



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE  
GOVERNMENT**

Harris School of Public Policy

# Annual Report

2022 - 23





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# Overview

01

The Center for Effective Government is committed to strengthening democracy and improving the capacity of government to solve public problems. Our work this year emphasized the critical role that research can and should play in broader conversations about democracy and reform, the importance of building a network of experts and partners to advance and uplift new ideas, and the need for deep, sustained investment that bridges divides in service of more effective government.







Amid changes in local leadership, the roil of partisan politics, an impending national election, war in Europe, and more, a common challenge remains: the governing institutions that undergird democracy are ill-equipped to handle the pressing issues the public expects them to address. As a result, democracy itself remains under threat, both at home and abroad.

For the past four years, the Center for Effective Government (CEG) has shone a light on these threats, while shepherding resources toward investigating and amplifying reforms and potential solutions. In 2022-23, this meant centering scholarship in all of CEG’s activities, carving out space for an expanding network of researchers and practitioners to meaningfully engage with each other, and deepening our investment in civic leaders best-equipped to grapple with reform ideas in their own work.

This approach is intentional. It emphasizes the critical role that research can and should play not only within the academy, but in larger conversations about democracy and reform. It also emphasizes the importance of building a robust network of experts and partners who, working in tandem and leveraging individual assets, can tackle the challenges facing democracy. And it acknowledges that the work of strengthening democracy with an eye towards more effective governance is the work of a generation—work that will require deep investment, new ideas, and continually bridging divides.

Taken together, these efforts bring needed perspective to a broader discourse among scholars, practitioners, students, the media, and the public at large—and they are bearing fruit.

This year, CEG provided numerous platforms and resources for scholars to ask important questions, interact directly with a wide audience, and inform a more nuanced dialogue on issues of democracy at the local, national, and international levels. In turn, practitioners, students, and others involved in CEG have unique access—through fellowships and executive education programs, exclusive and public events, cross-sector conferences, and more—to world-class scholars and civic leaders who have guided and informed their work in the field. And, with the help of key partners in media and a growing portfolio of distribution channels, ideas for reform and issues of effective governance have a wider reach than ever, shaping public discourse at critical moments of politics and policy-making.

As CEG prepares to mark important milestones in 2024—including our fifth year of operation at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and the 10th

year of our flagship Civic Leadership Academy—our mission has never been more critical. And we are just getting started. CEG’s work in 2022-23 forms a solid foundation for years of continued progress and impact towards a strong and healthy democracy that fuels an effective government.



**WILLIAM HOWELL**  
Director



**SADIA SINDHU**  
Executive Director





## Partners and Co-Sponsors



## Featured In



and more...

## Our Numbers

**30** events hosted in 2022-23,  
featuring more than **70** panelists and speakers.

Network of more than **300**  
faculty affiliates and practitioner fellows.

Podcast episodes downloaded **417,000**  
times by listeners from **178** countries.

**2** new executive education programs  
launched for Chicago leaders.

**22** articles, op-eds, and podcasts published  
through media partnerships.

**20%** growth in both audience  
and engagement on social media.



# Ideas

## 02

Any efforts towards meaningful reform must be built upon sound, evidence-based ideas from across disciplines—innovative and rigorous research on the threats to democratic governance and solutions to ineffective government. CEG encourages scholars to engage deeply with these issues by producing new scholarship and writings, taking part in conferences and symposia alongside their peer academics and practitioners, and more, while supporting early-stage faculty and seasoned experts alike in lifting up their research and translating its lessons to a broader audience of practitioners, students, and leaders.





As a research center housed at a preeminent policy school and a world-class university, scholarship is at the core of CEG’s ethos, theory of action, and programming. As such, CEG’s work aims to provide both traditional and innovative platforms for faculty to explore new questions, synthesize and make sense of existing research and its gaps, engage with each other and the broader reform community to facilitate better understanding of critical issues, and think through how research can inform and enhance the debate over threats to democracy and effective governance.

CEG’s work with scholars embodies the values that define both the Harris School and the University of Chicago: the open exchange of ideas, freedom of expression, and data-driven inquiry. CEG seeks to explore contradictions and disagreements between experts, challenge existing assumptions about our governing institutions, and facilitate dialogue that is grounded in rigorous research. This occurs in closed-door convenings and in media and events in the public square. It involves scholars at UChicago and beyond and, critically, practitioners and leaders who can best leverage scholarship to effect change.

By establishing numerous workstreams and platforms for faculty to engage with the issues of democracy and government reform, CEG has successfully seeded original research, empowered emerging scholars, and injected scholarship into ongoing conversations about the state of our governing institutions and policy challenges.



# Research Support, Funding, and Initiatives

CEG continues to provide direct research support to our faculty affiliates at the Harris School for a variety of efforts that advance the study of our governing institutions and norms, including as part of dedicated research initiatives as well as through one-off research grant awards. CEG also supports affiliated faculty with recruiting and hiring research assistants to support their ongoing research efforts.

## DATA & DEMOCRACY

Understanding and addressing the challenges facing democracy in the digital age—mis- and disinformation, the rise of AI, content moderation of social media, online extremism, and more—and their effect on governments and society requires new inquiry and expertise at the intersection of democracy, public policy, technology, and data science. Data & Democracy, a joint collaboration

between CEG and the University’s Data Science Institute (DSI), launched in March 2022 to ignite interdisciplinary research on the digital challenges facing democracies around the world, and has scaled its activities in 2022-23.

Since its launch, the initiative has awarded over \$500,000 in research funding, seeding four new interdisciplinary collaborations addressing questions on political participation and freedom of expression in the digital age. These projects—led by principal investigators from the University of Chicago’s Harris School of Public Policy, Law School, Social Sciences Division, Computer Science Department, Psychology Department, and Data Science Institute—concluded in 2023 with results that shined a light on social media content moderation, neurological signals of political bias, the relationship between political polarization and dysfunction, and the effect of messaging on online information consumption and behavior. Results were presented to an interdisciplinary group of faculty and initiative affiliates, and opportunities to apply for additional research funding for existing and new research efforts are ongoing.

## Impact



As recipients of an inaugural Data & Democracy research grant, UChicago Political Science Professor Molly Offer-Westort and Computer Science Professor Nick Feamster partnered to develop a Facebook Messenger chatbot which, in connection with a research Facebook page, served as a point of contact to collect information and test a range of messaging interventions. The chatbot was designed to be a flexible tool to reach online populations for a progression of research studies aimed at better understanding social media behavior and information consumption, and testing the efficacy of a chatbot for behavioral change and political engagement.

This approach allowed the researchers to run studies in a naturalistic setting close to respondents’ regular social media engagement. Initial insights gained from this research include experimental evidence that in-depth conversations with a chatbot on social issues can decrease prejudice and change attitudes towards public policy. These conversations demonstrate the potential for chatbots to scale up outreach efforts by governments, public health agencies, and political organizations at lower costs. Research efforts leveraging the chatbot developed through this research will continue with the support of an incoming political science postdoctoral scholar working with Offer-Westort in 2023-24.



To expand the capacity of University of Chicago researchers interested in Data & Democracy, the initiative dedicated resources to support the recruitment and hiring of a dedicated postdoctoral scholar. They will begin their tenure in fall 2023, advancing initial seed funding research under the supervision of a Data & Democracy principal investigator. CEG and DSI have also striven to establish a broader footprint for Data & Democracy, carving out space both for students, practitioners, and the general public to engage meaningfully with research at the intersection of data science and democracy—and to consider its real-world implications.

To do this, the initiative's activities intertwined with existing programming housed at both CEG and DSI. Two of CEG's four 2022 Senior Practitioner Fellows—Tiana Epps-Johnson and Mindy Finn—focused their fellowship efforts on Data & Democracy, hosting public-facing events, mentorship opportunities, and closed-door convenings on intersecting topics. The initiative also partnered with the DSI's Summer Lab program, a highly-selective, 10-week paid summer research program for high school and undergraduate students focusing on rigorous, applied, interdisciplinary data science research and rooted in a cohort community. This allowed students to participate in Data & Democracy-related research projects alongside mentor faculty. Six recipients of Data & Democracy research seed funding participated as mentors in the 2022 program and worked with student research assistants on Data & Democracy grant-funded projects.

## Impact



CEG Senior Practitioner Fellow Mindy Finn partnered with DSI's Clinic Program—a quarterly project-based, for-credit course where students work in teams as data scientists with real-world clients (from social impact, civic, and research organizations) under the supervision of mentor instructors—to pair a student working group with working group with Finn's organization, Citizen Data, on a mission-critical project.

Through their clinic work, students built a model that leveraged Citizen Data's existing database to predict individual's political ideology scores, to help make Citizen Data's targeting and political analysis work more efficient and accurate. This work informed recent reports from Citizen Data on building majoritarian pro-democracy coalitions among American political moderates.







# Conferences

CEG endeavors not only to seed new original research, but to highlight cutting-edge existing research and expertise from leading faculty at the University of Chicago and beyond. Through conferences and symposia, CEG creates purposeful space for dialogue among scholars and, critically, between scholars and a broader community of practitioners interested in their work. In 2022-23, these gatherings tackled critical topics at the forefront of democracy, governance, and political science research at the local, national, and international levels.

## CHICAGO MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE SYMPOSIUM

On February 13 and 15, CEG co-hosted a two-part virtual Chicago Municipal Governance Symposium with Crain's Chicago Business. This was part of a broader partnership with Crain's to study and debate the structure of the city council and its effect on policy in the midst of Chicago's municipal elections. CEG Director William Howell moderated panels featuring professors from the Harris School of Public Policy, University of California, Merced, New York University, as well as leading Chicago practitioners and journalists. Panelists considered opportunities to diminish systemic corruption and increase the Chicago City Council's capacity to address public needs, in coordination with other government bodies, through reforms to size and at-large representation.

## CROSS-ATLANTIC DEMOCRACY CONFERENCE

As part of a broader effort to build an intercontinental network of scholars and practitioners devoted to the study of democracy, CEG—together with the Chicago Center on Democracy (CCD) and the University of Chicago's International Institute of Research in Paris (UC-IIRP)—hosted its first international conference in Paris in February 2023.

The conference, attended by two dozen leading global democracy scholars, experts from NGOs, and pro-democracy activists from the field, featured presentations and roundtable discussions on topics such as democracy in international politics, the war of ideas in Ukraine and beyond, and the role of grassroots activism in global democratic reform. This initial conference laid groundwork

for future efforts by CEG, CCD, and UC-IIRP to expand their network of experts and leverage the network for additional activities. This will include edited and published paper collections, working groups, and ongoing convenings, and future conferences at both the University of Chicago and UC-IIRP.







**EXPANDING THE REACH OF RESEARCH**

CEG makes coordinated efforts across the Center’s public platforms and in the media to uplift research, helping to elevate, enliven, and add nuance to discussions about mainstream issues facing our politics and our democracy. Together with the Harris School, CEG pitches academic experts for articles in major news outlets on current events and issues like mobile voting, voting patterns in the midterm elections, presidential addresses, and Chicago’s municipal finances.

As a result, affiliates have been featured in numerous publications in 2022-23, including AP, Bloomberg, the Chicago Sun-Times, the New York Times, and more. Beyond these one-off efforts, CEG establishes numerous channels—including podcasts, written primers, executive education seminars—for research distribution in various forms in order to reach critical audiences of peer researchers, policy-makers, civic leaders, and public influencers. The results of these efforts are twofold: they provide opportunities for scholars to present unvarnished research and synthesis to broader audiences, and they allow scholars to gather feedback and engage in meaningful discourse that can in turn inform their future work and studies.

**AMERICAN POLITICS CONFERENCE**

Spearheaded by three CEG faculty affiliates, Alexander Fourinaies, Daniel Moskowitz, and Adam Zelizer, CEG hosts an annual American Politics Conference. Discussion and presentations focused on enduring themes of American democracy, including elections, lobbying, design of political institutions, accountability, and representation. Held this year on June 22 and 23 at the Harris School, discussion aims to reflect the diversity and cutting-edge expertise in the field of American politics, with presenters and contributors covering topics relevant to current political discourse in the US, such as electoral competition in collective policymaking and expertise acquisition in Congress.



**Impact**

- 01

190 attendees in the Chicago Municipal Governance Symposium, hailing from academia, federal and local government, consulting firms, nonprofits, Chicago City Council, Chicago municipal campaigns, and the press.
- 02

30 leading scholars participated in CEG’s 2023 American Politics Conference, representing Princeton, Northwestern, and Vanderbilt Universities.
- 03

11 working memoranda produced by global democracy experts as the basis for roundtable discussions at CEG’s Cross-Atlantic Democracy Conference in Paris.



# Engagement

## 03

Effecting meaningful reform requires establishing urgency, a shared and nuanced understanding of the challenges facing democracy, and a network of trust across the reform community. This year, CEG has worked to foster this network with an eye towards injecting scholarship and expertise into broader conversations among leaders, policymakers, and in the public square, while leaning on our partners' own assets and strengths to advance the work of government reform.





Ideas for reform—and the research that underpins them—are only as effective as they are known, debated, understood, and ultimately put into practice. With this in mind, CEG thinks not only about providing scholars with the resources they need to investigate critical questions facing democracy, but how to build a broad network of practitioners, journalists, and other change-makers who amplify and leverage research to great effect. To do this, CEG partners—both formally and informally, both with individuals and organizations—with those who have proven expertise in implementing and advocating for institutional reforms in the field, those who have a vested interest in understanding the nuance, trade-offs, and scholarship behind reform ideas, and those who have platforms and resources to spur informed conversations about democracy and reform in the public square. Taken together, these connections create a network of like-minded yet differently-resourced actors, working in tandem to advance reform.

In 2022-23, CEG built on its track record of successful partnerships with practitioners and media organizations—including with four senior practitioner fellows, Crain’s Chicago Business, and Chicago Public Media—to steer conversations about government effectiveness, institutional design, and particular reform ideas towards research. These efforts, alongside public-facing events, robust direct outreach, and digital engagement, augmented public discourse in ways that informed voters, catalyzed the broader reform community, facilitated new connections between practitioners, and established CEG as a source of valuable expertise on topics related to democracy and government reform.



# Media Partnerships

Effecting meaningful change means successfully steering leading political and policy practitioners towards the threats of democracy and potential solutions to ineffective governance, as well as bringing together a broad community of reformers and arming them with the information, tools, and expertise they need to make a lasting impact on our governing institutions. With programming that establishes bonds between practitioners, CEG’s network of scholars, and students, CEG is tapping the vast wealth of knowledge and expertise from the field in service of our mission.

## SENIOR PRACTITIONER FELLOWSHIP

Launched in 2021, CEG’s Senior Practitioner Fellowship has continued bringing together a diverse set of leaders for in-depth analyses and extended stewardship of institutional reforms. Each year, fellows design and lead myriad activities—public events, student mentorship opportunities, closed-door convenings, and collaborations—unified by a topical theme of each fellow’s choosing that aligns to their work in the field. Fellows also embed into other aspects of CEG’s programming, from research initiatives

to conferences, throughout their year-long tenure. CEG helps uplift the fellows’ work, both at and beyond the Center, in the public sphere and in turn, fellows act as ambassadors of the Center in their organizations and professional networks.

CEG’s 2022-23 Senior Practitioner Fellows represent the breadth and depth of reform-oriented practitioners making progress in critical areas, such as election security and integrity, understanding public opinion, government accountability, political appointments, and more. They are:

- Tiana Epps-Johnson:** Founder and Executive Director, Center for Tech and Civic Life
- Mindy Finn:** Founder and CEO, Citizen Data
- Liz Hempowicz:** Director of Public Policy, The Project on Government Oversight (POGO)
- Rudy Mehrbani:** Senior Director of the Governance Program, Democracy Fund

# Impact

CEG traveled to Washington, DC to host a series of events on catalyzing democracy reform with a curated audience of DC-based leaders and practitioners. The in-person receptions in August 2022 and May 2023 included panel discussions featuring four of CEG’s eight Senior Practitioner Fellows from 2021-22 and 2022-23, in conversation with CEG Director Prof. William Howell and CEG Faculty Affiliate Prof. Anthony Fowler.

The events were attended by representatives of civic organizations (Protect Democracy, the Project on Government Oversight, Third Way, the R Street Institute, the Partnership for Public Service, the Niskanen Center, the Election Trust Initiative), foundations (Democracy Fund, the Hewlett Foundation, POPVOX Foundation), government agencies (Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Transportation), congressional offices, and more.





## MAYORAL CANDIDATE RUNOFF FORUM

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CHICAGO

IOP  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CHICAGO  
INSTITUTE  
OF POLITICS

CS★T

### Media Partnerships



In addition to current fellows, CEG engages often with informal networks of organizational and civic leaders who carry the Center's research and reform framework into their daily professional lives. Former fellows continue to represent CEG and participate in the Center's programming, while peer organizations in the advocacy space regularly cosponsor and attend events and work alongside with the Center as thought partners.

The media—distribution channels that serve as trusted sources of information to their audiences—have vast potential and the critical resources necessary to amplify pressing reform ideas, frame the debate, and influence opinion of leaders and the general public alike. CEG sees enormous value in partnering with media organizations to expand the reach of our research,

our affiliates, and our civic partners —particularly at moments of increased public attention and relevance of reform issues to current events. This year, CEG has built fruitful partnerships with influential local outlets like Crain's Chicago Business and Chicago Public Media, which have carved out space in the public square for extended, in-depth engagement with issues facing democracy and our governing institutions.



### Impact

In May 2023, former CEG Senior Practitioner Fellow and Director of the Brennan Center's Liberty and National Security Program, Liza Goitein, and longtime CEG partner and Director of Governance at the Niskanen Center, Soren Dayton, testified at a hearing of a subcommittee of the U.S. House's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

The hearing concerned “never-ending emergencies,” and the need to reform the national emergency system in the United States. Dayton and Goitein's testimony described how Congress established a clear framework in the 1970s to give presidents the power to act in cases of emergencies but also ensured that Congress could be a restraint

and check that power. They also discussed the potential for a consensus approach to reforming the national emergency system that may also unlock new bipartisan coalitions. Their testimony builds upon work led by Goitein during her CEG fellowship, including a closed-door convening with experts—including Dayton—on presidential emergency powers in 2021.





ONE CITY, 50 WARDS

Beginning in the lead-up to the 2023 Chicago municipal elections, CEG joined forces with Crain’s Chicago Business to run a five-month multi-part series, “One City, 50 Wards: Does ‘the City That Works’ Really Work?”. Through long-form reported articles by seasoned Crain’s reporters, Q&As and op-eds by local leaders and experts, and podcast segments featuring deeper dives into issues, the series explored the deep connections between how Chicago’s city council is designed, how it functions, and how it performs.

DEMOCRACY SOLUTIONS PROJECT

Building on a prior partnership with WBEZ —Chicago’s NPR affiliate—CEG and Chicago Public Media—the parent organization of WBEZ and the Chicago Sun-Times—kicked off an 18-month extended multimedia series, “The Democracy Solutions Project” this May. In the year and a half leading up to the 2024 election, the partnership will investigate and explore the critical issues facing democracy in the city, state and nation. Journalists from the WBEZ and Chicago Sun-Times newsrooms will dig into topics such as how government works, extremist factions in Illinois politics and government, the immigrant experience, corruption and money in politics, polarization and the impact on democracy, election integrity and security, and grassroots organizing.

Chicago Public Media’s community engagement and podcast teams, as well as its music station Vocalo, will also participate with events, audio storytelling and music exploration. In turn, faculty experts, affiliated practitioners, and other partners from CEG will weigh in on the conversation and connect with policymakers, thought leaders and political leaders.

ONECITY | 50 WARDS  
DOES THE CITY THAT WORKS ACTUALLY WORK?



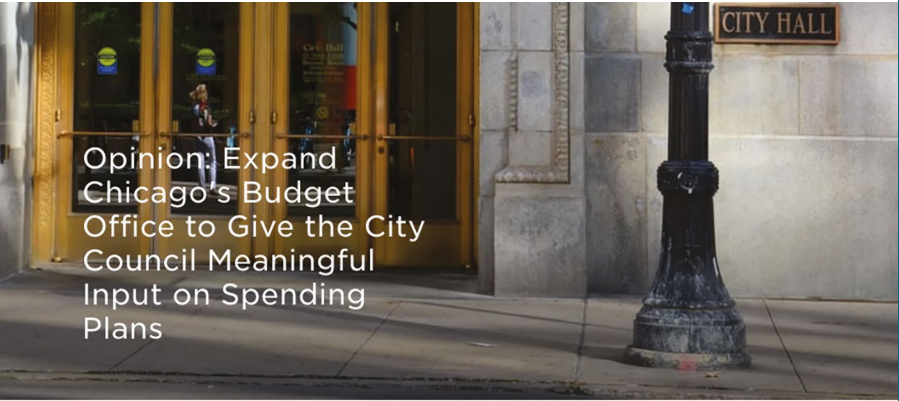
Opinion: Chicago’s City Council Design Needs Re-Examination

Engagement  
Published: Jun 22 2023

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“One City, 50 Wards: Does the City That Works Actually Work?” a joint series from Crain’s Chicago Business and the University of Chicago Center for Effective Government, explores the connections between how Chicago’s city government is designed, how it functions, and how it performs.

By: William G. Howell and Sadia Sindhu



Opinion: Expand Chicago’s Budget Office to Give the City Council Meaningful Input on Spending Plans

Engagement  
Published: Mar 20 2023

Share  
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“One City, 50 Wards: Does the City That Works Really Work?” a joint series from Crain’s Chicago Business and the University of Chicago Center for Effective Government, explores the connections between how Chicago’s city government is designed, how it functions, and how it performs. You can learn more and read other articles from the series [here](#).

By Justin Marlowe



Impact

01 20 weekly written pieces and podcasts produced and published as part of CEG and Crain’s “One City, 50 Wards” series between February and June 2023.

02 Featured authors and contributors included Civic Leadership Academy Fellows Alderman Michael Rodriguez (CLA’18) and Dion Dawson (CLA’23), Harris School professors William Howell and Justin Marlowe, CEG Executive Director Sadia Sindhu, Chicago Inspector General Deborah Witzburg, and more.

03 Series content distributed to a combined list of over 100,000 print and digital subscribers and social media followers.





## Events and Outreach

CEG benefits from a robust network of students, university affiliates, community partners, and peer organizations that serve as an engaged audience for ideas and engagement with issues of democracy and reform. CEG leverages this network through direct digital outreach across multiple distribution channels: press announcements, general and targeted email and newsletters, regular social media posts, and more. And, by producing high-quality events together with partners, the Center highlights synergies across the university and across the reform space, spotlighting and providing wider access to a diverse set of speakers.

### THE DEMOCRACY SERIES

Building on an extended partnership with the Chicago Center on Democracy (CCD) and internationally-renowned book-seller, the Chicago-based Seminary Co-op Bookstores, CEG hosted a book talk in April 2023 for an intimate in-person audience with UCLA Profs. Chris Tausanovitch and Lynn Vavreck, co-authors of “The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy.”

### FOLLOW THE MONEY

In November 2022, CEG and the Project on Government Oversight (POGO) hosted a virtual event “Follow the Money: Lessons Learned from the Federal COVID-19 Response” moderated by CEG Senior Practitioner Fellow Liz Hempowicz. The discussion centered on the great difficulty in tracking federal

dollars past the state level to assess program impact, a conversation with important equity implications across infrastructure, education, and more. Panelists included Michael Horowitz, Chair of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee and Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Justice; Joe Ferguson, Harris Policy Lecturer and Former City of Chicago Inspector General; Aimee Ramirez, Policy and Advocacy Manager at The Chicago Community Trust; and Sean Moulton, Senior Policy Analyst at POGO.

### DATA, DEMOCRACY, AND CIVIL RIGHTS

As part of CEG and the Data Science Institute’s Data & Democracy initiative, CEG hosted an in-person visiting scholar talk at the Harris School with Tufts University Professor Moon Duchin, for an audience of students and faculty. Duchin’s talk focused on the myriad decisions to make about systems and structures for making every vote count towards meaningful representation, showcasing her work at the intersection of math, geography, law, and policy in contemporary American elections. Her presentation will be followed by a talk-back and audience Q&A moderated by David Uminsky, Executive Director of DSI.

In order to achieve the large-scale change needed, reformers and experts must break down silos, go beyond echo chambers, and reach a broad audience of change-makers and citizens alike. CEG seeks to meet this diverse community where they are—across different geographies, sectors, media outlets, and more—by working with key practitioners and experts to distill reform ideas and research into forms that create lasting impressions, meaningful dialogue, and the potential for real progress towards effective governance. This network of trust, shared vision, and myriad assets is essential to CEG’s success.

## Impact

**01** 30 events hosted in 2022-23, featuring more than 70 panelists and speakers.

**02** 200+ attendees for CEG’s “Follow the Money” event, including those representing over two dozen federal agencies, offices of elected officials in the House and Senate, state and local agencies (California Department of Finance, Colorado Department of Human Services, Commonwealth Of Massachusetts), media organizations, higher education institutions, and private sector organizations.

**03** 20% growth year-over-year in audience, impressions, and engagement metrics on CEG’s social media channels.





**Giacomo Ponzetto**  
UPF Adjunct Professor and  
Barcelona School of Economics  
Affiliated Professor, CREI

EPISODE 86 | APRIL 26, 2023

**Does Bad Government Breed Populism?**

Why is populism on the rise across the globe? One story says this movement is driven by anti-elite and anti-establishment sentiment, that they just want to throw the bums out. Another says it’s driven by identity politics, an anti-immigrant pro-nativist ideology. Both stories don’t leave room for much hope. But what if there was another story that not only gives us some hope, but supplies a clear solution?

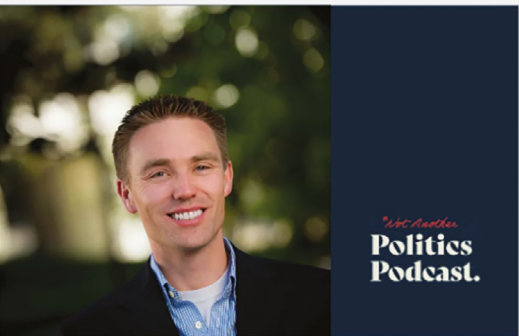


**Anne Meng**  
Associate Professor, University  
of Virginia

EPISODE 81 | FEBRUARY 15, 2023

**Are We in A Period of Global Democratic Decline?**

The popular narrative these days is that democracies around the globe are backsliding. If we turn to countries like Hungary, Poland, and Venezuela, this threat certainly is true—authoritarian dictators have contributed to democratic decline. But what does the global picture reveal? Does the claim hold true?



**Seth J. Hill**  
Professor of Political Science,  
University of San Diego

EPISODE 77 | DECEMBER 21, 2023

**Why Aren’t the Majority of Voters Getting What They Want?**

Lately it feels like politicians are favoring smaller groups of their constituents over the majority of them. If you’ve been skeptical about whether this favoritism exists, there’s a new theory that supports it. Some voters who are more vocal or intense about political issues are more likely to get their local politician’s attention, and these smaller groups of constituents are more likely to get what they want.

**NOT ANOTHER POLITICS PODCAST**

Produced in partnership with the Harris School and hosted by CEG faculty affiliates Wioletta Dziuda, Anthony Fowler, and CEG Director William Howell, “Not Another Politics Podcast” delves into important, timely, and evidence-based scholarship rather than opinion or punditry, featuring interviews with paper authors and lively discussion of political science literature. This year’s episodes used academic papers to begin answering key questions facing our politics, such as “Does Bad Government Breed Populism?”, “Are We In A Period of Global Democratic Decline?”, and “Why Aren’t the Majority of Voters Getting What They Want?”.

Driving research and engaging scholars on the issues of democracy and reform are cornerstones of CEG’s efforts. By supporting this work through direct funding, recruitment of interest-aligned research staff, and established distribution channels for research and synthesis, CEG is building a community of scholars intent on digging into the most critical questions facing our democracy and advancing better-informed conversations about their work.

**Impact**

In 2022-23, 23 Not Another Politics Podcast episodes were produced, featuring 43 guests and paper co-authors with appointments at 26 global universities. They were downloaded 417,000 times by listeners from 178 countries.





# Education

## 04

Supporting the next generation of civic practitioners, leaders, and students in pursuit of rigorous solutions to the challenges facing democracy is critical to the success of the reform movement—and a fundamental part of CEG’s deep connection to the University of Chicago. CEG’s education efforts in 2022-23 included the continuation of its flagship Civic Leadership Academy, a significant expansion of executive education programming for local leaders, and partnership with fellows and peer campus organizations to create meaningful opportunities for students to learn from and engage with government reform experts. All these activities had an emphasis not only on pressing policy challenges, but also on the structural deficiencies that underpin them and threaten democracy at every level.







## Civic Leadership Academy

Training and mentorship are critical tools for facilitating change: a sustained investment in those best positioned to implement, lead, and reform ensures that they are armed with the skills, expertise, and ideas they need to succeed. For CEG, this means providing civic leaders and students with structured learning opportunities and access to the network of scholars and experts within CEG's orbit who can empower them to tackle democracy and reform issues in their own work.

The Civic Leadership Academy—CEG's flagship leadership development program now in its ninth year—is an innovative executive education program for local nonprofit and government leaders that continues to have a profound impact on Chicago's civic infrastructure through the work and accomplishments of its 270 fellows and alumni. This year, it has also launched a new model for programming by CEG in training additional cohorts of practitioners and leaders, tailored to the needs of specific local agencies and governing institutions. These programs leverage both world-class faculty as well as the expertise of peer practitioners with varied backgrounds and perspectives to build trust, impart essential leadership skills, and hone participants' understanding of the interconnectedness between policy challenges, structural deficiencies, and effective governance.

CEG is also uniquely positioned to work closely with the next generation of policy leaders and reformers. Through events tailored specifically to students, mentorship and experiential learning opportunities with CEG-affiliated fellows, paid positions funded by CEG, and more, students can leverage the vast resources and talent available at CEG—and with myriad partner organizations across the university community—to advance their careers and dive more deeply into issues facing democracy.

Taken together, CEG's education initiatives facilitate learning not just for executive training cohort members or graduate students, but also for the CEG-affiliated faculty and experts who act as mentors. Exposure to students and practitioners provide scholars and mentors with valuable perspective, resources, and feedback that helps guide future work and investment in the reform space.





## Impact

University of Chicago Political Science Professor John McCormick, an expert on political thought in Renaissance Florence, 19th and 20th Century continental political and social theory, and the philosophy and sociology of law, has taught lessons on Machiavelli to cohorts of CEG's Civic Leadership Academy for numerous years.

His engagement with the Civic Leadership Academy fellows has helped to inform the direction of his research on leadership, contemporary democratic theory and populism.



My appearances at CLA are invariably the intellectual highlights of my year. It's a thrill to present a master on leadership like Machiavelli to a group of seasoned, experienced veteran leaders such as the CLA fellows. It's truly a privilege to hear them make sense of his timeless, or, as they often show me, his outdated lessons on leadership. I suspect that I learn more from the fellows than they learn from me because of their wealth of leadership experience.

John McCormick, Professor of Political Science

Executive education and training—working closely with groups of civic practitioners to impart critical leadership skills, build community, and frame issues in terms of threats to democracy and structural solutions—has been an essential part of CEG since its inception, with the integration of the already-successful Civic Leadership Academy into the Center's portfolio. As the Academy prepares for its 10th year, CEG has spent 2022-23 extrapolating the Civic Leadership Academy model and launching innovative new programming for other local leaders who call Chicagoland home: from Chicago Public Schools to the Cook County States' Attorney's office to the Chicago City Council.

### CIVIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Civic Leadership Academy (CLA), which was launched in 2014 in partnership with the Harris School of Public Policy and University of Chicago Office of Civic Engagement, is CEG's flagship leadership training initiative. CLA is known across the City of Chicago and Cook County to be an enriching leadership program for the highest-potential civic workers looking to gain leadership skills and reform institutions to work best for the people they serve.

Fellows—30 nonprofit and government leaders from Chicago and Cook County—engage in six months of leadership development programming and education with world-class faculty from UChicago and beyond.







The curriculum, which includes classes under the thematic groupings of foundations, goals, strategy, and communication, is designed to stimulate discussion around leadership challenges fellows face, how they can widen the depth and breadth of their work across sectors, and ways of enacting institutional reform. CLA draws faculty from The College, the Crown School of Social Work, Harris School of Public Policy, Booth School of Business, UChicago Medicine, and more to create a truly interdisciplinary curriculum tapping different skill sets in its leaders. In 2023, visiting faculty hailed from the University of Washington, University of California, Los Angeles, Johns Hopkins University, Northwestern University, and University of Denver.

In addition to biweekly sessions, fellowship cohorts have opportunities to connect with program alumni to see how the value of CLA extends beyond their six months of classes. The Civic Practitioner Leadership Series (CPLS) sessions are more informal, off-the-record conversations with past CLA fellows, who from their vantage point can reflect on how they use their CLA network and experience to grapple with leadership challenges. Topics covered during in 2022-23 ranged from mental health and resilience to identity and access to power.

## Impact

01

In 2022-23, CLA has 270 fellows and alumni in leadership positions across over 100 government agencies and nonprofits in Chicago and Cook County.

02

There is great diversity in the issue areas and organizational reach represented in this cohort. The same is true with the fellows themselves: this year, as with every year of CLA since its start, over 60% of fellows are people of color.

03

16 Civic Leadership Academy alumni appointed to Mayor Brandon Johnson's transition subcommittees in 2023.





## Impact

“The 2023 Global Practicum took place at a seminal moment for both Chicago and Paris: Chicagoans headed to the polls to select the top candidates for mayor and city council run-offs, while a wave of strikes in Paris began against raising the retirement age in France. It provided CLA fellows so familiar with the cultural and social context of their work within Chicago with exposure to how French identity and universalism inform their work and how measurable their impact can be.

One visit in particular focused on historical conceptions of belonging in France. On the first day of the Global Practicum, fellows joined a walking tour with Kévi Donat, founder of Le Paris Noir, a company specializing in telling the story of Black Paris. This tour,

titled “Pioneers,” took the fellows through the history of Black thought leaders, activists, and politicians in Paris. Many CLA fellows like Kenneth Gilkes Jr., director of real estate for ITAV Development, found Donat’s tour to be the perfect start to the week: “Kévi guided us through the nuances of Afro-French history in a way that addressed structural racism, with an intellectual and witty comedic cadence that allowed the information to be digestible and resonate with our group. It was clear that he took a deep dive into history and was able to distill the message or go into greater detail depending on the audience. His tour set the tone for our trip.”

Other signature events throughout the year, such as the annual cohort launch event and Welcome Ceremony in January and CLA Graduation in June, bring together the entire CLA community and give fellows the chance to hear directly from university and prominent local leaders as well as their peers. This year, the 2023 Welcome Ceremony inducted the new cohort of CLA fellows at the historic Chicago Cultural Center. This event featured a toast from Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle (AB’69, AM’77), as well as remarks from Mayor Lori Lightfoot (JD’89), then-Harris School Dean Katherine Baicker, and program alumnus Jermaine Harris (CLA’19). The 2023 CLA Graduation took place at the Keller Center and featured speakers included Andrea Sáenz of the Chicago Community Trust, Dilnaz Waraich of WF Fund, CEG Director William Howell, CEG Executive Director Sadia Sindhu, and 2023 fellow JC Aevaliotis.

Civic Leadership Academy fellows also travel to Paris, France for a weeklong intensive Global Practicum experience. During the week, fellows meet with their counterpart civic leaders in the government and nonprofit sectors to learn about leadership challenges they face, French identity, and governmental structures. In 2022-23, issue areas covered and peer organizations engaged with fellows during the Global Practicum included housing (Paris Habitat, Samusocial de Paris), climate and economic justice (Yellow Vest movement, Climate Academy), arts and culture (American Library in Paris, National Museum on Immigration), and more. During discussion sessions and site visits, fellows took part in dialogue with the speakers, shared leadership strategies, and made lasting connections with speakers and each other.





CEG is active and intentional in its CLA recruitment process, as the Center works to build a representative group of fellows looking to take the next step in their careers. This process included numerous virtual information sessions, social media outreach, and alumni engagement in order to gather a pool of Chicago’s brightest civic leaders.

An important focus of CLA is positioning fellows as stewards of bold ideas for structural change and improving the capacity of institutions to solve the public problems fellows grapple with daily. In 2023, fellows completed an assignment exploring a structural challenge facing Chicago in more depth and propose a series of institutional reforms to address the challenge.

## Impact

In keeping with the mission of CEG, CLA fellows play a crucial role as we work to collectively reimagine our political and social institutions. At the end of the six months of class, this takes the form of the institutional reform capstone project.

Fellows are asked to identify a challenge Chicago faces and a corresponding institutional reform idea that addresses that challenge. To mitigate the challenge, fellows propose a specific reform to either the internal organization of an institution or the structured relationship between two or more institutions. With the skills and strategies learned throughout the six months, the 2023 cohort devised innovative institutional reform ideas. The reform proposals ranged in scope and in the mechanism of the reform

These explorations—covering a wide range of topics from streamlining event permit reform to standardizing city development proposals, to reinstating the Department of Environment—were presented privately to the cohort at the culmination of the program.

itself: one group sought to streamline the event permitting process in Chicago, another proposed to consolidate local government agencies’ processes, and another explored how the City of Chicago could digitize public input and petitions.

The CLA community is positioned to create change, as leaders bring expertise in such a range of sectors and roles. With each cohort, CLA creates a space and model for advancing institutional reform in Chicago and Cook County. Our fellows are empowered leaders with tools, knowledge, and networks to effect the change for our public institutions that they might not otherwise be able to do working in silos.

## Student Engagement







Our constituents expect us to confront the myriad challenges facing our city from day one. As we prepare to do so, it is invaluable to hear from experts with deep knowledge and perspective on the issues that matter most to Chicagoans. I am grateful to the Center for Effective Government for bringing this cohort of incoming leaders together at this critical juncture.

Alderperson Nicole Lee (Harris MPP’05), participant in CEG Incoming Alderperson Orientation



It was an honor to be selected as a participant for the inaugural Executive Leadership Seminar Series alongside so many impressive CPS leaders. Continual learning and development are at the bedrock of our work at Chicago Public Schools, and I’m eager to take part in an innovative program that will further our mission of providing high-quality public education for every child.

Gabriela Brizuela, Deputy General Counsel for the Chicago Board of Education Law Department, participant in CPS Executive Leadership Seminar Series



### CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In 2023, CEG launched an innovative new partnership with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to provide immersive, multi-disciplinary leadership training to senior-level staff at CPS. The Executive Training Seminar Series, comprised of four day-long sessions held over six weeks in spring 2023, aimed to develop the skills of CPS staff to lead their departments, other leaders, and the organization as a whole.

Twenty-one participants engaged in sessions on topics of leadership capacity, negotiation, persuasion, resilience, communication, and more, taught by leading University of Chicago faculty and experienced practitioners from the field. Members of the inaugural cohort were selected by Chicago Public Schools for the Seminar Series from a wide range of eligible employees across CPS departments and

functions who applied to participate. As part of the multi-year partnership, CEG will host the series again in 2024 and 2025, for new cohorts of CPS staff.

### CHICAGO INCOMING ALDERPERSON ORIENTATION

As a new slate of city legislators prepared to take office in May 2023 and embark on the work of governing alongside a new mayoral administration, CEG hosted newly-elected members of the Chicago City Council for a wide-ranging training session on policy and governance issues, led by scholars and experts from the field.

The daylong orientation session—a voluntary program offered to both newly-elected alderpersons and those who won elections following earlier mid-term appointments to the city council—provided incoming alders with access to both faculty and peer civic leaders, who in turn helped characterize the policy and governance challenges, trade-offs, and opportunities that stand before the entire city.

Policy “flash talks,” led by faculty from the University of Chicago, DePaul University, and the George Washington University, covered critical issues facing the city, such as public safety, municipal finance, and housing. Later, panel discussions on policy and governance featured alumni of CEG’s Civic Leadership Academy.

## Impact

**01** 66 Chicagoland civic leaders participated in CEG’s executive education programming in 2022-23.

**02** 14 faculty from disciplines ranging from sociology to political science to law taught in new executive seminars developed for Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago City Council.

**03** Top prize awarded to support the work of the Civic Leadership Academy in sixth annual George V. Voinovich Public Innovation Challenge, co-sponsored by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University and the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), for demonstrating innovative approaches to applied learning or executive education.





# Student Programming and Engagement

Students are an invaluable part of the CEG community. They provide a pool of talent, expertise, and passion for issues of institutional reform and strengthening democracy. CEG strives to engage this community through robust programming and events, opportunities for mentorship, and regular communication. To further increase students' exposure to CEG's mission, work, and affiliates, while supporting and strengthening the broader efforts, CEG remains a valued partner to the Harris School and to peer entities across the campus.

In addition to programming designed in-house, the Center also partners with numerous entities, departments, centers, and institutes to foster strong connections with all University of Chicago students, as well as faculty and staff. At Harris, CEG affiliates are an integral part of the Harris Mentorship Program and mentoring programming for undergraduate policy students.

CEG serves as the link between our affiliates and partner organizations and the Harris Career Development Office and Student Affairs. CLA fellows and alumni often collaborate closely with CEG's partners at the Harris School, and we have intentionally built direct relationships between CLA fellows and students: CLA fellows and alumni—and their work on behalf of Chicago—are often featured in a written pieces at the Harris School, and fellows frequently take part in orientation and mentorship panels and other partner events.

Across the University of Chicago, CEG maintains close working relationships with, among others, the Institute of Politics, UChicagoGRAD, the Office of Civic Engagement, the Chicago Center on Democracy, the Data Science Institute, and Alumni Relations and Development.

## STUDENT-PRACTITIONER DAYS

In 2023, CEG launched its first-ever series of Student-Practitioner Days, in partnership with the Center's Senior Practitioner Fellows. Student-Practitioner Days bring senior fellows to campus for a series of student-facing interactions that provide exclusive access to reform-oriented lunch 'n' learns, career advice through one-on-one office hour sessions, interaction with student organizations, and more.

These days, held in October, January, February, and May, covered a wide range of topics, from advancing democracy reform on Capitol Hill in an era of divided government, to work on protecting and securing our elections and our democracy in the presence of partisan polarization. Student-Practitioner Days garnered significant interest from a broad

range of students, thanks to partnerships with peer campus entities like the Computational Analysis and Public Policy program, the Undergraduate Public Policy Studies program, and the University of Chicago Public Policy Podcast network.



**I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to directly interact with, and learn from, students at the Harris School during my Student-Practitioner Day. Practitioners don't often have a break from their daily work to receive input from such an impressive group of up-and-coming scholars with a broad diversity of backgrounds. Hearing their concerns and reactions to the pressing issues facing our democracy was energizing—and it provides me hope for our collective futures.**

CEG Senior Practitioner Fellow, Rudy Mehrbani



**Meeting Liz and Rudy through [CEG's Senior Practitioner Fellowship] opened my eyes to the critical but unheralded work of ensuring that the government works for everyone at the nuts and bolts level. The topics may not be [at] the top of the headlines but having the right people in the right places in government determines whether it can meet our highest ideals or not. The opportunity to interview them for the podcast allowed me to hone my skills as an interviewer and to help spread awareness about their critical work in the world.**

Graham Harwood (MPP'23), host of University of Chicago Public Policy Podcast's "The Forum"





**CHICAGO POLICY TREKS**

In partnership with the University’s Institute of Politics (IOP), CEG brought together its practitioners with University of Chicago undergraduate and graduate students interested in politics and public service for a Chicago-focused series of immersive policy treks. Six events in 2023, held twice a quarter, explored pressing policy topics such as immigration, equitable transit, Chicago’s municipal election, housing and homelessness, and climate change from a Chicago lens.

Students began each trek with guest speakers, including CEG and CLA affiliates, to open discussion, followed by site visits with partner organizations across Chicagoland. Students visited and heard from practitioners from many CEG-affiliated organizations including The Resurrection Project, Access Living, Metropolitan Planning Council, La Casa Norte, and Northwest Center.

students to engage with a critical piece of CEG’s mission: uplifting scholarship in solutions for practitioners in the civic space. The winning team, composed of three undergraduates, presented their proposal to local transit experts and officials at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Regional Transit Authority.

**INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

In the winter of 2023, CEG launched an exciting pilot program with UChicagoGRAD, the university’s resource center for graduate and postdoctoral students. This partnership matched social science and humanities PhD students with CLA fellows for fully-funded internship opportunities. Fellows in both the non-profit and government space provided students with working experience, mentorship opportunities, and meaningful connections to the practitioner experience.



**EQUITABLE TRANSIT POLICY CHALLENGE**

Also in collaboration with the Institute of Politics, CEG hosted a student policy challenge on equitable transit solutions entitled “Rerouting: Public Transportation for All.”

Eighteen teams of students submitted proposals to improve Chicago’s transit system, covering topics and ideas like expanded Metra routes, transportation demand management, bus shelter repairs, and more. The winning team, as judged by CLA fellows and CEG affiliates, proposed a bus rapid transit network in Chicagoland to decrease wait times, increase ridership, and enhance rider experience.

Five CLA fellows across cohorts and sectors offered their time as advisors to student teams, bringing experience in transit, public-private partnerships, equity, and community engagement. The challenge prompted





# Impact

01

200+ students participated in CEG's four Student-Practitioner Days, including lunch 'n' learn sessions, office hours, and more.

02

100+ students participated in CEG's partner programming with the UChicago Institute of Politics.

03

\$12,000 in funding provided to students placed in summer internships with Civic Leadership Academy host organizations through UChicagoGRAD.

CEG also continues to provide meaningful opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students to work directly in support of CEG's work throughout the school year. In 2022-23, one graduate assistant and three undergraduate interns contributed extensive operational support to the Center and its programming. These opportunities also provide a pipeline for continued engagement with the Center.

As a research center housed at a world-class university, CEG has the unique ability to convene the next generation of leaders and provide them with essential skills, perspective, and context needed to grapple with the most pressing challenges we face. Building on a model of training and trust-building established 10 years ago with the launch of the Civic Leadership Academy, CEG continues to innovate and expand opportunities for bringing those critical lessons to the broader base of civic practitioners working every day on behalf of our city. Likewise, without deep engagement with the community closest to us—students and the myriad entities at the University of Chicago that serve them—we would be unable to build lasting momentum towards the bold ideas for reform essential to strengthening democracy and its institutions. CEG, our friends and partners across the university, and our growing network of practitioners and civic leaders, aim to provide opportunities that enrich students' learning experiences and enliven their interests in democracy and effective government.







## Our Leadership

### WILLIAM HOWELL

William is the Director of the Center for Effective Government and the Sydney Stein Professor in American Politics at the University of Chicago, where he holds appointments in the Harris School of Public Policy, the College, and the political science department, where he serves as chair. He has written widely on separation-of-powers issues and American political institutions, especially the presidency. William is the author or co-author of numerous books, most recently *Presidents, Populism, and the Crisis of Democracy* (with Terry Moe), and his research has appeared in numerous professional journals and edited volumes. William is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a 2023 Guggenheim Fellow, and a former fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. He is the recipient of numerous academic awards on executive politics, the American presidency, and Congress, among others. He has written for a wide variety of media outlets, including the Boston Review, Prospect Magazine, Wall Street Journal, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, and Education Next.

Before joining the University of Chicago, William taught in the government department at Harvard University and the political science department at the University of Wisconsin. He received his PhD in political science from Stanford University.



### SADIA SINDHU

Sadia is the founding Executive Director of the Center for Effective Government. She has served in a variety of strategic roles in the public and private sectors, most recently as director of the University of Chicago's Civic Leadership Academy, prior to its integration with CEG.

Sadia is a Fellow in the second class of the Civil Society Fellowship, a Partnership of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and The Aspen Institute, and a member of the Aspen Global Leadership Network. She serves on the Research Advisory Council for the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that strives for a more effective federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and transforming the way government works. Sindhu is an inaugural member of the Vote is Sacred Thought Leaders Organizing Committee, a national, multi-year, nonpartisan civic engagement initiative led by Interfaith America.

Sadia has previously held roles at Rothschild Global Advisory, the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, and Human Capital Research Corporation. She received an MS in higher education policy from Northwestern University and a BSFS in international politics from Georgetown University.



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those whose continued support and commitment to our mission made 2022-23 at the Center for Effective Government a success.

For their ongoing partnership and support, we express our deep gratitude to the entire Center for Effective Government team, as well as our leaders and colleagues at the Harris School of Public Policy and across the University of Chicago. We also thank CEG's affiliates—faculty, fellows, and alumni—who act as stewards of our mission and ambassadors for our work. To our friends and partners from across campus and beyond in the worlds of academia, advocacy, government, journalism, and in the civic and private sectors, thank you for your collaboration and for working alongside us in service of democracy and government reform.

We are incredibly grateful for the financial support we have received this year from the Harris School, the University's International Institute of Research in Paris, Crown Family Philanthropies, the Harris Family Foundation, the Searle Funds at the Chicago Community Trust, the Walder Foundation, the WF Fund, and Wicklow Capital. Your contributions, as well as your guidance and counsel, enable us to do our best work while helping to secure a strong future for the Center.

Finally, we are thankful to all of you for following the work of the Center for Effective Government and for your commitment to the work of building a more effective government and stronger democracy.





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