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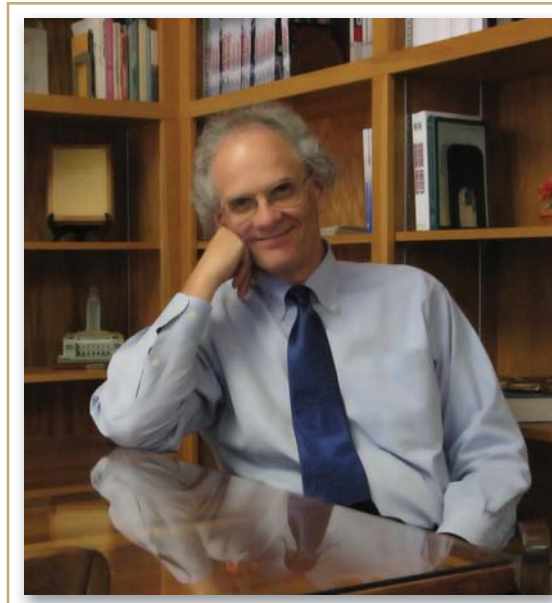
## MORE VOTERS, BETTER CITIZENS

⇒ THE ANNETTE STRAUSS INSTITUTE ⇐

It's election season again and, unfortunately, an intense and bitter partisanship stands to emerge as the big winner this year. The gulf separating the American people from one another threatens to grow, and the consequences for democracy are real: fewer Americans will vote ("a pox on all their houses") and public conversation will suffer ("why talk to people like that?").

Thank goodness for the Annette Strauss Institute. We believe in a better way. We believe that the only way to eliminate bad politics is with more politics – enlightened politics, energized politics, respectful politics and, above all, participatory politics.

From the very beginning, the Institute's goal has been to combat political cynicism and disaffection in the United States. We've recognized that a decline in comity is terribly costly to a nation: it drives folks away from the polls, puts a small cadre in power, and sends a terrible message to our young people – "Don't bother. You can't fix things."



*Dr. Roderick P. Hart  
Annette Strauss Institute's Executive Director*

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*We are proud that, during  
the last ten years, the Institute  
has become a beacon for a new  
way of doing politics –  
respectfully, thoughtfully, and,  
above all, with civility.*

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Naturally, we disagree. For many years now the Institute has been fixing things. In the pages to follow, we tell you how. Our projects have ranged from cutting-edge research to filmmaking to outreach with young people. In all of our work, the message is the same: "Of course you can fix things. If not you, who? If not now, when?"

*Speak Up! Speak Out!* teams high school students with college student mentors to work on pressing local problems. *The Student Pollworker Program* recruits college students across the county to help conduct local elections. *UT Votes* conducts registration and get-out-the-vote drives on campus and beyond. *The New Politics Forum* introduces students to professional opportunities in campaign politics.

And here's a new addition to the Institute: *Project Vote Smart*. This project began in 1992 and, after a national search, its board asked the Institute to host it. We will become the home of *Key Votes*, an online database of congressional and state voting records of elected officials designed to help all Americans know what they need to know about those who represent them in the halls of power.

➔ THE ANNETTE STRAUSS INSTITUTE ◀

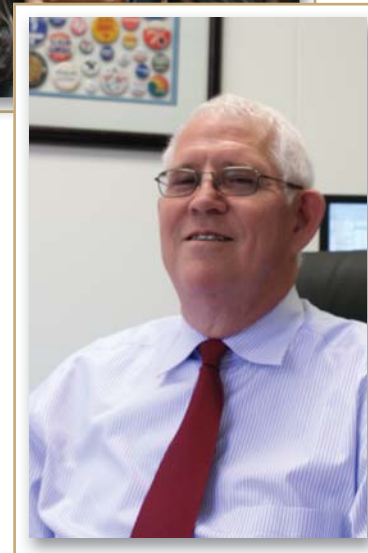
The Institute is also pleased to welcome Kevin Moomaw as its associate director of development. Moomaw brings to the Institute a storied career in politics, having worked for numerous public officials and campaigns. He served as executive director for both of George H.W. Bush's presidential campaigns in Texas and as a former senior advisor to Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst. Additionally, he has served as the political director of the Texas GOP, executive director of the New Mexico GOP, and as a political consultant on numerous campaigns.

On the research front, the Office of Survey Research performs survey and focus group work for public and private organizations and the Institute's faculty members produce books, journal articles, and convention papers designed to understand contemporary political culture.

We also have a number of new projects we'll be launching in 2011, new ways of making more voters and better citizens. We are proud that, during the last ten years, the Institute has become a beacon for a new way of doing politics – respectfully, thoughtfully, and, above all, with civility. Try it, you'll like it.



*Speak Up! Speak Out! -  
Class of 2010*



*Kevin Moomaw -  
Associate Director of Development*



**CREATING MORE VOTERS  
AND BETTER CITIZENS**

The Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation was established at The University of Texas at Austin in 2000 to respond to growing political cynicism and disaffection in the United States. The goals of the institute are (1) to conduct cutting-edge research on the ways in which civic participation and community understanding are undermined or sustained and (2) to develop new programs for increasing democratic understanding among citizens.



⇒ OUR WORK ⇐



Jacob Levine  
NPF Alumnus - Class of 2009

“Attending New Politics Forum actually resulted in me getting involved with campaigns. After one of the panelists finished speaking, I approached him to ask how I could get involved. One thing led to another, and six months later here I am working in Houston.”

The research projects of the Annette Strauss Institute examine political language and attitudes of college and non-college youth, voter turnout, civic education programs and include:

- ⇒ **The Office of Survey Research**  
An expert survey and field research resource for academic, government, non-profit, and business clients with facilities specifically designed for focus groups and telephone interviewing.
- ⇒ **Campaign Mapping Project**  
A multi-year attempt to assemble campaign materials produced during presidential elections between 1948 and 2008 as a guide to understanding the direction of American politics.



UT Votes - Hook the Vote Rally

The outreach projects of the Annette Strauss Institute enliven political and civic education for high school and college students and include:

- ⇒ **The American Trustees Project**  
A collection of video profiles of ordinary Texans who do extraordinary things, edited into teachable moments with curriculum for high school classrooms.
- ⇒ **Speak Up! Speak Out!**  
A collaboration with public high school teachers in which students identify community problems and work together to develop solutions to present at a civics fair for state leaders, community members, and the media.
- ⇒ **The New Politics Forum**  
A campaign school that prepares students across Texas to work in politics and brings students into contact with experienced political professionals, members of the working press, and university researchers.
- ⇒ **UT Votes**  
A University of Texas student organization that invites undergraduates to increase electoral participation and create more voters and better citizens. Each election cycle, UT Votes, in partnership with the Institute organizes and coordinates Get Out the Vote activities, including registration booths, deputization sessions, and campus competitions.

⇒ ENGAGEMENT ⇐

The Institute's educational outreach programs provide civic learning experiences for middle and high school students. The Institute also awards scholarships each summer to enable undergraduate college students to pursue civic engagement activities leading to careers in public service.

The Theodore H. Strauss Civic Internship Awards are given annually by the Annette Strauss Institute to students at The University of Texas at Austin to help to supplement paid or unpaid internships in the fields of public service, public policy, government, or politics.



*Jacklyn Verdin - 2010 Ted Strauss Internship Award winner*

The 2010 Theodore H. Strauss Civic Internship Award recipients are:

- ⇒ **Jennifer Aguirre**, a Psychology major from Austin, interned with the non-profit Refugee Services of Texas.
- ⇒ **Lander Baiamonte** - from Corpus Christi, a Political Communications major, worked in State Representative Todd Hunter's office at the Capitol.
- ⇒ **Lara Haase**, from Austin, majoring in Journalism and Psychology, went overseas with the nonprofit University of Texas Students of the World to film the politics and culture of Kosovo.
- ⇒ **Jacklyn Verdin**, from Austin, whose major is Government, was the student outreach director for the Texas Sierra Club this summer.



**Jennifer Aguirre**  
2010 Ted Strauss  
Internship Award winner

“Taking on an unpaid internship is a challenge for any student but having programs like yours allowed me to work in public service and gain insights into how a non-profit organization functions.”

## → OUTREACH ←



Moriah Butler  
Student Pollworker Association

Starting November 2010, the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation has launched a partnership with Project Vote Smart, the national nonpartisan organization that collects information about candidates and issues for voters.

Through the partnership, the Annette Strauss Institute will manage *Key Votes*, a free online database of congressional and state voting records of elected officials. The *Key Votes* website organizes voting records by issue to help voters dissect how their elected officials are representing them.

“In order to be an engaged citizen, one must have access to quality information about their government,” said Roderick P. Hart, executive director of the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation. “Our partnership with Project Vote Smart to manage the *Key Votes* program dovetails nicely with our mission of creating more voters and better citizens through high-quality, nonpartisan information.”

Research for *Key Votes* will be compiled largely by undergraduate interns from The University of Texas at Austin. Students in political science, government, journalism, and other disciplines will research voting records based on the Congressional Record, state house and senate journals, newspapers, magazines, and other media. Before posting to the *Key Votes* website, political scientists and journalists

of opposing viewpoints will review the selection and the content of the research to ensure nonpartisanship.

Project Vote Smart was founded in 1992 by national leaders including Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford, Michael Dukakis and Newt Gingrich. In addition to *Key Votes*, Project Vote Smart researches the voting records, backgrounds, issue positions, campaign contributions, interest group ratings, and public statements of more than 40,000 candidates and elected officials.

*Key Votes* can be accessed at [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org).



*Project Vote Smart*



➔ RESEARCH ◀

Executive Director Roderick Hart has been examining the 2008 presidential campaign using his computer content-analysis program, **DICTION**. Hart found the 2008 presidential campaign was rhetorically unique: Both major-party candidates were uncharacteristically pessimistic in their pronouncements. Candidate Obama's ability to inspire likely was due to his overwhelming tendency to refer to the common good.

The Institute continues to sponsor research by young scholars through its Patricia Witherspoon Awards:

- ➔ Graduate students Clariza Ruiz de Castilla, Colene Lind, and Ashley Muddiman interviewed young adults about politics, media use, and family communication. Interviewees reported receiving most of their political information from the news and their family members when they were not actively searching for it.
- ➔ Graduate student Maegan Stephens analyzed how citizens interact with the news online. She conducted a content analysis of comments left by readers below stories on the New York Times website. Compared to previous research, Stephens found an absence of *flaming* comments and increases in disagreement in the comments.

Associate Director of Research, Dr. Sharon Jarvis, analyzed the virtues of using filmmaking to teach students about citizenship. The research was inspired by the Institute's **American Trustees Project**. Assistant Director of Research, Dr. Talia Stroud, published an article on the polarizing effects of partisan media in the *Journal of Communication*.

The Strauss Institute commissioned an evaluation of the **New Politics Forum** – a nonpartisan, youth-focused political education program funded by the Hatton W. Sumners Foundation. NPF had a positive effect on attitudes toward citizens' role in government and increased participant's knowledge of political institutions and how they work.



*New Politics Forum - November 2009*



**Maegan Stephens**  
Witherspoon Award recipient

“Incorporating undergraduates interested in Political Communication into the research process was very important to me and funding from the Witherspoon Award gave me that opportunity.”

→ PLEASE HELP SUPPORT ←

### Why Your Support Matters

We receive modest University support for basic operations, grant funding to support specific projects, and donations from people like you. Your contributions help the Institute pilot new projects, ensure the health of on-going educational endeavors, and fund innovative research programs. Each dollar raised goes directly to Texas classrooms, to fund research, and to better the quality and tenor of our democracy.

This year, our goals include:

- **Establishing a Civic Education Fund**  
By increasing contributions and expanding *Speak Up! Speak Out!*
- **Continuing adult outreach**  
By expanding the Texas Advocacy Workshops to nonprofit organizations and pilot the advanced advocacy communications training.
- **Broadening our base of support**  
Through creating an executive finance committee.
- **Celebrating our 10th Anniversary**  
In a manner and spirit to honor the legacy of Annette Strauss.

We hope you will add your name to our list of supporters. Our gift levels reflect our belief that a society needs all of its members to work for the common good. Our highest level, The Citizen's Level, is inspired by Harry Truman's statement upon leaving the White House: *"I'm not leaving the highest office in the land, I'm assuming the highest office—that of citizen."*

- **Council Level – Up to \$250**
- **Mayoral Level – \$250 to \$999**
- **Gubernatorial Level – \$1,000 to \$4,999**
- **Senatorial Level – \$5,000 to \$9,999**
- **Presidential Level – \$10,000 to \$49,999**
- **Citizen's Level – \$50,000 and up**

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