

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



The Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Program at the University of Pennsylvania offers its students comprehensive instruction in the social sciences, and this year's issue of *SPICE*, like prior publications, showcases the remarkable achievements that can emerge from this interdisciplinary education.

Explaining Abortion Attitudes uses complex statistical methods to model attitudes towards abortion based on the availability of welfare resources and beliefs on sexuality. This paper demonstrates the high caliber of empirical research conducted by PPE students. It is followed by *Rational Choice and Domestic Violence*, which argues for the incorporation of decision theory in domestic violence research and investigates how decision theory can inform policy. The paper also includes compelling first-hand interviews with domestic violence victims in Philadelphia. Next, *A New Generation of Voting*, the recipient of the award for the best paper in this journal, explores how policy changes inspired by Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler's bestselling book *Nudge* can increase youth voter turnout, and discusses the importance of doing so. This paper applies behavioral economics and research on social norms, two cornerstones of the PPE Department. Finally, *An Intercultural Dialogue Between Confucianism and Liberalism* contends that there is a conflict between Confucianism and human rights, and it can be characterized as the conflict between communitarianism and liberalism. The author argues that despite this conflict, the two traditions can complement each other through an intercultural dialogue. This paper exhibits some of the best philosophical work produced by PPE students and its practical applications.

I am proud to present each of these papers as they illustrate one or more of the Five Themes of Study that students may currently pursue: *Choice & Behavior*, *Ethics & the Professions*, *Distributive Justice*, *Public Policy & Governance*, and *Globalization*.

The *SPICE* Editorial Board reviewed many outstanding papers and we

are appreciative of all those who submitted their work for consideration. This journal would not be possible without the exemplary effort of its contributors, authors, and editors. I applaud their enthusiasm for the Program, as well as their expressed commitment to research and scholarship in general, and in the PPE disciplines specifically.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my appreciation to Dr. Sumantra Sen for his invaluable guidance and support. Dr. Sen is an avid supporter of the interdisciplinary studies and was paramount in the establishment of this journal. He also deserves our deep gratitude for serving as a mentor during our years at Penn.

I am confident that the level of scholarship presented in these pages will inspire thought, reflection, and healthy debate. More importantly, it is my hope that it encourages action. While scholarship for its own sake is a worthy use of intellect, it should be most admired when used to solve the problems we face in the world. As students of philosophy we learn how to think deeply and logically about issues; as students of political science we learn the value and inner-workings of human institutions; and as students of economics we learn how to analyze the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. I urge the students of PPE to capitalize on their ability to understand issues through these multiple lenses as they go into the world and tackle its many challenges, all with the goal of making a rich contribution and powerful impact.

To the students, parents, faculty, alumni, and friends of the PPE Program at Penn, the Editorial Board and I hope that you enjoy this year's issue.

Sincerely,



Avi Grunfeld
Editor-In-Chief