

THE CENTERPIECE

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

University of Illinois Springfield

August 15th, 2012

- Can information change the tendency of people to downgrade the chances of candidates for elected office when they are women? The answer appears to be “it depends,” according to a paper that **Michael Miller**, UIS assistant professor of political science, and Conor Dowling of the University of Mississippi will present at the upcoming annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in September. Miller and Dowling used two national survey experiments to determine whether stereotypes about female candidates can be changed when people are presented with contrary information. In the first experiment, people were given a fictional story to read about a successful woman who defeated an incumbent member of Congress. In the second, people viewed a video which contained factual information about women winning elections at similar rates as men. The fictional story had no effect, but the factual information reduced stereotyping. Miller and Dowling are currently doing a follow-up to find out whether the effect of the factual information endures. If it does, then this may suggest ways to make it easier for women to run for office and succeed.
- Preliminary findings from a study by the **Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies** of local collaborations to improve the handling of domestic violence cases will be presented at the annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association in October. Many domestic violence and sexual abuse offenders are never held to account because insufficient evidence is collected, victims withdraw from the process, or incidents are never reported in the first place. Multidisciplinary teams have been created in some Illinois counties to overcome these barriers. Since May of 2011, the Institute’s **David Gruenenfelder, Jan Hill-Jordan, and Peter Weitzel** have been evaluating these teams for the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. At the Evaluation Association meeting, the UIS group will present two papers, one discussing the study’s analysis of data from surveys and victim services and criminal history records, and the other which uses results of interviews and document reviews to describe in detail how teams operate and how they differ from one county to the next.
- This year’s drought led to a piece on August 9 on National Public Radio’s popular Morning Edition for **WUIS** reporter **Rachel Otwell**. Otwell reported on the drought’s impact on central Illinois water supplies in a story which examined the national effects the drought is having on local communities and on jobs that depend on businesses which use large quantities of water. You can hear the story at <http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=158477177&m=158477097>
- **Otwell’s** reporting for **WUIS** also featured recently in a more unusual way. In the Internet age, you never know where a story will show up on the Web. Otwell experienced that in late July, when she produced a quick vignette on a new safety fence being installed around the race track at the Illinois State Fairgrounds. Along with on-air, WUIS publishes its stories

online, and it was through the online version of Otwell's story that it wound up appearing on the industry trade site "Fence News."

- Of the 23 **Legislative Staff Interns** who worked for the Illinois General Assembly in 2011-2012, sixteen were offered regular positions with the legislature when their internships ended earlier this year and fourteen accepted. Joining the regular House Republican staff were **Alex Laird** in the Legal department and **Meredith Van Kampen** in Communications, and **Jennifer Hogan**, **Aimee Winebaugh**, and **Joe Sculley** accepted positions on Research and Appropriations where they previously worked as interns. **Brian Kenner** took up a post on the Research staff of the House Democrats. Over in the Senate, **Katherine Eastvold** joined the Communications staff for the Democrats, and **Russell Orrill** secured a position on the Democratic staff for Appropriations. On the other side of the aisle, **Jack Felker**, **Joshua Horeled**, **Kevin Kulavic**, **Margaret Nunne**, and **Matthew Zimmerman** have been hired to work on campaigns with plans to join the Senate staff after the elections in November. Also noteworthy is that **Jennie Le**, who had taken an intern position with Wisconsin's Legislative Reference Bureau after her Illinois legislative internship ended, has been promoted into a regular job as legislative analyst with the Wisconsin legislature.
- The September edition of *Illinois Issues* will feature an analysis by Statehouse bureau chief **Jamey Dunn** of how Illinois will be affected by the recent Supreme Court ruling upholding most of the federal Affordable Care Act. The article is part of ongoing coverage in the magazine and on WUIS focusing on health care issues in Illinois.
- **WUIS** listeners are taking an active part in the station's new news and information lineup that started July 1. Local listeners were on the air several times in July during the public radio program *On Point*, which deals with issues of the day through in-depth interviews and listener comments and questions. WUIS listeners called in from Springfield, Lincoln, Kincaid, and Pittsfield. *On Point* is jointly produced by NPR and WBUR in Boston and airs from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. weekdays.
- The **Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies** recently received word that it has been awarded a \$400,000+ grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation's Division of Traffic Safety to continue a series of annual training programs for prosecutors, police, and probation officers who deal with drunk driving. New with this coming year's grant will be preparation of DUI guidebooks for prosecutors and law enforcement, creation of new training videos, and statewide surveys examining local variations in DUI management practices.

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