

Political Campaigning Newsletter

UF MA/PC Program



Dr. Stephen Craig

Director's Corner

I received a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in 1979. My dissertation, titled *Citizen Demands and Political Reality: A Dynamic Model of Political Discontent*, dealt with the erosion of public trust in government in the United States since the mid-1960s.

ment tries to do too much, those who think it does too little, and those who believe that government simply doesn't care about the problems of people like themselves. There have been brief moments (most notably, during the period immediately after 9/11) when it seemed like a restoration of public trust might be possible.

In this issue...

- *Three essays by faculty members on the highly unusual 2016 presidential election.*
- *A profile of new Ph.D. and Campaigning Program fixture Roger Austin.*
- *Learning survey research from Dr. Jim Kitchens.*
- *Where Are They Now?*
- *Alumni Spotlights.*

In the early 1990s, I pursued the same theme in two books, *The Malevolent Leaders: Popular Discontent in America* and *Broken Contract: Changing Relationships between Americans and Their Government*, after which I moved on with my research to explore a variety of topics ranging from generational change to racial attitudes to the effects of negative attack ads in political campaigns.

As one observes the campaign fireworks of 2016 . . . well, as Yogi Berra famously said, it's like *déjà vu* all over again. Pretty much everybody is pissed – those who think govern-

In case you've been living on Mars lately, that never happened and doesn't seem likely to happen no matter whom we put in the White House (or anywhere else in government) this fall. According to the Rasmussen polling organization, for example, roughly half of likely voters (the figure has been rising in recent years) say that a group of people selected at random from the phone book would do a better job of addressing the nation's problems than the current Congress.

Clearly, this mistrust and even anger has been a factor shaping voter behavior this year (see especially: Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders). But let's not lose sight of the fact that skepticism and cynicism about government has been around for awhile. I have spent much of my career researching its origins and consequences, and it appears that the same will be true for the next generation (or two or three) of scholars who study American politics and public opinion. To paraphrase Bette Davis, you might want to "fasten your seat belts. It's gonna be a bumpy ride." And I don't mean just between now and Election Night in November.

The Variability and Volatility of Election Forecasts— Dr. Michael Martinez

The many surprises of the primary season caution pundits and scholars alike to express a little more humility in making predictions about this election season. While the emergence of Donald Trump and the persistence of Bernie Sanders (neither of which was expected) may create suspicion about election forecasts, the more well-defined structure of the general election – a contest between candidates of the two parties that have dominated American politics since the Civil War – may make its outcome somewhat more predictable than the nomination process was.

Six months out, there are a variety of ways to forecast the outcome we are likely to see in November. The figure below shows the trends so far this year in projections derived from (a) econometric models, (b) polls, (c) expert predictions, and (d) prediction markets that differ not only in the assumptions behind their respective forecasts, but also in their volatility. *Continued on page 3*

This newsletter includes several short essays by UF/PC faculty members on other aspects of the 2016 election. Enjoy (if that's the right word) – and let us know if you would like to attend our [biennial election workshop](#), to be held at the Gainesville Hilton on [January 27, 2016](#). Details are still TBA, but stay in the loop by [liking us on Facebook](#): www.facebook.com/1010434685706694/

Where Are They Now?

Elizabeth (Christie) Sena (UF/PC 2004)

Elizabeth is vice president of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, a leading opinion research and strategic consulting firm with headquarters in Washington, DC.

Andrew Wiggins (UF/PC 1998)

Andrew is senior director of campaigns and elections for the Florida Chamber of Commerce, managing the Chamber's campaign activity throughout the state of Florida.

Jessica Carraway (UF/PC 2010)

Jess, who worked for the Democratic Governors Association in Washington, DC, before becoming Charlie Crist's research director in the 2014 cycle, is now serving Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) in the same capacity.

Kevin Akins (UF/PC 2008)

Kevin, formerly a research assistant with fellow alum David Beattie at Hamilton Campaigns, is an associate with Anzalone Liszt Grove Research, living in Montgomery, Alabama.

T.J. Harrington (UF/PC 2007)

T.J. is president of Capital Alliance, LLC, a public policy and consulting firm for nonprofit research, issue advocacy, strategic development, grant work, and lobbying needs at the local and state level in Florida. He also serves on occasion as an adjunct instructor of Political Science at Santa Fe College.

Meredith O'Malley Johnson (UF/PC 2010)

Meredith is a communications and public relations specialist in Jacksonville, Florida, and a veteran of 14 state and local political campaigns. She also is founder and chair of the Jax Young Voters Coalition, press secretary for the Jacksonville Coalition for Equality, and hosts a new political commentary show that airs on TVJax and Metro Jacksonville.

Jacob Pewitt (UF/PC 2008)

Jacob is director of the Office of Research and Planning for Florida's Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater in Tallahassee. His responsibilities include serving as chief economist for the Department of Financial Services, as well as supporting the Department's communications and public outreach programs through speechwriting and other efforts.

Reforming Presidential Nominations—Dr. Michael McDonald

Outsider candidates arose in both parties to challenge the establishment candidates during the 2016 presidential nominating contests. For the Republicans, Donald Trump, one by one, laid waste to his establishment opponents. For the Democrats, Bernie Sanders continued to press Hillary Clinton until the bitter end. As the parties reflect upon these events, they have begun to recognize that the manner in which they nominate their candidates affects the final result.

There are two general methods that parties use to select their delegates to their national conventions: caucuses and primaries. Caucuses are meetings held in homes and school gymnasiums, among other places, where party members meet to discuss and select delegates. They are holdovers from the proverbial smoke-filled rooms of the machine politics era of the 1800s when party leaders met to select their general election candidates. Caucuses can be time-intensive as only a limited number of delegates are selected out of each meeting and there may be more candidates with supporters than there are delegates.

Primaries are elections run by the states where voters select delegates by ballots. Primaries emerged during the Progressive Era of the early 1900s, as reformers sought to

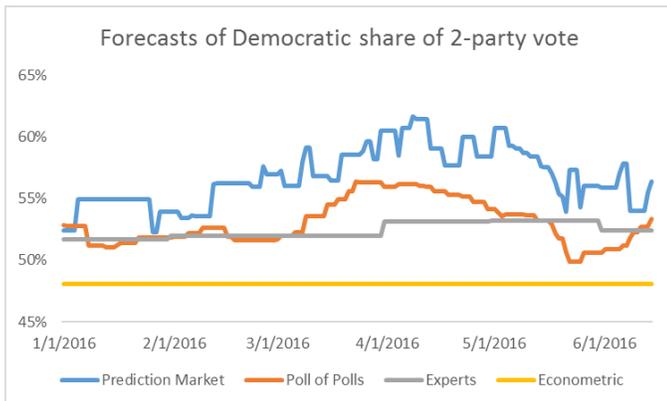
curtail the power of the political machines. Primaries for presidential nominations come in three flavors. In closed primaries, only voters registered with a party may participate. In open primaries, there is no party registration and voting is open to all registered voters. In semi-closed primaries, voters registered without a party affiliation may choose to vote in party primary of their choosing. (For non-presidential nominations, a few states use what is known as the "top-two" primary where all candidates regardless of party appear on the ballot and the top two voting-getting candidates proceed to the general election.)

Even before the summer party conventions, Maine and Minnesota decided to scrap their presidential caucuses in favor primaries and Colorado is considering doing the same. The Republican National Committee is contemplating requiring that all presidential primaries be closed.

In doing so, the RNC echoes some Clinton supporters who are also calling for closed primaries. The intuition is that closed primaries are the sweet spot for electing party establishment candidates. Caucus participants tend to be those most committed to a cause, and who are sufficiently motivated to dedicate an evening or weekend day to caucusing. Ironically, King Caucus – the vehicle for the party elites to control elections in the machine era – has evolved into the electoral institution most permeable to ac-

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Econometric models come in a variety of specifications, but they all make predictions based on how economic and political conditions factored into previous presidential election outcomes. Most of these models are based on data points several months before the election, so once the parameters of each model are known, its predictions are set and do not fluctuate over the course of the campaign. Several of these models tell us that some important fundamentals in this election that should favor the Republican candidate: a party that has held the White House for two or more terms usually finds it harder to hold on, and the economic growth rate remains below the historical average. As of June 1, the mean of five well-known econometric forecasts gave Trump a 51.9% to 48.1% advantage in the national two-party vote. But forecasts like these are best viewed as baseline estimates of what we can expect if candidates and voters behave more or less similarly in this election as in previous elections. An extraordinarily effective (or ineffective) campaign, a seriously flawed or extraordinarily popular candidate, or a shift in the partisan bases of support could sway the election outcome several points in either direction from the econometric forecasts.

The most familiar forecasts are based on *polls*, which at this point, foretell a close election. The Real Clear Politics “polls of polls” gave Clinton a solid advantage over Trump throughout most of the primary season. The race tightened in May, but Clinton had regained her advantage by mid-June. These fluctuations show how the public reacts to the ebb and flow of the campaigns and other events, but any given poll (or poll of polls) does not necessarily project how the campaign or other events will affect voters’ choices on Election Day.

In contrast, *expert predictions* have been remarkably stable over the course of this campaign year. PollyVote has surveyed fifteen scholars in American politics (including me) monthly since the end of December, and the average predicted Democratic vote share has stayed between 51.7% and 53.2% throughout the first five months of the panel. Experts presumably recognize the fluidity of shifts in

public opinion polls, and weigh how they think that the campaign will likely unfold against the backdrop of the fundamentals of the election. The fact that the experts have thus far given Clinton a slight advantage, while most the econometric forecasts slightly favor the Republicans, suggests that the experts expect Democrats will ultimately benefit from the net effects of the campaign, issues, or perceptions of the candidates.

Prediction markets allow experts and non-experts alike to “invest” in predicted outcomes of elections. The logic of the market is that anyone who feels confident enough in their predictions can put their money where all of their insights, analyses, and hunches lead them, which will produce a consensus forecast based on the information that all investors have. So far this year, the Iowa Electronic Market has consistently favored a Democratic victory in the presidential election. The Democratic advantage peaked in mid-April (a 61% Democratic forecast) but narrowed going into summer (to a 56.4% Democratic forecast in mid-June). In previous elections, market forecasts came closest to the actual result about twelve days before the election.

Under the principle that all forecast methods have biases, Pollyvote.com aggregates these and other predictions into a composite election forecast. Averaging across methods smooths out much of the volatility in some components (such as the polls) with the more stable forecasts (such as econometric models). The resulting composite forecast predicts a close Democratic victory in 2016, but the margin has narrowed since the mid-April peak of a 53.9% Democratic share of the two-party vote to a mid-June prediction of 52.0%. Earlier versions of Pollyvote predicted Bush’s reelection throughout all of 2004 and predicted the Obama elections throughout both 2008 and 2012, but variations between the component forecasts this year pose a challenge for Pollyvote to keep its streak alive.

For updated data on these and other forecasts, visit <http://pollyvote.com>



Campaigning students with Lobbying instructor Doyle Bartlett, co-founder of the Eris Group, Washington, DC.

Politics in the Purplest State— *Dr. Roger Austin*

“Ain’t this the craziest thing you’ve ever seen?” How many times over the past few months have you heard someone (perhaps including yourself) say something along these lines? Well, the 2016 presidential primaries pretty much set the gold standard for crazy.

On the Republican side, name calling became the norm: you had “lying Ted” Cruz (described as a “miserable son of a bitch” and “Lucifer in the flesh” by former House Speaker John Boehner), “little Marco” Rubio, “con artist” Donald Trump (who also felt the need to defend his manhood in response to Rubio’s comments about his small hands), and other instances far too numerous to mention). Such antics may have boosted the candidates’ standing with their respective bases, but regular folks were less impressed.

While Democrats could not compete on the crazy scale, they had their moments starting with socialist Bernie Sanders providing a much stronger challenge than Hillary Clinton (who you’d think might have seen this coming . . . again) ever expected. The candidates themselves were fairly well behaved, but the same could not always be said for their supporters: Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright told young women there was a “special place in hell for them” if they didn’t support Clinton, and a Sanders backer linked Clinton with “corporate Democratic whores who are beholden to big pharma and the private insurance industry instead of us.”

All of this is why I’ve changed my mind: When I grow up, I no longer want to be an insurance company. Instead, I want to be a major news media outlet for one cycle and continually present “breaking news” whether or not it is breaking – or whether it is even news for that matter – and then sell expensive ads to everyone, especially Super PACs, who do not get the same lowest unit rate discount that candidates do. Huh? What’s he talking about? What does this have to do with anything? I’m glad you asked. There are two reasons: *The Gamble* and the Number of the Year: 270.

The Gamble, by John Sides and Lynn Vavreck, is a must-read analysis of the 2012 presidential election. Without giving away the ending, let me just say that this is a terrific book by two political scientists who analyzed the race and concluded that “fundamentals” were what really mattered; in other words, President Obama won a race he should have won and should have been favored to win all along. Understand, the authors were not answering our favorite comps question (do campaigns matter?) with a no. They simply said that because both sides waged vigorous and expensive campaigns, the fundamentals (voter partisanship, presidential approval, economic conditions) more than strategy, tactics, events (“breaking news”), or candidate gaffes were what drove the train. As they usually do.



Left: Students visit the Florida state capitol with Lobbying instructor Dave Mica.

As for numbers, 270 is the only one that truly counts in presidential politics. There are 18 states that have voted Democratic for six elections in a row dating back to 1992, and 19 states (with 242 electoral votes) that have voted Democratic four times in a row dating back to 2000. If this breakdown holds in 2016, Clinton only needs to win Florida (29 electoral votes) and it’s game over.

Thus, whereas Obama had about 110 field offices in Florida’s 67 counties, the Democrats this year should aim to have at least 200 and be prepared to spend upwards of \$60 million – thereby stretching the GOP and its affiliated organizations to the limit both on the air and on the ground. Donald Trump must win Florida to claim an electoral majority, and every dollar spent trying to accomplish that goal is a dollar that can’t be spent in other states (such as Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) that are crucial to the Republicans’ chances of winning back the White House..

See, it’s not really that crazy after all, is it? Just another election like most others.



Pictured above: Kevin Gerson (left), 2016 Walter G. Campbell Leadership Award winner, and Elizabeth Hyatt (right), 2016 Ralph Gonzalez Independent Spirit Award winner.

Profiles: Two Alumni Discuss Their Careers in Politics, Offer Advice for Current Students

Jon Anderson (Mad Dog Mail)

What have you been doing since you graduated from the Political Campaigning program?

I started off as a congressional campaign manager in Mississippi in 1998, which was a bright spot for Democrats in the South. In 1999, I took a job as caucus director for the Democratic Party of Georgia and became the party's executive director in 2001. After that, I became vice president at one of the largest Democratic mail firms in the country, but soon decided to open my own firm. Mad Dog Mail started in Atlanta in 2005 before moving to Fernandina Beach, Florida a few years later. We now have four current and former UF Political Campaigning graduate students here at Mad Dog.

We are the only firm in the country that has defeated a Republican incumbent in a red or swing state every year since 2010. In 2012, we took back the majority in the Colorado House, and last year we were able to elect Governor John Bel Edwards in Louisiana and Jay Hughes to the state House in Mississippi - defeating the only Republican incumbent to lose in the state.

We have won 33 awards for our work and continue to work in campaigns across the country. Our record in state legislative races is second to none with a nearly 60% win rate against target Republican incumbents. And I still make it to a decent number of UF football games with my family. Go Gators!

What have you enjoyed the most about your time in politics so far?

I enjoy helping candidates get elected when no one else thinks they have a shot. I love the energy and creativity of photo shoots, and finding creative ways to engage voters and get them excited about our candidate and the things we believe in. I enjoyed taking back the Colorado House and seeing a new Speaker and House majority take control; they did more in the next six months than Congress has done in 10 years.

What advice do you have for former and current students?"

When working on a campaign, remember that you control where you sleep: bunking with someone's mom, uncle, aunt, etc. just isn't a lot of fun. Pay attention to the small details: the lack of attention to detail that will erode any trust you might have with your candidate. And listen to your clients: some of our best, most award-winning pieces have come out of conversations with our clients.

Jay Payne (SRCP Media)

What have you been doing since you graduated from the Political Campaigning program?

Immediately after graduating, I went to work for the company I'm still with today, SRCP Media. I started as a production assistant, helping to produce advertising for the firm's clients. I now oversee all components of our creative and production services - from messaging, conceptualization and boarding, to shooting and editing.

What have you enjoyed the most about your time in politics so far?

The 'challenge and reward' aspect of the business. Trying to identify each client's unique message and then deliver it in a memorable way almost always presents a great challenge somewhere in the process. But the reward is equally as great after the ad helps a client.

What advice do you have for former and current students?

Always have a great attitude and take pride in your work. Listen and learn from those who have experience because they know more than you. And most importantly, work the hardest of everyone.

Without necessarily naming names, can you tell a funny story about one of the campaigns you've worked on?

Not a story exactly, but the "acting" resume I've built as a "volunteer extra" for our campaigns is humorous - particularly since I'm typecast, used for pretty much every role in the crime genre. I've been cuffed and thrown in the back of a squad car multiple times, stalked my boss's kids at a playground, abducted a co-worker, and mugged a little old lady (my first gig). I think I'm about ready for a second career on *Law and Order*.

Jon Anderson and family



Jay Payne



Roger Austin, Ph. D.—A Campaigning Program Fixture

Roger Austin recently finished his Ph.D. in Political Science at UF, and is a valued member of the Political Campaigning faculty.

Tell us about yourself, prior to coming to UF.

I am a recovering attorney and full-time political consultant, and have been for 20 years. I am a 5th-generation Floridian and grew up in Jacksonville. I received my B.A. in History from UF. After a few years practicing law, I was able to get into politics, did a few campaigns, and then ended up working for the Republican Party of Florida (RPOF), both as political director and legal counsel.

How did you come to be an instructor for the Campaigning program?

While at RPOF, I met Dr. Craig in Tallahassee and we sort of stayed in contact. Later, when I moved to Gainesville, we became re-acquainted and there came a point in 2001 where they needed someone on short notice to teach POS 6274 (Political Campaigning). I was thrilled for the opportunity to teach at my alma mater, and to teach what I do for a living to folks seeking to do the same.

What lessons did you learn on that journey that would be useful for incoming students?

Never say never. The Jets beat the unbeatable Colts in 1969, and Trump beat the unbeatable Jeb in 2016! Stay tuned in and keep breathing.

What are your responsibilities now for the program?

I help Dr. Craig recruit students and raise money. I also help students get internships, in addition to continuing to teach POS 6274.

Do you have any specific advice for incoming students?

Take the opportunity seriously, read the literature and learn the academic side of politics. Anyone can call themselves a political consultant, but with an intellectual grounding in the academic literature you can place yourself at an incredible strategic hiring advantage. By knowing the debates over polarization and partisanship, and knowing Gerber and Green's experiments with *Get Out The Vote*, and by having written an actual campaign plan

and having done an internship, you'll be able to come in and make a difference on a campaign from day one. In short, your learning curve will be shorter and your paycheck higher because you will have some value-added attached to you that will make you attractive to a campaign.

Creating a Lasting Impact—Cristina Citro

I have the honor of working with Drs. Craig and Martinez plus many alumni to ensure that the Political Campaigning Program and its students have the resources needed to continue their outstanding work.

To accomplish this, we are currently focused on creating the *Political Campaigning Alumni Endowment*. With the generosity of a handful of graduates, we have established the fund and are working to gain the support of other alumni to see that it is fully endowed. This endowment will be able to provide, in perpetuity, support for student awards and scholarships, travel to academic conferences and practical politics workshops, inviting guest speakers, and sponsored events both in Gainesville and throughout Florida.

We are grateful for the enthusiasm and support expressed by so many alumni and friends of the Political Campaigning Program. If you would like to help create a lasting impact by offering your time, career knowledge (including mentoring), or financial resources, please contact me at 352-294-2398 or ccitro@ufl.edu.

Please see p. 8 of this newsletter for additional information about how you might contribute to the Political Campaigning Program.



Right: Cristina Citro is the Assistant Director of Development for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



Left: Dr. Roger Austin

McDonald—Continued from Page 2

tivists. As a consequence, Sanders and Ted Cruz tended to do best in caucus states. The political punditry site FiveThirtyEight (using data, in part, compiled by myself) determined that Clinton would have beaten her rival by an even larger margin if all caucuses had been held as primaries.

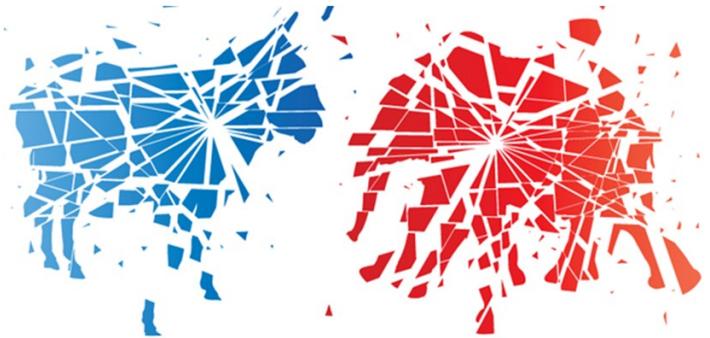
The type of primary is also important. Open or semi-closed primaries again permit voters with weak party ties to participate in a party's primary, bolstering the votes for outsider candidates. Clinton actually won more open primaries than closed primaries, but much of that had more to do with states' demography. FiveThirtyEight's modeling predicted that Clinton's margin over Sanders would be narrower if all states had used open primaries.

Thus, the parties have decided, based on their experiences in 2016, that closed primaries are needed to purge the interlopers from their midst.

I believe that parties are short-sighted in that they are prioritizing controlling the nomination process over other party goals. The Progressive Era reforms were designed to provide citizens greater control over government. Other re-

vide citizens greater control over government. Other reforms, like popular elections for the U.S. Senate and the ballot initiative, were intended to give more voice to the people over party elites. In recent decades, parties have fallen out of favor with the public as people have become more disapproving of the parties and fewer people register with a party.

A late May AP poll found that the public favors primaries over caucuses, and open primaries over closed primaries. Successful parties grow their supporters, and one mechanism to do so is by inviting citizens to participate in the selection of their candidates. Shutting out voters sends a message that they are not welcome, and parties should not be surprised if voters reciprocate come the general election.



Survey Research With Dr. Jim Kitchens—David Bell, UF/PC 2016

Jim Kitchens (an attitude and mass persuasion specialist with a Ph.D. in political communication) became the newest member of the UF/PC faculty in spring 2016 when he taught the campaigning section of Survey Research. Founder of the Kitchens Group (established in 1983), he has served as a pollster and strategist for campaigns at all levels of American politics. Dr. Kitchens also has been a public opinion consultant for numerous corporations and major trade associations throughout the country.

The Survey Research seminar deals with the ins and outs of survey sampling, research design, theories of voter persuasion, and much more. Students were required, for example, to design questions, using examples from previous polls to provide a basic format for their research. They also participated in a roundtable demonstration of a focus group that was taught by a guest lecturer with considerable experience in that area, and in numerous discussions about the role (and occasional inaccuracy) of polls in the 2016 presidential race.

Not only did students learn a great deal in Survey Research but, according to Dr. Kitchens, "It was my first exposure in a while to young people looking at working in politics. Teaching always makes you learn something new or refresh your know-

*Dr. Jim Kitchens
joined the UF Cam-
paigning Faculty in
Spring 2016*



ledge. It was a good review of ideas and theories for me." Asked about the prospect of teaching for us again in the future, Kitchens said that he owed his career to the education he received at UF and felt that this was a way for him to "give something back. The field of political consulting has no licensing or testing procedure. Anyone can hang out a shingle and call themselves a political consultant. Hopefully, the students coming out of this class have a much better understanding of polling, how to use it in a campaign, and how to be more helpful to their future clients."

Asked to reflect upon the Political Campaigning Program as a whole, Dr. Kitchens emphasized its unique blend of academic and practical instruction: "I have a great appreciation for the academic research being done to advance theories related to many areas of human behavior. However, I feel that students are often left with the feeling that something may be interesting – but does it really matter? I like the UF program because it makes the connection. It isn't just a "trade school" for consultants, but rather shows students how to take the theoretical and put it into practical application."

The banner features the text 'UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA' and 'POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING PROGRAM' in white, bold, sans-serif font against a blue background. On the left, there are images of campaign materials like 'Vote' signs and 'OCELA' signs. On the right, there is a white dome, likely the Florida State Capitol.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING PROGRAM

The University of Florida's Graduate Program in Political Campaigning (UF/PC) is designed to provide students with the skills, insights, and experiences that are so critical for success in the ever-changing profession of politics and political consulting. Unlike other programs in professional politics, UF's M.A. in Political Campaigning combines the best of both academic study and practical experience.

By incorporating academic study in the fields of voting behavior, political participation, public opinion, political parties, and political communication, students are presented with a sound theoretical basis that can be used to better understand the "how and why" of political campaigns.

Political Campaigning Program (UF/PC)

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Want to help the UF/PC program? Consider making a tax-deductible contribution. We have several endowments that provide scholarships to our outstanding MA students.

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Ralph E. Gonzalez Independent Spirit Award
William R. Hamilton Memorial Endowment

Checks should be payable to the *University of Florida Foundation*, with the name of the fund on the memo line. Please mail your check to:

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