

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear undergraduate and graduate alumni,

In this first annual newsletter of Rochester's Department of Political Science, I'd like to reflect on the Department's progress over the previous year. In doing so, it's impossible to ignore the context of an ongoing pandemic, recession, racial tension, and political turmoil. Most of us have lost loved ones and friends, and all of us have lost the sense of normalcy that we used to take for granted. But normalcy is defined by our actions, after all, so I'd like to focus on academics at Rochester, and especially on the accomplishments of our students and faculty over the last year.

Last April, the University of Rochester shifted to online education, and in May, the Class of 2020 received their degrees in Rochester's first virtual commencement ceremony. During the ceremony, 1987 alumna **Lizette Pérez-Deisboeck** contributed the first virtual commencement speech. In fall semester, the educational mission continued in the form of in-person, online, and hybrid teaching, with many students attending classes and engaging in activities on campus. I'm proud of my colleagues for maintaining the highest academic standards in this environment, and I'm especially proud of our students for persevering under difficult circumstances.

The **PhD program**, which has been a jewel of the department for over half a century, was recently restructured and continues its success, but it too was affected by the pandemic. For the first time, we elected to defer admissions to the next academic year, and we created an independent **MA program** in Political Science. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we continue to equip students with the most advanced formal and statistical tools, and our PhD students apply these tools to study substantive questions in political science. Our PhD alumni continue their success, as well. Among their many notable accomplishments, 2020 marked the beginning of **Daniel Diermeier's** term as Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, as well as the election of **Lynn Vavreck** (UCLA) to the Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The year saw the passing of **Richard Fenno**, a towering figure in the discipline, a founding father of the Rochester department, and a dear friend to all of us. At the same time, the department continued to grow, with Professors **Bethany Lacina** and **Alex Lee** being recently promoted to tenured associate professor, and Professors **Hein Goemans** and **David Primo** being promoted to full professor. Our junior faculty, including recent hires Professors **Dan Alexander** and **Mayya Komisarchik**, continue to energize the department with their research and teaching.

Through adversity, the Department of Political Science has been productive. In addition to running popular majors in Political Science and in International Relations, and beyond training graduate students at the highest level, Rochester is distinguished by its success as a leading research department. It is ranked by U.S. News as the #17 department in the U.S. overall, and it is ranked **#4 in the field of political methodology**, placing it among the elite universities in the country. Rochester is the smallest department among the top 30 in the U.S., and we compete with departments that are typically much larger, some over twice our size. Nevertheless, our faculty (often coauthoring with current PhD students or PhD alumni) are **producing research** on par, in terms of quantity and quality, with the best departments in the discipline.

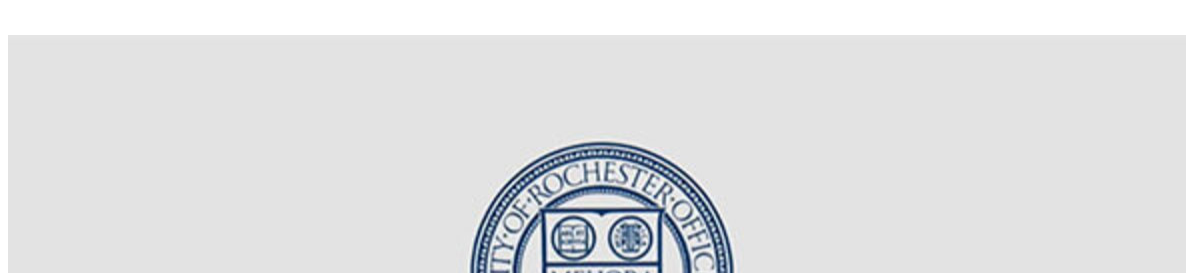
As we prepare for spring semester, the "light at the end of the tunnel" is visible and growing brighter. Similarly, the future of political science at Rochester is bright. We're looking forward to conferring degrees to the Class of 2021 in the spring; to filling our first-year class in the PhD program in the fall, and training the next generation of political scientists; and to continuing the Rochester tradition of rigorous research in political science.

Moving ahead, we hope to stay connected with our alumni, and this newsletter is part of that effort. Please reach out to us if you would like to inform us of your own accomplishments and milestones, or if you'd simply like to stay in touch. We look forward to seeing or hearing from you in the future, and until then, we will strive to be ever better. Meliora!

John Duggan
Chair, Department of Political Science

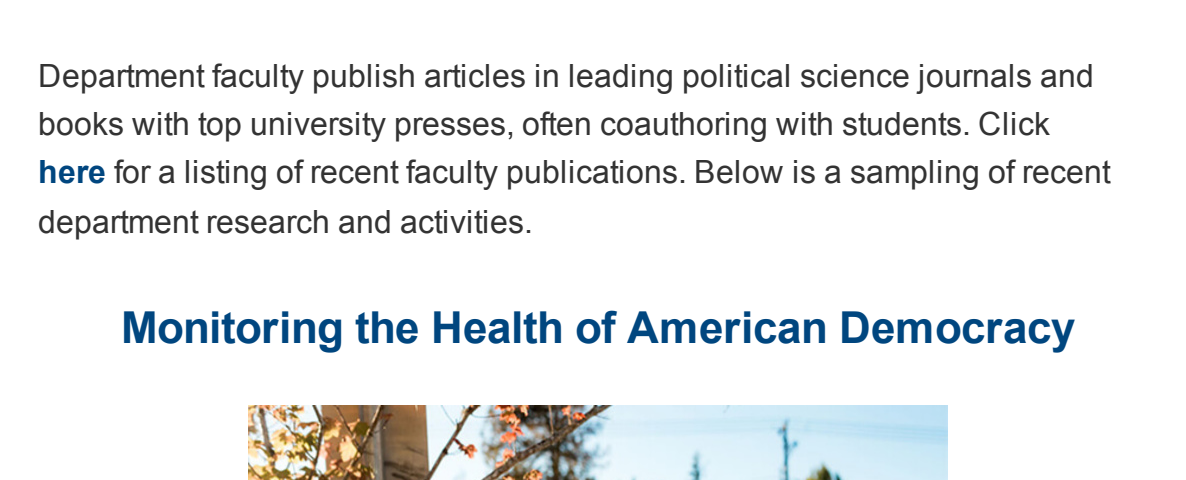
Support the Department of Political Science by [making a gift](#) today.

A TRIBUTE TO RICHARD FENNO



The Department of Political Science remembers Dick Fenno, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, who passed away on April 21, 2020. View the tribute [here](#).

GRADUATION 2020

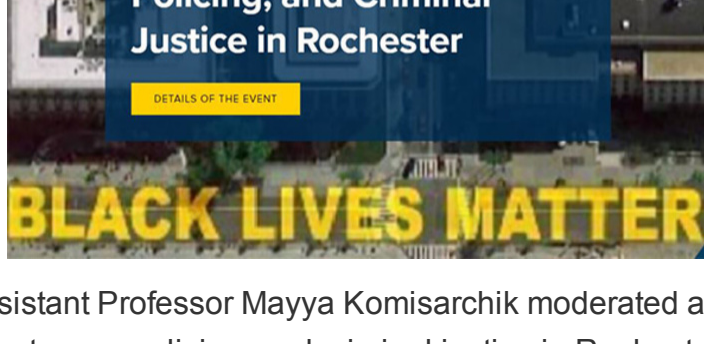


The Department of Political Science celebrated its graduates with a video ceremony featuring remarks from faculty and students. Watch the video [here](#).

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

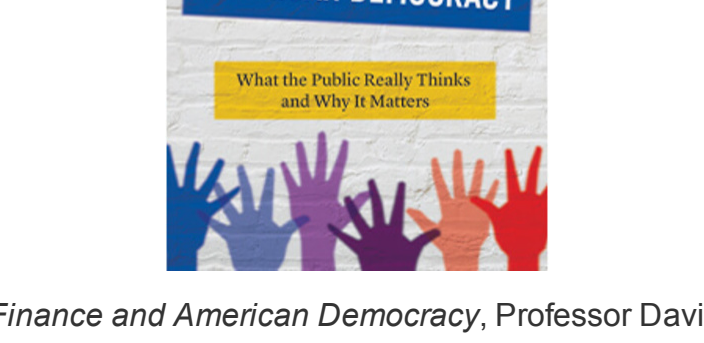
Department faculty publish articles in leading political science journals and books with top university presses, often coauthoring with students. Click [here](#) for a listing of recent faculty publications. Below is a sampling of recent department research and activities.

Monitoring the Health of American Democracy



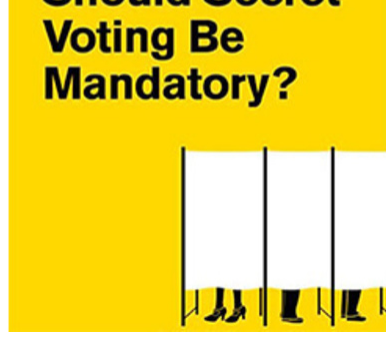
Professor Gretchen Helmke and collaborators created Bright Line Watch to regularly survey Americans and political scientists about the state of American democracy. BLW prepared several reports about the 2020 election.

Discussing Race in Contemporary Politics



In October, Assistant Professor Mayya Komisarchik moderated a virtual panel discussion about, race, policing, and criminal justice in Rochester. This is the first in a series of virtual symposia in memory of Richard Fenno.

Dispelling Myths about Money in American Politics



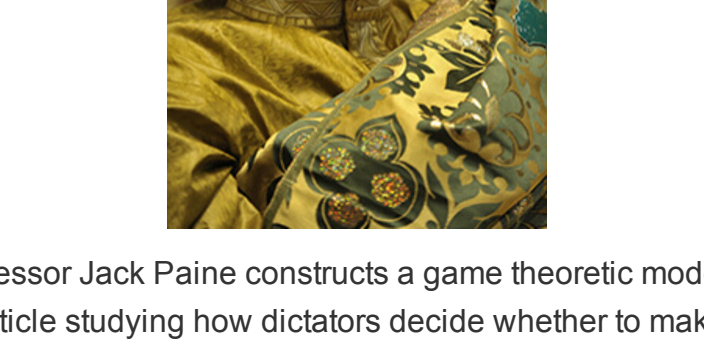
In *Campaign Finance and American Democracy*, Professor David Primo and coauthor Jeffrey Milyo utilize decades of survey data to challenge the conventional wisdom that campaign finance reform will "fix" American democracy.

Making the Case for Mandatory Voting



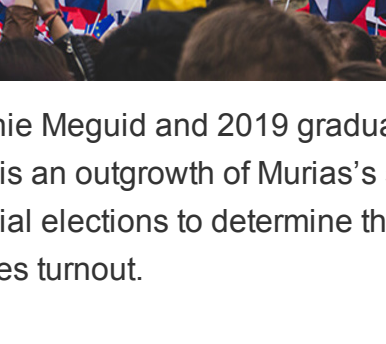
In *Should Secret Voting be Mandatory?*, Professor James Johnson and coauthor Susan Orr argue that mandatory voting and the secret ballot "are best thought of in tandem"—a timely contribution in light of the recent rise in vote-by-mail.

Uncovering the Hidden Costs of Electoral Quotas for Women



Associate Professor Alexander Lee and PhD candidate Varun Karekurve-Ramachandra published an article showing that the effect of electoral quotas for women in India reduced the representation of lower caste groups.

Understanding the Dictator's Power-Sharing Dilemma



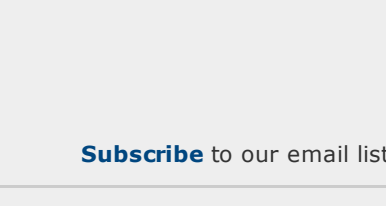
Assistant Professor Jack Paine constructs a game theoretic model in a forthcoming article studying how dictators decide whether to make elite factions "insiders" or "outsiders" in an effort to survive in power.

Dissecting the Effects of Party Polarization on French Turnout

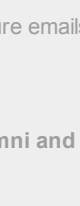


Associate Professor Bonnie Meguid and 2019 graduate Maria Murias, in a forthcoming article which is an outgrowth of Murias's senior honors thesis, analyze French presidential elections to determine the conditions under which party polarization increases turnout.

Fixing Financial Regulation



In *Misalignment*, Professor and President Emeritus Joel Seligman takes the reader through the history of financial services regulation, concluding that a fundamentally different approach is needed to avoid future financial meltdowns.



UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

