



The
University
of Akron

Ray C. Bliss
Institute of
Applied Politics



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



HISTORY AND MISSION STATEMENT

Ray C. Bliss, who served as Republican National Committee Chair from 1965-1969 and a UA trustee for nine and a half years, endowed the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied (Bliss Institute) at the University of Akron in 1986. The Bliss Institute is charged with promoting civic knowledge and political participation. Since its founding, the Bliss Institute has served as a bipartisan research, teaching, and service institute dedicated to increasing understanding of the political process with emphasis on political parties, electoral politics, grassroots activity, civility, and ethics. The Bliss Institute implements its mission through hands-on experiential learning, traditional coursework, internships, events, community programming, and research.



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



When I graduated from The University of Akron with an MA in Political Science and a Bliss Institute Certificate of Applied Politics in 1994, returning as director of the Bliss Institute was the farthest thing from my mind. Yet when I learned that the position was open, I simply could not resist applying – and when invited, returning to the Institute and to the graduate program that put my feet on the path toward a career in academia. Few in my immediate and extended family have earned a bachelor's degree, let alone an MA or Ph.D. As I have said repeatedly at my interview and at various events over the past year, I know that I would not have gone on to earn a doctorate if I had not received a funded graduate assistantship from the Bliss Institute all those years ago. The mentoring and support I received, along with the opportunity to work directly alongside my professors as they taught classes, published research, and educated the public, made all the difference. An important milestone in my first year back at UA occurred when Senator Vernon Sykes introduced me as the new director to his colleagues in the Ohio Senate. In addition to welcoming me, Senator Sykes charged me with upholding the proud legacy of the Bliss Institute established by my predecessor and former advisor, Director Emeritus John C. Green. Going forward, rest assured I will make every effort to meet Senator Syke's charge. As an alumna, preserving this legacy is personally important to me – in no small part because when I see our students, I cannot help but see myself.

Over the past 35 years, the Bliss Institute's focus on applied politics has led to curriculum and programming intended to not only educate the public, but to prepare students for public service professions that sustain the mechanisms of democratic governance. These include careers in political parties, electoral politics, political campaigns, government relations, and legislatures. While I was one of the few Bliss Institute students who went on to pursue a doctorate rather than a career in public service, my first role models at UA also fundamentally shaped my career. Unlike many political scientists, I saw no need to eschew an applied interest in the health of American democracy in favor of more traditional, objective scholarly work. Given the Bliss Institute's imprint on my approach to academia, I always found ways to incorporate both traditional and applied activities into my research agenda. Over the course of my career, I have undertaken traditional research about political participation, partisan polarization, civility, and deliberation. At the same time, I have been committed to applied teaching and research focused on promoting public-spirited citizenship and increasing students' and average people's civic and political participation. During my interview, I explained how I would use this expertise to supplement the Bliss Institute's legacy programming focused on public service careers with an additional layer of citizen-focused initiatives. I believe these will help the Institute continue to fulfill its mission to sustain American democracy by promoting civic and political participation in an era of increasing partisan polarization.

Several of these new initiatives are underway. In collaboration with the Department of Political Science, the Institute is developing a new degree focused on cultivating public-spirited citizens capable of sustaining democracy. New courses being developed for this degree include "Deliberation and Political Disagreement" and "Foundations of Civic Engagement." This effort also includes embedding cutting-edge experiential civic learning into existing courses. For example, our funded graduate students will serve as trained moderators for deliberative discussion sessions in introductory U.S. government and world politics courses, where they will grade undergraduate students on their ability to demonstrate civility and reason-giving as they develop solutions to controversial political issues. I look forward to working with my colleagues at the Bliss Institute to implement these and other exciting new projects in the upcoming year.

Yet as the account of activities undertaken in my inaugural year detailed below reveal – I stepped into the directorship of a thriving, active Institute. I could not have undertaken so much, while also making plans to add a new layer of citizenship-focused initiatives to the Bliss Institute's portfolio, without the enthusiastic support of the faculty, staff, and colleagues affiliated with the Bliss Institute. I would be remiss without thanking and acknowledging the support and contributions of the following people:

- **Kim Haverkamp, Manager of Marketing & Events;**
- **Dr. Matt Akers, Special Assistant to the President for Government Relations & Associate Director;**
- **Dr. David Cohen, Professor of Political Science, Director of the Applied Politics Program, & Bliss Institute Fellow;**
- **Dr. Nancy Marion Chair & Professor of Political Science, Internship Coordinator & Bliss Institute Fellow;**
- **Dr. Stephen Brooks, Professor Emeritus of Political Science & Associate Director Emeritus; and**
- **Dr. John C. Green, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Political Science & Director Emeritus**





EVENTS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Much of the Bliss Institute’s mission is accomplished by sponsoring events and public programming.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND PRESENTATIONS CELEBRATING PUBLIC SERVICE

Honorary Certificate in Applied Politics

The Bliss Institute presented an honorary Certificate in Applied Politics to Republican Janet Weir Creighton and Democrat Mary Ellen Withrow in recognition of their outstanding service to the democratic process at an award ceremony held in Columbus. They also received a proclamation from the Ohio House of Representatives, presented by Representative Tavia Galonski, and the Ohio Senate, presented by Senator Vernon Sykes.



From left to right: Director Cherie Strachan, Mary Ellen Withrow, Janet Weir Creighton, and Associate Director Emeritus Stephen Brooks.

Creighton is president of the Stark County Commissioners and brings the county more than 35 years of elected experience. From January 2008 until January 2009, she was Deputy Assistant to the President of the United States and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs in Washington, D.C., where she was the direct liaison between the president and officials in all cities, counties, and states. Creighton also served as the first female mayor of the City of Canton (2004-2007), Stark County Auditor (1992-2003) and Stark County Recorder (1985-1991).

Withrow was confirmed unanimously by the Senate to be the 40th treasurer of the United States on February 10 and sworn into office March 1, 1994. She is the first person to have held the post of treasurer at all three levels of government – local, state, and national. She was elected treasurer of her native Marion County, Ohio, in 1976 and 1980. She was elected as an Ohio state treasurer in 1982 and re-elected in 1986 and 1990. Withrow’s innovative programs, management efficiencies and record earnings for Ohio earned her nationwide recognition.

The Bliss Institute supported a wide array of additional community focused events and programming.

Interview and Reception with John Roy Price

Price, the author of *The Last Liberal Republican: An Insider’s Perspective on Nixon’s Surprising Social Policy*, was interviewed by Director Emeritus John C. Green. Mr. Price, retired banking and finance executive, served as senior domestic policy advisor for former President Richard Nixon. The interview was preceded by a reception featuring an archival display of recently donated material related to Ray. C. Bliss. The event was open to community members along with alumni, students, staff, and faculty. (September 20, 2022)



From left to right: Director Emeritus John C. Green and John Roy Price.





Screening of Geraldine Ferraro: Paving the Way by the National First Ladies Library

Director J. Cherie Strachan participated in an online discussion of this documentary about Geraldine Ferraro's groundbreaking career. (November 8, 2022)

Akron Press Club Presents Jerry Austin

The Bliss Institute co-sponsored a luncheon presentation by longtime political consultant Jerry Austin. Austin was schooled in Cleveland politics in the late 1960s, eventually working for prominent politicians like President Jimmy Carter, Ohio Governor Richard Celeste, presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, and Senator Carol Moseley Braun. Austin is also the author of *True Tales from the Campaign Trail*, *True Tales from the Campaign, Volume II* and *True Tales from the Campaign Trail, Volume III* published by University of Akron Press. (January 24, 2023)

Hudson Library Interview with Richard Haas

On behalf of Hudson Library, Associate Director Matt Akers interviewed Dr. Richard Haas about his new book, *The Bill of Obligations, The Ten Habits of Good Citizen*. After a long career as a diplomat and policymaker, Haas is now president of the Council on Foreign Relations, the preeminent independent, nonpartisan organization in the United States dedicated to the study of American foreign policy. (February 13, 2023)

Screening of Punch 9 for Harold Washington

The Bliss Institute supported the Department of Philosophy's on-campus screening of a documentary about the campaign that elected Chicago's first African American mayor, followed by a Q&A session with film director Joe Winton. (February 28, 2023)

PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL POLITICS

Akron Decides Collaboration

In October 2022, Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan announced that he did not plan to run for re-election. The open seat attracted seven mayoral candidates, all Democrats who would vie for the party's nomination in the May 2nd primary election. Given the need to quickly cultivate civic and political engagement around this important decision, the Bliss Institute agreed to cosponsor a series of public opinion polls fielded by the Center for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR) along with several community partners, including the Akron Press Club, the Greater Akron Chamber, the Ohio Debate Commission, State and Federal Communication, the Akron NAACP, the Akron Beacon Journal, and Ideastream Public Media. The [Akron Decides](#) initiative included a benchmark poll released in February, a horserace poll released in April, and a post-election poll released in June.

This initiative resulted in a series of events designed to engage Akron voters in the electoral process. These included:

- **Akron Decides, Debating the Future:** Results from the benchmark poll were discussed by Akron NAACP President Judy Hill and Director Emeritus John Green at an Akron Press Club meeting. (February 27, 2023)
- **Akron Mayoral Debate:** The Bliss Institute supported a mayoral debate, featuring all seven candidates, co-sponsored by the Akron Press Club, Ideastream, the Akron Beacon Journal, and the Ohio Debate Commission by providing funding for public opinion polling that informed development of the debate questions. (March 2, 2023)
- **Akron Press Club Presents Poll Results and Shammas Malik:** The Bliss Institute supported a luncheon event featuring a discussion of post-election poll results between Director Emeritus John C. Green and prospective Akron mayor Shammas Malik by providing funding for public opinion polling. (May 15, 2023)





The poll results also resulted in considerable media coverage:

- [Crime, public safety and police reform are top concerns for Akron residents | Ideastream Public Media](#)
- [Key findings of Akron Decides community survey \(beaconjournal.com\)](#)
- [New Akron poll: Crime, Jayland Walker, and undecided voters dominate in Akron mayor's race | Ideastream Public Media](#)
- [Poll: Crime, Jayland Walker dominate public opinion in Akron mayor's race \(beaconjournal.com\)](#)
- [How the Beacon Journal is covering Akron's primary election for the community - Akron Beacon Journal](#)
- [What we know about the 2023 Akron mayor's race: See the latest poll results](#)
- [Too close to call: These 3 candidates are in a virtual tie in the Akron mayoral race](#)
- [Poll: There's a 3-way race for Akron mayor. Undecideds could make the difference](#)
- [New poll: Akron voters happy with results as women overwhelmingly elected Shammias Malik](#)
- [New poll: 60% of Akron voters disagree with grand jury decision in Jayland Walker case](#)
- [In their own words: Akron Decides survey respondents explain stances on protests, police](#)
- [By the numbers: A visual look at Akron Decides poll on Malik, police and protests](#)
- [Akron's presumptive next mayor Shammias Malik discusses optimism amid 'enormous' challenges](#)
- [Presumptive mayor Shammias Malik responds to voter survey on election results, issues](#)

Inclusiveness in Elections, A Project for Lebanon

The Bliss Institute collaborated with Global Ties Akron to host a roundtable discussion for Lebanese delegates interested in the effects of civility and polarization on electoral politics. Featured speakers included Director J. Cherie Strachan, Associate Director Emeritus Stephen Brooks, and Associate Director Matt Akers. (July 19, 2022)

Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce Candidate Conference and Leadership Reception

The Bliss Institute served as a premier sponsor for a community event bringing together hundreds of business executives, higher education leaders, elected officials, candidates, economic development professionals, and community stakeholders for an evening of networking and engagement. This year's event featured interviews with candidates running for U.S. House of Representatives, now Congresswoman Emilia Sykes and her opponent Madison Gesiotto Gilbert. (October 27, 2022)



Election Night Watch Party

In cooperation with the Office of Student Affairs, along with serveAkron, College Republicans, College Democrats, Graduate Student Government, and Undergraduate Student Government, the Bliss Institute hosted an on-campus event open to all students interested in watching 2022 midterm election results unfold. (November 8, 2022)

U.S. Elections and Civic Engagement - A Project for Poland

The Bliss Institute collaborated with Global Ties Akron to host a roundtable discussion for Polish delegates interested in sustaining democracy through elections and civic engagement. Featured speakers included Director J. Cherie Strachan and Associate Director Emeritus Stephen Brooks. (May 5, 2023)





SUPPORTING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

A Day of Public Discourse: Debates as a Pathway to Civic Participation and Public-Spirited Professions

In partnership with the Ohio Debate Commission, students from colleges, universities, and law schools across the state facilitated discussion with Ohio high school students. The keynote speaker was Dean of Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences Mitchell S. McKinney, who shared his research and facilitated conversations about the historical and contemporary practices and challenges in political debates. In community roundtable discussions, participants discussed materials collected from the U.S. Senate and Ohio gubernatorial candidates to craft meaningful questions later submitted to their campaigns. After lunch, a panel of journalists, among them reporters from Ohio Statehouse News Bureau, spoke about the Ohio political and media ecosystem. At the end of the day, Director J. Cherie Strachan moderated a panel of Bliss Institute alumni to discuss career opportunities for graduate students, while the high school students toured campus with ambassadors from the Admissions Office. (October 11, 2022)

Ohio Student Government Summit

The Bliss Institute provided financial support to convene college and university student government officials from across Ohio. Director J. Cherie Strachan also facilitated a break-out session titled Involvement in Student Government Propelling Student Engagement, where she explained the role student organizations play as an important source of political socialization – and invited attendees to consider enrolling in the Master of Applied Politics. (February 18, 2023)

Not Too Young to Run – Engaging Youth in the Political Process

The Bliss Institute collaborated with Global Ties Akron to host a roundtable for international delegates from around the globe who were all interested in encouraging youth civic and political participation in their home countries. Featured speakers included Director J. Cherie Strachan, Associate Director Emeritus Stephen Brooks, Civic Engagement Director Corie Steinke, and President of Undergraduate Student Government JP Garcher. (February 20, 2023)

Akron Youth Decide

The Bliss Institute hosted students from Akron Public Schools at an on-campus event, where they discussed Akron Decides poll results in small groups facilitated by Bliss Institute funded graduate students. They developed their own distinct policy preferences on issues affecting the city of Akron – and these preferences were shared directly with all of the candidates running for mayor. Students were provided with packets of information about voter registration and polling locations that they could share with their classmates, friends, and family. They were reminded that, according to Ohio law, those who would turn 18 prior to the general election could register and vote in the primary. (March 2, 2023)

Akron Early College Summer Camp

Director J. Cherie Strachan was invited to serve as a faculty mentor for Akron Early College High School students tasked with working in teams to prioritize a public issue of concern in the city of Akron and to develop a preferred solution. (May 5, 2023).

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

DEGREES AND COURSEWORK

The Bliss Institute collaborates with the Department of Political Science to offer an undergraduate and graduate certificate, and a master's degree in applied politics. New joint undergraduate and graduate certificates in applied political communication were launched in Fall 2022 with the School of Communication and Department of Political Science. All of these degrees prepare students for public service professions that sustain the mechanisms of democratic governance, including careers in political parties, electoral politics/campaigns, government relations, and legislatures.





The Master of Applied Politics (MAP) degree is especially unique, as it is one of three applied politics graduate programs in the United States and is the only applied politics graduate program at an affordable regional public located outside the D.C. beltway.

Recent changes to the curriculum allow MAP students to complete the program in as little as two semesters as long as the required internship is completed during the summer. All MAP classes are offered online, in real-time, and out-of-state students who attend online now pay in-state tuition.

Political Science faculty covered an array of courses that count toward these applied degrees, including Voter Contact & Elections, Campaign Battleground, Ohio Politics, American Political Parties, Women in Politics, Scope and Theories of Political Science, and Research Methods in Political Science.

In addition to these traditional political science classes, the Bliss Institute supports our degrees by recruiting established political consultants and public servants to teach applied courses in their areas of expertise. Courses offered by Bliss Institute supported professors of practice this academic year included Fundamentals of Political Strategy, Fundamentals of Electoral Messaging, The Art of Political Spin, Campaign Finance, Fundraising and Budgeting, and Fundamentals of the Digital Campaign.

MEET OUR 2022-2023 PROFESSORS OF PRACTICE



Richie Alicea is an assistant lecturer. He holds master's degrees in Elections and Campaign Management from Fordham University and Urban Planning from Hunter College. He is a veteran of Republican and independent campaigns and causes, with over 15 years of experience in nearly every campaign role. His experience in digital politics is extensive, having held leadership campaign roles in the 2016, 2018, and 2020 election cycles.



Jim Crooks is an assistant lecturer. He earned both a MA in political science and a Certificate in Applied Politics at the University of Akron. Professor Crooks regularly teaches a course on the Fundamentals of Electoral Messaging, sharing his insights on the practical application of campaign management built from more than 15 years in private practice in Northeast Ohio.



Cyndra Cole is an assistant lecturer. She earned both a BA in political science and a MAP at the University of Akron. Professor Cole teaches courses on American campaigns and elections, focusing primarily on campaign finance and campaign management.





GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Beyond supplementing UA course offerings, the Bliss Institute provides graduate assistantships to MAP students who work 20 hours per week in exchange for a stipend and tuition waiver. This academic year, the Institute supported six MAP students. Two of these students graduated in December. Brandon Plaza, who earned his undergraduate degree at The University of Akron, now serves as Executive Director of the Summit County Democratic Party. Kayla Fischer, who earned her undergraduate degree from Ohio Northern University, is Senior Finance Associate for Bellwether Strategies and Assistant Lecturer at The University of Akron.

Four graduate assistants will return to finish their studies this fall, including: Benjamin Dziworshie, from Accra, Ghana (University of Ghana); Clair Jimerson from Akron, Ohio (The University of Akron); Elizabeth Mawhinney from Cincinnati, Ohio (The University of Akron); and Nour Shakaki from Akron, Ohio (The University of Akron).

The Bliss Institute also welcomes four incoming graduate assistants this fall, including: Logan Harrah from Rootstown, Ohio (Ohio Northern University); Brandon Meeker from Akron, Ohio (The University of Akron); Bryan Pepper from Copley, Ohio (the University of Oklahoma and the University of Kansas); and Wan Yu from Akron, Ohio (Ohio State University).

INTERNSHIPS

The Bliss Institute has a long history of providing stipends to support undergraduate and graduate students with political internships in Akron, Columbus, other state capitals, and Washington, D.C. While undergraduate internships serve as an elective course, MAP students are required to complete for-credit internships as part of their degree requirements.

The Bliss Institute supported 22 students in the past academic year. Many of our students interned for Ohio political parties and Ohio campaigns, as well as for polling and consulting firms:

- [Center for Marketing and Opinion Research](#)
- [Colossus Strategies and Consulting](#)
- [Emilia Sykes for Congress Campaign](#)
- [Frank LaRose for Senate Campaign](#)
- [Portage County Republican Party](#)
- [Sean Brennan for State Representative Campaign](#)
- [Summit County Democratic Party](#)
- [Summit County Republican Party](#)





Students interested in public service, government relations, and policymaking interned at:

- Greater Akron Chamber
- Mayor’s Office in Elkhart, Indiana
- Representative Bill Roemer, District 31
- Sunday Creek Horizons Consulting
- U.S. Department of State
- The White House

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

In 2022-2023, the Bliss Institute and the Department of Political Science collaborated to provide undergraduate students with scholarships from five endowed scholarship accounts:

- The Ray C. and Ellen P. Bliss Scholarship, which was established in 1982 in honor of Ray C. Bliss, class of 1935, who served as a board member and chair of The University of Akron Board of Trustees and served as National Chairman of the Republican Party.
- The George W. Pruet Memorial Scholarship Fund, which was established in 1988 to honor the high standards for scholarship and interest in law that characterized Dr. Pruet’s career as a teacher and scholar.
- The Alberta Hensley Scholarship, which was established in 2006 as a fitting tribute to Alberta Hensley’s personal and professional service to The University of Akron.
- The Dr. Richard S. LeFevre Endowed Scholarship, which was established in 2012 by his wife Mary Stowe LeFevre to honor her late husband and his friendship with Mr. Ray C. Bliss.
- The Rosemary Titmas Wright Scholarship, which was established in 2014 to honor Rosemary Titmas Wright, who earned a BA with distinction in English from UA in 1958.

In the 2022-2023 academic year we collectively provided a total of \$39,000 to support 13 undergraduate students.

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|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| • Alexis Currie | • Olivia May | • Chelsea Phares |
| • Nicole Cutich | • Deja Meekins | • Meghan Schmitt |
| • Dina Elhindi | • Jordyn Miklinski | • Kylee Schwartz |
| • Sophia Fisher | • William Nagy | • Ty’Hier Simon |
| • Riley Hepler | | |

Next year, undergraduate scholarships will include awards from the Dr. John C. Green Endowed Scholarship, which was established in 2019 to honor our director emeritus. He led the Bliss Institute wisely and with great energy across his 32-year career at UA, inspiring generations of politicians and practitioners of politics, many of whom occupy legislative offices at the local, county, state, and federal levels. He remains involved with the Bliss Institute in his role as director emeritus.





PROMOTING BROADER POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING

Beyond campus-based learning, the Bliss Institute participates in efforts to promote broad understanding of the political process and current events in American politics.

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

THE DONALD TRUMP PRESIDENCY: LEGACY AND RECORD CONFERENCE

Along with the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Mount Union, the Bliss Institute co-sponsored an even-handed, non-partisan, and scholarly examination of the actions and consequences of the Donald J. Trump Presidency on the United States and world from a variety of perspectives. The [Keynote Address](#) was delivered by Major Garrett, CBS News Chief Washington Correspondent, while prominent national and Ohio journalists participated in a [media roundtable](#) titled Covering Trump and Trumpism. (April 6-7, 2023)

A TALE OF TWO ELECTIONS, 2022 IN PERSPECTIVE PRESENTATION AND RECEPTION IN COLUMBUS

Director J. Cherie Strachan and Director Emeritus John C. Green delivered a joint analysis of the recent mid-term elections to a gathering of interns, alumni, legislators, and staff. The presentation was followed by a reception to introduce the new director to stakeholders in Columbus. (December 13, 2023)



MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Over the past year, faculty associated with the Bliss Institute helped to put contemporary political events into context for the broader public by providing 79 media interviews. Interviews were provided to journalists at a wide range of prominent outlets, including international (Al Jazeera, Canadian Television News, News Express Nigeria), national (Bloomberg Government, Christian Science Monitor, Fox News Channel, Daily Beast, National Public Radio, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report, Voice of America, Washington Examiner, Yahoo! News), statewide (Ideastream Public Radio, Ohio Capital Journal, Spectrum News, Statehouse News Bureau), and regional/local (Akron Beacon Journal, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Columbus Dispatch, Toledo Blade, WFMJ-TV, WKYC-TV, WAKR-Radio, WVXU-Radio).

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Bliss Institute supported a number of scholarly publications and presentations over the past year.

BOOKS

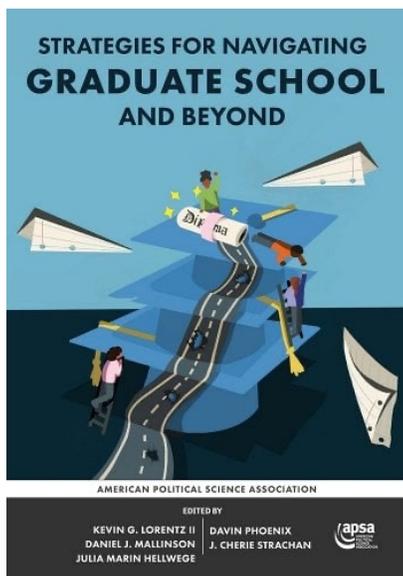


Director Emeritus John C. Green and Applied Politics Director David B. Cohen, along with Bliss Institute alumnus Kenneth M. Miller, edited *State of the Parties 2022: The Changing Role of American Political Parties* published by Rowman and Littlefield. The *State of the Parties 2022* brings together leading scholars of parties, elections, and interest groups to provide an indispensable overview of American political parties today. The 2020 presidential election was extraordinary. Contributors to this volume, who include scholars and practitioners from throughout the United States, answer important





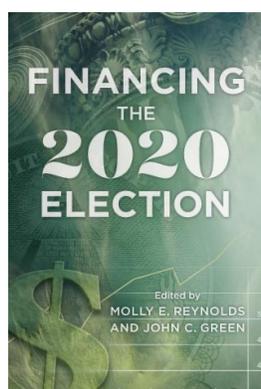
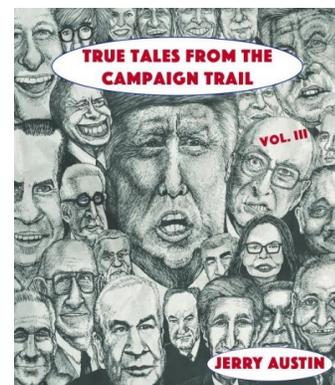
questions, such as: what role did political parties play in these events and how did the party organizations fare? Perhaps most importantly, they ask what are the implications for the future of U.S. elections and our democracy?



Director J. Cherie Strachan collaborated with several colleagues and the American Political Science Association to publish the co-edited volume *Strategies for Navigating Graduate School and Beyond*. Earning a graduate degree in political science is the first step in pursuing an academic or alt-academic career. Yet there is a large hidden curriculum in graduate school pertaining to strategies, norms, and practices which, when implemented, can help students navigate graduate school.

This resource guide is an essential component of APSA's effort to fill the knowledge-gap for prospective and current graduate students, as it provides insights into everything from applying for admission and finding a mentor to landing that first job-and everything in between. Listen to the co-editors share more about their goals for this edited collection by listening to their interview with the [New Books in Political Science Podcast](#).

The University of Akron Press has published a new addition to its Bliss Institute series – Jerry Austin's new book, *True Tales from the Campaign Trail, Volume III*, which is a compilation of great campaign anecdotes from experienced political consultants, Democratic and Republican, and other great storytellers. Many of the stories are funny. Many of the stories give you a behind-the-scenes view of what happens in campaigns when the camera is off and the reporters have put down their laptops, and all of these stories are stories that only an insider could tell. Anyone with any curiosity about how political campaigns are run and won will enjoy this book.



Director Emeritus John C. Green and colleague Molly Reynolds edited *Financing the 2020 Election* published by Rowman & Littlefield. The book draws on detailed data from the Federal Election Commission and analysis by a range of campaign finance experts. The chapters provide both overall context for the landscape of campaign finance regulation in 2020 and examine different aspects of the 2020 cycle, including the presidential contest; congressional races; and the role of the political parties. A concluding chapter places the entire campaign in context and offers suggestions for reform.





Beyond books, Bliss Institute supported publications and publications of Bliss Institute affiliated faculty include peer-reviewed articles, invited book chapters, and conference papers.

ARTICLES

- Glazier, Rebecca A. and Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. The long-term effects of COVID-19 on teaching in political science and international relations. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 56(3), 349-356.
- Jesuit, David K. and Strachan, J. Cherie. 2022. Student engagement and learning outcomes in Model United Nations. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*. 18(8)

BOOK CHAPTERS

- Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. Taking innovative teaching to the next level – Writing and publishing instructional materials and textbooks. In Charity Butcher, Mai Hallward, Tavishi Bhasin, and Elizabeth Gordon, eds. *Aligning teaching and research: Working smarter, not harder*. Palgrave Macmillan.

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Castle, Jeremy, Stepp, Kyra, and Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. White Christian Nationalism, Authoritarianism, and Polarization on Gendered Issues. *Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Meeting*. April, Chicago, IL
- Cohen, David B., Karen M. Hult, and Charles E. Walcott. 2023. The Office of the Chief of Staff in the Obama White House. *Conference on the Obama Presidency at Hofstra University*, Hempstead, NY
- Cohen, David B. and Karen M. Hult. 2023. Mission Impossible: The Chiefs of Staff in the Trump White House. *Conference on the Trump Presidency at the University of Mount Union*, Alliance, OH, 2023
- Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. Roundtable Convener. Student Needs, An Intersectional Approach to Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement. *International Political Science Association Annual Meeting*. July, Buenos Aires.
- Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. Chair and Discussant. Fashion and Political Expression: Clothing Choices Defining the Language of Politics. *Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Meeting*. April, Chicago, IL
- Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. Chair. Public Engagement: Mixing Academics and Practical Politics. *Midwestern Political Science Association*. April, *Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL.





Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. Chair. Mentoring Graduate Students Roundtable. Midwestern Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.

Strachan, J. Cherie. 2023. Civic Engagement Track Participant. APSA Teaching and Learning Conference, February, Baltimore, MD.

Strachan, J. Cherie. 2022. This Sh*t Is Hard: Teaching Civic Engagement in an Era of Divisive Politics. American Political Science Association Annual Meeting. September, Montreal, Canada.



AWARDS AND HONORS

Kim Haverkamp, Manager of Marketing and Events, was awarded the Staff Outstanding Achievement Award at the annual Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences Awards Luncheon on April 28.

Director Emeritus John C. Green was awarded the Samuel Eldersveld Career Achievement Award. The award recognizes a scholar whose lifetime professional work has made an outstanding contribution to the field. The award was presented at the American Political Science Association's annual meeting in September.



Also, his book *Secular Surge: A New Fault Line in American Politics* received the 2022 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Distinguished Book Award. The committee was impressed by the book's novel theoretical and empirical contributions and the wealth of new data brought together to support the argument. The award will be presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion's annual meeting in November.

Director Emeritus John C. Green receives the Samuel Eldersveld Lifetime Achievement Award from Dr. Paul Herrnson, chair of the award committee.





SERVICE TO ACADEMIA AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Director J. Cherie Strachan contributes to the political science discipline by serving in a number of leadership positions. For example, she recently stepped down from a 6-year term on the editorial team that helped the Journal of Political Science Education transition to a prominent journal sponsored by the American Political Science Association (APSA). In the past year, she has been asked to step into additional leadership roles – which will help to position the Bliss Institute as a prominent resource in academia. These positions include:

- Editorial Board Member for the APSA-wide journal *PS*, Politics & Political Science
- Planning Committee Member for the APSA's 2023 Teaching & Learning Conference
- Treasurer and Executive Council Member for APSA's Political Science Education Section
- Civic Education Director for APSA's Civic Engagement Section
- Co-Chair of APSA's Civic Learning Working Group
- Member of APSA's Committee on Organized Sections
- President-Elect, Midwestern Political Science Association's Women's Caucus

Faculty associated with the Bliss Institute have also engaged in a number of professional development activities that not only provide national visibility for Bliss Institute programming and endeavors, but the enhance ability to fulfill the Institute's mission of improving civic and political participation.

- Research Network Meeting, for a group of interdisciplinary scholars who study civility and deliberation, sponsored by the National Institute for Civil Discourse Research
- Civic Engagement Authors' Retreat, for chapter contributors to a forthcoming edited collection, supported by the Lumina Foundation
- Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Symposium, for scholars who do applied research on the effectiveness of political science pedagogy, sponsored by the American Political Science Association's Centennial Center

ALUMNI UPDATES

Throughout my first year as director, I have had the pleasure of meeting many Bliss Institute alumni in Akron and Columbus. In future annual reports, we will use this section to celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni. Please take a minute to update us on where you are and what you are doing by taking this [brief survey](#).

We would also like to ask you to forward this annual report to other Bliss Institute alumni you are in contact with.

Thank you in advance for helping us reconnect with our alumni!

