



## ELECTION '08: THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS



## 2008-2009

INSTITUTE DIRECTOR:  
Dr. Roderick P. Hart

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR; RESEARCH:  
Dr. Sharon E. Jarvis

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR; ADMINISTRATION:  
Mr. Chuck Courtney

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR; RESEARCH:  
Dr. Natalie Stroud

STRAUSS RESEARCH FELLOW:  
Dr. Nicholas Valentino

DIRECTOR; EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH:  
Ms. Deborah Wise

NEW POLITICS FORUM  
PROJECT MANAGER:  
Ms. Emily Balanoff

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE & DESIGN:  
Ms. Melissa Huebsch

STAFF WRITER:  
Mr. Nicolas Hundley

CENTER FOR DELIBERATIVE  
OPINION RESEARCH  
DIRECTOR:  
Dr. Robert Luskin

OFFICE OF SURVEY RESEARCH  
DIRECTOR:  
Ms. Veronica Inchauste

MANAGER:  
Mr. O'Neil Provost

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE:  
Ms. Beth Van Riper

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS:  
Ms. Jeannette Bellemur  
Ms. Erin Boeke Burke  
Ms. Colene Lind  
Ms. Cathy Setzer

INTERN:  
Ms. Dareth Finn

<http://www.annettestrauss.org>

### PLEASE SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Annette Strauss Institute  
3001 Lake Austin Boulevard,  
Suite 2.316  
Austin, Texas 78703  
Phone (512) 471-1959  
Fax (512) 471-1927  
email: [strauss@communication.utexas.edu](mailto:strauss@communication.utexas.edu)

# Contents

## 3 From the Director

## 4 UT Votes

Making the College Vote Count

## 6 Strauss Civic Internship Award

Civic Internship Award Letter

## 8 TexElects

## 9 New Politics Forum Trains for 2008

## 10 Strauss Notes:

American Trustees

*Speak Up! Speak Out!*

Associate Director Courtney Joins Institute

Researching Objectivity for PBS

## 12 Research Report:

Publications

Research Fellowships

## 14 Supporting the Institute

Institute at Hispanic Community Fair





## From the Director

Roderick P. Hart

3

### 2008: Year of Change

The cornerstone of both presidential campaigns in 2008 was a promise to lead the country in a new direction. New directions also await the Annette Strauss Institute as we explore new ways in which we can “create more voters and better citizens.” Among the many changes, the saddest will be the absence of Dr. Mary Dixson, former associate director of administration, who has returned to her home in San Antonio to be closer to her family and fundraise for the new Bexar County Performing Arts Center. However, the Institute is pleased to welcome Chuck Courtney to help steer us in the right direction.

Educational outreach projects will continue to grow as they have this past year. Under the direction of Debbie Wise, even more schools participated in the 2008 *Speak Up! Speak Out!* and Tex Elects programs, and The American Trustees project has completed yet another film. The campaign school for young people, New Politics Forum, held sessions at Rice University and at the Texas Capitol, and with the help of project manager Emily Balanoff, it attracted students from universities across Texas. UT Votes had a breakthrough year in registering new voters and getting out the vote for the 2008 election by capitalizing on the energy surrounding the presidential campaigns—including the Democratic primary debate held on campus this past spring.

Dedicated staff members like our administrative associate Melissa Huebsch and grant writer Nick Hundley will continue to be integral in developing new educational programs. These include the Texas Advocacy Workshop, which will train more Texas citizens to be involved with government and become better legislative advocates. Also, there to ensure our success are graduate research assistants, including Cathy Setzer and Colene Lind from the College of Communication, Jeannette Bellemeur from the College of Education, as well as Erin Boeke Burke of the LBJ School.

The Institute’s research agenda will be pioneered by our faculty members, including Dr. Bob Luskin, who recently completed study on energy alternatives for the State of Vermont; Assistant Director Dr. Talia Stroud, who studied objectivity and balance in the Public Broadcasting Corporation and the success in a local Hispanic community fair; Dr. Nick Valentino, who examined racial reaction to the war in Iraq; as well as Associate Director Dr. Sharon Jarvis and her continued research on civic education.

And as always, there to provide cutting-edge critical research services for UT faculty, The University of Texas System components, state agencies, and charitable and non-profit groups will be Veronica Inchauste, O’Neil Provost, and Beth Van Riper of our Office of Survey Research.

You may ask why the Institute needs a new direction. It is because our civic and political worlds are constantly changing, driven in part by the nation’s changing demography and the wealth of new media technologies. And as we strive to involve people in their communities and become better citizens, we must keep pace with those changes. While the following pages tell of our success from the past year, we hope that you will help us to succeed in the future.

## 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.



## MAKING THE COLLEGE VOTE COUNT: UT Votes Helps Mobilize Students to Record Turnout

**I**t's taken for granted in politics that the college vote can't be counted on. College students with UT Votes, however, are proving that students are a force to be reckoned with in the 2008 presidential election.

The student-run organization had a break-through year in 2008 mobilizing UT students to the polls in record numbers. By harnessing the energy surrounding this election on campus, UT Votes was able to conduct a registration drive and Get Out The Vote effort unlike any before seen on campus.

"What we saw in this election were young people—college students in particular—playing pivotal roles in this election all across the country" says Cathy Setzer, project manager for UT Votes. "This was especially apparent at The University of Texas at Austin, where students all across campus couldn't wait to vote."



The registration drive, according to Setzer, succeeded in registering over 6,000 new student voters. Partnering with organizations including Student Government, College Republicans, University Democrats, and the Student Events Center, the registration drive was part of a campus-wide effort called "Hook the Vote."

The registration drive included a number of events aimed at the University community, including a voter registration contest, in which deputized students from over 30 organizations—such as the Asian Student Organization and various sororities and fraternities—competed for prizes with the goal of each student registering 200 voters by the time of the event. Held in Gregory Plaza, the event featured live music, barbeque, and speakers.

Throughout the semester, UT Votes registered another 1,000 of their fellow students by tabling in strategic locations across campus, distributing registration cards and voter guides, and answering questions on the voting process.

After the voter registration deadline, UT Votes switched gears to focus on the Get Out The Vote campaign, aimed at generating enthusiasm and turnout at the polls with a series of rallies and events to coordinate with milestones in the election.

These included a Presidential Debate Watch Party at the LBJ Library attended by around 250 students, a rally

### Did You Know?

Young people who report that they recently choose to take a civics or government class are more likely than other young people to say that:

- \* they helped solve a community problem
- \* they can make a difference in their community
- \* they have volunteered recently
- \* they trust other people and the government
- \* they have made consumer decisions for ethical or political reasons
- \* they believe in the importance of voting
- \* they are registered to vote.

According to a Pew Research survey from January, 42% of people age 18-29, regularly learned news about campaigns from the Internet, compared to 20% in 2004.

For more information, see the full list of sources at [www.annettestrauss.org](http://www.annettestrauss.org)





at the Flawn Academic Center to commemorate the last day of early voting on October 31, 2008, and an Election Night Returns Party on November 4, 2008 at the Texas Union attended by 1,500 students.

Additionally, UT Votes hosted education seminars on the 2008 election, including a September 22 session with the Travis County Clerk, a representative from the Secretary of State's office, and UT faculty members to discuss election security. The session covered topics such as electronic voting machines and voting fraud.

However successful this year's activities were, UT Votes will have to do it all again next year when the next Freshmen class arrives.

"A college campus is the best place to register voters," said Stephen King, freshman and UT Votes member. "It creates a habit in young people to vote—increasing the possibility that they will be more politically active later in life."

Sponsored by the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation, UT Votes is a non-partisan student organization at The University of Texas at Austin. UT Votes has over 25 active student members, who coordinate and run on-campus events to promote participation in the electoral process.

**"A college campus is the best place to register voters. It creates a habit in young people to vote—increasing the possibility that they will be more politically active later in life."**

**—Stephen King,  
Freshman, UT Votes member**

## UT Votes Participates in Political Engagement Conference

UT Votes traveled from Austin to Cambridge to participate in the National College Conference for Political Engagement at Harvard University's Institute of Politics September 19–21, 2008.

The National College Conference for Political Engagement was a non-partisan, three day event that brought together 200 representatives of the College Republicans, College Democrats, and University newspapers from across the nation to emphasize the importance of youth voting in the 2008 Presidential election.

The NCCPE featured sessions on the key role youth voting could play in the 2008 elections, Get Out The Vote strategies, and interacting with the media, among others. Each participant pledged to write an editorial for his or her school's newspaper on the importance of youth voting, their experience at the conference, and their impressions of the candidates.

"Getting the chance to attend the conference at Harvard was incredible," says Kate Raetz, chair of UT Votes. "I learned so much from interacting with students from across the country, and heard some great new GOTV ideas we can bring to UT."





# Theodore H. Strauss

## Internship Profiles



**Zack Hall** worked as an intern for Sara Martinez Tucker in the U.S. Office of the Undersecretary of Education in Washington, D.C. He worked on U.S. Department of Education projects on an array of topics, including student financial aid and exchange programs, as well as outreach programs such as the “College.gov Coaches Program” for economically disadvantaged and at-risk high school students. “This summer I contributed a student perspective to policy decisions that will affect tens of millions of young people across the country,” said Hall. “I was part of a team committed to making higher education more affordable, accessible, and accountable throughout the United States—no matter what the political ideology.”

**Shivani Matur** worked as an intern for OAJNU (Organización Argentina de Jóvenes para las Naciones Unidas), a non profit organization in Córdoba, Argentina dedicated to teaching children the importance of leadership and responsibility. It spreads the UN principles of peace and cooperation by organizing several projects including a model UN conference. She spent the summer of 2008 helping to organize the conference and working with the students to teach them about the UN and different countries. “I have left the internship equipped with much more knowledge about the international community and the role of the UN. As a government major hoping to one day work with an NGO, I should know the basics about these important organizations.”



**Doug Molof** worked as intern in the Government Relations office for Defenders of Wildlife, where he helped advocate on behalf of energy and drilling issues. He attended meetings and congressional hearings, researched issues, developed fact sheets, and even testified before the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on fuel economy standards. “In Washington, D.C., it is an unusual position for even long-time activists to be lobbying Congress on an issue that is in the forefront of the national consciousness. This summer I was fortunate enough to work on an issue that dominated the national news as gas prices soared.”

**Lauren Winterfeld** worked as the regional public affairs coordinator for the Muscular Dystrophy Association in Houston, TX. Her responsibilities were coordinating special events, fundraisers, and public service campaigns. “The Strauss Civic Internship Award enabled me to participate wholeheartedly in the outreach opportunities through this powerful volunteer health agency,” says Winterfeld. “Becoming a part of MDA’s production this summer meant that I worked daily to not only serve the Houston community, but the disabled community, their friends and family, and affected networks stretching around the globe as well.”



# Civic Internship Awards

7

## Letter from Jeffrey Bechdel

This summer I had the opportunity to work in the Pittsburgh Regional office of U.S. Senator Arlen Specter.

Upon my arrival, I was immediately immersed in the work of the office—answering phones, meeting with constituents, calling various government agencies and departments. But before all of that began, a staff member clued me in to something that I would remind myself every day before walking in the office: very often, the people who are contacting their U.S. senator are doing so because they feel as if they are out of options. Whether it's frustration from so many dead ends or the self-conscious act itself of asking for help, people are simply exasperated by the time they reach our office.

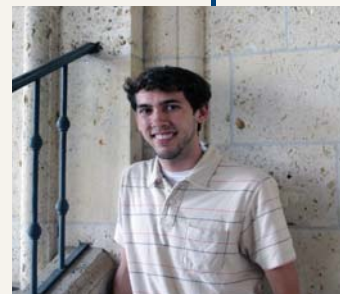
My job was to sit down with these men and women to discuss the issues they were having and what, if any, assistance our office could offer to them. In Pennsylvania, Senator Specter—the longest serving senator in my state's history—is seen almost more as an institution than a politician, and as a result, constituents were often shocked to discover that his offices have well-defined limitations. Phone calls regularly turned into education sessions that drew the contrast between state government and its jurisdiction, and the workings of our office with the federal government.

But it was from these conversations and meetings that I had an “a-ha!” moment this summer. I've followed politics to some degree for a significant portion of my life, and had always been turned off by politicians using anecdotes on the campaign trail or even in office. To me it always seemed like a cheap way to score political points and gain support against whatever it was that caused affliction—high gas prices or lack of health insurance to name a couple. I understand now that my previous way of thinking is cynicism in its purest form.

Working at Senator Specter's office, I met the type of people who are brought up in those speeches and thrust to the forefront of political activism. Among the interns, there was an understanding that the people who called in demanding answers were among the hardest to deal with, because their stories broke your heart. In the news, it's easy to gloss over these stories, but when men and women are on the other end of the telephone, asking for answers, it gives a person a different perspective.

By dealing with some issues extensively, I was able to gain the respect of the staff members and the lion's share of the responsibility for those issues. I handled nearly every call regarding problems with economic stimulus payments and other IRS-related matters, as well as Social Security and Medicare issues, to name a few. I also had the opportunity to speak to nearly every labor union in our office's 15-county (and very labor-friendly) jurisdiction, as I compiled a master list of contact information for local union offices for the upcoming election season.

My up-close observations of government from Senator Specter's office helped me see what government does, and what it is capable of doing. Through it all, I became more impassioned to serve the citizens of this country, because I have now seen with my own eyes the people who need help the most.



# Tex Elects

## Texas Students Elect to get Involved

Who says you have to be 18 before you can participate in politics? Texas students aren't waiting that long to take on one of the toughest topics in America—how to get more people to vote.

More than 200 middle and high school students from across Texas made their political voices heard through the 2008 Tex Elects competition—a statewide contest for students to produce campaign messages that encourage their peers and parents to vote.

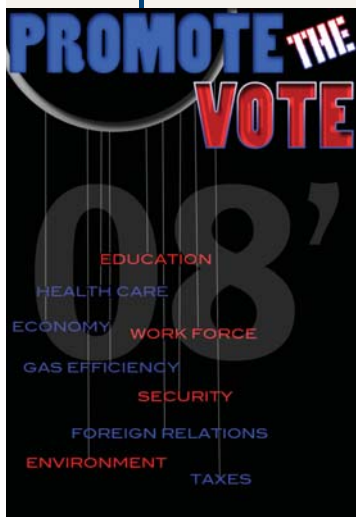
Students competed in one of four categories, including writing a persuasive essay, filming a public service announcement, designing a poster, or building a website.

This was the second Tex Elects competition, which is held every four years to coincide with the presidential election. Civics and social studies teachers across the state incorporated Tex Elects into their classroom this semester as a way to talk about the election and the importance of voting.

“Interest in the Tex Elects contest was high this year with a 200 percent increase in participation over the last contest, held in 2004,” said Deborah Wise, project manager. “We received entries from as close as Austin to as far away as Laredo and Fruitvale.”

Entries were judged by a panel of community and business leaders from the Austin area. Winning entries received gift cards or prizes of up to \$250 to throw a party, purchase supplies, books, equipment, or finance a class field trip.

Winning entries of the 2008 Tex Elects Contest can be seen at [www.texelects.org](http://www.texelects.org).

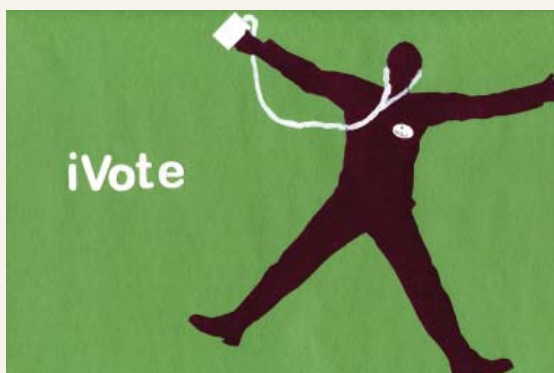


*Above Top to Bottom:*  
McCallum High  
School, Austin

Roosevelt High  
School, San Antonio

*Left to Right:*  
McCallum High  
School, Austin

Barbara Jordan High  
School, Houston





## New Politics Forum trains students in the Art & Ethics of Politics

With youth participation in politics reaching record levels in the 2008 presidential campaign, it is clear that young people will shape the politics of the future. But are they prepared for the anything-goes world of politics?

This year, over 200 undergraduates from universities across Texas took steps towards learning the art and ethics of campaigns as part of the New Politics Forum.

As part of seminars held in Houston and Austin in 2008, the New Politics Forum brought together members of the press, consultants for major party candidates, and scholars on American political campaigns to give students a chance to speak with political leaders about the country's most visible democratic process.

The Politics Online conference, held June 7, 2008 in Houston, Texas at the James Baker Institute at Rice University, assembled students and nationally-recognized e-strategists, scholars, journalists, and social networking pioneers to think critically about the impact of the Internet on American democracy.

This event marked two important milestones for New Politics Forum: the first webcast and first event in Houston. The entire program was broadcast live over the Internet and is available now on the NPF website ([www.newpoliticsforum.org](http://www.newpoliticsforum.org)).

This was followed by the 2008 Presidential Election Debriefing conference, held November 14–15, 2008, which brought young adults face-to-face with individuals involved in the public process of selecting the president to analyze the results of the 2008 Presidential election.

“Most young adults will learn their political skills by chance, informal networks, or haphazard mentorship,” says project manager Emily Balanoff. “New Politics Forum alters this model by helping young adults gain the skills and confidence they need to create energetic campaigns that produce an enlightened and motivated electorate.”



*Above Top to Bottom:*  
Garrett Graff keynoted the  
Summer 2008 session

Students talk in detail with Karen  
Tumulty following her panel  
discussion

Students from UT and Rice  
University meet CNN's  
Betty Nguyen

*Left:*  
Students from the Summer 2008  
Politics and Media session of the  
New Politics Forum

## American Trustees Featured in PBS Broadcast

The American Trustees project was broadcast this year on Austin PBS program DocuBloggers. The Lone Star Emmy award-winning program broadcast the documentary vignettes about Barbara Brown, Bernard Rapoport, Craig Flournoy, Charles Clymer, and Barney Flores and ran throughout central Texas. See the episode online at: [www.klru.org/docubloggers](http://www.klru.org/docubloggers).

## American Trustees Announces New Film

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Louisiana coast in August 2005, it was one of the most deadly and costly hurricanes in the history of the United States. While stories of corruption, mismanagement, and weak infrastructure captured the headlines, many heroic stories went untold. Terence Fontaine of Houston is one such story. Fontaine, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations to Mayor Bill White, worked steadfastly night after night to support one of the largest evacuee operations ever. Fontaine and partner organizations provided food, shelter, and basic needs at the George R. Brown Convention Center. See his story with accompanying lesson plans at: [www.americantrusteesproject.com/videos](http://www.americantrusteesproject.com/videos).

## Taking Civics into the Classroom and Beyond

In an effort to improve civic instruction, the Institute has continued to use the American Trustees Project and the *Speak Up! Speak Out!* lesson plans, resources, and teaching strategies to train teachers statewide. Traveling to Dallas, San Antonio, Lewisville, and elsewhere this year, the Institute worked with hundreds of teachers who are on the frontlines of creating better citizens. The Institute also shared its programs for the first time at the National Council for the Social Studies in Houston and the National Educational Computation Conference in San Antonio.



First place winners Highland High School, second place Akins High and third place Sam Houston High

## Texas Students Raise Their Voices

High school students across Texas are speaking so loudly they're being heard from El Paso to Austin. As part of the *Speak Up! Speak Out!* competition, held May 14, 2008 at The University of Texas at Austin, students made their voices heard on the community issues that matter to them.

As part of the sixth-annual competition, classrooms worked together to craft innovative solutions to community problems and presented them to other students and teachers, UT students and staff, and community leaders. The competition included entries from schools in Austin, San Antonio, and as far away as El Paso from Horizon High School—which participated by using video conference facilities at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Students tackled topics including teen pregnancy, cycling safety, water conservation, and child abuse. First place went to Highlands High School from San Antonio and their project on neighborhood graffiti. "We are looking forward to growth this year and engaging more students across the state," said Jeannette Bellemeur, project manager. "*Speak Up! Speak Out!* will add more schools in the Austin, Dallas, and Brownsville areas."

For more information on projects or participating in *Speak Up! Speak Out!*, please visit: [www.speakuppeakout.org](http://www.speakuppeakout.org).





## Welcome, Chuck Courtney

The institute is pleased to announce the appointment of Charles R. “Chuck” Courtney as the Institute’s new associate director. Chuck joins the Institute after thirty-one years of governmental experience at the local, state, and federal levels. With an M.A. in History and Government from the University of Texas at Arlington, Chuck began his legislative career in 1976 working for State Representative Gibson D. “Gib” Lewis of Fort Worth and continued to serve Mr. Lewis when he became Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

Chuck later became director of personnel for the Texas Legislative Council, the bill-drafting agency for the Texas Legislature, where he supervised a staff of over 200 employees with an annual budget of \$1.2 million. In 1984, he joined the Texas Retailers Association and eventually became president and CEO. During his twenty-three year career advocating for the retail industry in Texas, Chuck worked with local governments, the Texas Legislature, as well as the U.S. Congress and a variety of state and federal agencies.

In addition to his legislative work, Chuck served as chairman of the Texas Society of Association Executives and served on the Advisory Committee to the State Preservation Board, which oversaw the \$200 million restoration of the Texas Capitol. He has also served as a member of the Summerlee Commission on Texas History and Center for American History at UT Austin.

Upon joining the Institute, Mr. Courtney stated, “I’m really excited to be using my political and foundation background for an entirely new purpose. I’m deeply committed to education and the Institutes’ mission is close to my heart. The opportunity of increasing civic involvement for future generations is enormously appealing to me.”



## Strauss Faculty Researches Objectivity & Balance for Public Broadcasting

Dr. Talia Stroud, assistant director of the Strauss Institute, and Dr. Stephen Reese, associate dean for Academic Affairs of the College of Communication, received a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to study how people perceive objectivity and balance in the news.

The researchers provided their findings in a white paper—a report that included recommendations based on the research. Their proposal was selected as one of seven White Papers to be developed on the subject.

### Civic Facts:

During the 2008 primaries, 8 in 10 young voters went to college.

Overall, more than a quarter of those younger than age 30 (27%)—including 37% of those ages 18-24—have gotten campaign information from social networking sites.

For more information, see the full list of sources at [www.annettestrauss.org](http://www.annettestrauss.org)



## Studies Examine Texas CASA Program & Tobacco Use of Hispanic Adults

**T**he Office of Survey Research is helping investigate two topics in the State of Texas—the CASA Program and tobacco use in Hispanic adults.

In September 2008, the Office of Survey Research conducted a survey with 275 State judges on behalf of the Texas CASA program. The CASA program—which stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate—places volunteers in the judicial system to advocate for children and provide better information to the courts.

In a survey received by mail, “judges were asked about their experience with the CASA program and to evaluate aspects of the program to make future improvements,” says Veronica Inchauste, program manager for the Office of Survey Research.

Between February and July of 2008, the Office of Survey Research collected information on tobacco use in Hispanic adults in the Houston and Dallas areas for The University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. The survey was conducted by telephone interviewers with 311 individuals from the Dallas area and 223 from the Houston area, each between the ages of 18 and 35.

According to Inchauste, the results will be given to the Center for Disease Control & Prevention to inform public health practices and strategies in this population.

## Campaign Mapping Project to Include Data from 2008 Election

**E**ver wonder how this election compares to those of years past? A research project with the Strauss Institute will be able to tell you with a degree of certainty unheard of before. Expanding its efforts to assemble campaign materials produced during presidential elections since 1948, the Campaign Mapping Project is being expanded to include the 2008 presidential election as part of the guide to understanding the direction of American politics.

Funded by the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation of New York, the project compiles various transcripts from news broadcasts, speeches, debates, wire services, and letters to the editors. These are entered into a database, where they can be analyzed and compared with information from previous elections.

“It is tremendously valuable to have this archive of campaign discourse. Citizens, pundits, and scholars are often caught up in the here-and-now of campaigns. Campaign Mapping allows us to say things about our democracy with historical insight and certainty,” says project manager Colene Lind.

### Civic Facts:

3.4 million more young people voted in 2008 than in 2004, an increase of 4 to 5 percentage points.

23 million voters in the 2008 Presidential Election were under the age of 30.

For more information, see the full list of sources at [www.annettestrauss.org](http://www.annettestrauss.org)





## Patricia Witherspoon Award Recipients Survey Understudied Groups

### Witherspoon Recipient Examines Latina Activism in Austin, TX

In Spring 2006, immigrant rights groups across the country protested the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005.

Hortencia Jimenez—a PhD student in the UT Department of Sociology and Witherspoon Award recipient—is conducting a pilot study on the role of Latina women in the immigrant rights protests that occurred in Austin, Texas.

Latina women were highly visible participants of the movement—thousands participated in marches along with their families and friends. But in her study, Jimenez asks: What role did Latina women play in mobilizing the community?

“Preliminary interviews with women involved in the movement” says Jimenez, “suggest that Latinas were both active decision-makers in the coalition as heads of non-profit organizations and mobilized the community at the grassroots level as well.” Jimenez will go on to develop the pilot study into a full-length research project as her dissertation.

### Future of the Hispanic Vote Researched by Witherspoon Recipient

As the fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States, Latinos will become an even greater force in local, state, and national elections. But how will they vote in the future?

As part of her Witherspoon Fellowship, Laura Barberena—a doctoral student in Communication Studies—is examining how young Mexican Americans talk, think, and feel about politics and civic engagement.

“Latino population growth numbers strongly suggest that Hispanics will be poised to dramatically influence politics and policy in Texas,” says Barberena. “While Mexican Americans often claim Democratic Party identification, they sometimes split their vote on the Presidential level.”

As part of her dissertation, Barberena will conduct 4 focus groups that will be made up of 8 to 10 Mexican Americans in Texas between the ages of 18 and 25. Funds awarded to Barberena through the Witherspoon Fellowship will be used to compensate focus groups participants.

### Civic Facts:

At least 52% of young people ages 18-29 cast ballots in the 2008 Presidential Election.

Nearly three times as many people ages 18 to 29 mention the Internet as mention newspapers as a main source of election news (49% vs. 17%).

For more information, see the full list of sources at [www.annettestrauss.org](http://www.annettestrauss.org)



# 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.**

- \$500 – will provide 10 scholarships for students to attend New Politics Forum
- \$1,000 – will support undergraduate voting efforts of UT Votes
- \$5,000 – will fund the next Tex Elects competition
- \$10,000 – will provide 3 Theodore Strauss undergraduate scholarships
- \$25,000 – will fund the *Speak Up! Speak Out!* program for a year
- \$50,000 – will fund a research project on youth participation
- \$100,000 – will enable American Trustees to expand nationally

## 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."

## Institute Helps Local Hispanic Community Fair

**E**ducation is an important building block for good citizenship. Educated citizens are more likely to vote and participate politically. Hispanic students, however, often lag behind on markers of academic success and vote and participate politically at lower rates.

In response to these trends, local Spanish-language media outlets, the Austin Independent School District, and a number of non-profit groups organized the community education fair FERIA Para Aprender on February 16, 2008 at the Burger Activity Center in Austin, Texas. The goal of FERIA Para Aprender was to inform community members—particularly Hispanic parents—about educational opportunities in the community.

Austin Partners in Education asked Strauss Institute Assistant Director Dr. Talia Stroud and Research Assistant Laura Barberena to conduct an on-site survey to evaluate the event. With the help of a student team from The University of Texas at Austin and other local universities who helped administer the survey, they determined that the event was a great success. The survey also provided key insights to help the event sponsors in planning future events. For example, the survey revealed that advertising both in the media and at local schools was a successful strategy.



## Thank You to Our Supporters

### Citizen's Level – \$50,000 and up

Mrs. Mary McDermott Cook &  
The Eugene McDermott Foundation  
The Dorot Foundation

Mr. & Mrs. Greg Levenson  
Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Halbreich  
Mr. Theodore Strauss

The Hatton W. Sumners Foundation  
Dr. Steven Ungerleider

### Presidential Level – \$10,000 to \$49,999

Mr. James Elkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Estrada  
Mr. & Mrs. John Hammack  
Dr. & Mrs. Roderick P. Hart

I.B.M. Corporation  
Mr. & Mrs. Cappy McGarr  
Mr. Mike A. Myers  
Mr. & Mrs. Erle Nye

The Perot Foundation  
Dr. Stefanie Sanford  
Mr. & Mrs. James Smith  
The Hon. Robert Strauss

### Senatorial Level – \$5,000 to \$9,999

The Hon. & Mrs. Tom Dunning  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation  
Mr. & Mrs. Roger Horchow

Mr. Rusty Kelley  
Drs. Willis & Ann Maddrey  
Mr. & Mrs. Edward W. Rose III

Mrs. C. Vincent Prothro  
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Perry  
Mrs. Barbara Van Pelt

### Gubernatorial Level – \$1,000 to \$4,999

The Hon. George Bayoud  
Mr. & Mrs. Norman E. Brinker  
Mr. Ted Delisi/Delisi Communications  
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Duey  
Mrs. Gail Ewing  
Mr. Alan Feld  
Mr. & Mrs. James Francis  
Dr. Kathryn Hammer  
Mr. Mark Harkrider

Ms. Kathryn Hopper  
Admiral & Mrs. B.R. Inman  
Mr. & Mrs. Mendel Kaliff  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Mankoff  
Mr. Red McCombs  
Mr. Wales Madden, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Lowry Mays  
Mrs. Mildred Oppenheimer  
Mr. & Mrs. John Rauscher

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schlegel  
Mr. Pete Schenkel  
Dr. Lee Sigelman  
Mr. Allan Shivers, Jr.  
Mr. Brian Shivers  
Mr. Ronald Steinhart  
Mr. & Mrs. Max Wells  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Wyly, Jr.

### Mayoral Level – \$250 to \$999

Mr. Ernest Angelo  
The Hon. Ben Barnes  
Mr. Eric Beverly  
Mrs. George Christian  
Mr. William Cooper  
Mr. Edward Copley  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Courtney  
Ms. Lee Cullum  
Dr. & Mrs. Peter DeLisle  
Dr. & Mr. Robert Dixon  
Ms. Linda Evans

Mr. Robert Floyd  
Mr. Robert Folsom  
Mr. Richard Graw  
Mrs. Caroline Hunt  
Dr. Sharon Jarvis  
The Hon. Ron Kirk  
Mr. Sylvan Landau  
Mr. Lowell Lebermann  
Dr. William Livingston  
Mr. Robert Looney  
Mr. Norman Miller

Mr. Donald McKneeley  
Mr. & Mrs. David McVey  
Dr. Robert Mosbacher, Jr.  
Ms. Shirley Pollock  
The Hon. John Sharp  
Mr. Robert Spellings  
Dr. Bartholomew Sparrow  
Mrs. Diana Strauss  
Dr. Charls Walker  
Mr. John Williams  
The Hon. Anne Wynne

### Council Level – Up to \$250

Dr. Kenneth Andersen  
Ms. Janie Avilia  
Mr. Paul M. Bass  
Mr. Tony Bernal  
Ms. Melody Chatelle  
Ms. Angela Collins  
Mr. Ray Farabee  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Giles

Ms. Mareem Horn  
Mr. Patrick Horn  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Krasawski  
Mr. Richard Lariviere  
Mr. Lewis Lazarus  
Mr. George Littell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Lowe  
Mr. N. Edd Miller

Mr. & Mrs. John Mullaly  
Prof. Elspeth Rostow  
Drs. Laurie Lewis & Craig Scott  
Mrs. Margaret Seay  
Senator Florence Shapiro  
Dr. William Spragens  
Ms. Melissa Sykes  
Dr. Jan Vermeer



## Institute Pilots New Advocacy Program

**T**hey say you can't fight city hall. But a new program with the Annette Strauss Institute aims to make local and state government more approachable to the public. The Texas Advocacy Workshop is a new non-partisan program that provides legislative advocacy training to organizations and individuals interested in building and improving their communication efforts with government.

Through half-day sessions with expert speakers and a structured curriculum, the Texas Advocacy Workshop tackles such topics as: the Texas legislative process; how county and city governments operate; how to formulate and communicate messages; working with professional advocates; and how to interact with traditional and new media. "The Texas Advocacy Workshop attempts to demystify our government and make it more accessible to citizens," says Chuck Courtney, associate director for administration at the Annette Strauss Institute.

The Institute piloted its first workshop on November 20th with the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI-Austin). Workshop opportunities are also being explored with professional and trade associations and other charitable organizations, with future pilots planned for the spring of 2009.

The University of Texas at Austin  
The Annette Strauss Institute  
for Civic Participation  
Lake Austin Centre  
3001 Lake Austin Boulevard, Suite 2.316  
Austin, Texas 78703

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
PERMIT NO. 391  
Austin, Texas

