

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF POLITICS  
PLAN FOR SPRING 2004**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Institute of Politics was established in 1966 with an endowment from the Kennedy Library Corporation as a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy. The Institute, brings together students -- particularly undergraduates -- with academics, politicians, activists, and policymakers on a non-partisan basis and to stimulate and nurture their interest in public service and leadership. The Institute also strives to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the academic world and the world of politics and public affairs.

Students are offered a wide-ranging program including internships, Forum speakers, visiting and resident Fellows, discussion groups and conferences which provide interaction with the people who shape politics and public policy. The Institute of Politics does not present formal courses or degree-granting programs; instead, it provides avenues for practical experience and encourages students to examine critically and think creatively about politics and public issues.

**National Campaign Headquarters:** The National Campaign for Political and Civic Engagement Headquarters is part of the National Programs at the IOP. The National Campaign Headquarters will continue to support the partner schools in the National Campaign network by providing technical assistance, trainings and general coordination. The National Programs will also conduct research such as the Fall and Spring national surveys on the views of college students about politics and public service, as well as develop partnerships with national groups in the youth voting community.

The goal for Headquarters is to continue to develop and enhance information about youth political and civic engagement, and make it available to the National Campaign partner schools. In addition, the National Campaign Headquarters will bring additional schools into the National Campaign network, and work with other national organizations on political and civic engagement.

In addition to serving as the headquarters for the National Campaign for Political and Civic Engagement, we will work with students on the same goals set for each campus for elective politics, career development, and civic education. The goals of the National Campaign fit into the work of the Institute of Politics. Below are the ongoing activities at the Institute. Some are inspired by the National Campaign and its goals.

**I. ELECTIVE POLITICS: VOTER REGISTRATION, EDUCATION AND MOBILIZATION**

**Voter registration**

The IOP registers students at the beginning of each year during the first week of school. Freshmen pass the voter registration tables on their way to getting their campus ID and

upperclassman are registered during various activities during the first weeks of school. Each student fills out a voter mobilization card which is entered into a database system at the IOP. This allows the IOP's Community Action Committee (CAC) to contact students about their particular state's requirements for absentee ballots, deadlines and reminders to vote. In addition, the CAC registers students throughout the year in dining halls and at IOP forum events. A student committee at the IOP developed a state by state absentee ballot guide that outlines all pertinent information for absentee voting in an easy to read format. This guide as well as our voter registration guide will be posted on the IOP website in the coming month.

### Voter Education

The IOP provides a full Forum calendar with typically 2-4 Forum's per week. In addition to the larger Forum, the IOP sponsors *Director's Dinners* where Secretary Dan Glickman invites a prominent person in a particular field to speak at a dinner of 50-60 interested students and to answer their questions throughout the course of the meal. The IOP also sponsors *Pizza and Politics* which is an informal setting at which politicians, policy makers or journalists discuss a particular topic with students.

Each year, the IOP invites 5-8 political and governmental practitioners to spend a semester at Harvard as resident Fellows. Fellows interact with students and run weekly study groups on particular topics. See the IOP website for a listing of current and former Fellows.

Students also run their own policy groups, which are discussion groups with a goal of a paper or other outcome that reviews a particular policy and makes recommendations. This semester there will be policy groups on the refugee crisis, social security and campus diversity. These programs are highly flexible and are offered in a variety of formats ranging from project-based working groups to skill-building workshops to traditional Q&A-based discussion groups. Well-known guest speakers frequently participate in study groups.

In addition to the above activities the IOP also provides activities for students to participate in real world politics. For example the IOP is providing buses to go to New Hampshire and work on presidential campaigns and will plan activities around both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions.

This semester the IOP will sponsor a series of Town Hall meetings that focus on areas of interest to young voters; the economy, education, healthcare, U.S. policy in Iraq and Leadership.

The IOP will also participate in the Presidential Debate Commission's DebateWatch. DebateWatch brings students together to watch the televised debates, talk about what they learn and what they think.

Other student ideas include: A Local “Grade the Candidate” Project, and a Primary race-watch perhaps with some sort of “guessing” game (aka betting without money).

### Mobilization

The Community Action Committee plans to work through Student Groups, Housemasters, and Harvard Yard Proctors to continue voter registration and education about the absentee voting, deadlines and polling sites.

The IOP will continue this work throughout 2003-04 and will remind and encourage students to vote as their primary/caucus nears. In addition to personalized email outreach to students registered by state, a full page ad will be placed in the Crimson with all absentee deadline dates and other pertinent information relevant to the elections.

## **II CIVIC EDUCATION**

Members of the Civics program volunteer a few hours a week for 9-10 weeks to teach the basics of American government to local middle school and elementary school students. The goals of the program are to demystify politics, and to make citizenship interesting and exciting to young people. This program is jointly administered by the Institute of Politics and the Phillips Brooks House Association (the umbrella community service organization of Harvard College).

Currently there are 41 student teachers and 6 schools participating in this program. This semester the Civics Committee plans to outreach specifically to school principals to expand the number of classrooms participating in the program. Revised Fall and Spring Curricula can be found on the IOP website.

The Civics Committee also plans to consider fieldtrips with students to local courthouses, and working with local City Year Corps working in high schools.

Other student ideas up for consideration include: putting together some plan or “manifesto” with CIVICS – what should civics education be like in this country? What are the problems from your perspective? What do we, as young people, recommend be done? Is this something we want to lobby for?

## **III CAREERS IN PUBLIC SERVICE**

The IOP will continue to work closely with Phillips Brooks House and Phillips Brooks House Association (the community service organizations at Harvard) to engage students from these organizations to think about the connection with community service, organizing and politics. An initial organizing meeting of students will take place in February to discuss joint activities, trainings and conferences for the semester.

The IOP will continue its relationship with Monstertrak.com and AOL.com to highlight the need for careers and internships in public service and government to be prominent on job search engines.

### **Internships**

The IOP has created many opportunities for Harvard Students to engage in practical, hands-on job experience in political offices.

The *Director's Internship Program* offers summer internships in politics and the public sector and provides an accompanying stipend to students who demonstrate merit and interest in politics.

Additionally, Summer Stipends are offered to students who have obtained full-time public sector summer internships and require supplementary financial support.

*Summer in the City* is designed to place students in their hometown mayor's offices. Through an application process, one intern is chosen and assigned to the predetermined Mayor's office, usually, in their home state.

Finally, Summer Thesis monetary awards are offered each year to rising seniors for research in politics or government contributing to a senior honors thesis.

### **Other opportunities:**

The Institute of Politics (IOP) created a fund to encourage undergraduate student groups to participate in political activities. Student groups are invited to apply for Grants, ranging from approximately \$100 to \$2,500, to perform politically oriented activities.

This Spring, the IOP will reinstitute the Research Assistant Program. Five Research Assistants will work on a specific project for a Kennedy School of Government Professor.