



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 10 Years of the Annette Strauss Institute
- 3 Creating More Voters and Better Citizens
- 4 Our Work
- 5 Engagement
- 6 Outreach
- 7 Research
- 8 Please Help Support

MORE VOTERS, BETTER CITIZENS

⇒ TEN YEARS OF THE ANNETTE STRAUSS INSTITUTE ⇐

Ten-year-olds are interesting little creatures. They're old enough to get into trouble but young enough to charm their way out of it. They're mature enough to act responsibly but innocent enough to use their imaginations. Ten-year-olds are impatient, to be sure, but they're also ready to take risks. On their best days, ten-year-olds can be counted on ... sort of.

The Annette Strauss Institute is now ten years old. We like to think of ourselves as mature and responsible, but not so old that we're afraid to take chances. The Institute continues to be filled with enormous energy and imagination and we sometimes get into trouble. But you can count on us ... sort of ... to get into really interesting trouble.

The Institute's goal today is exactly what it was ten years ago: to combat growing political cynicism and disaffection in the United States. We do so by conducting cutting-edge research on ways of increasing community understanding and by developing new forms of civic engagement for the nation's citizens, especially its young citizens.



Roderick P. Hart,
Annette Strauss Institute's Executive Director

*The Institute's goal today
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During the last ten years the Institute has brought in \$4 million dollars from institutional funds and grants to support our programs. We've received help from the U.S. Department of Education, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Annenberg Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Dorot Foundation and, in Texas, from the LBJ Library Foundation, Humanities Texas, and the the McDermott and Hatton Sumners foundations

Each day, 15 faculty researchers, project managers, administrative staff, and research assistants show up for work to attack these goals. To date, over 450 high school students have participated in our *Speak Up! Speak Out!* and *TexElects* programs, while more than 750 Texas college students from 22 colleges and universities in Texas have discovered the world of practical politics through our *New Politics Forum*, a series of short courses that have now been offered in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio, and Houston. In addition, we've created an extensive collection of *American Trustees* videos, along with a complete, online curricular guide, that is now being introduced to high school teachers throughout Texas and the nation.

⇒ TEN YEARS OF THE ANNETTE STRAUSS INSTITUTE ⇐

On the research front, our *Office of Survey Research* has performed survey and focus group work for more than 65 clients during the past five years. The Institute's *Campaign Mapping Project*, a detailed tracking of election discourse in the U.S. during the past sixty years, has now produced 4 books, 10 theses and dissertations, and more than four dozen journal articles and convention papers. More recently, the Institute has received a grant from the U.S. Election Assistance Program to help train poll workers and one of its publications has been designated the book-of-the-decade in political communication by the American Political Association.

So, yes, we've managed to become ten years old without getting into too much trouble. Our parents—the College of Liberal Arts, the LBJ School for Public Affairs, and the College of Communication—have helped us at every turn and we are exceedingly grateful for their support. Like any ten-year-old, we're filled with bumptious new ideas for the future. So stay tuned, dude.



UT Votes -
Early Vote Rally



Roderick P. Hart's *Campaign Talk:
Why Elections are Good for Us*



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 ←

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

→ **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.



Speak Up! Speak Out! Civics Fair 2009

The outreach projects of the Annette Strauss Institute include ambitious attempts to enliven political and civic education.

→ **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.

→ ENGAGEMENT ←

In addition to providing civic learning opportunities to middle and high school students, the Annette Strauss Institute enables college students to pursue careers in civic service through the Theodore H. Strauss Civic Internship Award program.

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



Lauren Conner, 2009 Ted Strauss Internship Award winner

The 2009 Theodore H. Strauss Civic Internship Award recipients are:

- **Lauren Conner**, a history major from Dallas, worked with the ACLU in New York City
- **Thomas Divine**, a Plan II honors/ history major from Houston, worked for the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (NCUSAR)
- **Cecilia Lopez**, a government major from Alexandria, Va., served as a government relations fellow with the Hispanic College Fund in Washington, D.C.
- **Rachel Y. Wade**, a government and history major from Dallas, worked in the Investigative Internship Program at Georgetown Law School in Washington, D.C.



*Cecilia Lopez
2009 Ted Strauss
Internship Award winner*

“My time at the Hispanic College Fund was without a doubt a memorable and enriching experience. I had the opportunity to work with individuals who are just as passionate as I am toward education and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to access higher education.”

*Jourdan Winstead
LBJ High School*

“SUSO is a great experience because it gives you get to practice talking in front of people and making group presentations. It also makes it possible for students to work together as a team.”

➔ OUTREACH ◀

➔ RESEARCH ◀



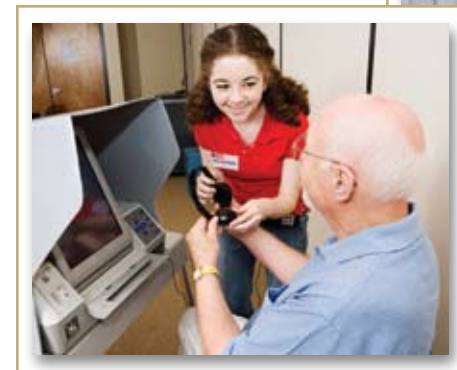
Taylor W. Murphy
UT Votes president

The Annette Strauss Institute has been awarded a \$53,000 grant from the U.S. Election Assistance program (EAC) to create the *UT Poll Worker Program*, which will recruit, train, and support college students in Travis County to serve as nonpartisan poll workers during 2009 and 2010 elections.

Selected as one of thirteen recipients from 71 applications, the Strauss Institute will partner with the Travis County Clerk Elections Division to engage more young people to take part in the operation of elections.

Students in the *UT Poll Worker Program* will work at polls across the county by verifying voter registration, assisting voters with equipment, counting and canvassing ballots, and serving as bilingual assistants.

The *UT Poll Worker Program* is funded through the EAC's 2009 Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program, which seeks to address the shortage of young people serving as poll workers and to teach young people about the election process and the importance of civic responsibility.



Elections Assistance program



UT Votes - Early Vote Rally

“It’s so rewarding to help students have a political voice and take advantage of the freedom we have to vote.”

The Annette Strauss Institute’s Executive Director Roderick P. Hart’s *Campaign Talk: Why Elections are Good for Us* won the Graber Book Award for the best book in political communication over the past 10 years from the American Political Science Association in August, 2009.

Two research papers by faculty of the Annette Strauss Institute will be honored by the National Communication Association in November, 2009:

- ➔ An evaluation of the *American Trustees* project that reveals how the use of short narrative films about everyday people engaging in extraordinary acts is an effective complement to civics instruction.
- ➔ An experiment revealing how watching presidential debates can reduce political cynicism—as well as how playing bingo while watching distracts from the debate’s informational content.

The Strauss Institute commissioned an evaluation of the *New Politics Forum*—a political education program funded by the Hatton W. Summers Foundation and launched in 2003—which revealed the program to be successful in teaching political skills and motivating young people to participate in politics.

Assistant Director of Research, Dr. Talia Stroud, has conducted an evaluation for *La Feria Para Aprender*—a local Spanish-language education fair—to help organizers and sponsors determine the success of the event. Dr. Stroud discovered that the event provides valuable information about educational opportunities and available community programs.



New Politics Forum



Jimmy Anderson
NPF Alumni, class of 2008

“NPF helped me to connect what you learn in college with the real world of politics. I still get emails today from my friends in the program and bump into them at the Capital.”

⇒ 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 into Texas classrooms, to fund research, and better the quality and tenor of our democracy.

This year, our goals include:

- ⇒ **Establishing a Civic Education Fund**
By raising 100 \$250 contributions and expanding the *Speak Up! Speak Out!* program statewide;
- ⇒ **Continuing adult outreach**
By expanding the Texas Advocacy Workshops to non-profit organizations and pilot the advanced advocacy communications training;
- ⇒ **Broadening our supporter base**
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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