

2023-2024 Annual Report

Duke
SANFORD

POLIS: CENTER *for* POLITICS

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Project Citizen students in the Rotunda at the U.S. Capitol building



Letter from the Director

Dear Friends of Polis,

The Polis team is delighted to share our annual report for AY 2023-24. As we wrap up another inspiring year of programming and events, we are struck by the impact that our amazing community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends had in bringing out the best in politics at a time when society continues to grapple with the forces of political polarization, legislative gridlock, and declining civil discourse.

Award winning journalist and Polis Distinguished Fellow John Harwood had greatly enriched our community bringing deep insights into the state of democracy to our campus this year. In November, he and special guests Sara Longwell and Michael Podhorzer engaged in a rich conversation about the stakes of the 2024 presidential election for democracy. His 'Bedeviled' podcast has given our community access to an extraordinary group of political figures, including President Joe Biden, Trump White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson, former congresswoman Liz Cheney, and Stanford law professor and elections expert Nate Persily.

Polis's student community is as vibrant as ever, and the Polis Student Committee (PSC) had a banner year of thinking big about how to foster political engagement at Duke. The primary election watch party that the PSC hosted in March stands out as one of my favorite Polis memories. It was deeply moving to see so many enthusiastic undergraduate, graduate, and professional students take time out of their hectic schedules to share a meal and geek out over election returns together. The PSC Executive Committee has been especially crucial to building a strong culture of student political engagement at Duke, and we are proud of and grateful for their leadership.

With such strong desire to better understand the dynamics shaping our current political landscape and interest in understanding how to safeguard democracy by actively participating in political and civic activities, Polis's events and activities attracted enthusiastic engagement this year. Our Combating Hate & Bias conference—which we hosted with conference chair and incoming Polis Director Professor Abdullah Antepi—brought leading scholars and advocates to campus to grapple with how hate and bias shape the political landscape in North Carolina, the U.S. and beyond. Democracy Day, a collaboration with Duke Student Government, Graduate and Professional Student Government, Duke Votes, Young People's Alliance, and American Grand Strategy, generated remarkable voter mobilization on campus. And Project Citizen, which Polis co-sponsored in August with Duke's Office of New Student Programs helped usher an amazing cohort of first-year students into Duke, helping them strike up new friendships and connections while thinking seriously about what it means to be a 'good citizen' in their various communities.

As we look toward next year, it is an overwhelming feeling of hope and gratitude that inspires our team. We are so grateful to each and every member of our Polis community for your support and hope that you will enjoy learning more about what your politics center has been up to this year.

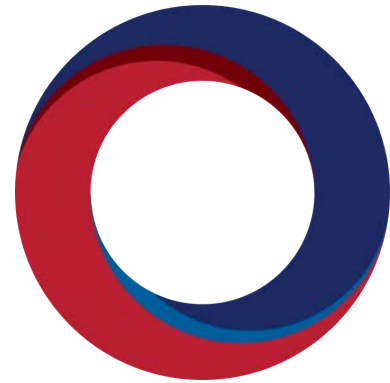
All my thanks and very best wishes,
Deondra



Deondra Rose, Ph.D.
Kevin D. Gorter Associate Professor of Public Policy
Associate Professor of Political Science and History
Director, Polis: Center for Politics
2023-24 Duke University Presidential Fellow
Sanford School of Public Policy
Duke University

Mission Statement

Established in 2015, Polis: Center for Politics is committed to increasing our understanding of politics locally, nationally, and globally. Our mission is to strengthen democracy by promoting powerful politics research, fostering transformative political discourse, and helping a new generation of leaders find on-ramps to public service.



Students participating in a Braver Angels Debate on April 24

Our People

DEONDRA ROSE DIRECTOR

Deondra Rose is the Kevin D. Gorter Associate Professor at the Sanford School of Public Policy with secondary appointments in the Department of Political Science and the Department of History. She is also the 2023-24 Duke University Presidential Fellow and Co-director of the North Carolina Scholars Strategy Network (SSN). Her



research focuses on U.S. higher education policy, political behavior, American political development, and the politics of inequality, particularly in relation to gender, race, and socioeconomic status.

Rose is the author of *Citizens by Degree: Higher Education Policy and the Changing Gender Dynamics of American Citizenship* (Oxford University Press, 2018), which examines the development of landmark U.S. higher education policies--including the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments--and their impact on the progress that women have made since the mid-twentieth century.

Her new book, *The Power of Black Excellence: HBCUs and the Fight for American Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 2024), examines the crucial role that historically Black colleges have played in American political development.

A summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Georgia, Rose received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University, with a specialization in American politics and public policy.

MEG BITTLE
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Meg provides developmental oversight and management of programs while assisting with strategic planning for the center. Prior to her career at Duke, she worked with the Finance and Administration team at George Washington University's School of Business. She spent three years working in higher education and interning at various political think tanks in Washington, DC before moving back to her hometown of Durham. Meg's studies in International Relations & Political Science, and focus on East Asian Studies at North Carolina State University, demonstrate her dedication to gaining a deeper understanding of political dynamics and international relations.



QUAZHA NETTLES
ADMINISTRATIVE &
COMMUNICATION ASSISTANT

Quazha's primary responsibilities include offering support and assistance to the director and assistant director as well as the development and administration of the Center's core programs and events. Nettles joined Duke as a communications intern for International Development within Sanford



Sanford School of Public Policy as part of the Duke-North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Internship program. The program provides NCCU students and recent graduates with hands-on experience in communications at Duke.

In May 2022, she earned a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication with a concentration in Journalism from NCCU. During her undergraduate studies, she joined the NCCU Campus Echo as chief writer and worked in the NCCU Television Studio.

Programs

POLIS DISTINGUISHED FELLOWS

The Polis Distinguished Fellows Program brings accomplished political practitioners, public servants, and organizers to campus to engage with our community and to dedicate some portion of their time to a project that promises an innovative solution to a problem of contemporary politics and that involves students in the process.

The program honors extraordinary leadership in politics and public service. Fellows are prominent figures who bring expertise and experience from their roles as practitioners in politics and governance, campaigns, activism, journalism, media, etc.



Polis Student Committee member Arjun Mahesh meets Polis Distinguished Fellow Reggie Love during a book signing.

MEET THE 2023-2024 FELLOW: JOHN HARWOOD

For more than three decades, John Harwood (Duke '78) has covered the White House, Congress, national politics and the economy for America's most prestigious news organizations. He has interviewed every president from George H.W. Bush to Joe Biden and received an Emmy nomination for his hour-long live CNBC town hall with President Barack Obama.



BEDEVILED: A PODCAST ABOUT AMERICAN DEMOCRACY FROM DUKE UNIVERSITY



John Harwood interviews Joe Biden for ProPublica and the 1st episode of the Bedeviled podcast.

In *Bedeviled*, John Harwood interviews politicians and voters, academics and activists about the 21st century divisions imperiling our national experiment in self-government. *Bedeviled* guests include President Joe Biden, Representative Liz Cheney, former White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson, and Stanford Law Professor Nate Persily.

PROJECT CITIZEN

79 FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS
17 STUDENT LEADERS
3 DAYS IN DURHAM
3 DAYS IN D.C.

This year, Polis co-sponsored “Project Citizen” for a second time. Project Citizen is an experiential orientation program that gives first-year Duke students the skills to be informed, active, and compassionate citizens within Duke campus and our local, national, and global communities.



Incoming first-year students exploring their new home



Students in front of the United States Capitol Building

With a special focus on discourse, finding common ground, and gaining exposure to different systems of change, this project helps students answer the question, “What does it mean to be a model citizen?”

Programming included an alumni panel featuring Sofia Girvin (PPS '22), John Harwood ('78), Jasmine Masand (MPP '21), Arturo Reyes (PPS '18), and Jaquell Sneed-Adams (MPP '23)



Students also participated in an immersive and collaborative debate hosted by Braver Angels, ACTA and BridgeUSA to foster ideological diversity and civil discourse on college campuses.

RHIANNON CAMARILLO ('26)
Orientation Leader

“During orientation, Project Citizen had the unique opportunity to visit Washington, D.C., where we explored the question: “What does it mean to be a good citizen?” We engaged in discussions with journalists, policymakers, and notable alumni during panels at the Duke in D.C. office, and toured D.C. landmarks including the Capitol building.



This trip not only fostered learning among the PCitizen project team, but also cultivated lasting friendships within my cohort of first-years. The POLIS faculty and this year's Project Citizen project directors created both an inclusive and vibrant environment for both students and orientation leaders to grow and learn. Their exceptional programming enabled me to form profound mentorships with students, which have extended far beyond the one-week program. I continue to offer guidance and support to my cohort, and through Project Citizen, I've discovered the strong support network that exists in POLIS and the PCitizen community.”





POLIS STUDENT COMMITTEE



Executive Board Members Ranjan Jindal and Julia Young speak to the PSC before the watch party begins

206
Members

The PSC is a community of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at Duke University who share an interest in politics, democracy, and public service.

4
Executive
Board Officers

The PSC aims to promote greater understanding of—and engagement with—politics at the local, state, national, and global levels. PSC members are official members of the Polis community who participate in the center’s events and activities, gain access to special perks and unique opportunities, and play a valuable role in helping to shape Polis’s programs.

AY23-24 ACTIVITIES

Early Voting Kickoff
Collaboration with Duke
Votes

Democracy Day

Primary Election Watch
Party

Facilitated events and
meetings with Polis
Distinguished Fellows
Huma Abedin, John
Harwood, Reggie Love, &
Congressman David
Price

Dinner with Incoming
Polis Director Abdullah
Antepli



Co-Presidents of the Polis Student Committee Noah Vaughn and Annaleise Linkenhoker speak at a Polis event with Huma Abedin and Reggie Love



Students posing for a picture during Democracy Day

PSC EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

NOAH VAUGHN CO-PRESIDENT - GRADUATE

"I can attest to the effect that Polis events can have on student life. In my experience, listening to famous speakers and politicians often removes me from the bubble that student life can become. It reminds me of why I am pursuing higher education in the first place, and what the larger picture after graduation looks like."

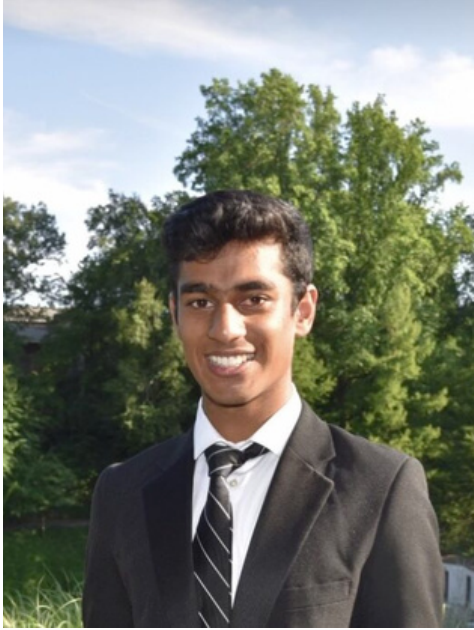
Noah is a dual-degree Master of Public Policy and Master of Divinity student from Red Oak, Texas. He bridges policy and religion in hopes of healing many realms of American life; such as attitudes toward domestic politics, drug policy and prison reform, and foreign affairs centered on ethical national security.



ANNALEISE LINKENHOKER CO-PRESIDENT - UNDERGRADUATE

"It's been an honor and a pleasure to serve as part of the inaugural PSC Exec Board. Community and unity makes us stronger as a university community and a country, and I am excited for the PSC to continue creating spaces for students to come together. I am looking forward to the PSC's continued progress in embracing forward-thinking ideas and excellence in policy and politics grounded in integrity and shared values."

Annaleise is from Bradenton, Florida and is majoring in Public Policy and minoring in Psychology. Her academic interests include political strategy, representation in government, political theory, Florida politics, and the US electoral system.



RANJAN JINDAL
VICE PRESIDENT OF EVENTS

“I have really enjoyed my time on the PSC executive board this year. It was really rewarding getting to meet some of the speakers we had — John Harwood and Reggie Love in particular — and both of their career paths really align with what I want to do. I hope to continue working with POLIS in whatever capacity is available because it is a really important group here at Duke.”

Ranjan is from Greenville, S.C., and is pursuing a double major in economics and public policy with a minor in journalism and media. He was also unanimously elected Chronicle sports editor of Vol. 120.

JULIA YOUNG
SECRETARY

“Acting as secretary on the PSC exec board has been an invaluable experience. Through my time with the PSC, I have not only gained experience in event planning, organization, and recruitment - I have also had the privilege to participate in remarkable public policy-related opportunities, such as dining with John Harwood, engaging in discussions with Huma Abedin and Reggie Love, and numerous interactions with passionate, like-minded members of the PSC general body. ”



Julia is from Durham, North Carolina and is pursuing a major in Political Science with a minor in Computer Science at Duke University. She is interested in ethics, political science, economics, and philosophy.

Events

SUMMARY

AUGUST

Project Citizen

SEPTEMBER

Polis Student Committee 2023 Kickoff

2023 Sexual and Gender Minority Wellness Symposium

Braver Angels Debate: Should the U.S. Government Implement
Reparations for Historic Racial Injustices?

Durham City Council Candidate Forum and Mixer

OCTOBER

Legislating Gun Policy with Former Congressman Dave Trott (L'85)

The 2024 Election, One Year Out

NOVEMBER

Combating Hate & Bias Conference

Critical (Legal) Collective Inaugural Convening

Braver Angels Debate: Will AI Provide More
Benefit Than Harm to Humanity?



Students play political trivia during Project Citizen

FEBRUARY

Duke Votes x PSC Pizza & Trivia Night

Javier Zamora: Poet, Activist, Author of *Solito*

An Evening with Polis Distinguished Fellows Huma Abedin & Reggie Love

Black Policy Conference - Policy in Living Color

MARCH

Democracy Day

Primary Election Watch Party with the PSC

Can the Constitution Bring Americans Together: A

Conversation with Egan Visiting Professor Yuval Levin

APRIL

Meet the Incoming Director of Polis: Professor Abdullah Antepli

MAY

NC Institute of Political Leadership Graduation Ceremony &

Alumni Event

JUNE

Healing Politics Campaign School for Nurses & Midwives



Yadira Paz-Martinez and Sofia Cava moderate a conversation with poet and activist Javier Zamora

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

THE 2024 ELECTION, ONE YEAR OUT

October 30



Polis: Center for Politics and the Duke Triangle Alumni Chapter jointly hosted The 2024 Election: One Year Out, a conversation moderated by Duke alumni and POLIS Distinguished Fellow John Harwood ('78) featuring two leading national political strategists: Sarah Longwell, President and CEO of Longwell Partners and Publisher of The Bulwark, and Michael Podhorzer, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress and former political director of the AFL-CIO.



The event centered on the direction of President Biden and former President Trump's campaigns, the role of the media in democratic systems, and the implications of this election for the future of American democracy.

COMBATING HATE AND BIAS CONFERENCE

November 6-7

In a two-day conference, Polis: Center for Politics considered the various ways that hate, and bias influence the lives and experiences of communities in North Carolina, the United States, and around the world. The conversations paid particular attention to how numerous forms of hate and bias—including anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim, anti-LGBTQ+, anti-women, and more—shape politics.

Associate Vice President/Associate Vice Provost for Community Engaged Research and Teaching and Associate Professor of the Practice of Interfaith Relations at the Duke Divinity School and the Sanford School of Public Policy Abdullah Antepi served as the conference chair. In his opening remarks, he argued that “we cannot combat hate with the weather of the day, you have to understand the seasons of hate and its global manifestations.”



The conference featured 6 panels on hate, bias, and racism in the state, local, and national level; as well as combating religious oppression, LGBTQ+ discrimination, sexism and misogyny, and the changemakers that are promoting unity and fostering transformative conversation across differences.

The conference also included 3 keynote events featuring Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League; New York Times Columnist and Sanford School of Public Policy Professor Frank Bruni; and a joint conversation between Ana Navarro, GOP Strategist, Political Contributor to CNN and Telemundo, and Co-Host of ABC's The View and Bakari Sellers, CNN Political Analyst & Former Representative from South Carolina.



AN EVENING WITH POLIS DISTINGUISHED FELLOWS HUMA ABEDIN & REGGIE LOVE

February 21



Polis: Center for Politics hosted Polis Distinguished Fellows Huma Abedin and Reggie Love (Duke '05) to discuss their respective memoirs, *Both/And* and *Power Forward*. The evening focused on the Distinguished Fellows' pathways to politics and how they became confidantes for the prolific political figures of former President Obama and Hillary Clinton, respectively. The two reflected on their careers in politics and public service, offered advice for being a

valued team member, and shared tips for cultivating trust in a fraught political landscape.



From left to right: Ranjan Jindal, Reggie Love, Deondra Rose, Huma Abedin, & Julia Young

HEALING POLITICS CAMPAIGN SCHOOL FOR NURSES & MIDWIVES

June 5-8



Polis was the proud host for the 2nd annual Healing Politics Campaign School. Healing Politics serves to inspire and train nurses and midwives from across the country to run for elected office. The Campaign School consisted of four days of workshops and lectures focused on campaign development, communications and media strategy, and finance and fundraising fundamentals.

Healing Politics was co-founded by Kimberly Gordon and Lisa Summers to bolster civic engagement

and reduce barriers to political participation for medical professionals. This initiative resonated with Sanford Professor's Nick Carnes and Deondra Rose, who both work to foster inclusivity within public policy. Professor Deondra Rose, Director of Polis, spoke at the opening reception for the Campaign School, highlighting the importance of healthcare representation in Congress to ensure all voices are heard in the democratic process.

Participants were also able to meet with current nurse legislators, Senator Gale Adcock (NC-D) and Senator Kristin Roers (ND-R). During a panel discussion they argued that those from all backgrounds should run for office and stressed the need for nurses' voices to be heard in public policy. Senator Gale Adcock said, "Nobody knows our story like we do. Nobody can tell our story like we do."



Research & News

NOTABLE RESEARCH

A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE 2024 REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY DEBATE

Polis Student Committee member Jordan Phillips ('26) attended the January 10th Republican Presidential Primary debate between Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis. She wrote a reflection for Polis detailing her thoughts on the debate, campaign messaging, intra-party opposition, and political polarization.

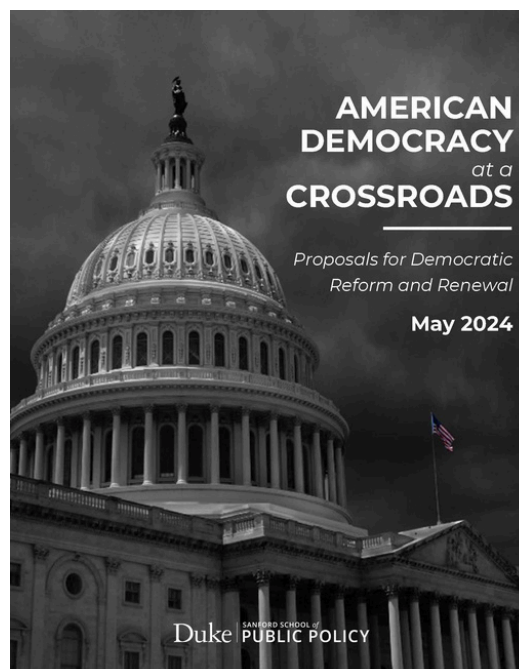


"When we ignore the diversity of ideology within political parties, even if that diversity is minuscule, we ignore a nuanced component of the solution to polarization. A tightly contested presidential race holds candidates accountable to adjust in the face of nuance. Without a need to

appeal to an undecided voter within a party, this nuance becomes a lost art" - Jordan Phillips

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AT A CROSSROADS: PROPOSALS FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND RENEWAL

The proposals in this report were authored by ten graduate and undergraduate students participating in Associate Professor of the Practice Asher Hildebrand's "American Democracy at a Crossroads" (PUBPOL590S), a seminar at Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, during the Spring 2024 semester.



The proposals attempt to answer the question, "how can we defend the imperfect democracy we have against the serious threats it faces, while also rebuilding and renewing it to move it closer to perfection?" In the Foreword, Professor Hildebrand states that the report "represents the culmination of the seminar's work: 10 distinct proposals for democratic reform and renewal, authored by students whose generation's commitment to democracy will determine our future."



2024 TERRY SANFORD LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNER CHLOE NGUYEN

Chloe Nguyen (PPS '24) is one of two winners of the 2024 Terry Sanford Leadership Award for her work to address political polarization. With Polis, she developed a report and pilot program, "A Call for Leadership: Political Polarization and Civil Discourse at Duke University," where she examines how Duke University can utilize social psychology research to improve civil discourse and political polarization amongst the student body.



She also worked with Braver Angels and Polis to hold debates on controversial topics amongst the campus community to bridge partisan divides, and strengthen democracy.

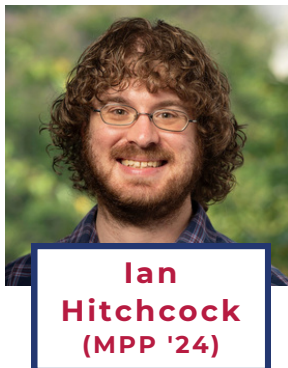
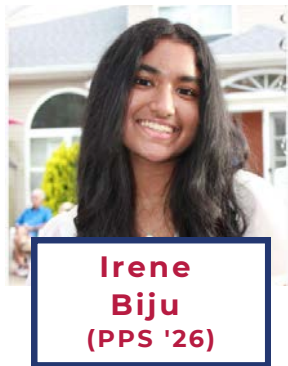


Source: Sanford School of Public Policy

DUKE POLITICAL HISTORY PROJECT

Since its founding, Duke University has played a central role in the development of generations of student-citizens, providing access to educational credentials that open the doors to social, economic, and political opportunity. Moreover, many of Duke's students have actively engaged in student politics and activism during their time on campus. As part of a larger investigation of Duke's institutional history that grapples with the University's relationship with slavery and its posture toward racial justice, this project engaged a team of undergraduate and graduate students to help examine the movement of historically underrepresented students into formal, campus-wide leadership positions at Duke.

Research Fellows



MEDIUM BLOG

Polis showcases student op-ed pieces from Professor Deondra Rose's Spring '22 and '23 Political Analysis for Policymaking (PUBPOL301) class on Medium. Check out valuable student insights at medium.com/@dukepolis

118 STUDENT OP-EDS TOP POLICY ISSUES:

Education Policy
Social Policy
Gender, Race, and Identity
Democracy & Governance
Healthcare & Health Policy

MOST READ OP-EDS OF AY23-24



**PHOEBE DUCOTE
(PPS '25)**

"Let Kids Play: Schools Need to Keep Recess as Part of the School Day"

93
READS



**CLAIRE HELGERSON
(PPS '25)**

"In Post-Roe America, Comprehensive Sex Education is Necessary to Prevent Teen Pregnancy"

51
READS



**ELINA MURARKA
(PPS '25)**

"America: The Home of the Brave, the Land of the Uninsured"

50
READS

Acknowledgements



Polis Student Committee Members and Sanford faculty and staff with Polis Distinguished Fellows Huma Abedin and Reggie Love.

The Polis team would like to thank our supporters including (but not limited to) the Polis Distinguished Fellows, our Polis Student Committee and Executive Board Officers, student assistants Rosa Golchin and Sophie Yost, our Steering Committee, the Duke in DC team, Polis's generous supporters and donors, the Sanford School of Public Policy, and Duke University.

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