

eisensta@american.edu

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Dear selection committee:

Jim Thurber's Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies (CCPS) recently celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the success of the Center has been and still is in large part thanks to Dr. Thurber. His innovative teaching methods and insatiable appetite for networking have not only benefitted his students, but the whole of American University. Since Dr. Thurber founded CCPS in 1979, the Center has been the home of the academic journal, *Congress and the Presidency*. Through CCPS, Dr. Thurber has also organized over 200 forums and academic conferences on the AU campus, many of which were covered by CSPAN and other local and national news outlets. Whether he is hosting ambassadors and other foreign dignitaries on campus or inviting Washington elites to speak to his students, there is no doubt that everything Dr. Thurber does, he does for the betterment of SPA and American University. Therefore it is with great pride that we nominate him, without any reservations, for the University's award for Outstanding Scholarship, Research, Creative Activity, and Other Professional Contributions

Dr. Thurber's career has long been characterized by public outreach and service. His long list of administrative and academic appointments and awards is a tribute to his long career of service in the public interest. Between 1974 and 1980, he founded the School of Government and Public Administration (now SPA) Cooperative Education Program, which worked to guide and place students into positions within national, state, and local governments. During that time he also founded Roll Call Votes, Inc. a system to record all roll call votes of the U.S. Congress in a computer data base for weekly reports and long term analysis for clients. Congressional Quarterly, Inc. continued the congressional vote recording system he launched in the form of Roll Call Votes, Inc. Among his many other accomplishments in the last two decades, one of the most notable includes his work as the Academic Adviser for the Carter-Baker Commission for Federal Election Reform, which brought Jimmy Carter and James Baker III to the American University campus for the presentation of the Commission findings. Currently, Dr. Thurber sits on the Editorial Advisory Board of *Campaigns and Elections Magazine*, the Board of Advisors for The School for Ethics and Global Leadership (SEGL) Honorary Leadership Council, and the Executive Board for the APSA Congressional Fellows Program.

Dr. Thurber has also achieved wide recognition for American University through a long list of academic publications. Since 1973, Dr. Thurber has produced over 20 monographs, over 10 co-authored publications, and over 10 edited volumes. He has also published 36 refereed journal articles and over 100 other pieces for newspapers, magazines, and government agencies. He has also extended that

influence to the production of three BBC documentaries in concert with CCPS and can often be heard as a commentator on National Public Radio and WAMU.

Throughout his time at American University, Dr. Thurber's grantsmanship has been second to none. He has managed millions of dollars in grants, most notably from the Pew Charitable Trust between 1997 and 2005 when he acted as the Principal Investigator for the "Study to Improve Campaign Conduct in Congressional and Presidential Elections" as part of \$1.4 million and \$1.9 million grants. He has also received numerous grants from the State Department to lecture in countries such as the UAE, Iceland, Sweden, Norway and a number of others. A 1994 Parliamentary Development Project Grant from AID-Indiana University sent Dr. Thurber to Kiev to assist the Ukrainian Parliament in drafting a new constitution. He returned in 2001 on a grant from the State Department to deliver a keynote address to the Ukrainian Parliament about Democratization in Ukraine. Dr. Thurber has also advised legislative reform for the Cuban National Assembly, the Brazilian National Congress, and he has personally advised President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan on the reorganization of the presidential and legislative apparatus.

Most recently, Dr. Thurber has worked closely with the Bryce Harlow Foundation to study lobbying reform and lobbying and ethics. Through grants and his relationship with the Foundation, Dr. Thurber has developed weekend workshops for AU students on lobbying, ethics, and advocacy through CCPS. His ongoing research is also breaking ground for lobbying reform in the US and abroad. One of his current projects is a comparative study of lobbying in the United States and the European Union, which he also explores with students in his European Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute (EPAAI) every summer.

In the past year, Dr. Thurber has delivered over 20 invited lectures all over the world. From a lecture analyzing the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress given at the Brookings Institution to a lecture concerning the 2008 election given at the International Symposium for Democracy in Berlin, Germany, Dr. Thurber's expertise is well-known and valued. However, despite his long list of credits and lectures, Dr. Thurber is always quick to use his success as a way to benefit CCPS and his students.

Shortly after founding CCPS, Dr. Thurber used his expertise and connections in Washington, DC to start the Campaign Management Institute (CMI) and the Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute (PAAI). The two-week institutes are designed to provide students with access to some of the top political strategists in Washington, while also immersing them in the planning process of a political candidate campaign or an advocacy campaign. Both institutes encourage students to network with guest speakers as a way to create opportunities for internships or future employment. As a result of Dr. Thurber's cultivation of CMI and PAAI, they have become two of the most popular classes for students within SPA and across campus. The institutes also have a strong reputation in and around Washington, DC as the best campaign training programs in the United States.

Students who have participated in the institutes always agree that they provide one of the most rigorous educational experiences found anywhere at American University. Aaron Zimmerman, a former student of PAAI and a research assistant in CCPS contributed this commentary about his experience:

“I took part in the Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute in January 2008, and I was honored to have had Dr. James Thurber as a professor. Professor Thurber had a resounding impact on my education. I had a deep interest in the politics going into his course but afterward I felt truly prepared to pursue a career in public service. He made clear the connection between a theoretical understanding of policy and the practical application of this knowledge. In this way he offered a clear, comprehensive perspective of policy systems.

The Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute was unlike any other course I have taken in how it seamlessly integrated professional insights, hands-on experience and the fantastic resources available to us in Washington, DC. In hindsight, it is clear that Professor Thurber’s ability to offer such a challenging, enriching, and relevant course has helped me grow as a student and as a professional.”

It is clear that Dr. Thurber’s contributions are not limited to his work in the world of government and politics. His contributions as an educator and colleague are some that should also be highlighted. Dr. Thurber has served on countless search committees for the Department of Government and continues to volunteer his service for the improvement of the Department as a whole. While his work with CCPS bolsters the reputation of SPA, his work with individual students has also become an integral characteristic of his stellar reputation. One of Dr. Thurber’s former PhD students, Sam Garrett, contributed the following testimonial for consideration:

“My career, which has been based in combining theory and practice, would have been impossible without Jim Thurber. In a field and at a time when many scholars unnecessarily disdain practical politics, Jim has embraced unifying theory and practice in ways that strengthen scholarship and the ‘real world’ of politics and government. Theory and practice need not be mutually exclusive. To the contrary, at their best, both reinforce the other and offer insights each perspective could not alone. Jim understands the need for dialogue between theory and practice and has made a career out of mediating the conversation. Importantly, he has encouraged and helped generations of students to do the same, ensuring that his professional contributions will remain long after his own career concludes.”

Whether based solely on his professional contributions to AU and Washington or based on his work in CCPS and the classroom, Dr. James Thurber stands as an example to which all American government teachers and scholars should aspire. Dr. Thurber has dedicated his career at American University to improving government domestically and abroad, while also leveraging his experiences for the benefit of his students and the University community. SPA is stronger because of Dr. Thurber’s contributions and Washington continues to draw on his expertise. It is clear that Dr. Thurber is, and continues to be, a strong asset to SPA and American University.

Why nominate one of SPA’s “most decorated” and distinguished professors for yet another award? Someone who has already received so many distinctions? I have always been impressed with Dr. Thurber’s reputation and scholarly record. But this year, I have also found, as a new department chair making some difficult choices, that I could always enlist his help and advice. Not only is Jim Thurber an outstanding scholar and center director, but he is a great colleague, one who I can call on whenever needed to create a space for deliberation and decision-making by the faculty.

We don't always agree 100 percent on everything, but Jim Thurber always promotes due process and transparent decision-making and he repeatedly volunteers for sensitive duties and shows tremendous leadership. He offers guidance, but also gives younger colleagues like myself the "room" we need to reach our own conclusions. Most important, he lends his name and efforts to every possible cause.

Dr. Thurber served on two search committees this past fall, helped reform the MA curriculum in the spring, sat on the PhD admissions committee, and contributed significantly to discussions on the department's external review. Unlike many of our less "busy" colleagues, Jim never said "no."

Jim Thurber comes through in the clutch even when others would be content to allow him to quietly "do his thing" at CCPS, separate from the department, as no one can argue that he has not done his share of administrative load-pulling. But instead of resting on his laurels, Dr. Thurber has taken a renewed interest in department governance, in faculty recruitment and in curricular reform. On behalf of the Government Department, it is a true honor to thank him for all his effort, salute his energy and his drive to make our department and our university better.

So yes, consider Dr. Thurber for all the obvious reasons – the notable merits and distinctions that have accrued over the years in his distinguished career. He is a top-notch scholar, an institution-builder, and a gentleman. But also consider him at this particular moment for this particular award, because without Jim Thurber's constructive attitude, high energy and aspirations, and his willingness to offer his best effort at every juncture, the Government Department would have been considerably less successful this year. It is without hesitation that I endorse Dr. James Thurber for the 2010 faculty award for Outstanding Scholarship, Research, Creative Activity, and Other Professional Contributions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Todd Eisenstadt,  
Associate Professor and Chair  
Department of Government