

THE CENTERPIECE

A bi-weekly publication of the Center for State Policy & Leadership

University of Illinois Springfield

May 8, 2012

- More news and information programming will be available on *WUIS* starting July 2nd. The station will add several programs, including the popular *Talk of the Nation* and a relatively new program getting rave reviews called *On Point*. **WUIS General Manager Bill Wheelhouse** and **News Director Sean Crawford** plan to host a daily noon-hour program, *Illinois Central*, which will focus on news, the arts, and community. *WUIS*' classical music programming is being shifted to web streaming and HD radio. To facilitate the transition, the station is providing HD radios at cost to listeners. The changes come as a result of a months-long self-study by *WUIS*, in which more than 1,000 listeners weighed in with their opinions on existing programs and what they'd like to hear more of on the station. A full outline of the new programming schedule is available at <http://www.wuis.org/programs/20120701.pdf>.
- Last week, the **WUIS** health desk was the first news source to report that Illinois' efforts to comply with the Federal Healthcare Affordability Act, otherwise known as healthcare reform, have been halted. **Statehouse Bureau Chief Amanda Vinicky** reported that legislative efforts to create a healthcare exchange, in which otherwise uncovered people could pick among insurance options, have been scrapped until the U. S. Supreme Court rules on the constitutionality of the new federal law, possibly some time next month. If the state doesn't act on the requirement to have an exchange, the federal government could come in and take over. The *WUIS* health desk was recently established to keep track of the rapid changes occurring in healthcare policy and practice.
- The Center sponsored a noontime seminar on April 25th featuring the authors of two recent books on legendary Illinois political leaders. **Dave Joens**, the state archivist, recounted how his biography, *From Slave to State Legislator: John W.E. Thomas, Illinois' First African American Lawmaker* (SIU Press, 2012), grew from a class paper to his master's thesis in history at UIS, and then to his doctoral dissertation at SIU-Carbondale. Joens' primary sources were newspapers from the 1870s and 1880s, since Thomas' personal records are lacking. Thomas moved to Chicago as a freed slave from Alabama, started schools and businesses, and later was involved in passage of early civil rights legislation. **Ed Wojcicki**, UIS associate chancellor for constituent relations, wrote with former Illinois Senate President Phil Rock, *Nobody Calls Just to Say Hello* (SIU Press, 2012), an account of Rock's experiences during 22 years in the Senate. Wojcicki conducted 28 interviews with Rock and dozens more with Rock's contemporaries. Rock was known for his bipartisanship, said Wojcicki, and his "story makes it clear that one can be a loyal partisan and a highly principled public official" at the same time.

- The **Illinois Innocence Project** (formerly Downstate Illinois Innocence Project) will soon have as formal partners all three of the state's public law schools. For more than a year, students and faculty at the University of Illinois College of Law and Southern Illinois University School of Law have been working on cases for the Project. This summer, the Northern Illinois University College of Law will join them, as the Project begins giving more attention to cases in the northern part of the state. Previously, owing to resource limits, the Project did little work in northern counties. Currently, more than 35 students, including 5 students at UIS, are involved in the screening and review of cases.
- Recently, **Hinda Seif**, a cultural anthropologist on the UIS faculty, presented her research on immigrant youth and the Illinois DREAM Act at the American Education Research Association Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. When Governor Pat Quinn signed the DREAM Act in 2011, Illinois became the second state in the nation to enhance an in-state tuition law to improve college access for undocumented students who have grown up in the state. Seif's research, funded in part by a grant from the Center, finds that immigrant student activists were central in conceptualizing, advocating for, and implementing the Illinois law. Legislators told Seif that the advocacy of immigrant youth helped to get the bill passed.
- **Sharron LaFollette**, chair of UIS' public health department with a joint appointment in the Center, will be speaking on the topic of assessing the health effects of environmental hazards at the annual meeting in late June of the National Environmental Health Association. The panel will also include two other faculty members of the department, Ken Runkle and Lenore Killam.
- Associate professor of political science at UIS, **Jason Pierceson**, spoke to the World Affairs Council of Central Illinois last week on comparing same-sex marriage politics in Canada and the U.S. Pierceson is completing a book manuscript on same-sex marriage and the Supreme Court, based on research he conducted with support from a Center faculty research grant. He spent last fall on a Fulbright fellowship at the University of Alberta as visiting chair of American studies. In his remarks to the Council, Pierceson described how the Canadian Charter of Rights and Equality, created in the 1980s, enabled the subsequent passage of a same-sex marriage law in Canada, and that without a referendum process as there is in the U.S., there will be no repeal vote. Pierceson expects his book to be published by Rowman & Littlefield in 2013.
- High quality images of 112 documents are now part of **The Papers of Abraham Lincoln**, thanks to a recent visit to Japan by the project's director, **Daniel Stowell**. Meisei University, near Tokyo, holds the largest known collection of Lincoln documents outside the United States. In addition to producing clear color images of documents that were before only available in black-and-white, the trip led to the discovery of several documents previously unknown, including an account written by a 23-year-old Abraham Lincoln in January 1833, a certification from 1834, a promissory note from 1835, a mortgage from 1838, and a legal notice from 1840 that identifies a new case for the Lincoln Legal Papers Series published by the Papers. The collection originated with

Japanese businessman Masaharu Mochizuki, who established the Tokyo Lincoln Center in 1961 and donated the papers to Meisei in 1980.

- News last week from **WUIS** on “fracking” was picked up by websites that watch the financial markets. NASDAQ’s news roundup quoted a **WUIS** story reporting that Illinois appears to be the next growth state for the controversial process in which water, sand, and chemicals are pumped into the ground to extract oil or natural gas. The Illinois legislature is considering imposing new regulations on fracking. The original story was produced by public affairs reporting intern **Rachel Otwell**.
- The June edition of **Illinois Issues** will examine the question of whether the state’s Tamms supermax prison has protected guards and inmates from the baddest of the bad, or whether it’s a place where prisoners are subjected to human rights abuses without changing their behavior. To save money, Gov. Pat Quinn has proposed closing the facility, which opened in 1998.
- With funding from a U.S. Department of Justice grant to the **Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies**, a survey is now underway of Illinois providers who evaluate and treat sex offenders. The survey is being administered by the Center’s **Survey Research Office**. The Institute hopes to learn about the practices, techniques, and therapies most typically used by providers, along with their assessment of various known techniques. Those surveyed are providers on the approved list maintained by the Illinois Sex Offender Management Board.
- **Illinois Issues** is looking to hire an associate director for marketing and circulation. The position organizes promotions and events, obtains sponsorships and conducts campaigns to increase readership and book sales. Information can be found at <http://bit.ly/Idm8iT>.
- **WUIS** came razor close to its Spring fundraising goal of \$160,000 during the recent on-air campaign. The station is about \$5,000 shy of its target and expects to be able to raise that amount in coming weeks.

David P. Racine, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Director, Center for State Policy and Leadership
Director, Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies
University of Illinois Springfield
One University Plaza, MS PAC 409
Springfield, Il 62703-5407
Phone: (217)206-8417

