



Campaigns & Elections Field Research Program Proposal (CEFRP) Iowa Presidential Caucus 2020

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Purpose

The Campaigns & Elections Field Research Project (CEFRP) is an interdisciplinary, cross-institutional effort to offer high-impact learning opportunities to current undergraduate students interested in government, public policy, communication and media, and political research.

The Field Research Program will support student success by:

- providing students with skills designed to meet their future career goals
- ensuring students have an intensive research experience during their time on campus
- helping students engage with an important component of the American political process

Overview

The Iowa presidential caucus presents a unique opportunity for students to experience and study the first major campaign event of the 2020 presidential election. The CEFRP plans to send 5-10 students into the field in Des Moines and Ames, Iowa ahead of the February 2020 caucus to conduct research with prospective caucus voters, observe campaign election operations, and examine media coverage of the presidential candidates. Students will be expected to conduct field research to address fundamental questions in American politics and political communication associated with how individuals use expectations of the President of the United States in their assessments of presidential candidates.

Student Success Outcomes

The CEFRP program will hone the following skills in a hands-on, research field environment:

- tangible student *undergraduate research* such as survey development and deployment, interviewing, analysis and synthesis of data
- *communication* such as conversing with study participants and political stakeholders and making public presentations
- *critical thinking* skills such as application of political science and communication concepts

The program will elevate the efforts of the Department of Communication, Florida Institute of Government, and the College of Arts and Sciences in promoting student research engagement while establishing deeper collaborations with other academic institutions. Students will have the

option of earning course credit for the field work experience and the opportunity to present research findings at the USF Undergraduate Research Conference.

Cross-Institutional Partnerships

The CEFRP has partnered with faculty research efforts at the University of Kansas, University of Alabama, University of Missouri, Iowa State University, and Emerson College for coordination and data sharing purposes on the ground during the student field research at the caucuses.

USF Campus Partnerships

The CEFRP will seek additional partnerships with the Judy Genshaft Honors College, the College of Arts and Sciences Office of Research and Scholarship, and the Office of Undergraduate Research to identify qualified students for the program.

Proposed Funding Strategy

The CEFRP will be financially supported in part by funding from multiple sources, including the Department of Communication, as well as potential sources such as the Zimmerman School of Advertising & Mass Communication, the Florida Institute of Government, the Genshaft Honors College, and the Office of Undergraduate Research. Funding partnerships will be used to secure matching funds from the Office of the Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. Anticipated costs are located with the attached budget.

History and Background

In 2016, 10 Purdue University undergraduate students (five political science and five communication) became the first team as part of the Campaigns & Elections Field Research Project (CEFRP). The CEFRP allowed the students to realize the benefits of an engaged field research program to the Iowa caucuses during a presidential election campaign. Before the trip, students were trained in field research methods and took a research ethics training course to become IRB certified. On the ground, students collected field survey data to assess individuals' attitudes about evolving forms of presidential communicative outreach, as well as observed the process of a presidential caucus, including the media coverage, candidate rallies, and the voting process. Following the trip, students assisted with data management and analysis. The academic outcomes included two refereed publications; tangible skills the students could later market; and media visibility for the students, project, and the university. From an industry perspective, the program coordinated and built relationships with C-SPAN and local news organizations as well as local organizations to gain access to caucus sites.

Academic Publications and Media Coverage from 2016 CEFRP at Purdue

Academic Publications

Scacco, J. M., Coe, K., & Hearit, L. B. (2018). Presidential communication in tumultuous times: Insights into key shifts, normative implications, and research opportunities. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 42(1), 21-37. doi:10.1080/23808985.2018.1433962

Scacco, J. M., & Coe, K. (2017). Talk this way: The ubiquitous presidency and expectations of presidential communication. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61(3), 298-314.
doi:10.1177/0002764217704321

Media Coverage

“Students experienced electric atmosphere of Iowa caucus.” *Purdue Exponent*. (2016, February 5). https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/article_e6496476-2f03-5ab3-bcf7-c6b724ed0dd9.html

“Hoosiers want a piece of the presidential campaign.” *Indianapolis Star*. (2016, January 31). <http://www.indystar.com/story/news/politics/2016/01/31/hoosiers-want-piece-presidential-campaign/79359140/>

“Decision 2016: Constant calls.” WTHR 13. (2016, January 30). <https://www.wthr.com/article/decision-2016-constant-calls>

“FOX 59 in Iowa: Purdue University students arrive to poll Iowa voters ahead of Monday’s caucuses.” FOX 59. (2016, January 30). <http://fox59.com/2016/01/30/fox-59-in-iowa-purdue-university-students-arrive-to-poll-iowa-voters-ahead-of-mondays-caucuses/>

“Open phones on Senator Marco Rubio campaign rally.” C-SPAN. (2016, January 30). <https://www.c-span.org/video/?403948-1/open-phones-senator-marco-rubio-campaign-rally>

“Purdue students attending Iowa caucus for field research experience” Purdue University. (2016, January 20). <https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2016/Q1/purdue-students-attending-iowa-caucus-for-field-research-experience.html>

Budget Request

The budget below details travel-related expenses for 5 USF students and one faculty member. The total cost of the field research experience is \$6,814.53 which covers participants' lodging, airfare, and ground transportation while in Iowa.

<i>Flights (6 USF individuals)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joshua Scacco (Faculty)• Adam Blake Arledge (Communication Master's Student)• Asia Anderson (Undergraduate Student)• Eduardo Fox-Velazquez (Undergraduate Student; Honors College)• Camila Nakandakari (Undergraduate Student; Honors College)• Aldo Puccini (Undergraduate Student)	\$1,869.00
<i>Flights for Non-USF Graduate Students (2 Individuals)¹</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delaney Harness (Doctoral student, UT-Austin): \$277.00• Eric Wiemer (Doctoral student, Purdue University): \$248.00	\$525.00
<i>Hotel Rooms (5 rooms for 4 nights; \$757.12 per room)</i> Holiday Inn Express at Drake University (1/31/20-2/4/20) 1140 24 th Street Des Moines, IA 50311	\$3,785.60
<i>Minivan Rental</i> Budget Rent a Car Des Moines Intl Airport (DSM) 5800 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321	\$434.93
<i>Incidentals (e.g. Car fuel, survey clipboards and pens)</i>	\$200.00
Total	\$6,814.53

¹ Two additional graduate doctoral students, Delaney Harness from the University of Texas at Austin and Eric Wiemer from Purdue University, will be in attendance to assist with undergraduate data collection and methods training as well as to collect data independently for their own research projects. Harness is a former master's advisee and Wiemer is a current doctoral advisee. Both have attended planning meetings held in fall 2019 for the trip via Skype.