

THE CENTERPIECE

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- **Suzanne Borland**, assistant professor of legal studies at UIS, and **Barbara Hayler**, professor emerita of criminal justice, presented initial findings from their recent study of judges in Illinois at a Faculty Public Affairs Research forum at UIS on November 28th. With a research grant from the **Center**, Borland and Hayler surveyed the entire population of Illinois appellate and trial judges, replicating a study by Stephan Daniels from 1980-1981. The response rate was an unusually high 54 percent. The survey found a significant increase in women on both benches, which was expected, but it also indicated a surprising swing from a largely Protestant to a predominantly Catholic judiciary (especially at the Appellate level). Interestingly, the judges who completed the survey reported valuing the same personal qualities – such as honesty and integrity, knowledge of the law, and impartiality – as judges did 30 years ago. Another unexpected finding was that appellate justices and trial judges in Illinois possess similar judicial attitudes, even though their roles within the justice system are markedly different. They agree that adherence to precedent and cleaning up accumulated case dockets are their most important goal.
- **Jason Pierceson**, UIS associate professor of political science, is the author of a new book, to be published in early 2013 by Rowman & Littlefield, titled *Same-Sex Marriage in the United States: Road to the Supreme Court*. Pierceson received a grant from the **Center** to support his research for and preparation of the manuscript. The book explores the legal, political, and cultural context of the movement for same-sex marriage and its opposition in the United States, setting the stage for the first genuine engagement of the issue by the Supreme Court. It examines the history of the movement, the philosophical and religious debates surrounding the movement, developments around the world to put the U.S. movement in context, state-by-state analysis of relevant legal and political developments, and recent federal litigation. The result is to highlight the role that religion, political parties, and federalism have played and will, at least in the short-run, continue to play in shaping the movement's path to national recognition.
- On January 3, 2013, a graduate of UIS will take the oath of office in Washington, DC as the new representative of the 17th Congressional District. **Cheri Callahan Bustos** (D), a former **Illinois Legislative Staff Intern** (a program operated by the Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies) and graduate of UIS' **Public Affairs Reporting** master's degree program, won the seat in November. She will replace one-term Congressman Bobby Shilling (R). The 17th Congressional District stretches from Rock Island in the North to Macoupin County in the South.

- **Lorena Johnson, Director of the Certified Public Manager Program of Illinois**, based in the Institute, will in the new year be helping Illinois Ventures for Community Action (IVCA) develop a new strategic plan. Comprised of community action agencies throughout Illinois, IVCA is a not-for-profit corporation whose purpose is to undertake job creation and economic developing, using any profits generated from its members to finance activities designed to eliminate poverty.
- **The Papers of Abraham Lincoln** have received a grant of \$32,745 from the **Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation** to continue digitizing issues of the *Sangamo Journal* (later named the *Illinois State Journal*) between 1831 and 1865. The newspaper supported Lincoln during his Illinois political career and later rise to national prominence. The new grant will allow the Papers to build on work already begun with funding earlier this year from the National Endowment for the Humanities to digitize the Sangamo Journal and analyze issues for anonymous and pseudonymous editorials and letters to the editor that Lincoln may have written.
- Associate Professor of Political Science **John Transue** will present a paper on using sampling to estimate valid signatures on petitions to place constitutional amendments on state ballots at the **Midwest Political Science Association** annual meeting in April. The paper is based on a research completed earlier this year by Transue, **Dick Schuldt**, then director of the **UIS Survey Research Office**, and **Xinrong Lei**, a statistician on the staff of the Institute, for the Illinois State Board of Elections on how to resolve the problem created when registered voters sign a petition more than once. Because of the high threshold in Illinois for petition acceptance (about 400,000 signatures) and the short time between when a petition can be submitted and the State Board of Elections must decide, sampling is used (e.g. 10% of signatures) to estimate the total number of unique valid signatures. The UIS team tested several different ways to estimate replicates (those signing more than once) and ended up recommending the one that did the best job of maximizing validity while still giving the benefit of the doubt to petitioners.
- **Rachel Otwell**, who covers Springfield for **WUIS**, had one of her stories picked up by NPR's **All Things Considered** on December 12th. The story was about **Mbanna Kantako**, who has operated an illegal pirate radio station in Springfield for 25 years and is known as one of the pioneers of the national movement to pirate radio channels. Experts say it was the movement that led to changes in the way small low-power stations will be licensed by the Federal Communications Commission, a change lauded by those who say radio should be open to more diverse and local voices. On the same day, **WUIS** Statehouse Bureau Chief **Amanda Vinicky** was also featured on NPR newcasts reporting on the Federal Court ruling that declared unconstitutional Illinois' ban on carrying concealed weapons.
- This fall marks the third year that the **Center** has invited **UIS faculty** to apply for research grants to study public affairs. Three projects have been selected for funding beginning in 2013. **Donald Morris**, professor of accountancy, will study a proposed policy for public disclosure of tax returns to encourage honest income tax reporting. The

study will involve a national survey, conducted by the Survey Research Office, to gauge public attitudes toward such a policy. **Hua Qin**, assistant professor of environmental studies, conduct research to understand the relationship between rural-urban migration and urban environmental change, a significant issue around the world, by empirically assessing this relationship in China. **Hinda Seif**, assistant professor of sociology/anthropology and women/gender studies, will look at the effect of the new federal program to delay deportation of undocumented youth on their civic activism.

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