

THE  
ANNETTE  
STRAUSS  
REPORT  
2007-2008



Ready For Citizenship?

CREATING MORE VOTERS AND BETTER CITIZENS

## 2007-2008

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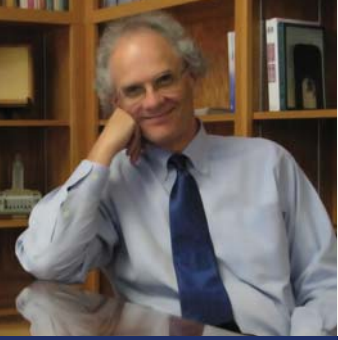
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## From the Director

Roderick P. Hart

The Annette Strauss Institute is a movable feast. When we opened our doors eight years ago, much of our work was Austin-based. Over the years, we've ventured out. For example, our American Trustees Project has traversed the State—from Santa Fe to McKinney to Victoria to Round Rock—filming ordinary Americans doing extraordinary things. Too, the New Politics Forum has attracted students from over forty colleges in Texas to learn about professional politics, with workshops being offered in Austin, Dallas, San Antonio and, next year, Houston.

Professor Bob Luskin, who oversees our deliberative polling projects, has been shuttling back and forth between Palo Alto, California and Burlington, Vermont, while Veronica Inchauste and O'Neil Provost, who run our Office of Survey Research, work with Texas clients interested in what non-Texans believe. Speaking of survey researchers, U.T.'s Government Department scored a coup by luring Professor Nick Valentino from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Nick is quickly becoming engaged in the Institute's activities, as is new staffer Nick Hundley, who hails from Massachusetts. And Jeannette Bellemeur, the new program manager for our much-acclaimed high school project, *Speak Up! Speak Out!*, taught in El Paso before moving to Austin.

Our research assistants come from all over as well—Ryan Reyna from Virginia, Cathy Setzer from Louisiana, and Natasha Kovalyova from St. Petersburg (Russia, not Florida), although our fourth assistant, Laura Barberena, is a San Antonio native. Our Director of Educational Outreach, Debbie Wise, will soon be telling our story at the National Council of Social Studies meeting in San Diego (California, not Guatemala), while Professor Talia Stroud has traversed the national convention circuit reporting work from her thrice-honored doctoral dissertation. When gathering data for the Gates Foundation, Professor Sharon Jarvis's team conducted focus group interviews in Austin, Indianapolis, and Boston. Meanwhile, yours truly continues as a member of the Carnegie-Knight Board of Deans, which meets in New York, Washington, Cambridge and, next year, overseas, to ponder how journalism can better make informed and capacious citizens.

Why all this talk of geography? Because our mission is to change people so they can change their communities. Yes, we all now live in a digital world, but the fundamentals of citizenship are practiced daily along each highway and byway of the nation. At root, our institute teaches people how to behave as neighbors. The following pages tell our story from the previous year and we hope you will become part of our story, that you will become our neighbor. No matter where you live.

## Our Purpose

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 how civic participation, community understanding, and communication are undermined or sustained, and (2) to develop new programs for increasing democratic understanding among citizens. The Institute's mission is strictly non-partisan. It works within communities to engage people in the political process, teach them about the nation's democratic heritage, and encourage them to take leadership roles.

## Civics, Not Government: Redirecting Social Studies in the Nation's Schools

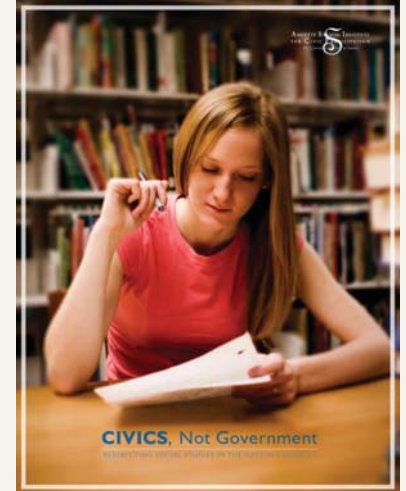
Americans are passionate about the democratic system. They are fiercely proud of the idea, history, and traditions of their democracy. And yet at the dawn of the 21st century, there is reason to worry. By almost every measure, today's youth pale in comparison to the knowledge, engagement, and participation of their forebears when they were their age. Specifically, young people today are less trusting, less likely to follow the news, less likely to participate in electoral politics, and less likely to join community groups geared toward solving public problems.

As we look toward our nation's schools to help prepare students for their lives as fully functioning adults, the question remains: what must high school students learn to be ready to act as citizens? The Annette Strauss Institute was commissioned to conduct a study by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to answer this fundamental question.

Associate Director for Research, Dr. Sharon Jarvis, notes "We adopted a unique way of answering that question. Rather than look solely to the traditional voices in the area of civic education—educators, scholars, and policymakers—we asked a new set of stakeholders to join the conversation: citizens themselves." Dr. Jarvis believes that talking to the very individuals who make democracy work offers new insight and allows researchers to think more broadly, and more practically, about what high school graduates need to learn to be prepared for real-world citizenship.

Inspired by the American Diploma Project (ADP) conducted by Achieve, Inc., Dr. Jarvis and her research team created a two-step study. Step one conducted a thorough review of what educators, scholars, and existing school standards have said that high school graduates must know to be prepared for a life of citizenship. Specifically, this step led to the creation of the Attitude, Skill, and Knowledge (ASK) Inventory which distilled thousands of recommendations into a manageable list of what young people should feel, do, and know about civic life before earning their high school diplomas.

Step two involved a public opinion component placing the ASK Inventory in front of four sets of stakeholder groups in three states (Indianapolis, Indiana; Boston, Massachusetts; and Austin, Texas) to gather their impressions. Jarvis notes, "These three states were chosen for both regional balance and for insight into differing state standards for instruction." The stakeholder groups included: (1) Workplace managers who supervise 18–24 year-olds; (2) Professors at two- and four-year universities who teach 18 year-olds; (3) City and municipal employees; and (4) Recent high school graduates.



**According to stakeholders, current practices are creating young people who are:**

**UNREFLECTIVE**—lacking personal ethics, political tolerance, and conflict negotiation skills

**INDIVIDUALISTIC**—concerned primarily about themselves and not identifying or connecting with their communities

**DETACHED**—distanced not only from their communities but also from the larger political and democratic processes

**UNPREPARED**—missing the basic prerequisites to be good citizens in the workplace, the college classroom, and their communities

During the group interviews, participants were asked to respond to a condensed version of the ASK Inventory by (1) individually rating the importance of the inventory items for creating good citizens and (2) identifying notable gaps in the inventory.

“The stakeholders we talked to see current practices as extraordinarily problematic. They spoke emphatically about the need to curtail memorization and regurgitation,” explains Jarvis. The status quo, in their minds, asks too much of teachers and offers too little to students.

The stakeholders believe that forcing students to memorize remote details cannot remedy these problems. In fact, they wonder whether too much breadth (information) and too little depth (meaning) created these problems in the first place. In other words, they doubt that more information will free students from the knowledge trap.

**“Redirecting social studies will pay off handsomely for students, schools, employers and society.”**

— Dr. Sharon Jarvis

The stakeholders were also asked to reflect on how civic education could be improved. They want to motivate and empower students. They want to help students see citizenship and democracy as relevant to their own lives today and into the future. They want to connect students with influential mentors and community groups to make citizenship meaningful. They want to help students gain practical skills so that they can become guardians, and not spectators, of the American system.

The stakeholders believe that social studies in our country must be redirected. Based on their comments, the report offers five recommendations to create a more invested citizenry.

1. Civic education must emphasize meaning over memorization.
2. Civic education must emphasize inspiration over efficiency.
3. Civic education must emphasize ownership over detachment.
4. Civic education must be integrated, not specialized.
5. Civic education must start early, not late.

“Redirecting social studies will pay off handsomely for students, schools, employers and society,” Jarvis notes, “It will give students lifelong learning and problem-solving skills. It will give schools a more engaged and efficacious student body and stronger connections to their communities. It will give employers workers who can think analytically, communicate well, be tolerant of others, and respect leadership. It will give society enlightened citizens who are self-directed and responsible, people who tend to their communities as they tend to themselves.”

By making these changes to how civic education is taught, America can set in place future guardians of its democratic system. Jarvis observes, “We encourage students to think about their communities and their collective futures. We teach students what it means to be part of a democracy and why their participation is important for the future of our nation. And we show them why all of this is important right now.”

Dr. Sharon Jarvis can be contacted at [sjarvis@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:sjarvis@mail.utexas.edu). To read the report “Civics Not Government” in its entirety, please visit [www.annettestraussinstitute.org](http://www.annettestraussinstitute.org).

# Theodore H. Strauss Civic Internship Awards

## Internship Profiles

**Axel Lopez-de-Cardenas** worked as an intern for the U.S. Department of State. His responsibilities included briefing the Consul General of Japan about executing Homeland Security measures and assisting a U.S. Attorney investigating visa fraud. “Working with the State Department has given me the opportunity to understand first-hand the functioning of our nation’s diplomatic foundations, as well as use my knowledge to assist with current operations.”



**Alexander Hunt** worked as a full-time communications intern in the office of state representative Juan M. Garcia. Alexander handled interactions with constituents, communicated legislative accomplishments from past sessions, worked on the “Capitol Update” newsletter, and assisted with distributing and writing press releases and op-eds. “I wrote articles that caught the attention of constituents and spoke to the accomplishments of their legislator.” Alexander notes that the experiences “would not have been possible without the generous financial assistance of the Strauss Institute and its donors.”

**Hyunjin Kim** interned for the Korean Service at Voice of America radio. Her duties included interviewing, translating reports from English to Korean, and learning about issues related to North Korea. “I had the opportunity to interview Christopher Hill, an assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the U.S. Department of State and Senator Sam Brownback.” As a result of her work, Hyunjin was hired to work as a producer and a reporter at VOA. “I really appreciate the experience and hope this program can continue to provide opportunities to more students.”



**Rhett Rhodes** acted as an intern at the Texas State Capitol for the Honorable Chente Quintanilla of El Paso. Rhett conducted research for proposed legislation, assisted constituents, wrote reports and participated in programs focusing on Texas-Mexican border issues. “I had the opportunity to do many tasks on my own which allowed me to interact with people from all areas of Texas politics.” Rhett’s weekly reports were vital to his colleagues working in El Paso. “I thank the Annette Strauss Institute for sponsoring me in a job that would not otherwise have been financially possible.”

**Shibani Khanna** worked as an intern with CNN’s Washington, D.C. Bureau. “I was involved with ‘Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer’ and ‘This Week at War,’ and I was part of the lead team to work on the Presidential Primary Debates.” Daily tasks included joining the CNN executives and Wolf Blitzer on a daily conference call to lay out the guests and topics for each day’s “The Situation Room.” “I will be forever grateful for being given the chance to live in Washington, D.C. for the summer and participate in an organization that makes a difference in our political and civic endeavors.”



## Lieutenant Governor Opens American Trustees Launch Party

Friends of the Annette Strauss Institute gathered at the Harry Ransom Center for a party to celebrate the state-wide launch of the American Trustees Project. Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst opened the event noting the importance of involving our youngest citizens in our democracy.

After cocktails and remarks, the event screened “Don’t Be Crude,” the story of teenager Barbara Brown and the motor oil recycling program she and her friends initiated in rural Victoria, Texas.

“It’s an eye-opener for kids to see ... that things can change and improve little by little,” said Janie Maldonado, social studies curriculum specialist for the Austin Independent School District. “This curriculum can help students adopt the mentality of perseverance and pushing to get your ideas implemented,” she said.



Dean Roderick Hart and Lt. Gov. Dewhurst recall the 2005 scholarship fundraising “roast”

The American Trustees Project is dedicated to increasing civic participation by providing quality educational content to young people using cutting edge, multi-media technology. “We are making this free curriculum available to middle and high school teachers across Texas to help teach civics lessons in a way that puts lessons in the context of everyday life and in a format that appeals to today’s youth,” said Deborah Wise, director of educational outreach for the Institute. “We hope to expand the program beyond Texas in the coming year.”



Strauss Advisory council member Jo Anne Christian and American Trustee Amy Wong Mok

The project offers stories of citizens who have made a substantial impact in their communities. “These are people who had ideas and took them to the next level,” Wise notes. “It may have been an idea about becoming involved in public service by running for office or filling a void by starting a new community center or program,

but it all started with someone getting involved and believing in their own power to make things happen.”

Classroom materials include a video library, lesson plans, training materials and teacher workshops. The project is an initiative of the Annette Strauss Institute in partnership with the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and additional funding provided by Humanities Texas. For more information, visit [www.americantrusteesproject.org](http://www.americantrusteesproject.org).



Trustee Cathy Bonner discusses the videos with an Austin area teacher

# Speak Up! Speak Out!

## SUSO Expands to San Antonio Schools

On May 7, 2007, over 200 students from schools across central Texas presented their ideas for making their communities better at the fifth annual *Speak Up! Speak Out!* Civics Fair. “It was a very moving program,” noted Strauss Institute director Rod Hart. “To hear kids who had been victims of child abuse talk about real solutions to the problem made you realize how much of themselves these students invest into these projects.”

Problems included such academic matters as school redesign and drop out rates, social issues ranging from child abuse to the relative availability of nutritious foods for low-income families, and infrastructure concerns such as bus lines and traffic.

First place was won by Akins High School, who focused on the dangerous rise of prescription drug abuse among teenagers. Judge Laura Stromberg was impressed by the level of effort put into each project. “They really had a passion for these issues.” Says Stromberg, “It makes you feel great about what they can do when they put their minds to it.”

For the first time, teams took their ideas beyond the competition and presented them to school boards, neighborhood organizations, and public transportation administrations to move toward implementing these creative and workable suggestions. “Judges were impressed with the fact that the team studying the bus system not only went out into the community to research their problem, but developed a workable solution, including how to pay for it and then presented it to the transit system,” explains project manager Jane Saunders. “Students were excited to see that their ideas could become reality.”

Evacuees from Hurricane Katrina who are presently attending San Antonio’s Sam Houston High School focused their efforts on creating a video to document their experiences. Social studies chair, Rance Olison, said the students expressed their excitement, noting “they had never been to an event that was about listening to what kids had to say about their community’s problems and offer solutions.” For more information, please visit [www.speakupspokeout.org](http://www.speakupspokeout.org)



*Above Top to Bottom:*  
Houston High School students enjoy time between judges’ visits

Students discussing their topic with Mayor Pro Tem Betty Dunkerly

Speech team congratulates fellow member after presentation of her speech

*Right:*  
Akins High School students and their first prize-winning project





## New Politics Forum prepares students for 2008 Campaign

The 2008 presidential campaign season began earlier than ever and the New Politics Forum was ready—training hundreds of young adults to participate in the political process. “Many young adults are interested in becoming involved with politics, but most are unsure how to get their foot in the door,” says program manager, Emily Balanoff. “The New Politics Forum can help by providing students with skills and contacts.”

This year the program sought to strengthen its base and nurture its core mission by reaching out to NPF alumni and bringing back its most popular course offerings.

After traveling the program to Dallas and San Antonio, NPF returned to Austin in June to host the Campaign 2008 BootCamp. The two-day course featured in-depth discussions of political polling, ethics, fundraising and advertising (to name just a few). Presenters included Mark McKinnon, chief media strategist to President George W. Bush. McKinnon joined the students for lunch, engaged them in a discussion of campaign strategy, and candidly answered their questions.

In addition to top-notch faculty, the program assembled one of the most motivated, enterprising groups of students to date. Presenters were amazed at the power of the program to engage young adults. Matt Matthews, former campaign manager for U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, stated, “I thought that young people were turned off by politics. I am struck by the enthusiasm this program has generated.”

NPF has an ambitious schedule planned for the fall of 2007 and beyond. In October, one hundred students will gather at the Texas Capitol for the Careers in Politics seminar. Reporter Gideon Yago (MTV, Rolling Stone) will provide the keynote address focusing on how young adults can make a difference.

Looking ahead to 2008, NPF will sponsor a Campaign 2008 Volunteer Fair, allowing students to meet with representatives from both local and national campaigns offering them a chance to sign up to begin work immediately. One hundred students and over 20 campaigns are expected to be involved with this conference. For more information, please visit [www.newpoliticsforum.org](http://www.newpoliticsforum.org)

“Many young adults are interested in becoming involved, but most are unsure how to get their foot in the door.”  
—Emily Balanoff  
Project Manager



*Above Top to Bottom:*  
Students compare notes after panel discussion

Student government leaders take time to meet Institute supporters

*Left:*  
Student government leaders from across the state meet to discuss common concerns



## American Trustees Project Teacher Training



Along with the completion of the American Trustees videos and curriculum, the project has been taking the show on the road. This summer, the Institute trained secondary teachers in Longview, San Antonio, and Dallas. The teachers studied what it takes to fully engage teens for civic learning. “We talk about reading and writing strategies, interdisciplinary approaches to civic participation, and generally, how to use the American Trustees materials,” says director of educational outreach, Debbie Wise.

The seminars are customized to the school district’s needs and represent the best strategies for engaging young people in their learning. In Dallas, where the Institute presented two separate, four hour sessions, teachers learned about the value of narrative and modeling in story telling, how to engage students in deep civic learning, and ways of supporting even the most challenged learners using text-based strategies. The teachers were excited about the hands-on activities used in the seminars. “I really enjoyed the lesson plan that accompanied the Craig Flournoy piece, where students simulate a newsroom experience,” said one Dallas teacher.

This coming school year, the American Trustees project will launch the completed product and continue to offer training at statewide conferences, colleges and universities, and onsite district-wide locations. The Strauss Institute is also looking for corporate sponsors to put all of the teacher training support online by the end of next year.

### STRAUSS JOINED BY RESEARCH FELLOW



Dr. Nicholas Valentino

Nicholas A. Valentino joined the Annette Strauss Institute in September of 2007. Dr. Valentino is the Mike Hogg Professor of Community Affairs in the Government Department and Adjunct Professor of Communication Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. His research interests include political psychology, mass communication, cognition and emotion, and political behavior. Valentino is the 2005 recipient of the Erik H. Erikson Award for Early Career Research Achievement in Political Psychology. He serves on the editorial boards of the *American Journal of Political Science* and *Political Communication* and on the Governing Council of the International Society of Political Psychology. He is currently writing several papers exploring the distinct impact of anger versus anxiety on political participation, information seeking, and opinion formation. He is also working on a project hoping to explain mass opinion regarding globalization policies, including immigration, trade, and terrorism. Finally, he is working on a book with David O. Sears exploring the role of racial attitudes in U.S. party realignments.

## UT Votes Gears-up for an Exciting Election Season

The student-led organization, *UT Votes*, is beginning its Get Out the Vote initiative early this year, in anticipation of a busy primary season. Even with the primaries still months away, activities are already well underway to deputize students, recruit volunteers, and to work with the League of Women Voters to provide non-partisan information to student voters. Program advisor, Cathy Setzer, notes that “We have to begin our work early so that we can meet important deadlines for registration, printing materials, and getting in front of campus organizations. It’s a very busy time for us!”

The new year brings with it a new crop of leaders including Co-Chairs, Megan Elise Ortiz and Katherine Raetz. Raetz, a junior Government major, says this about her work with *UT Votes*: “I believe that it is very important for students to voice their opinion through voting, which is why *UT Votes* is a great organization. Through voter registration drives on campus, plus handing out non-partisan literature about upcoming elections, *UT Votes* assists students in making informed decisions and letting their voices be heard in Travis County and in Texas.”

Ortiz, a junior majoring in Political Communication, begins her second year as Co-Chair of *UT Votes*. Her hard work for the organization, dedication to and passion for GOTV is inspiring. Megan has been instrumental in many of the *UT Votes* events including rallies, Voter Registration drives, the Election Night Watch Party, and she has great plans for the future of *UT Votes*. For more information please visit [www.utvotes.org](http://www.utvotes.org)

Even with the primaries months away, activities are underway to deputize students, recruit volunteers, and provide non-partisan information to student voters

## OSR Conducts Hispanic Scholarship Study

The Office of Survey Research is conducting a study for the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and The University of Texas Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. The purpose of the survey is to learn about the students’ and parents’ experiences during the application process to UT, and to identify any barriers that could be diminished or eliminated for future Hispanic applicants. The study is conducting a web survey of currently enrolled Hispanic UT students and a telephone survey with their parents to address this issue.

A third web survey will be conducted with Hispanic students who were accepted to The University of Texas but declined in favor of another institution. This survey will further our understanding of this group of students and how they reached their final decision on the college of their choice. “We are excited to be a part of understanding this historically understudied group,” notes project director Veronica Inchauste.

## Study Investigates Media Coverage of Public Opinion Polls

**H**ow do we know what the public thinks about the issues of the day? One important way is by looking at public opinion polls. Before we learn what the public thinks via opinion polls, however, certain processes must occur. Polling firms first have to craft questions to ask the public. Then, media firms have to decide how to report poll results.

University of Texas faculty Dr. Bartholomew Sparrow, an associate professor of Government, and Dr. Talia Stroud, an assistant professor of Communication Studies, are investigating public opinion polls and the media coverage of polls. They wanted to figure out how polling questions are constructed and how the media subsequently report on polling results. Thanks to a summer fellowship from the Annette Strauss Institute and funding from the Office of the Vice President for Research at The University of Texas, Sparrow and Stroud worked with a team of students who coded public opinion polls and media coverage of polls.

Sparrow and Stroud's findings suggest that poll questions and the media's coverage of polling data constrain our understanding of the public in some noteworthy ways. Poll questions typically ask the public to choose between only two alternatives, for example. Furthermore, only sometimes is the American public asked to weigh in on important issues facing the nation; at other times, the public is not asked its opinion. And in their reporting of poll results, the media overwhelmingly report on the majority's opinion instead of what one or more minorities of the American public may believe.

Sparrow and Stroud look forward in the upcoming year to further analyzing poll questions and media coverage. For more information, contact Dr. Stroud at [tstroud@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:tstroud@mail.utexas.edu).

## Does Internet Use Produce Community or Polarization?

**I**nternet users are more likely to search out information that supports their position than oppose it. However, most Internet users say they do not rely on the Internet at all for political information, according to a study funded by the Annette Strauss Institute and conducted by professors Thomas J. Johnson, Shannon Richard and Weiwu Zhang of the College of Mass Communications at Texas Tech.

The survey asked about use of four online sources for political information: political websites, blogs, electronic bulletin boards and chat. Of the 772 people who responded to the online poll, 3 in 10 indicated they most often visited political websites that supported their view while 27.3% favored sites that did not present a specific point of view. On the other hand, only 7.5% said they ever visited sites that challenged their point of view. Similarly, while just over half (50.8%) said they at least sometimes visited political websites that had information they agreed with, only 37.4% said they at least sometimes visited political websites that they disagree with.

Perhaps the most surprising result was how many people never visited any of these sites for political information. While just over a third (35%) said they never visited political websites for political information, scores were much higher for other online components. Nearly 70% never visited blogs for political information, while scores were even higher for bulletin boards and chat (76.6% and 85.5%, respectively). For more information, contact Dr. Johnson at [tjohnson@ttu.edu](mailto:tjohnson@ttu.edu).

## Patricia Witherspoon Award Recipients Survey Understudied Groups

### Civic Education is Focus for Witherspoon Fellow Cherry

Teachers are already stretched to their limits. They teach their subject matter; they prepare their students for TAKS exams; they teach the state and district curriculum; and they teach daily living skills such as respect. For many of them, it is daunting to hear discussion of what else they can incorporate into their classrooms to educate their students. However, teaching students to be civically aware and active is perfect for the classroom, according to Witherspoon Research Award winner Sharon Cherry. “My research focuses on how organizations can help teachers teach in a manner that leads to civic activation.”

Social studies teachers were surveyed in an effort to determine the state of today’s civics curriculum. The vast majority of respondents indicated that they had not heard of participatory civics curricula. However, research has found, that the traditional civics curriculum does little more than convey knowledge of government institutions and practices. Participatory civics curricula, on the other hand, provide engagement in many critical areas of citizenship, including quality of citizen participation; activation of community systems, including the family; and activation of low-socioeconomic status individuals. By investing in a program such as this, the chance for a government that is much more representative of its people is possible.

According to Cherry, getting teachers to adopt a participatory curriculum can be accomplished by explaining its importance, showing them how they can use it as a method for teaching the current state-required curriculum, and working with those who teach teachers to incorporate it into their methods instruction.

### Witherspoon Recipient McGowan Examines Political Participation Among Minority Groups

In a research project supported by the Patricia Witherspoon Research Fund, Ernest McGowan is examining the participation of minority groups in affluent suburban communities traditionally dominated by Anglo voters. McGowan notes that while the higher levels of income and education should serve to raise the average rate of participation, the geographic separation of these groups from both political institutions and historic urban neighborhoods should change the stimuli to participate, if not lower the overall rate.

Unfortunately, there has been little comprehensive work done on the participation of minority groups beyond those areas that can be covered in a stratified national survey. This practice has produced a picture of minority participation and opinion that misses these unique pockets. With an original survey instrument and statistical analysis of previously compiled data McGowan’s project will shed light on this understudied area.

# Please Help Support ...

## Why Your Support Matters

The Institute is funded in three ways. 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.**

\$1,000 - will support undergraduate voting efforts

\$5,000 - will sponsor a keynote speaker for the New Politics Forum

\$10,000 - will support the *Speak Up! Speak Out!* program for a year

\$25,000 - will fund the creation of one American Trustees video and lesson plan

\$50,000 - will fund a research project on youth participation

## Our Supporters

We hope you will add your name to the list of supporters on the next page. 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."

## Dorot Grant Expands Internship Program

**T**he Dorot Foundation of Providence, Rhode Island contributed \$10,000 toward the expansion of the Theodore H. Strauss Civic Internship Award program. The award, which honors businessman and philanthropist Theodore "Ted" Strauss, provides \$2,500 stipends to University of Texas at Austin students interning in the areas of public policy, community service, and government. "So many internships are unpaid and require travel," notes Mary Dixson, associate director. "We believe that all students should have these opportunities, and this award is designed to provide assistance to students who might not otherwise be able to accept an internship." We are grateful to the Dorot Foundation for their continued support of this important program.

## Levenson Endowment Funds

**T**he Greg and Shana Levenson Civic Education Endowment provided funding for *Speak Up! Speak Out!* expansion efforts this year. "The Levenson Endowment allowed us to support three San Antonio high schools that would not otherwise have been able to attend," notes Institute Director Rod Hart.

Funds from the endowment were used to provide stipends and teacher training funds. The \$50,000 endowment makes possible civic education programs at the University. "We are tremendously grateful for their continued support of our work," says Hart.

## Thank You to Our Supporters

### Citizen's Level - \$50,000 and up

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## Institute Receives \$300,000 Grant for Vermont Deliberative Poll

The Center for Deliberative Opinion Research at the Annette Strauss Institute has received a \$300,000 grant from the State of Vermont to conduct a deliberative poll on energy alternatives. “The deliberative process is ideal for an issue such as energy,” explains CDOR director Robert Luskin. “This project will provide uniquely meaningful public input on electric utility planning and policy making.”

Following the sampling and interviewing to be conducted by the Strauss Institute’s Office of Survey Research, roughly 200 Vermonters will spend a weekend hearing from experts about energy sources ranging from wind to coal. Their responses to the merit of different possible energy sources — and the expected cost of each — will then be part of a report that will give utilities and policy-makers guidance as they seek new supplies. Topics for the program will include energy sources, increasing supply and decreasing demand, and values criteria.

“This research will provide public input that is both informed and thoughtful, on the one hand, and representative on the other,” Luskin notes. “It will provide the State with opinions from mainstream citizens, not special interest advocates.” The deliberative polls will be conducted during November 3-4, 2007.

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