and agreed with some more than others, I found that everyone played an important role in making progress. It is equally essential to have activists pushing against the system and calling for radical change as it is to have allies working in the system who are looking for the most practical solutions.

What surprised me the most was how everyone we met with, who was affiliated with a party, was a Democrat. The fact that pro-police pro-incarceration former prosecuting attorney Bob McCullough and activist progressive squad member Representative Cori Bush were a part of the same political party shocked me. Seeing the diversity of thought within the Democratic party made me realize how much other people and I were caught up in party labels. So much of the national media and attention is focused on Democrats vs. Republicans that people ignore the inner party tensions and complexities. Breaking out of this biparty mindset also helped me understand that there can be more than two proposed solutions to an issue."

**Shannon Dye**  
AB'25



# The IOP in London



Panelists discuss the intersection of politics and economics during the IOP's joint Speaker Series event with Chicago Booth London.



IOP Executive Director Zeenat Rahman.

As part of a broader strategy to tap into the larger University of Chicago community, the IOP partnered with the Booth School of Business, London Campus, to convene a panel discussion exploring the links between political upheaval and economic instability.

The panelists – **Jeff Currie, PhD '96** and the global head of commodities research in global investment research at Goldman Sachs; **Sasha Havlicek**, cofounder and CEO of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue; and **Randall S. Kroszner**, the Norman R. Bobins Professor of Economics at Chicago Booth – unpacked this unprecedented period in the global economy and the political implications of economic policy. The conversation was moderated by **Mark Landler**, the London bureau chief for the New York Times. The event took place just after the first anniversary of Russia invading Ukraine, a conflict that has delivered a severe global economic shock and a significant humanitarian crisis. “The trajectory of this war will essentially determine for generations to come the balance of power between authoritarianism and liberal democracy,” noted Havlicek. “The stakes could not be higher.”

Many among the 130 in-person attendees remarked on the compelling combination of the two centers from each side of the Atlantic. “I thought overlaying geopolitical and economic issues was extremely interesting and insightful,” one attendee said. Another 445 people from the United States, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Spain, India and other nations watched the event online. The London conversation is hopefully the first of more international partnerships to come, leveraging relationships with university partners to help reach a global audience with the political and public service content that is central to the IOP's identity back home.



# Commitment to Free Expression

The nonpartisan Institute of Politics has established itself as a vital part of the UChicago campus community, a place where students challenge themselves and each other, test their assumptions – and ours – while pursuing pathways to engage in work in service of others.

Our commitment to free expression manifests itself in programming designed to break down ideological barriers, work through polarization and confront the most pressing issues of the day.

Javier Rodriguez, AB '25 asks a question during a 2022-23 Speaker Series event.



Three Speaker Series events this year exemplified the institute's commitment to providing a forum for free expression and vigorous debate.



### Taking it to the Streets: The Power of Iranian Women Now

The IOP speakers series frequently hosts “pop-up” events, small-scale discussions pivoting off the big news of the day, including last year’s protests in Iran. An IOP event “Taking it to the Streets: The Power of Women Now,” prompted significant backlash from a segment of the Iranian diaspora in reaction to the panelist Negar Mortazavi, a journalist some accused of supporting the Iranian government. In spite of an aggressive email and social media campaign, protests outside the IOP house, vandalism to the building, intimidation tactics toward staff and calls to cancel the program, the panel discussion pivoted to an online format. While other universities have canceled events under parallel conditions, the IOP, with the full backing of UChicago leadership, chose to hold the event as planned.

### American Jews and Israel: Fraying Bonds

Since its founding in 1948, Israel has been a fundamental touchstone for American Jews, but that support has eroded over the years as a peace process with Palestinians foundered, particularly under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government. A third rail discussion that has been met with backlash and discouraged on college campuses, the IOP instead brought together a panel of experts who rarely agree to share a stage: the conservative New York Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky; Israeli Deputy Consul General Daniel Aschheim; Eva Borgwardt, political director of IfNotNow, which advocates for Palestinian rights; Jonathan Weisman of The New York Times; and moderator Jodi Rudoren, editor-in-chief of the Forward. The conversation was frank and at times painful for its participants but ultimately enlightening for the people in attendance.



### Counterpoint – Crime and Punishment: Two Recent Governors’ Views

IOP students perennially request one-on-one public conversations between individuals who have stark policy disagreements. This year, the Speaker Series responded with the launch of a new program, “Counterpoint,” intended to be a model for civil discourse on campus and beyond. In its first iteration, former Oregon Governor Kate Brown, who commuted 17 death row sentences on her way out of office, faced off in discussion against former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, who oversaw an 11-day execution streak in his state before Arkansas’ lethal injection cocktail expired. The conversation proved to be a robust debate on capital punishment and criminal justice.



## 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.

During one dinner with Pritzker Fellow and former Democratic Congressman Beto O'Rourke, students structured a conversation around his home state of Texas, its role as the center of the national immigration debate and whether it can be a beacon for the American dream.



Pritzker Fellow and former U.S. Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL) meets with students during a dialogue dinner.

“

Dialogue Dinners are the most intimate space the IOP offers. They are a special place for one-on-one connections. It's not just asking questions, but engaging in conversation. Because of that, we had really fruitful conversations pertinent to our lived experiences.”

**Solana Adedokun, AB '24**

“Everyone had their own story, but there was a sentiment about community and making profess and the promise of the American dream. I got a much broader perspective and a charter to deliberately help people realize their version of the American dream. I can be a part of the solution to realize the American Dream, even just my part of the world. We can't just sit here and complain, we have to do something about it.”

**Tara Farwana, MPP '23**



# Bridging the Divide



Bridging the Divide participants visited communities in Springfield, Peoria and Chicago over the course of three weekends, exploring issues that have historically divided urban and rural communities.



Established in 2018, the Bridging the Divide (BTD) public service leadership program has brought urban and rural students together to listen and learn from each other, engage in productive – and sometimes uncomfortable – conversations to break down ideological and geographical barriers and step outside the cultural silos that lead to increased polarization.

Bridging the Divide first launched as a partnership between the IOP and Eureka College, a private Christian school in central Illinois. In its second year, BTD welcomed Arrupe College, a two-year degree program at Loyola University in Chicago to the partnership. BTD has since gained national recognition resulting in colleges across the country requesting assistance in creating similar programs on their campuses.

Over the course of several weekends throughout the academic year, students from the three institutions travel to Peoria, Springfield and throughout Chicago to attend Democratic and Republican focus groups and meet with political leaders, government workers, nonprofit executives, activists and journalists, with the specific goal of exploring issues related to housing and safety.



Bridging the Divide participant Chloe Chiles Troutman (center) speaks during a visit to the Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, IL.

“

I was surprised to learn that these rural areas like Eureka and the towns surrounding it suffer from many of the same issues that Chicago does such as homelessness and violence. The difference is that these areas have different approaches to solving those problems. BTD taught me that there is no one way to solve a problem, and that attacking an issue from multiple avenues is the most effective way to manage and minimize it. BTD dismantles so many misconceptions about the difference between urban and rural students, voters, and areas, as well as misconceptions behind homelessness and affordable housing, and safety. And BTD has brought to my attention the various civic engagement organizations there are all around Chicago that I can be involved with. When I go home for the summer back to my small town, I now know that it's possible to create change and attempt to bring a solution to a problem even if that problem isn't immediately visible or it seems like there is a lack of resources because my town is so small."

**Chloe Chiles Troutman**

**Political Science, German Minor, AB '26**



# Elections & Voter Engagement



Chicago mayoral candidates Brandon Johnson, the eventual winner, (left) and Paul Vallas debate public safety, housing and education during the final forum before the election.





Chicago mayoral candidates discuss their policy proposals at three separate forums hosted by the IOP and Chicago Public Media.



## ChiElect 2023

In a contentious year for local politics, Chicago saw nine candidates vying to win the mayor's race and 50 aldermanic seats up for grabs. In response, the IOP partnered with WBEZ and the Chicago Sun-Times to create "**The People's Agenda**," a comprehensive election survey designed to assess the most pressing issues young voters want answered from candidates. As part of the partnership, IOP students distributed the survey on campus and in neighboring communities.

Responses to the survey were used to frame questions asked during **Reset on the Road**, a series of roundtable candidate discussions held at local colleges and broadcast on WBEZ's midday show Reset.

Reset on the Road included two debates on the UChicago campus, including a debate during the mayoral runoff featuring eventual election winner Brandon Johnson and challenger Paul Vallas.



UChiVotes students encourage their peers to vote outside the early voting location on campus.



## UChiVotes

Founded five years ago to establish UChicago as a national leader in voter registration and turnout, this student-led, staff-supported initiative has helped improve the culture of voting on campus.

With the 2022 Congressional midterms, the 2023 Chicago general election, and the 2023 Chicago runoff elections happening during the 2022-23 academic year, UChiVotes placed a special emphasis on visibility to ensure students, faculty and staff had up-to-date voting information during each cycle.

The 20 student-leaders and 83 volunteers that makeup UChiVotes, partnered with university administrators, Undergraduate Student Government and several Recognized Student Organizations (RSOs) to build three distinct campus-wide voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives.

UChiVotes also participated in a national student voter conference “College Votes Count,” which brought together groups from across the country to share voter engagement strategies. More than 10 schools participated in the conference.

Together with the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, UChiVotes worked to operate an on-campus early voting location for each election. Students ended the year the Chicago Runoff election, where **a record 700 people voted early at the on-campus polling site.**





Some of my favorite UChicago memories are with UChiVotes. It is an opportunity to see the UChicago community come together around voting and get involved with democracy. At the early polling site, there is an energy around democracy that I don't see in other places on campus. Specifically, it is rewarding to see students who otherwise would not have voted actually walk into the polling location and vote."

## Caroline Koclanes

Mathematics and Economics, SB + AB '23



2023 Pritzker Fellow and former U.S. Rep. (D-TX) Beto O'Rourke helps drive turnout during early voting on campus.



IOP directors meet with UChiVotes student leadership ahead of the 2022 midterms.



I am passionate about UChiVotes because organizations like ours are working to increase the voter turnout rates for young voters, who have historically not been as engaged in elections as other age cohorts. In addition, I know our campus has historically had comparatively low turnout rates compared to other universities, so I am hoping to do everything I can to change that!"

## Kylan Bartel

Sociology, Minor in Spanish, AB '25



A man incarcerated inside Cook County Jail votes early inside the facility, March 25, 2023, in Chicago. (John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune)

## Bridge Civic Education

As part of the IOP's Bridge Program, which creates opportunities for students to interact with the criminal justice system, Bridge students delivered nonpartisan voting rights and voter education seminars inside Cook County Jail ahead of the 2022 midterms and the 2023 Chicago municipal elections.



“

Prior to this experience, I had never visited a jail or prison. Bridge Civic Ed has given me the opportunity to visit the jail in a positive way. I have been able to interact and make connections with the people there, and am consistently moved by their interest in affecting change in their local communities.”

**Hannah Kaplan**  
MPP ‘24



“

Within civic education and voting rights conversations, people in jails and prisons are often lost or forgotten. I see how important our workshops are whenever we visit Cook County Jail and find that many individuals there are learning for the first time that they are still eligible to vote. These workshops are one of the few ways they can get information about their rights and upcoming elections since they do not have access to the internet.”

**Janae Nkansah**  
MPP ‘23





## Reflections of Leadership

Estrella Hernandez (left), a fourth-year student from San Antonio, Texas has touched every part of the IOP since arriving on campus. Over four years, she's become a staff liaison to the student body, a mentor to her peers and one of the most trusted voices on the Student Advisory Board.



“

When I was in high school, pursuing a career in politics and public service felt like something far removed from my life. Although my friends and I could get involved with politics in a few ways — like writing to our representatives or encouraging other students to register to vote — getting to meet with key decision-makers or work in the field felt completely impossible. I didn't know anyone I could ask for advice about working on a campaign or studying discrete policy areas, and the process of getting involved with both felt opaque.

Coming to the Institute of Politics completely changed the trajectory of my life. As a first-year in college, I immersed myself in an environment where my peers and mentors were interested in learning about what policy topics I was passionate about, hearing my opinions on current events, and giving me opportunities to see inside the institutions central to American life. Through cohort-based programs like Chicago Bound and Leaders of Color, I was welcomed into fiercely supportive spaces where I could simultaneously learn critical professional skills and discuss how my identity informed my approach to public service. I could share the professional goals I previously thought were too unattainable with other students who encouraged me to pursue them. I became more confident asking questions at Speaker Series events and in class, applying for internships, and even describing my future plans to my classmates and professors.

Even through the challenges of being sent home in March 2020 and returning to a year of entirely virtual instruction later that year, being involved with the Institute of Politics made a challenging period of my life much more bearable. I found a sense of purpose in getting to coordinate remote voter outreach in the lead-up to the 2020 Presidential Election. I enjoyed coordinating SAB events and programming despite the unique constraints we faced that year. The relationships I formed while working on these projects solidified the importance of the IOP community to me. My peers and mentors gave me advice as I applied to my major, celebrated my acceptance into the program alongside me, encouraged my fledgling interest in civil rights law, and helped me begin to pull together an early articulation of my future goals.

Being able to return to the IOP house itself and return to in-person programming has been invaluable. I am so profoundly grateful that I was able to spend the last two years of my time on campus growing the cohorts and communities that made college so meaningful to me. The opportunity to prepare UChiVotes for the 2022 midterm elections, launch programming as part of the 2022 - 2023 Student Advisory Board, and create materials for Bridge's expansion into Civic Education workshops were incredibly impactful experiences.



As a fourth-year reflecting on the culmination of my time in Hyde Park, I know that I wouldn't have become the person I am today without the Institute of Politics. I can't imagine a version of myself who believes in her ability to lead an organization, pursue opportunities for meaningful civic engagement, or is as knowledgeable about politics without having become so deeply invested in the IOP.

I still vividly remember my first time coming into the IOP house as a nervous first-year. I was awed by the images of students engaging with political leaders. I wondered if I would be like them one day — self-assured and well-informed enough to engage with anyone.

Writing this out has honestly made me quite emotional. It's difficult to explain how transformative it truly was to stop looking at myself as an outsider — someone who, no matter how much time she invested, would never truly have access to the spaces where decisions are made — and start seeing myself as someone capable of working in politics and public service. I learned the value of my skills and experiences, and became more confident speaking up and willing to take risks.

Graduating is quite bittersweet. I'm sad to be leaving the IOP behind and its groups that have been incredibly influential to me — especially UChiVotes, the Bridge Program, and the Student Advisory Board. Despite this, I'm energized by the vision of new student leaders who will lead these organizations. I feel comforted by the knowledge that whatever the next chapter of my life may hold, the IOP has prepared me to meet its challenges and continue growing. And I hope that one day, I'll be able to return to Hyde Park and share my knowledge with a new generation of students.

**Estrella Hernandez**  
**AB' 23, Student Advisory Board Co-Chair**





# Civic Engagement

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 working with incarcerated individuals on their voting rights to bridging the urban-rural divide, the Civic Engagement program provides myriad opportunities for students to practice democratic engagement



Members of Leaders of Color present plans to address persistent Chicago public policy issues during the group's end-of-year symposium.





“

The first time I visited the IOP building on Woodlawn was for a panel held by W+ a few weeks into my second year in The College. Despite knowing about the IOP during my first year, I found myself talking myself out of several of the opportunities here because of a lack of confidence in myself and a regrettable notion that the identities I hold do not fit the image of a leader in public service. I realize now that these thoughts were unreasonable – in fact, the leaders who I look up to in this field are precisely those who don't fit the stereotypical image. My involvement with Civic Engagement through the IOP, specifically through the skill-building workshops, opportunities for student leadership, and the sense of community provided by affinity-group based programming like W+, pushed me to recognize the value of my identities as an asset, not an obstacle, to my leadership.

Since that initial visit, I've also had the chance to learn from real-world policy practitioners, esteemed Pritzker Fellows and speakers, and my fellow student leaders about the importance and broad definition of public service. As I prepare to graduate and reflect on my five years at The College and the Harris School of Public Policy, I can confidently say that the IOP shaped my own path in public service and provided me with opportunities and a community that I could not have found anywhere else – on this campus or beyond!

From organizing events with role models like Pritzker Fellows Dr. Janice Jackson and Heather McTeer Toney, to serving on the Student Advisory Board as Civic Engagement Chair, the IOP has undoubtedly reinforced my interest in and prepared me for a career in public service. Working alongside my W+ co-Chairs last year to launch W+ Engage, a community service and volunteer program that matched cohort members to direct and sustained service at environmental and food justice organizations in Chicago, helped me develop my leadership, outreach, and program management skills. Traveling to El Paso and Juarez on the Borderlands Trek allowed me to ground my understanding of immigration policy through lessons from the lived experiences and anecdotes of communities and leadership in the region. Engaging with the IOP's incredible community of staff and leadership, especially on the Career Development and Civic Engagement teams, prepared me for internships at the City of Chicago's Mayor's Office, Vice President du Buclet's Office at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Environmental Justice Team this past summer.

I'm endlessly grateful to the Institute of Politics for these opportunities and so many more. Above all else, I am grateful to the people I've met and the community we've built through this institution. I look forward to carrying with me the lessons that I've learned during my involvement with the IOP as I graduate this spring!"

**Sinduri Soundararajan**  
MPP '23



Leaders of Color hosts a spring mixer for UChicago students of color.

# Leaders of Color

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

“

Leaders of Color quickly became my home and community on campus. I knew that I have a desire to create social change, and I was wrestling with wanting to be a part of political processes and wanting to entirely change or upend politics as usual. Participating in LoC helped me answer what public service can be. My experience as a participant in the cohort showed me the breadth and depth of opportunities to create social change. I also left the cohort experience with an incredible peer network and upperclassmen mentors. The community helped expand my notions of public service, created space for me to grapple with my concerns and has continued to support me on my career and political journey.”

**James Roberson**  
AB '25



Leaders of Color hosted mixers, a policy symposium and speakers throughout the 2022-23 academic year.



# Spectrum

Connects and empowers LGBTQ+ students with leadership development opportunities.



Spectrum students gather for social events and host LGBTQ+ leaders.

“

I got involved in my third year in Spectrum and was seeking a sense of community post covid. I loved connecting with a bunch of people who are thinking about public policy and are interested in social justice. In my leadership role, it's been lovely getting to talk to people who work on queer issues nonprofit advocacy, etc. Serving in this role I learned the languages of volunteer and nonprofit work. I have also gained an incredible first-hand understanding of the ecosystem of LGBT advocacy and service organizations in Chicago.”

**Amy Lu**  
AB '23



# W+

Connects and empowers LGBTQ+ students with leadership development opportunities.

“

I got involved in W+ after joining a few early conversations in the fall quarter. I chose to dive deeper because I appreciated the diversity of perspectives and pathways that W+ helped me connect with.

I participated in W+'s Winter Institute because I was seeking community and a small group and discussion-based environment. I was excited about the different topics and really wanted to connect with leaders in Chicago. I left W+ with a wide range of connections and a base level of knowledge that helped me get better involved in the Chicago community. It's been incredible to see role models pursuing advocacy work after college, and I have learned that you can make your passions into something bigger. There is always an avenue where you can translate your passions, hopes, and questions about the world into service. It doesn't have to be government, and it can even be outside of your job.”

**Abby Ryan**  
AB '26



W+ invited staff and Chicago-based activists to the IOP to discuss reproductive rights, criminal justice reform and other issues during the 2022-23 academic year.



# The Gate

*The Gate* recruits new writers during Politipalooza.

*The Gate* is an independent, undergraduate publication covering politics and policy on the local, national, and international levels. Content is developed, written, and published by students.

*The Gate* provides an outlet for students interested in political journalism to try their hands at different forms of journalism, and to write about the issues they care about in a non-classroom setting.

Aspiring student journalists, policymakers, and more are supported by a team of section editors and a team of two co-editors-in-chief. *The Gate* also offers a Junior Writers Program and a Senior Writers Program to assist student journalists of different skill levels. Throughout the academic year, *The Gate* hosts workshops led by professional journalists, including Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anchorage Daily News* reporter Kyle Hopkins and Chicago-based *New York Times* reporter Mitch Smith. This year, *The Gate* published more than 20 articles, on topics ranging from climate migration to the implications of the 2022 Midterm elections.

“

For me, *The Gate* has probably been the most transformative career-related experience of my time at UChicago. Journalism gave me an outlet for my biggest passion – writing – and showed me how to make a career out of it. Since then, I have interned at news organizations like The Independent and Harper's Magazine, freelanced locally at South Side Weekly, and will soon be taking part in a fellowship program with The Nation where I will be reporting on abortion access in the Midwest. *The Gate* not only taught me the basic reporting skills I would need for a career in journalism, but getting to take on leadership roles at *The Gate* has made me a confident and curious journalist and editor, and has been instrumental in my decision to pursue journalism after college.”

**Molly Morrow**

English Language and Literature, Human Rights Minor, AB '24





# Bridge

Bridge students host a panel on re-entry following incarceration.

The IOP's Bridge Program seeks to create opportunities for students to interact with the criminal justice system, in particular working with incarcerated people. Student interest in this area of service grew out of conversations with former Pritzker Fellows and Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart. In addition to delivering nonpartisan voting rights and voter education seminars inside Cook County Jail, Bridge students lead peer-to-peer creative writing workshops inside the jail and at the Illinois Youth Center.



Harley Pomper (left) and Ethan Ostrow read selections from the Bridge creative writing publication.



“

Facilitating Bridge workshops and now leading the group has dictated the course of my college experience and changed the direction of my career. Working with so many amazing people living their lives under such deleterious conditions has shown me the imperative of reimagining our criminal legal system, and provided the foundation for a career in emancipatory criminal legal policy. My work with Bridge has inspired me to research restorative justice as a Stamps Scholar and has given me the chance to learn political strategy and navigating institutions in practice. In short, Bridge has inspired me and trained me in ways I could have never imagined happening in the classroom."

**Ethan Ostrow**

**Law, Letters, and Society, Philosophy Minor,  
Masters in Political Science, AB + MA '24**



# TechTeam

Students discuss policy issues with mentors during Ideathon, TechTeam's annual hackathon competition.

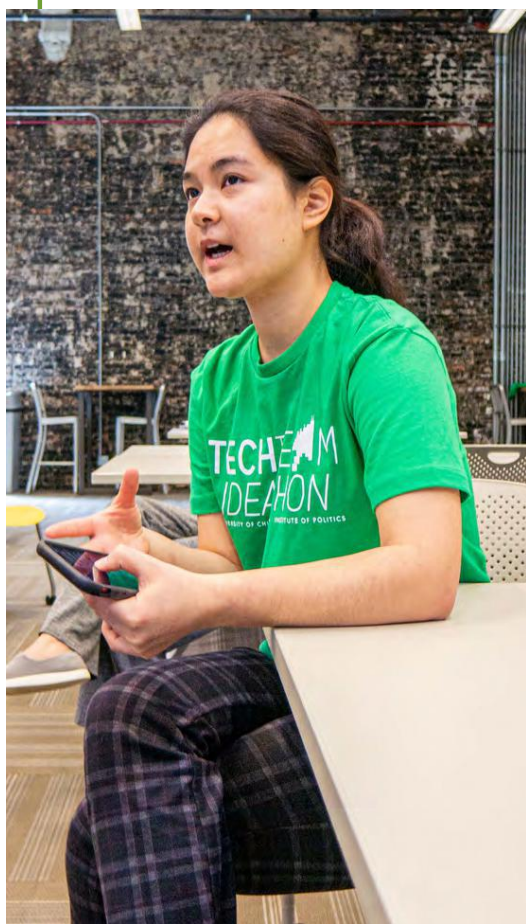
TechTeam students provide technical solutions and tech-oriented consulting to nonprofits and government agencies. TechTeam takes on clients including state representatives, the Chicago Public School system and the American Library Association. Students assess each clients' needs and then work with them throughout the academic year developing mobile apps, creating websites and analyzing data. This year, among other projects, TechTeam students worked to make accessing property tax data on Cook County Assessor's website more user-friendly.

Throughout the academic year, TechTeam hosts workshops to teach different aspects of software development. Students also run a Winter Mentorship Program, where upperclassmen share internship and career advice with younger peers.



TechTeam recruits new members at Politipalooza.





“

We want to provide local organizations with pro bono technical solutions, especially those organizations that might not have the bandwidth to focus on creating a website but are creating an impact in the community. Our projects have a lasting impact, with many of our clients still using products we made for them years ago. Second, we want to create a space for students to nurture their technical skills and for students interested in civic tech to find a community on campus. TechTeam has opened my eyes to different opportunities in tech. In the future, I hope to work somewhere at the intersection of tech and policy or within the civic tech space, either for a nonprofit or within government.”

**Abida Aisikaer**  
**Computer Science, SB ‘24**



“

From the moment I joined TechTeam in my first year, it opened my eyes to the vast opportunity and responsibility we have as students to contribute to our surrounding community. Data and programming are powerful and accessible ways to make a meaningful impact, illustrating how a single group or individual can truly make a difference. This feeling is incredibly energizing, making every minute spent with TechTeam a deeply fulfilling experience.

Through working with a diverse range of clients, my understanding of 'politics' has expanded, and I've gained a greater appreciation for the role unsung civic organizations play in promoting prosperity, equity, and justice.”

**Nish Sinha**  
**Physics and Economics, AB ‘24**



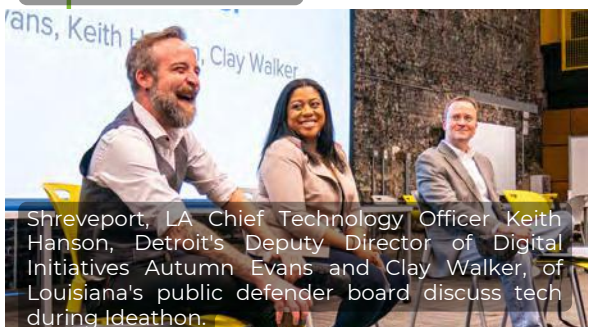
# TECHTEAM IDEATHON



Students meet with mentors, craft their policy proposals and receive feedback during Ideathon.



Pritzker Fellow and former Shreveport, LA Mayor Adrian Perkins (left) discusses civic tech with a student during Ideathon.



Shreveport, LA Chief Technology Officer Keith Hanson, Detroit's Deputy Director of Digital Initiatives Autumn Evans and Clay Walker, of Louisiana's public defender board discuss tech during Ideathon.

**Ideathon**, a student-led hackathon hosted by TechTeam brings together civic-minded and tech-savvy students for a weekend challenging students to generate solutions addressing the most pressing issues at the intersection of technology and society.

Participants used the multi-day event to conceptualize new ideas ranging from original startups, social enterprises, innovative software, or reimagined government policy.

This year's program focused on restorative justice and smart city initiatives. Students formed teams and spent the weekend brainstorming ideas with policymakers and technologists including Pritzker Fellow Adrian Perkins, a former mayor of Shreveport, Louisiana and Julia Oran, AB '18 a solutions engineer at Code for America.

The winning team, Swift Equitable Care Uniting Resources and Education (S.E.C.U.R.E), led by Kanchan Naik AB '25, and Shama Tirukkula AB '24 proposed a remarkable solution using technology to improve access to health care for underrepresented populations in Illinois. Their proposal would establish software creating an online marketplace connecting doctors interested in pro-bono work with recipients of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. Kanchan is continuing to pursue her idea through resources and support from IOP staff.

Keynote speakers for Ideathon 2023 were Keith Hanson Shreveport, Louisiana's first chief technology officer, Clay Walker, director of Juvenile Defender Services for Louisiana's public defender board, and Autumn Evans, Detroit, Michigan's deputy director of digital initiatives Director of Digital Initiatives, City of Detroit].



# Career Development

The Institute of Politics provides approximately 300-fully-funded 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. Regular career workshops provide students in-depth looks into various public service sectors.



Students gather on the steps of the U.S. Capitol during the Washington, D.C. Spring Break Trek.





**Arushi Bansal** is a third-year student at the University of Chicago pursuing a double major in Political Science and Economics. She worked as the IOP's alumni strategies intern during the 2022-23 academic year.

On campus, Arushi is President of The Paul Douglas Institute, a student-run public policy think tank. This past year, she managed 6 different project teams of more than 50 researchers that work with Chicago-based organizations to explore varying sectors, from criminal justice to K-12 education. She is also a member of Women+ In Law and participates in local tutoring programs. After graduation, she plans to take a gap year to work in federal education and labor policy before pursuing a law degree.

“

I first became involved with IOP by attending office hours with the previous Director of Career Development, Melissa Navas. Entering the College with no work experience and unsure about my career aspirations, I was scared about finding my first internship. Melissa met with me several times (albeit virtually since it was 2020) to walk me through writing a resume, cover letter, approaching an interview, etc. She encouraged me to apply to IOP's UPRoP program, where I secured my first ever internship with Chicago Public Schools. Working in the Office of Network Support, I had the opportunity to work closely with central administration in writing and communicating safety and equity protocols as schools began transitioning to hybrid learning models.

That first internship piqued my interest in pursuing a career in public service, and made me want to explore education policy at a national level. Through IOP's funded internships, I was able to work with DC-based think tank Civic, LLC, to examine the long-term impacts of remote learning on K-12 education. The following summer, I was on Capitol Hill with the Office of Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi. During that internship, I had the opportunity to attend congressional committee hearings, answer constituent calls, and draft policy memos that were handed directly to the Congressman. Being surrounded by the energy of the Hill cemented my own desire to work in public service and come back to DC over the summer."



# 2022 Summer Internships

## Nonprofit/Advocacy

- A Better Chicago
- AccoglieRete
- Advance Illinois
- American Red Cross Greater New York Region
- Braven
- Casa Refugiados
- Chicago Children's Museum
- Chicago Community Loan Fund
- Chicago Justice Project
- Chicago Volunteer Legal Services
- ConTextos
- Delta Health Alliance
- Derechos Humanos
- Disability Lead
- Exoneration Project
- Foundation Para el Beneficio Global
- Great Commission Latin America Ministries
- High School Law Review
- Housing Assistance Council
- Human Trafficking Institute
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant Rights
- Illinois Justice Clinic on Entrepreneurship
- Illinois Justice Project
- IMAGO Global Grassroots
- International Economic Development Council
- International Organization for Adolescents
- International Research & Exchange Board
- IOP Charles H. Percy Summer in Washington Program
- IOP Communications Intern
- The Invisible Institute
- Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation US
- Koszyn & Company
- Latino Policy Forum
- Lawndale Christian Legal Center
- Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands
- Legal Services Corporation
- LIFT, Inc (LIFT Chicago)
- LiftUp Communities
- LiftUp Enterprises

- Marakuja Kivu Research
- Matt Singer Law, LLC
- NAACP Legal Defense Fund
- Partnership for College Completion
- Peaslee Neighborhood Center
- Public Interest Research Group
- Rai Govind Shyam Trust
- re(Chicago)
- Recidiviz
- Reform for Illinois
- Resilient Cities Network
- Results for America
- Save the Children
- Self Employed Women's Association
- Southland Development Authority
- Sunrise Movement
- The Center for Advancing Domestic Peace
- Chicago Community Trust
- The Cohousing Association of the United States
- The Exoneration Project
- The Majority Trust
- Therapy4thePeople
- University of Chicago Office of Federal Relations
- Urban Triage
- Worthy Minds, LLC
- Young Invincibles

- DuSable Museum of African American History
- Embassy of Mexico to the US
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- FIVS; Office of the Secretariat
- French Embassy in the United States
- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
- Metropolitan Water Reclamation Commissioner's Office
- Orleans Public Defenders
- The Law Office of the Cook County Public Defender
- The Shedd Aquarium
- U.S. Department of Education Special Education Programs
- U.S. Department of Energy: Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs
- U.S. Department of Energy: Office of International Affairs
- U.S. Department of Energy: Office of Secretary and Deputy Secretary
- U.S. Department of Energy: Office of the Under Secretary for Science & Energy
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of State
- U.S. Department of the Treasury
- United States Attorney's Office
- United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Judge Diarmuid F. O'Scannlain)

## Government Agency

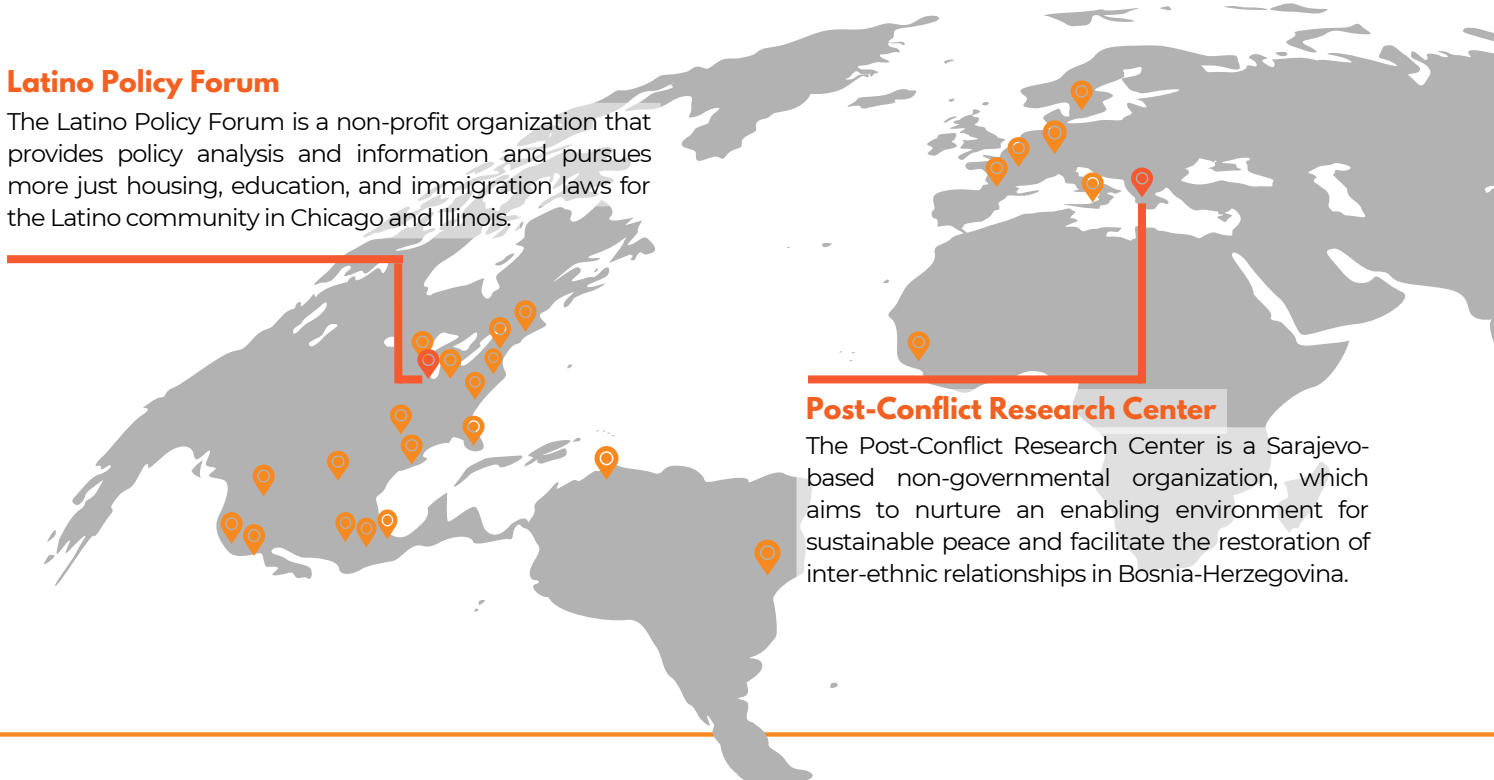
- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum
- British Embassy to the United States
- Broward County Public Defender's Office
- Chicago Public Schools Strategic Planning Team
- Chicago Public Schools External Research Team
- Chicago Public Schools Office of Network Support
- Chicago Public Schools Office of Student Assessment & MTSS
- Chittenden County Office of the Public Defender
- City of Chicago Office of Budget & Management
- Contra Costa Public Defenders
- Courtroom of Honorable Kelly O'Neill Levy (The Supreme Court of the State of New York)

## Latino Policy Forum

The Latino Policy Forum is a non-profit organization that provides policy analysis and information and pursues more just housing, education, and immigration laws for the Latino community in Chicago and Illinois.

## Post-Conflict Research Center

The Post-Conflict Research Center is a Sarajevo-based non-governmental organization, which aims to nurture an enabling environment for sustainable peace and facilitate the restoration of inter-ethnic relationships in Bosnia-Herzegovina.





## Elected and Political Office

- City of Chicago Mayor's Office
- Cook County Office of the Treasurer
- Cook County State's Attorney's Office
- County of Los Angeles Office of Inspector General
- Movimiento Ciudadano
- Office of Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer Kahan
- Office of Illinois State Senator Robert Peters (D, 13th District)
- Office of the Governor of Texas
- Office of U.S. Rep. Don Beyer (D, VA-08)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D, IL-5)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Sean Casten (D, IL-6)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Cindy Axne (D, IA-3)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Marie Newman (D, IL-3)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R, IL-16)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Andy Kim (D, NJ-03)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Linda Sanchez (D, CA-38)
- Office of U.S. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D, IL-8)
- Office of U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL)
- Office of U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
- Office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)
- The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

## Media

- ABC News
- Circle of Blue
- Crooked Media
- Daily Herald
- ESPN
- Independent
- PBS Newshour
- The Axe Files
- WisPolitics.com

## Think Tank

- Aspen Institute - College Excellence Program
- Aspen Institute - Community Strategies Group
- Aspen Institute - Religion and Society Program
- BILARK
- Brookings Institution
- Economy and Development Program
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law
- Chicago Council on Global Affairs
- Chicago Project on Security and Threats
- Civic, LLC
- Environmental Law & Policy Center
- Fambul Tok, Wan Fambul Framework
- Harris School of Public Policy
- Hoover Institution
- Intellisite Institute
- Malmö University, Faculty of Education and Society
- Pacific Forum
- Potomac Institute for Policy Studies
- Pozen Family Center for Human Rights
- Southern Illinois Univ. School of Medicine Population Science and Policy Department
- Stimson Center
- Tata Institute of Social Science
- The Centre for Social and Behavior Change
- Urban Institute's Research to Action Lab
- Urban Labs Energy & Environment Lab
- Weinstein Carnegie Philanthropic Group

## Civic Technology

- Ballotpedia
- JusticeText
- SkyIT

## Intergovernmental/ Nongovernmental Agency

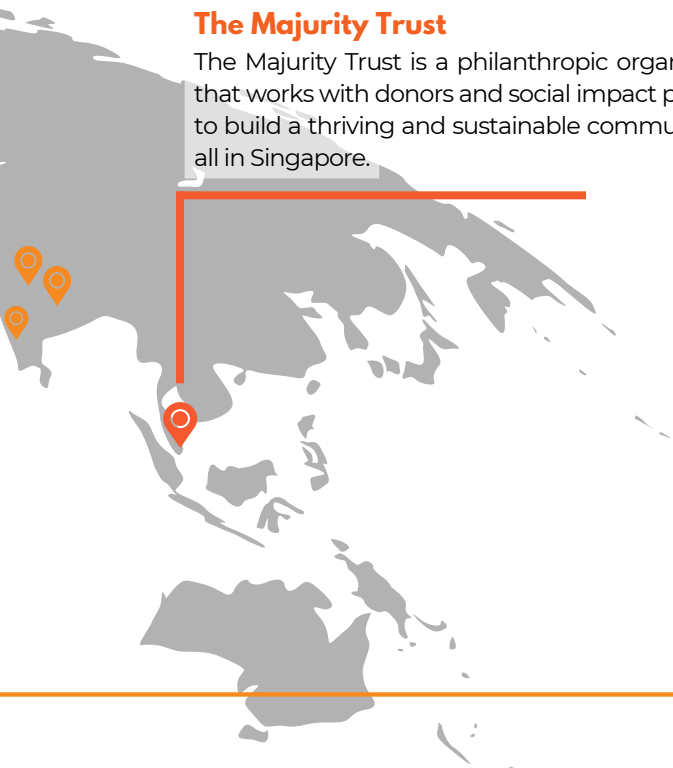
- Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
- Pan American Development Foundation
- Post Conflict Research Center; Balkan Diskurs Branch
- Pratham Organization
- Puntos Solidarios NGO
- The World Bank
- The World Bank (DIME)
- The World Bank: Mind, Behavior, and Development Unit
- U.S.-Asia Institute
- Ukrainian Relief
- UN Women: Data and Statistics
- UNESCO
- UNICEF
- United Nations
- United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- United Nations: Executive Office of Secretary-General

## Political Consulting/Strategy

- BallotReady
- Country First
- Fabrizio Lee & Associates
- Intellz
- KJD Strategies
- Magnify Strategies
- New Chicago Consulting
- New Politics
- New Politics Leadership Academy
- Public Opinion Strategies

## The Majurity Trust

The Majurity Trust is a philanthropic organization that works with donors and social impact partners to build a thriving and sustainable community for all in Singapore.



**251**  
Internships

**13**  
U.S. States

**12**  
Countries

**176**  
Employers



# 2022-23 Academic Year Internships

## ACE (Activism and Community Engagement)

- Advance Illinois
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice
- Blackroots Alliance
- Chicago Votes
- Community Organizing and Family Issues
- Disability Lead
- Genesys
- Hope Chicago
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Illinois Justice Project
- JusticeText
- League of Women Voters
- LiftUp Enterprises
- One Million Degrees
- Partnership for College Completion
- People's Action Institute
- Reform for Illinois
- Southside Together Organizing for Power
- Sunrise Movement
- Young Invincibles

## UPReP (Urban Policy and Research Program)

- Chicago Public Schools, Chief Education Office
- Chicago Public Schools, Information and Technology Services
- Chicago Public Schools, Office of Social and Emotional Learning
- City Colleges of Chicago
- City of Chicago - Department of Planning and Development
- City of Chicago Mayor's Office
- City of Chicago Office of Budget and Management
- City of Chicago Treasurer's Office
- Cook County Sheriff's Office
- Cook County State's Attorney's Office
- Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health
- Illinois Department of Human Services, Poverty Commission
- Illinois Finance Authority
- Office of Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton (JEO Initiative)
- Office of Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago Commissioner Kimberly du Buclet
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# 65

**Academic Year Internships All Across Chicago**







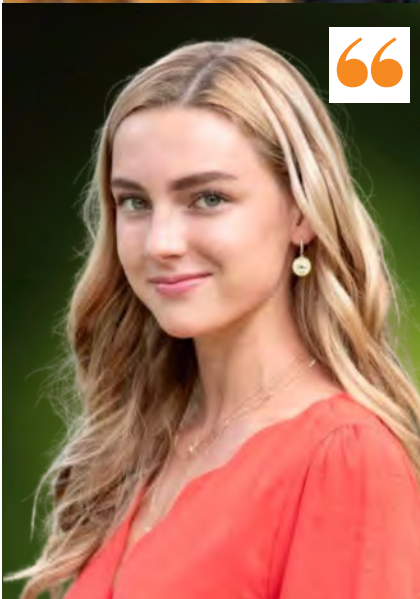
Working at Fabrizio, Lee & Associates gave me crucial insight into how pollsters read the results of a survey, whether it is for campaigns or corporations, and provide data-driven recommendations to clients. This has directly helped me in other research by equipping me with the right skillset in analyzing data and interpreting it in a non-technical way. The highlight of my internship was when the surveys we prepared for Darren Bailey's gubernatorial campaign made their way to social media mere hours after I had finished working on the final steps! It was exciting to see our poll dissected by various analysts after having familiarized myself with multiple vital components of the poll.

### **Aatman Vakil, AB'23, Fabrizio, Lee & Associates**



This summer has been incredible -- I have been trying to get on to Capitol Hill for the past 2 summers and have spent a lot of time doing Hill-adjacent work (think tank, political comms and fundraising, campaigns, etc.), but nothing compares with working in the center of it all. This summer, I've realized that I want to work directly with policymakers -- not electing policymakers or trying to influence policymakers. One of my favorite experiences was when my Representative was able to get us in to hear the First Lady of Ukraine's address to Congress in the Congressional Auditorium (with help from Speaker Pelosi). I was able to sit with Members of Congress and listen to Olena Volodymyrivna Zelenska's speech in real time and have it translated into English in my headset. Incredible! I also sat outside of the House chamber while the Inflation Reduction Act was being voted on and was able to watch Nancy Pelosi sign the bill (and get a selfie) right after its passage. Last, but not least, I was able to sit in the Senate gallery when the PACT Act was passed (and ran into Jon Stewart at the post-passage press conference!).

### **Sophie Hare, AB'23, Office of U.S. Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-08)**



Through my internship, I have expanded my knowledge of the Bosnian War and international conflict as I researched its causes and consequences and engaged in dialogue with experts. Additionally, I developed skills in conducting research and writing since I have completed rigorous research tasks and written articles for publication. The Srebrenica Youth School was my favorite experience so far since I was immersed in the history of Srebrenica, learning more about the conflict and resolution of war crimes committed there. I additionally had the opportunity to meet and converse with both incredibly accomplished students and experts who helped me expand my perspective on the war and responses. This conference inspired my own independent research project for the Post-Conflict Research Center, writing an article comparing Western responses to the Bosnian War and other conflicts.

### **Natalie Larsen, AB'23, Post-Conflict Research Center**





## Career Corner Podcast

“

Created by Niels Ras, CIR '22 and the 2021-22 Student Advisory Board (SAB), the Career Corner Podcast exposes University of Chicago students to careers in politics, social impact, and government by interviewing various fellows and guests that come through the IOP. The goal was to have another medium of connection, less formal than speaker series events and fellows seminars to get to know public service leaders and learn from their experiences. Last year's podcast iteration was started by interviewing Pritzker Fellows such as Erin Simpson, Mark Campbell, and Keisha Lance Bottoms. These interviews laid the foundation for a robust collection of interviews sharing the career stories of various political leaders.

Coming into this year, my goal for the podcast was twofold. The first was to try and tailor each podcast more towards students and their career needs, rather than learning about the overall career journey and story of a particular guest. The second goal was to continue to add to the collection of podcasts and begin to create a database within the IOP's website for all of the podcast episodes to be housed. In regards to the first goal, I began the quarter brainstorming types of questions that would have the most impact and be the most helpful for students. As a student myself, the stories of longtime politicians running for senate, governor, and other high-level positions, while inspiring, were not helpful to my short-term goals. As a result, I wanted to ensure that the main focus of my interviews would be discussing the early careers of guests and specifically the impactful decisions they had to make to get to the position they are now. I felt this approach would lead to more engaging conversations that created a path for current students to think about careers in public service. For the second goal, I wanted to make sure that I interviewed a diverse array of people that would draw students with varying interests to the IOP via the podcast's reach. Having interviewed all of the full-time and visiting fellows this year, I feel I have taken an important step in diversifying the types of guests that come on the podcast.

On a more personal note, the podcast has been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had during my time at UChicago. Being able to meet and talk to some of the most influential, impactful public service leaders in the US has inspired me to really pursue a career in public service and try to change the world. Learning from each guest and working with IOP staff to continue this project of the podcast has been an amazing experience, and I hope to continue to spearhead this mission in the future. One of my favorite episodes this year was with visiting fellow Tim Ryan, whose campaign during the 2022 midterms I had followed very closely. Listening to him talk about the attention he paid to every different type of Ohio voter was very refreshing to hear from a politician. Additionally, it made me think deeper about the type of politician that I want to be in the future: one that connects with people on a personal level and inspires others to do the same."

**Rohil Saxena, AB '25**





# Speaker Series

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.



U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY) discusses Trump's impeachment and the future of American democracy.



“



As a first-year graduate student at the Harris School of Public Policy, I came to the University of Chicago immediately searching for programs and groups that I would like to engage with. Every student, faculty, and staff member I spoke to quickly directed me to the Institute of Politics. By the way each person praised the IOP's consistent and robust programming, it was apparent to me that it is an integral aspect of the University of Chicago's campus community. The very first event that I attended was “[Meet the Fall 2022 Pritzker Fellows](#),” where I had the opportunity to be introduced to a new set of Pritzker Fellows, each coming from various backgrounds in government, politics, policy, international affairs, and journalism. As someone interested in a career in policy or public service, hearing these fellows reflect in-depth on experiences and influential careers very valuable to me.

Another event that stood out to me was with the [former White House Director of Speechwriting for President Obama, Cody Keenan](#). He spoke about his upbringing, his time interning for Senator Ted Kennedy, grappling with imposter syndrome, and the process of becoming the director of speechwriting. Despite the imposter syndrome he felt, his story emphasized the importance of identifying what you're skilled at and being consistent with it throughout the role. In Keenan's case, his unique ability to organize and craft a story is what made his speeches compelling and thoughtful. To do well in most roles in public service or management, it's simply necessary to be organized. This was tangible information that I'm sure other students and I will use as we progress through our own careers and personal lives.

However, the commitment the IOP has to fostering a space for public engagement goes beyond its Speaker Series and discussions with civic leaders. Through career-focused workshops and résumé or cover letter advising appointments, the IOP has cultivated my professional development and supported me in my desire to explore public service and politics.

These countless programs have also been a source of motivation for me as I get through the quantitative-focused core courses at Harris, reminding me of my passions for service and community engagement. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunities that the Institute of Politics has provided me, and I intend to continue being an active member of its community.”

**Semeredin Kundin**  
**MPP '24**



### Meet the Fall 2022 Pritzker Fellows



David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director; Indian journalist Rana Ayyub; former Senate Secretary for the Majority Laura Dove; former U.S. Sen. Doug Jones (D-AL); Steve Hayes, The Dispatch; and former U.S. Rep. Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL) (left to right)

### 90's Kids: Getting Sh\*t Done Outside Government



Zeenat Rahman, IOP Executive Director; Benji Backer, American Conservation Coalition; Lily Rocha, Young Invincibles; and Rachel Sumekh, Swipe Out Hunger (left to right)

### Looking Toward the Midterms



John Dickerson, CBS News; Lis Smith, Democratic Strategist; Nathan Gonzales, Inside Elections; and Jazmine Ulloa, The New York Times (left to right)

### Cody Keenan and Ten Unforgettable Days in the White House



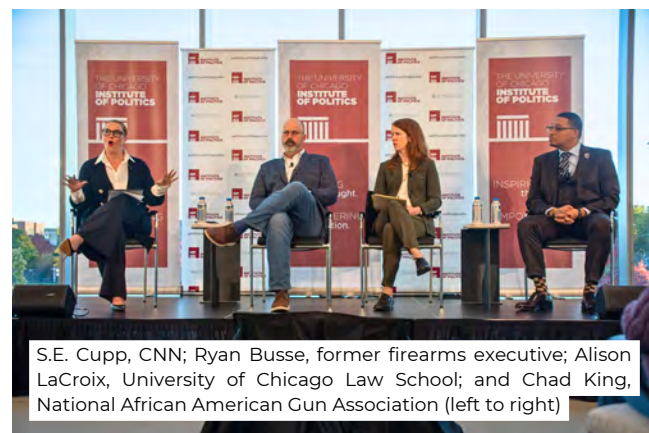
David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director (left) and Cody Keenan, former speechwriter for President Obama

### Hacks & Axe, Part 1: Pollsters



Sarah Longwell, The Bulwark; and David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director (in-person left to right); Tony Fabrizio, Fabrizio, Lee & Associates and John Anzalone, Impact Research (appearing virtually left to right)

### From Muskets to M16s: America's Unique Relationship to Guns



S.E. Cupp, CNN; Ryan Busse, former firearms executive; Alison LaCroix, University of Chicago Law School; and Chad King, National African American Gun Association (left to right)



## Combat and Congress: Two Veterans in the House Talk Shop



Former Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary Kayla Williams; U.S. Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-MA); and U.S. Rep. Peter Meijer (R-MI) (left to right)

## Taking It To The Streets: The Power Of Iranian Women Now



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows; Saeid Golkar, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; and Negar Mortazavi, Iranian-American Journalist (left to right)

## Hacks & Axe, Part 2: Congressional Analysis



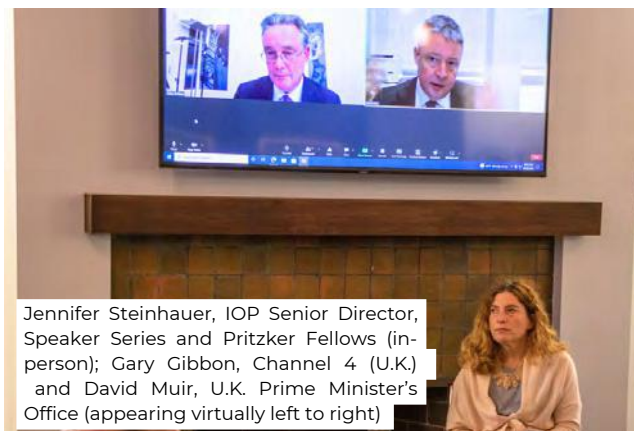
David Wasserman, Cook Political Report and David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director (in-person left to right); former U.S. Rep. Thomas Davis (R-VA) and former U.S. Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY) (appearing virtually left to right)

## Maggie Haberman: The Trump Whisperer Comes to Town



Mark Leibovich, *The Atlantic* (left) and Maggie Haberman, *The New York Times*

## Meltdown in the U.K.: What Exactly Just Happened?



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows (in-person); Gary Gibbon, Channel 4 (U.K.) and David Muir, U.K. Prime Minister's Office (appearing virtually left to right)

## Roads to Restoration: Exploring Pathways By & For The Formerly Incarcerated



Joel Ebert, IOP Associate Producer (left) and Keri Blakinger, Marshall Project



## Hacks & Axe, Part 3: Midterm Mulling with Matzo



David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director; Mo Elleithee, Georgetown University's Institute of Politics and Public Service; Tim Phillips, Republican Political Strategist; and Jonathan Weisman, *The New York Times* (left to right)

## International Policy Program: A Conversation with Sigrid Kaag, Minister of Finance of the Netherlands



Divya Mehrotra, AB '25 (in-person); Niels Ras, CIR '22; and Minister of Finance of the Netherlands Sigrid Kaag (appearing virtually left to right)

## The Highs and Lows of Drug Decriminalization



Mona Zhang, Politico; Kassandra Frédérique, Drug Policy Alliance; Tera Hurst, Oregon Health Justice Recovery Alliance; and Denver City Councilwoman Robin Kniech (left to right)

## In Conversation with Rep. Liz Cheney



Katherine Baicker, University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy (left) and U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney (R-WY)

## International Policy Program: Volodymyr Sheiko, Director General of the Ukrainian Institute



Maksym Kuzhdin, AB '25 (in-person); Volodymyr Sheiko, The Ukrainian Institute (virtual)

## Everything Is Inflation and Inflation Is Everything



Hal Weitzman, University of Chicago Booth School of Business (left) and Austan Goolsbee, University of Chicago Booth School of Business



## Now What? A Post Midterm Analysis



David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director; Nsé Ufot, New Georgia Project; former Senate Secretary for the Majority Laura Dove; and David Chalian, CNN (left to right)

## The Authoritarian's Playbook



Zeenat Rahman, IOP Executive Director; Indian journalist Rana Ayyub; Elizabeth Shakman, Northwestern University; and Katherine Stewart, expert on religious extremism (left to right)

## The Future of Democracy in Brazil: In Conversation with Dilma Rousseff



Simon Romero, *The New York Times* (left) and former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff

## On the Record with Vice President Mike Pence



David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director (left) and former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence

## A Townhall with Incoming IOP Director Heidi Heitkamp



David Axelrod, IOP Founding Director (left) and Heidi Heitkamp, IOP Director



### Forever War Forever More: Afghanistan and Its Aftermath



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows (left) and Ben Kesling, *The Wall Street Journal*

### A Rare Chance to Hear from Jan. 6 Committee Witnesses



Katie Benner, *The New York Times*; former United States Attorney BJay Pak; former Vice President Mike Pence's Chief Legal Counselor Greg Jacob; and former Vice President Mike Pence's Chief of Staff Marc Short (left to right)

### Life After Trump: Mike Pompeo in Conversation



Zeenat Rahman, IOP Executive Director (left) and former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

### Inflation, Markets and What's Up with the Economy Now



Banking and finance journalist Bethany McLean (left) and Vice Chair of the Federal Reserve Lael Brainard

### Countering China's Economic Power: Can the US Finally Catch Up?



Craig Kafura, Chicago Council on Global Affairs; Margaret Lewis, Seton Hall Law School; Damien Ma, MacroPolio; and former U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH) (left to right)

### A House Divided: What's Ahead for the New Congress



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows; Paul Kane, *The Washington Post*; and former Senate Secretary for the Majority Laura Dove (left to right)



## Chicago Style: The Everyday Work of an Alderman



Jacob Steinberg, AB '26; André Tse, AB '26; and former Chicago Alderperson Leslie Hairston (left to right)

## Meet the Winter-Spring Quarter 2023 Fellows



Alicia Sams, Pritzker Fellows Program Director; Robin Rue Simmons, FirstRepair; former U.S. Rep. Peter Meijer (R-MI); Heather Cherone, WTTW; former Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak; former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX); former Shreveport Mayor Adrian Perkins; and political blogger and journalist Matthew Yglesias (left to right)

## Race, Police and Violence: The Killing of Tyre Nichols

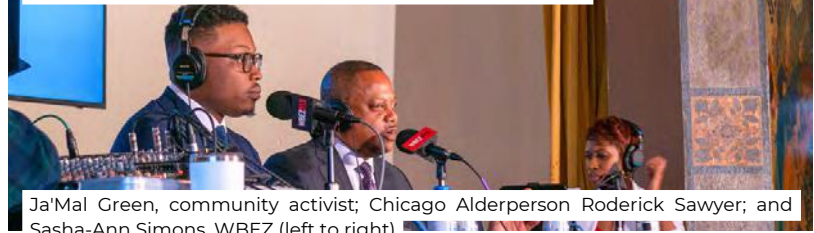


Jamie Kalven, Invisible Institute and Joel Ebert, IOP Associate Producer (in-person left to right); Charles Ramsey, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. Police Departments; Amber Sherman, The Law According to Amber; and Minority Leader of the Tennessee Senate Raamesh Akbari (appearing virtually left to right)

## Reset on the Road Mayoral Debates at the University of Illinois-Chicago and the University of Chicago



Sasha-Ann Simons, WBEZ; Chicago Alderperson Sophia King; Illinois State Rep. Kam Buckner; former CEO of Chicago Public Schools Paul Vallas; Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot; and U.S. Rep. Jesús García (D-IL) (left to right)



Ja'Mal Green, community activist; Chicago Alderperson Roderick Sawyer; and Sasha-Ann Simons, WBEZ (left to right)

## The Voting Power of Gen Z Realized: Is the Youth Vote Finally Making Inroads?



U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI); Estrella Hernandez, IOP Student Advisory Board; Jack Lobel, Voters of Tomorrow; and Victor Shi, On the Move Podcast (left to right)



## The Army of the Future: What Will the Biggest Branch of the Military Look Like



U.S. Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth (left) and Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows

## Welcome to the Mosaic: The Rise of Black Mayors in American Cities



Former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms; New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell; former Shreveport Mayor Adrian Perkins (left to right); Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser (virtual)

## International Policy Program: A Conversation on the Future of US-Africa Relations



Former U.S. State Department Diplomat Elizabeth Shackelford (left) and Dequa Aden, MPP '23

## Chicago Style: Unpacking Chicago's New Police District Councils



Constance Hammer, AB '25; Isaac Troncoso, CityBase; and Oswaldo Gomez, City of Chicago Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (left to right)

## Border Buses: A Sanctuary State Tests Its Limits



Laura Rodríguez Presa, *Chicago Tribune*; Illinois Deputy Governor Sol Flores; Eréndira Rendón, The Resurrection Project; and former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX) (left to right)

## A Woman's Place is in the House: Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows (left) and Speaker Emerita U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)



# Calendar of Events

Spring Quarter 2023

## Analyzing Chicago's Choice: Brandon Johnson or Paul Vallas



Heather Cherone, WTTW; Jason DeSanto, Northwestern University Law School; Jason McGrath, GBAO Strategies; and Gregory Pratt, *Chicago Tribune* (left to right)

## Toxic Chemicals and Lead Pipes: Water Crises in the US



Mark Templeton, University of Chicago Law School and Dave Boucher, *Detroit Free Press* (in-person left to right); Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba and Elin Warn Betanzo, Safe Water Engineering (appearing virtually left to right)

## Smacking Down: When Legislatures Oppress the Will of Cities



Joel Ebert, IOP Associate Producer; former Shreveport Mayor Adrian Perkins; Nashville City Councilmember at-large Zulfat Suara; and Orland Park Mayor Keith Pekau (left to right)

## Reset on the Road Runoff Election Mayoral Forum



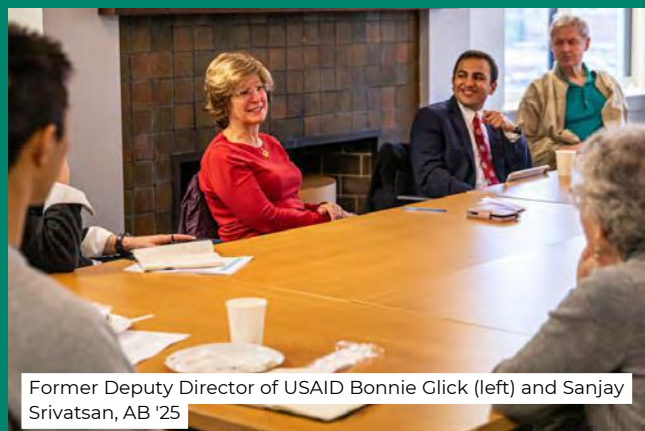
Sasha-Ann Simons, WBEZ; Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson; and former CEO of Chicago Public Schools Paul Vallas (left to right)

## Dress Code: The Politics of Style



Vanessa Friedman, *The New York Times*; former U.S. Rep. Cheri Bustos (D-IL); Tom Broecker, *Saturday Night Live*; and Maria Pinto, M2057 (left to right)

## International Policy Program - USAID: America's Role in Countries' Journeys for Self-Reliance



Former Deputy Director of USAID Bonnie Glick (left) and Sanjay Srivatsan, AB '25



## The Opioid Crisis Redux: What Can and Is Government Doing



Eric Eyre, Opioid Epidemic Investigative Reporter; U.S. Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN); Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Rahul Gupta; and Denver District Attorney Beth McCann (left to right)

## Tick Tock on TikTok



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows and Genevieve Lakier, University of Chicago Law School (in-person left to right); Cecilia Kang, *The New York Times*; Olivia Julianna, Gen-Z for Change; and Vitus Spehar, Under the Desk News (appearing virtually left to right)

## 50 Years of Hip Hop: Fighting for Change Through Activism and Art



Robin Rue Simmons, FirstRepair; Freddie Old Soul, musician and emcee; Kool Moe Dee, rapper and songwriter; Rhymefest, rapper; Soren Baker, hip hop journalist; and Leon Rogers, Radio 107.5 WGCI (left to right)

## Counterpoint - Crime and Punishment: Two Recent Governors Views



Former Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson; former Oregon Governor Kate Brown; and Jane Coaston, *The New York Times* (left to right)

## Journalists Under Fire: International Reporters Working Under Threat



Lori Montgomery, *The Washington Post*; Javier Garza, Enredos Laguna; Lotfullah Najafizada, Amu TV; and Anton Troianovski, *The New York Times* (left to right)

## China Challenges: A Nation's Problems Viewed From the Inside Out



Susan Jakes, ChinaFile; Dake Kang, Associated Press; Deborah Seligsohn, Villanova University; and Dali Yang, University of Chicago (left to right)



## Sexual Assault in the Military: Former Rep. Jackie Speier and Others On This National Scourge



Kaedy Puckett, AB '23; former U.S. Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA); Josh Connolly, Protect Our Defenders (in-person left to right); Dr. Nathan Galbreath, Department of Defense Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (virtual)

## Chicago Style: The Progress and Shortcomings of Transgender Legislation in Illinois



Camille Cypher, AB '26; Benito Goff, Rainbow Cafe; and Elizabeth Ricks, Chicago House (left to right)

## Supreme Court Outlook: A Race to the End of a Hefty Docket



Jennifer Steinhauer, IOP Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows and David Strauss, University of Chicago Law School (in-person left to right); Derek Kindle, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Adam Liptak, *The New York Times*; and Former Solicitor General of the United States Donald Verrilli (appearing virtually left to right)

## American Jews and Israel: Fraying Bonds



Jodi Rudoren, *Forward*; Israeli Deputy Consul General Daniel Aschheim; Eva Borgwardt, *IfNotNow*; Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky; and Jonathan Weisman, *The New York Times* (left to right)

## Chicago Style - Trauma Care on the South Side: In Conversation with Trauma Center Director Dr. Selwyn Rogers



Riley Fisher, AB '25 (left) and Dr. Selwyn Rogers, UChicago Medicine

## Our Children: Policies and Politics of the U.S. Child Welfare System



Darcel Rockett, *Chicago Tribune*; Ricky Holder, AB '23; Gina Samuels, University of Chicago Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture; and Bryan Samuels, Chapin Hall at University of Chicago (left to right)



## International Policy Program - France's Role in Global Affairs: A Discussion with Christopher Weissberg, MP



Member of Parliament for the French Abroad Christopher Weissberg (center)

## AI: Technology, Culture, Politics and Policy Collide



Joan Donovan, Technology and Social Change Project; Elizabeth Adams, Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence; Ian Bogost, Washington University in St. Louis; and Chenhao Tan, University of Chicago (left to right)

“

One particular event that I attended at the IOP stands out in my memory and has shaped my perspective on public service and democracy; it was a panel discussion titled "Bridging Divides: Finding Common Ground in a Polarized Era." The panel featured prominent individuals from diverse political backgrounds who engaged in a respectful and constructive dialogue about bridging the gaps in our society.

What struck me the most during that event was the genuine commitment to civil discourse and the emphasis on seeking common ground. It was refreshing to witness individuals with differing viewpoints engage in meaningful conversations, highlighting the importance of understanding and empathizing with one another. The panelists' ability to find commonalities and work towards practical solutions left a lasting impression on me.

This IOP moment taught me that, despite our differences, we can come together to address the challenges facing our nation. It ignited a passion within me to actively participate in our democracy and foster a spirit of collaboration and understanding. The IOP has been instrumental in shaping my civic outlook, emphasizing the value of public service and meaningful dialogue."

**Muhammad Nawawy Arasy Padil**  
MPP' 23



Students react during Speaker Series events.







Former U.S. Vice President Mike Pence greets students after a live taping of "The Axe Files" podcast.



# Pritzker Fellows

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



Former Mayor of Shreveport and Pritzker Fellow Adrian Perkins discusses smart cities initiatives.



92

Seminars

358

Office Hours

662

Unique Students



Yasmin Ali (center) speaks during a Pritzker Fellows seminar.

“

As a first-year, I was eager to discover more about opportunities to connect with students, speakers, and the wide range of ideas generated at the IOP. In the Fall Quarter, I began attending fellows seminars regularly. The rich discussions facilitated by participants and fellows consistently left me with transformed perspectives. This led me to seek out additional ways to immerse myself in the IOP's unique environment of inquiry and action, both on campus and beyond the IOP living room. Applying to become a fellows ambassador was the next natural step in my involvement.

For the winter-spring cohort, I had the unparalleled experience of working with Beto O'Rourke. His unwavering dedication to expanding voting rights was evident across his various roles in government, and I was struck by his passion. Through seminar discussions and personal conversations on topics such as immigration, elections, U.S. policy systems, and history, I gained a broader understanding of what it means to uphold the nation's project of democracy.

The most memorable part of my experience as a fellows ambassador was working with the three other ambassadors and going on excursions with Beto. We had thoughtful conversations about how to scale the impact of discourse to reach communities across the nation. I left my role as a fellows ambassador with invaluable lessons that I couldn't have learned elsewhere and new friends to keep in touch with."

**Yasmin Ali**  
**AB '26**



# 2022 - 2023 Pritzker Fellows

Fall Quarter 2022



**Rana Ayyub**

**Investigative Journalist from India**

An award-winning investigative journalist and global opinion writer at *The Washington Post*, Ayyub led a series of seminars about India today, the crackdown on the press in Narendra Modi's India and threats to journalists worldwide.



**Laura Dove**

**Former Senate Secretary for the Majority**

Dove, who served under Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY), took students deep inside the U.S. Senate for a candid, insightful look at how the legislative body really works.



**Luis Gutiérrez**

**Former U.S. Representative (D-IL)**

The former Chicago alderman and U.S. congressman walked students through how progressive change is made and the community's role in pushing policymakers toward that change.



**Steve Hayes**

**CEO & Editor of The Dispatch, NBC News Political Analyst**

The longtime political writer and analyst led a fascinating series of seminars that examined the arc of conservative media from the early days of radio to the rise of Fox News and the state of media today.



**Doug Jones**

**Former U.S. Senator (D-AL)**

Jones gave a play-by-play of the run-up to the midterm elections, led discussions about how the Democrats can gain ground in the South, and provided a legal analysis of the January 6 hearings.



“

This was probably my favorite professional experience of my entire life. Working with students has been revelatory, and reconnecting to that sense of wonder and energy around public service and the political process has been a complete tonic.

The free speech ethos, the really welcoming atmosphere, the really welcoming relationship that the staff here have with the students regardless of where they're coming from ideologically, and the ability to have authentic conversations with people you don't agree with is pretty amazing. If a conservative on campus told me that the IOP is not the place for them, I would tell them that they are wrong. Walk through the door and make yourself welcome, because the welcome mat will be set out for you — I guarantee it.”

**Laura Dove**

**Former Senate Secretary for the Majority**



“

The IOP is a place where you're not just learning about America — this is a place where you come to understand the various experiences that make up the world, that make up politics.

The students were a revelation. They were not just talking about January 6th. They were also talking about what's happening in Iran, talking about what's happening in the rest of the world. Despite their own commitments to their academic work, they still came for my seminars and office hours. The students here have a real commitment to the issues that they believe in.”

**Rana Ayyub**

**Investigative Journalist from India**





# 2022 - 2023 Pritzker Fellows

Winter & Spring Quarters 2023



**Heather Cherone**

**Political Reporter for Chicago's WTTW**

Based out of Chicago City Hall, Cherone helped students sort out the dynamic Chicago mayoral race and alderman contests. Cherone also moderated a lively and informative post mortem analysis of the general election that presaged the final victory of Mayor Brandon Johnson.



**Peter Meijer**

**Former U.S. Representative (R-MI)**

Meijer, an army reservist who deployed to Iraq in 2010 and a former member of the House, examined the impact of federal policies and processes on both cost-of-living realities and defense capabilities. Meijer riveted students with his longitudinal takes on the cost and value of the regulatory state, and the interests and incentive structures at play that make it increasingly difficult to craft nimble policies in the face of daunting challenges.



**Beto O'Rourke**

**Former U.S. Representative (D-TX)**

O'Rourke led a series of seminars using Texas as a case study to explore the present and future of U.S. democracy. He focused relentlessly on students and the local community, extending his popular office hours, participating in a public event examining the busing of migrants to Illinois and inviting students for his bracing morning runs along Lake Michigan.



**Adrian Perkins**

**Former Mayor of Shreveport, LA**

Perkins, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, drew on his experience as the second youngest mayor in Shreveport's history to discuss the challenges and rewards of running a mid-sized city, with a focus on smart-grid technology and the digital divide. Perkins also judged a technology conference; mentored student journalists at The Gate; and participated in two public events looking at local government.



# 2022 - 2023 Pritzker Fellows

Winter & Spring Quarters 2023



**Robin Rue Simmons**

**Former Alderwoman, Evanston, IL**

As the lead sponsor of the country's first government-funded reparations bill, Simmons walked students through the complexities of passing the historic, tax-funded legislation in a largely segregated city. Simmons also moderated a panel examining the political threads over 50 years of Hip Hop's history with a group of artists and critics, an event that drew an unusually vast crowd from the surrounding community.



**Steve Sisolak**

**Former Governor of Nevada**

Sisolak, a politician and entrepreneur, led seminars focused on the challenges and opportunities of governing the politically purple and continually growing state of Nevada. Exploring demographic changes, economic and labor issues, gambling, the impact of climate change and drought and impact of the COVID-19 crisis, among other issues demonstrated why Nevada is one of the most interesting and challenging states to govern.



**Matthew Yglesias**

**Author, Columnist & Political Analyst**

Joining for spring quarter, Yglesias walked students through how journalists, aspiring to tell true, interesting, and important stories without fear or favor, are challenged in the modern media culture. His mantra – people naturally disagree about what is interesting and important, and they certainly disagree about what is true – was underscored by a series of seminars on various policy areas that are the subject of intense ongoing social controversy. Of particular interest was a conversation via Zoom with the New York Times reporter Emily Bazelon on the debate over gender-affirming care for young people.





For far too many people, they wait for the perfect set of conditions to run for office. They say, "I'm not old enough. I don't have the experience." And there's no such thing as perfection. There won't be the right set of circumstance. You have to go when you feel it. And so many students at the IOP clearly feel the call of public service. This next generation of leaders is already stepping up. They're not, as is often said, the leaders of tomorrow — they're the leaders of right now. They're making things happen, and they're not waiting around for previous generations to figure it out."

**Beto O'Rourke**

**Former U.S. Representative (D-TX)**



The 2022-23 Pritzker Fellows lead seminars and interact with students throughout the academic year.







## 2022 - 2023 Visiting Fellows

The 2022-23 Visiting Pritzker Fellows host seminars.

### Joan Donovan

**Media, Politics and Public Policy Researcher, Harvard Kennedy School**

Donovan dove into some of the ways politicians have engaged with internet subcultures and explored the use of open-source investigation tools for digital ethnographic research. In addition, Donovan moderated a public discussion on the regulatory and policy challenges of AI.

### Astead Herndon

***The New York Times* political reporter & "The Run Up" podcast host**

Herndon walked through the future of the America First movement and interviewed voters live for his podcast. Herndon also participated in the IOP's campaign journalism conference examining how reporters can seek a wide range of voter voices in their reporting.

### Asa Hutchinson

**Former Governor of Arkansas**

Hutchinson discussed his approaches to crime, the death penalty, drugs, and new approaches to justice. Hutchinson also faced off with Kate Brown, the former governor of Oregon, over criminal justice issues, including the death penalty, in the first installment of our new civil discourse series "Counterpoint."

### Dake Kang

**IOP alumni and multi-format journalist for the Associated Press in Beijing**

Kang, a finalist for the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in Investigative Reporting, discussed his coverage of China's COVID-19 response and the state repression of Uyghurs. He also participated in a Speaker Series event on China's domestic challenges.

### Tim Ryan

**Former U.S. Representative (D-OH)**

Ryan centered his seminars around the political and cultural divides impacting the U.S. electorate. For his second seminar, Ryan led students on a guided meditation – a first for an IOP seminar.



“

Each fellow that I have interacted with has inspired me to find my own place in the political space where I can have impact. I attended and had office hours with Robin Rue Simmons, former alderwoman for the city of Evanston, in this most recent cohort of fellows. I remembered hearing about her reparations legislation when I was in high school, and the opportunity to speak with her directly added greater context to a policy that I did not know much about. We also discussed the responsibility of the government to make strides for civil rights, and how to leverage a public office position to make positive change. I have truly enjoyed interacting with the Pritzker Fellows Program, and I hope to become more involved in the upcoming quarters."

**Alexandria Porter**  
**AB'25**



Alexandria Porter attends a seminar on reparations.



Students share their thoughts during Pritzker Fellows Seminars.







Detainees including Percy Hicks, front right, listen while University of Chicago students speak about voting rights and mayoral candidates during a workshop, March 21, 2023, at Cook County Jail. (Brian Cassella / Chicago Tribune)

## As City's Most Active Voting Precinct, Cook County Inmates Vote with Help From Jail and Advocates

Voting at the Cook County Jail has risen sharply since the jail added pioneering in-person polling places in 2020. Incarcerated voters say they feel more heard as voting rights groups work to educate and register inmates, and politicians are taking note of the increasingly involved voters.

[...]

Those efforts lit up an otherwise drab white-cinderblock room in the jail on a mid-March Tuesday morning as **students from the University of Chicago Institute of Politics' Bridge program** worked to inform inmates on how to vote and what would be on the ballot.



"A healthy democracy works when everyone who has the right to vote expresses that right," undergraduate **Estrella Hernandez** told the two dozen inmates wearing the jail's loose, khaki uniforms.

[Amjad Asaad, an inmate in Cook County Jail] appreciated the University of Chicago students coming in to share voting information. People taking the time to help him vote makes him feel like somebody, he added.

"You're not even guilty until you're actually proven guilty," said Asaad, who faces vehicular hijacking and weapons charges. "There's so many people who are incarcerated that need to be heard."

"People aren't in jail forever," [sociology masters student **Lizzie Lewandowski**] said. "People get out. People come home. And people should still be able to engage with the things that are going to shape their community."





## How to Build Housing for People Aging Out of Foster Care

**[IOP student Ricky Holder, AB'23]** heard the “black bag” story when he was shuttled through multiple foster homes in southern California between the ages of 9 and 18.

“The story goes that when you come home from your high school graduation, your stuff will be in black garbage bags on the front porch of your foster family’s house,” says Holder, now 30 and studying public policy at the University of Chicago. Many people he knew ended up homeless after aging out of foster care — a fate he avoided by joining the Navy, enrolling in community college and ultimately earning a Marshall Scholarship.

[...]

Improving outcomes for more former foster youth will be a priority for Holder after he receives his BA this year: He’s moving to the UK to pursue a degree in comparative social policy at Oxford University, with a focus on child welfare systems in multiple countries. His goal is to return to the US armed with policy recommendations to reform foster care so that it’s used only when absolutely necessary. “So many children are damaged by a system that’s ostensibly for their welfare,” he says. “It’s a moral imperative that we do everything we can to preserve families before dismantling them.”

In the meantime, Holder believes the most beneficial type of housing for youth aging out of foster care is one that embeds them in a community and allows them to be close to where they are from, where they go to school, or where they work — much like the projects in Cedar Rapids and Houston. “Housing that is close, safe, and aligned with long-term goals does the most good for this vulnerable population,” he says.



# A Tribute to Founding Director David Axelrod

## Congratulations on 10 years at the helm!

"The first time we met, David and I got into a vigorous disagreement – the details of which don't matter here, other than that I assumed I had absolutely bombed my Student Advisory Board interview. Immediately afterwards, though, David came to find me, shook my hand, and said, "I respect people who stand up for what they believe in." We've been friends ever since. What an incredible accomplishment, to spend the final decade of your career mentoring young people and creating pathways for them to fight for what they believe in. The IOP has produced an entire generation of public servants, and I'm forever grateful to count myself among them."

**Caroline Hutton, AB '18**

"There are probably millions of reasons to be in awe of David Axelrod. I'll share just one: it is truly incredible how much he cares about and is invested in so many of us at UChicago. I have seen David reach out and provide support and wisdom to dozens of students – people who have been involved with the IOP for years and people who just walked through the door that quarter alike. He is a mentor in the truest sense of the word. There are very few people who have the capacity and compassion for that...and there is only one David."

The IOP will certainly not be the same without him, but I have absolutely no doubt he will continue to work with and inspire students and community members for many years to come. And for those of us who have already been lucky enough to work with Axe, we will carry all that he has taught us and the determination that he has instilled in us to create a brighter future everywhere we go."

**Lucy Ritzmann, AB '21**







"The IOP introduced me to reporting through the frame of journalism as an act of public service, and David's mentorship as a former reporter and the vast resources he brought to campus were key in shaping my current career. As a student, I appreciated Axe's respect for young people – it meant the world to not only be able to turn to him for advice on a story for The Gate, but to also feel fully heard in brainstorming sessions for UChiVotes or when raising difficult questions during a SAB meeting. Thanks to the community David created on campus, I not only learned and grew as a student, but met many of my closest friends. I'm very grateful to have been able to work with him both at the IOP and after graduation."

**Dylan Wells, AB '19**

"If I were to credit one person for my introduction to American politics, it would be David Axelrod. Years before we first met at the IOP's inaugural event, I was a teenager in China following the 2008 presidential election and dreaming of a new life on the other side of the oceans. I received an education of a lifetime at the University of Chicago beyond any degree program, and David helped affirm my identity beyond my training as a physicist. Seven years after graduation, I'm still reflecting on many of the things I learned at the IOP. Thanks David, and congratulations!"

**Yangyang Cheng, Ph.D '15**





IOP Founding Director David Axelrod (left) cuts the ribbon on the IOP house along with former UChicago President Robert Zimmer, strategist Mike Murphy, then-Executive Director Darren Reisberg and IOP board members Brad Keywell and Bill Kristol (left to right)

"David, it seems like just yesterday I was running over to Prudential Plaza and interrupting your campaign meetings to begin executing on your vision (and for critical input about the choice of carpet tiles for 5707 South Woodlawn Avenue). Ten years later, that vision has been more than realized, with the Institute of Politics beautifully ingrained in the fabric of the finest educational institution in the world, and those, dare I say, perfectly chosen carpet tiles trod upon by global national and local leaders, as well as staff who day and night were and are dedicated to supporting our students and building lasting partnerships.

And of course, now thousands of students have been inspired to explore and pursue a wide array of careers in public service. You created an ever-growing, nurturing family as only you could. And I hope that as you look around, you are as proud as you should be about the impact you've had and hopeful because of what this impact means for our collective future.

We love you, David."

### **Darren Reisberg, IOP Executive Director, 2012 - 2014**

"David's passion for students and his belief in the need for all of us to play an active role in civic life is deep and genuine. He often likes to say that democracy is not a spectator sport and that all of us have an obligation to "get into the arena" to try to shape our country and our communities for the better. That was the central idea behind the creation of the IOP – and it's the animating force that's propelled the IOP's programs ever since. As we partnered together, I witnessed that profound commitment first-hand and was inspired by it every day. Ten years later, to see the work IOP students and alums are accomplishing in the world is so inspiring – and so necessary. They are testament to David's founding vision, and like him, they give me hope that we can find our way forward as a nation with a renewed spirit of common civic purpose."

### **Steve Edwards, IOP Executive Director, 2014 - 2017**



"Your belief in our democracy, and the ability of each and every one of us to better it, is well known. Thank God for it. As a country, we're better and stronger for it. And as individuals around you, we're uplifted and emboldened by it in dark and deflating moments. But beyond believing in our democracy, you've built it. After the White House, you could have done any number of things more lucrative or cushy. I have so much admiration that you chose to architect something new - to roll up your sleeves and work your back off. And look at what you've built: more than 10,000 students whose lives have been changed, and who are now going on to contribute to the project of our democracy. Kudos. And thank you for giving me the gift of a lifetime when you called to offer me the ED role in December 2017. It has been an honor and a joy to be part of this IOP story and community. Cheers to what you've believed in, what you've built, and what and who you've brought out the best in. We salute you, thank you, and love you!"

### **Gretchen Crosby Sims, IOP Executive Director, 2018 - 2021**

David, what you've built with the IOP is truly extraordinary. You've created a community of doers, motivated to make the world a better place. You understood how to take the ethos of the University of Chicago, and connect the life of the mind with concrete experiences in a powerful way. And you only have to look at our amazing alumni to see that your theory was correct. I first saw the inquisitiveness and smarts of our students when I was a Fellow in 2015, and now daily as executive director. Thank you for giving me such an extraordinary opportunity. You often say the most important office in a democracy is that of citizen. You, my friend, are a model citizen who has done so much to build the strength of our democracy. You've given so many an opportunity to be leaders, build bridges, and celebrate the beauty of our community. Our students, staff, and board are all grateful for your leadership. Thank you for devoting your life's work to building our democracy. And thank you for being an exemplary figure of public service for all of us.

### **Zeenat Rahman, IOP Executive Director, 2021 - Present**



IOP leadership past and present: Darren Reisberg, Heidi Heitkamp, Gretchen Crosby Sims, David Axelrod, Zeenat Rahman and Steve Edwards (left to right).



## Staffing & Leadership

### IOP Staff

#### Heidi Heitkamp

##### Institute Director

Heidi was the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate from North Dakota. She is Co-Founder and Chair of the One Country Project. She has served as the Director of the IOP since January 2023.

#### Zeenat Rahman

##### Executive Director

Zeenat comes to the IOP with more than two decades of experience in the public and social sectors working to strengthen democracy and civil society. She previously, served at the U.S. State Department as a special advisor to Secretaries Hillary Clinton and John Kerry; and as acting director at the Center for Faith-based and Community Initiatives at USAID.

#### Koran Addo

##### Director of Communications

Before joining the IOP, Koran worked as Director of Communications for the St. Louis Mayor's Office and as a political and education reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and other publications.

#### Joel Ebert

##### Associate Producer of the Speaker Series

Joel joined the IOP after spending nearly a decade reporting on state legislatures and government in South Dakota, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Illinois. His award-winning reporting has garnered national recognition.

#### Noureen Hashim

##### Chief of Staff

Noureen joined the IOP in April 2022. Her background includes working as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Tenth District Office of Cook County; and as the national portfolio manager for Ismaili CIVIC, a faith-based civic engagement organization committed to improving communities through volunteerism and community organizing.

#### Christine Hurley

##### Director, Production and Special Events

Christine began at the IOP as Associate Producer then Director of the Speaker Series. Before joining the IOP, Christine was Associate Producer for "Chicago Tonight," a nightly news magazine on PBS where she was nominated for three Emmy Awards.

#### Ashley Jorn

##### Associate Director, Fellows Program

Ashley joined the IOP in 2015 as the program coordinator for the Pritzker Fellows and Speaker Series teams. She's held her current position with the Pritzker Fellows program since 2017. Prior to joining the IOP, Ashley worked in education as a teacher, tutor, and coach.

#### Laresa Lund

##### Program Coordinator, Career Development

Before joining the IOP, Laresa worked at Indiana University within the Liberal Arts and Management Program and with IU Online. She also spent time working in conservation in the mountain west.



## Staffing & Leadership

### IOP Staff

#### **Katrina Mertens**

##### Director of Operations and Budget

Katrina joined the IOP in the fall of 2012. Prior to joining the IOP, Katrina worked at the Illinois State Board of Education. Before that, Katrina worked in the narcotics unit of the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office.

#### **Purvi Patel**

##### Director, Civic and Campus Engagement

Before joining the IOP, Purvi worked as an administrator in diversity and student life at Washington University in St. Louis, Loyola University Maryland, and Oberlin College

#### **Gabe Pimsler**

##### Content & Digital Communications Specialist

Gabe comes to the IOP from Washington, D.C. where he helped non-profits and corporations navigate Congress and the White House as a government relations professional. Prior to his time in D.C., Gabe served as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Kyiv and Kramatorsk, Ukraine.

#### **Dani Salazar**

##### Multimedia Specialist

Dani joined the IOP in August 2022. Before joining the team, they worked as a multimedia specialist at the University of Florida College of Education.

#### **Mark Schauerte**

##### Director, Career Development

Before joining the IOP, Mark served as chief of staff to Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-IL. Mark is an attorney and practiced law in Chicago in addition to working as an award-winning journalist for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Chicago Lawyer.

#### **Jennifer Steinhauer**

##### Senior Director, Speaker Series and Pritzker Fellows

Jennifer Steinhauer came to the IOP in February 2022 after a 25-year reporting career at the New York Times. She has written several books including "The Firsts" which chronicled the first year of the largest female class in Congress.

#### **Matilda Thornton Clark**

##### Program Coordinator, Civic and Campus Engagement

Before joining the IOP, Matilda worked as an organizer and organizing director with student public research interest groups, running campaigns to turn out the youth vote in elections.

#### **Lindsey Winters**

##### Executive Assistant

Lindsey joined the IOP in the Spring of 2023. Prior to joining the IOP, Lindsey worked as an administrative office manager for the Cook County Board of Commissioners.



## Staffing & Leadership

### Board of Advisors

#### David Axelrod

Board of Advisors Chair  
Founding Director of the Institute of Politics

#### Stephanie Cutter

Partner, Precision Strategies  
Former Deputy Campaign Manager for Barack Obama

#### Bob Dold

Former Member, U.S. Congress (R-IL)  
Partner, Forbes Tate

#### Ed Gillespie

Senior Executive Vice President, AT&T  
Former RNC Chairman

#### Larry Grisolano

Partner & CEO, AKPD Message and Media

#### Bill Kristol

Director, Defending Democracy  
Together Editor-at-Large, The Bulwark

#### Ray LaHood

Co-Chair, Building America's Future  
Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation

#### Isaac Lee

Executive Chairman, Exile Content Studio

#### David Muir

Former Director of Political Strategy for UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown

#### Shailagh Murray

Executive Vice President for Public Affairs, Columbia University  
Former Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama

#### Beth Myers

Co-founder, The Shawmut Group  
Former Senior Advisor to U.S. Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney

#### Deval Patrick

Former Governor of Massachusetts

#### Darren Reisberg

President, Hartwick College

#### Bakari Sellers

Former South Carolina State Representative

#### Bret Stephens

Op-Ed Columnist, *The New York Times*

#### Karen Tumulty

Political Columnist, *The Washington Post*

#### Amy Walter

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, The Cook Political Report

#### Howard Wolfson

Senior Advisor, Bloomberg Philanthropies

#### Ex Officio Member: Sofia Haft

Director of Communications, Anduril Industries



## Staffing & Leadership

### Student Advisory Board



**Estrella Hernandez**  
Co-Chair

**Ricky Holder**  
Co-Chair

**Eric Shagrin**

**Rohil Saxena**  
Career Development

**Hamza Jilani**  
Voter Engagement

**Sinduri Soundararajan**  
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**Kate Wehle**  
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**Tara Farwana**  
Grad Chair

**Annie Henderson**  
Grad Chair

**Andrea Fedrigo**  
Grad Chair

**Sophie Hare**  
Member at Large

**Owen Hein Phillips**  
Member at Large



An abstract network diagram is overlaid on a solid red background. It consists of numerous white dots of varying sizes, connected by thin white lines. The dots are scattered across the frame, with a higher concentration in the upper-left and lower-left areas, creating a sense of interconnectedness and flow.

Inspiring  
thought.

**Empowering  
action.**