

2017 Hatton W. Sumners Careers in Politics Conference

Saturday, April 1, 2017
Belo Center for New Media

- 8:30 am – 9:00 am** Registration and Breakfast Tacos
- 9:00 am – 9:15 am** **Welcome from the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life**
- 9:15 am – 10:00 am** **Keynote Address**

Parag Mehta, Former Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the U.S. Surgeon General

- 10:00 am – 10:15 am** Break

- 10:15 am – 11:15 am** **Inside and Outside the Dome: Influencing Policy in Texas**

State-level policymaking isn't just for elected officials. While officeholders are cast in the spotlight, there are many working behind the scenes to put policy initiatives into practice. From communications strategists to government relations officers to lobbyists, influencing the policy process requires strong communication skills as well as a breadth of knowledge of the issues most important to Texans. This panel of experts will help you navigate the political landscape and share insights on emerging trends in the field.

Denise Davis, Attorney, Davis Kaufman PLLC

Jo Cassandra Cuevas, Area Manager – External and Legislative Affairs, AT&T

Randan Steinhauer, Co-founder and Partner, Steinhauer Strategies

Mark Harkrider, Lobbyist and Former Aide to Mayor Annette Strauss

Moderator: Susan Nold, Director, Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life

- 11:15 am – 11:25 am** Break

- 11:25 am – 12:25 pm** **Effective Leadership for Local Impact**

Moving from the state to local level, this panel will explore how Austin's civic leaders are galvanizing their communities to work together to realize a better future. Drawing from their extensive experience, panelists will discuss what kind of skills are important for enacting change in communities in Texas. This group of stakeholders and community partners will discuss leadership and engagement strategies that have proven effective in their work in local government.

Commissioner Gerald Daugherty, Travis County, Precinct Three

Victor Obaseki, Policy Coordinator, Institute for Urban Policy Research & Analysis, The University of Texas at Austin

Perla Cavazos, Director of Government Affairs, Central Health

***The Honorable Sherri Greenberg**, Clinical Professor, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, Fellow of Max Sherman Chair in State and Local Government, & Former Senior Adviser to Mayor Steve Adler*

12:25 pm – 1:00 pm Networking Lunch

1:00 pm – 1:45 pm **The Power of Your Personal Brand**

Your personal brand is increasingly important to your career in politics. Learn from CEO and co-founder of The Texas Tribune, Evan Smith, how to develop and refine yours both online and offline. Participants will get ample time for Q&A - a great opportunity to get to know one of the leaders in the field of civic engagement.

***Evan Smith**, CEO & Co-founder, The Texas Tribune*

1:45 pm – 2:00 pm Break

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm **We Did It & So Can You! + Practice the Art of the Elevator Pitch**

During this session, you will hear from recent New Politics Forum alumni who have successfully transitioned from the seats you're in now to employment in the public sector. They will share their insight about networking, beneficial professional development opportunities, and how to get your foot in the door!

Participants will also have the opportunity to apply what they learned from Evan Smith's presentation on personal branding and update their **elevator pitch**. This will be a fantastic opportunity for students to practice and hone their message alongside New Politics Forum alumni and other participants.

***Jessica Beemer**, Chief of Staff for Houston City Council Member Dave Martin*

***Paul Theobald**, Former Committee Director, Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs, Texas House of Representatives*

***Michelle Castillo**, Legislative Director for Representative Ramon Romero, Texas House of Representatives*

***Moderator: Taylor Calvin**, Legislative Director, McWilliams Governmental Affairs Consultants*

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm Program Evaluation

3:15 pm – 5:00 pm Networking Event

At the conclusion of our conference, make sure to head over to the **after-party at Michi Ramen** for **free snacks!** This will be a great way to make new friends and possibly even new professional contacts.