



### Announcements:

- Nine new civic engagement financial awards for students in 2023-2024
- RFP for school districts to examine dual enrollment models to be released in March 2023
- IOP awarded \$1 million operating endowment for its policy work in Southwestern Pennsylvania
- Chancellor Award for Community Engagement presented to Tasha Peacock, IOP Assistant Director of Student Programming and Community Outreach



*Dr. Arthur C. Brooks - Harvard Professor, Bestselling Author, and The Atlantic Columnist - speaks with students during the September 2022 All Angles program. [Read more on PittWire.](#)*

## **Tackling Regional, State, and National Policy Challenges Presenting Thought-Provoking Programs on Key Issues of the Day & Advancing Student Civic Engagement Opportunities**

Welcome to the Institute of Politics' newsletter. We created this semi-annual newsletter to provide you with a more frequent opportunity to hear and learn about our current and emerging work. Over the last several years, the IOP has been building upon our highly regarded programming in regional policy development, student civic engagement initiatives through the Elsie Hillman Civic Forum, and distinguished public educational programs through the Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy. Each set of programs complements the others to reinforce our vision of delivering enlightened public policy that promotes the vitality of Western Pennsylvania.

We aim to have positive impact toward achieving five primary goals:

- 1) Promote regional economic vitality and mobility,
- 2) Support healthy and resilient communities,
- 3) Preserve and strengthen our democracy,
- 4) Foster effective and responsive government, and
- 5) Develop the next generation of civic leaders.

The strengths of the Institute continue to include our staying power on politically complex issues, our nonpartisan and interdisciplinary approach, and the creation and stewardship of strategic regional collaborations between elected officials, civic leaders, and academic content-experts. It is a privilege to work with such a broad array of dedicated leaders who offer their expertise, networks, and knowledge to identify, inform, and implement the IOP programs.

We hope you enjoy keeping up to date with the many activities of the IOP, and we encourage you to learn more about each of our initiatives by visiting our website and contacting us with your suggestions and questions.

## 2023 Policy Initiatives

Every year, the Institute of Politics considers how we can offer the most value to our region. We solicit input and involvement from our Board of Fellows, policy committee members, elected officials and public sector stakeholders, and academic leadership to determine the policy topics we will tackle within the year. Our initiatives range from long-to-short term. This year, we plan to:



- Finalize the research initiative, *Creating a Pathway to Reduce Racial Disparities in the Allegheny County Criminal Justice System*.
- Move forward with the implementation of recommendations from the IOP *Preparing for Tomorrow* report on municipal resiliency.
- Support statewide efforts towards personalized learning in K-12 education.
- Spearhead a research initiative on regional best practices to increase equitable accessibility to dual enrollment and how it is financed.
- Offer educational programming on the public health crisis of gun violence facing our nation's children.
- Offer analysis and education on broadband sustainability issues.
- Explore family caregiving policy to support the elderly, people with disabilities, and individuals with substance use disorder.
- Examine comprehensive models that can build a thriving workforce in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

**Upcoming Educational Forums:**

- **March 20** - [The Thornburgh Family Lecture on Disability Law & Policy](#) featuring [Katie Booth](#) discussion on [The Invention of Miracles: Language, Power, and Alexander Graham Bell's Quest to End Deafness](#) ([Open Registration](#)).
- **March 27** - [Advancing College and Career Readiness in Pennsylvania through Equitable Dual Enrollment Policy, Practice, and Research](#) ([Open Registration](#)).
- **April 3** - [All Angles - Managing the U.S. Relationship with China to Achieve Global Goals](#) ([Students Only](#)).
- **April 4** - [Pitt Cyber Founding Director David Hickton](#) sits with former Attorney General [Eric Holder](#) to discuss his book, [Our Unfinished March](#) ([Open Registration](#)).
- **April 10** - [Preserving Democracy](#) featuring [David Thornburgh](#) discussion on [Repealing Closed Primaries: A Path to Better Government in Pennsylvania](#) ([Open Registration](#)).
- **April 18** - [Protecting our Children from the Plague of Gun Violence](#) ([Open Registration](#)).

## Congratulations



### Community Engagement Chancellor's Staff Award

Congratulations to Tasha Peacock, the IOP's Assistant Director of Student Programs and Community Outreach. The award recognizes team members who have dedicated themselves to making their community a better place to live and to improving the quality of life for others. There is no doubt that Tasha exemplifies the spirit of this award!

[Learn More](#)

### 2022 Coleman Awards

John R. McGinley, Jr., Chair of Eckert Seamans' Board of Directors and Karen Farmer White, Education Consultant and Chair of the Seton Hill University Board of Trustees, were selected as recipients of the 2022 Coleman Award for Excellence in Community Service. Nominations for 2023 open in June 2023.

[Meet the Awardees](#)





## 2022 Dykstra Award

Matthew Moore is a Politics and Philosophy major who has served on the Pitt Student Government Board. He interned with State Representative Dan Deasey on the West End in the IOP Internship & Seminar course, where he worked with constituents on navigating community concerns. Matthew's ultimate goal is to become a prosecutor in a district attorney's office.

## Dick Thornburgh Forum Awards to Pitt Law Students

### Dick Thornburgh Prize for Legal Service Award:

Katherine Andrews (2022)

### J. Evans Rose, Jr. Prize for Government Service Award:

Alexander Dettwyler (2022)

Kaleigh Dryden (2023)

Click [here](#) to learn more about all of our prestigious awards and view past recipients.



*Pictured: Katherine Andrews (top), Alexander Dettwyler (bottom left), Kaleigh Dryden (bottom right).*

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**Promoting Regional Economic Mobility**

## Pathways to Opportunity:

EXPANDING AND ALIGNING COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS PROGRAMS IN PENNSYLVANIA

By: Briana Mihok  
Assistant Director for Policy Programs, Institute of Politics

Alex Perry  
Policy Advisor, Foresight Law + Policy and Coordinator, College in High School Alliance  
with contributions from Rachel Romac, policy intern, Institute of Politics



Over the course of 2021, the IOP Taskforce on Equity in Dual Enrollment and Pre-Apprenticeship Programming released its report, *Pathways to Opportunity*. In December 2022, the IOP was awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Benedum Foundation to launch an examination of dual enrollment programming in three school districts to inform the Commonwealth on best practices such as student and family engagement, teacher credentialing, partnerships with higher education, student outcomes, and financial models. The goal of this project is to increase equitable accessibility to these programs. The RFP will be launched on March 27 during our Advancing College and Career Readiness in Pennsylvania through Equitable Dual Enrollment Policy, Practice, and Research program.

[Download the Report](#)

## Marshaling Regional Assets to Build Shared Opportunities for Growth

The University of Pittsburgh's, Institute of Politics hosted the 25th Annual Elected Officials Retreat this past December! Elected officials from all levels of government, and from both sides of the aisle joined us to explore ways to marshal regional assets to build shared opportunities for growth.

[Program Recap](#)



*State Representative Jason Ortity (R-Allegheny/Washington) discusses preparing students for the future, holding up Butler Area School District's Playbook for college and career readiness. 2022 IOP Elected Officials Retreat*

[Supporting Healthy and Resilient Communities](#)



For more than six years, the IOP — in partnership with Allegheny County and the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania— has worked to advance criminal justice reform in Allegheny County. The overarching goal is to improve Allegheny County's criminal justice system so that it is fairer and less costly, without compromising public safety.

The IOP is in the final stages of an extensive mixed-method research and engagement initiative called, ***“Creating a Pathway to Reduce Racial Disparities in the Allegheny County Criminal Justice System”***. This work is being conducted in partnership with The RAND Corporation and RTI International. The project design includes a holistic approach to understanding the policies, practices, and outcomes at key decision-making points within the system that may drive racial disparities. The IOP will publish specific policy recommendations to support these goals in 2023.

### **The Dick Thornburgh Forum's American Experience Distinguished Lecture Series**

featured Congressman Mike Doyle. The discussion focused on infrastructure as an essential investment in our future and how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act aims to support much needed improvements in our communities while also creating family sustaining jobs.

We would like to extend a congratulations to Congressman Doyle on his retirement from the U.S. House of Representatives and thank him for his continued involvement in the IOP Board of Fellows and the Elsie Hillman Civic Forum's National Advisory Council.



[View Video](#)

## **Preserving and Strengthening Democracy**

### **A Life Well Lived**

In addition to several lectures in 2022, on October 15 the Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy and the Office of the Chancellor hosted **A Celebration of the Life and Legacy of Dick Thornburgh: Learning from a Life Well Lived.**

This program featured keynote speaker Andrew Card, who formerly served as Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush, and as the U.S. Secretary of Transportation followed by a panel of

six respected leaders who knew Dick Thornburgh. These guests shared recollections of Dick's accomplishments, how he accomplished them, and how his legacy continues to impact our society. The event was moderated by David Thornburgh whose own career has been devoted to good governance.



[Watch the Celebration](#)



[Learn More](#)

## Preserving Democracy, the Rule of Law and American Values

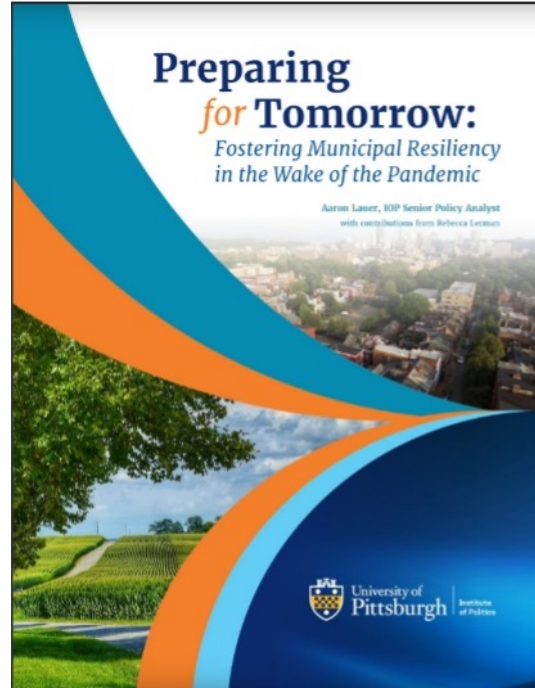
The Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy launched an educational program titled, *Preserving Democracy, the Rule of Law and American Values*. The program is intended to help both policymakers and interested citizens, whatever their positions or political leanings, to better understand the important governance issues that seem to be arising all too frequently.

Join us on April 10 to hear from David Thornburgh about how an open primary system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania would create a more representative election process while also diminishing the heightened polarization that currently threatens civility and our democracy.

## Foster Effective and Responsive Government

The IOP's Fiscal Policy & Governance Committee published the Preparing for Tomorrow report that provides specific recommendations to improve municipal resiliency. Over the course of 2023, the IOP will be working with individual members of the committee to move these recommendations forward.

[Download the Report](#)



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The IOP is following up on a 2017 examination of voluntary municipal disincorporation. This tool allows a struggling municipality to voluntarily dissolve into the county in which it is located. The county would then provide municipal services to the former municipality in exchange for a tax or fee. The theory is that efficient and effective services can be delivered by the county by stretching revenue with economies of scale and by removing administrative redundancies. Disincorporation does not currently exist in Pennsylvania except under the newly revised Act 47 legislation pertaining to distressed municipalities. However, it is an available tool in 38 states, including the neighboring states of Maryland, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia.

[Download the Report](#)

## Developing the Next Generation of Civic Leaders and Engaging with the Community

### Marc Cherna Fellowship

The Cherna Fellows program is an exclusive opportunity for students pursuing graduate degrees in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work. Jointly administered by the University's School of Social Work and the Institute of Politics, the Cherna Fellow will embark on policy-related experiential learning opportunities within the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and will receive a financial award of over \$10,000. The deadline to apply is **March 1,**



2023, and for more information about the program visit our [website](#).



## IOP Launches James G. Fulton Political Internship Award

The University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Politics is building upon its long-standing and very successful **IOP Internship and Seminar Program** by offering students annual internship financial awards through the James G. Fulton Political Internship Fund. James Fulton was an American politician from Dormont, PA and served as a member of the US. House of Representatives from 1945-1971. These awards will support eight students who are from Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Westmoreland, Butler, and/or Washington counties.

The deadline to apply is **April 12, 2023**. For information regarding the **IOP Internship and Seminar Program** please visit our [website](#).



## Legislator for a Day

The Legislator for a Day program provides students with the unique opportunity to "shadow" a member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly in Harrisburg. Students will learn more about PA politics, career paths, and network with high level staffers. We received 65 applications, which is record-breaking for the IOP, from students with major interests in business, political science, engineering, medicine, urban studies, and public safety, to name a few. For more information, please click [here](#).

## 25 Civic Leaders Mentor Pitt Students

The **Never a Spectator Civic Engagement Forum** is a unique opportunity for Pitt students to network with some of the region's most prominent leaders, including leaders from government and politics, foundation executives, and nonprofit and business leaders. We had leaders from Highmark, the City of Pittsburgh, Urban League of Pittsburgh, Hello Neighbor, and the Pennsylvania House of Representatives just to name a few. The keynote speaker was Leah Lizarondo, who is the former CEO and Co-Founder of 412 Food Rescue, a social enterprise with a technology, logistics and civic engagement model that aims to fight hunger and promote sustainability. Please click [here](#) for more information.



*Halen Sav, IOP Policy Analyst discusses her career development in government with Elsie Hillman Honors Scholar Kim Le, Pitt Junior and Nordenberg Scholar.*



## ACE Working with Homeless Children's Fund

The Ambassadors for Civic Engagement (ACE) Fellowship provides an opportunity for graduate students to apply their education and skills to contribute to and improve the quality of life of people living in the Pittsburgh region through a long-term experiential fellowship with a community partner that works in public policy, governance, community organizing and activism, or philanthropy. This year, two graduate students are working for the Homeless Children's Education Fund (HCEF) to help identify potential policy solutions regarding homelessness and design and convene a legislative luncheon for key public officials. For more information please click [here](#).

## Elsie Honors Scholars Serve 12 Community Based Organizations

This year's Elsie Hillman Honors Scholars are working on a range of issues such as equity in education, women's health and reproductive rights, food security, healthcare disparities, access to mental health for refugees and immigrants, and workforce needs. Community partners include: Catholic Charities, Auberle, National Council of Jewish Women, Adagio Health, Remake Learning, Women for a Healthy Environment, Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Allegheny County DHS, Jewish Family & Community Services, Pittsburgh Promise, City of Pittsburgh's Department of Innovation, and the Consortium for Public Education. For more information please click [here](#).



*Ritika Segireddy from the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences worked with community partner, Adagio Health.*

## Student Application Deadlines:

- **March 1** - [Marc Cherna Fellowship](#)
- **March 9** - [Dick Thornburgh Forum Disability Service Award](#)
- **March 13** - [Undergraduate Student Summer Fellowship Program](#)
- **April 12** - [IOP Internship & Seminar James G. Fulton Award](#)
- **April 12** - [Elsie Honors Scholars](#)
- **April 14** - [Ambassadors for Civic Engagement \(ACE\) Fellowship](#)

## IOP in the News

- [Allegheny County received additional funding to continue its Safety and Justice Challenge project.](#)
- [Pitt report on improving education post-pandemic says personalized, learner-centered approach is key.](#)
- [All Angles discussion series tackles climate change](#)
- [Affordable Housing Is Largely 'Out Of Reach' For Low-Income Pennsylvanians](#)
- [IOP Report: K-12 Schools Need to Change for Success in Post-Pandemic World](#)

## Learn More

[Institute of Politics](#)

[Elsie Hillman Civic Forum](#)

[The Dick Thornburgh Forum for Law & Public Policy](#)