



Community Matters

Author : Mike Smith

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I've been lucky enough to be at the Institute and School since 1978—actually the summer of 1977 if you count my time as a summer law clerk. That's a long time, obviously, and yet I'm even more excited about our work than I was in 1978 or in 1992 when I became Director of the Institute of Government.

There are lots of reasons for my continued excitement, but let me mention just one. I've truly come to appreciate the powerful sense of community that exists at the School. It is a special part of our culture and I believe it has been critically important to our success. I love that everyone is working to align themselves with one another in advancing the School's mission, and we don't waste a lot



of time or energy on worrying about distinctions based on status. That is not necessarily the norm in higher education, which is a shame.

Everyone at the School makes an important contribution in different ways—faculty and staff—and you support one another as valued and respected colleagues. I grew up knowing what it feels like to be viewed as occupying a lower status, and I never wanted to work somewhere where those kinds of distinctions mattered to people. They have never mattered to most people at the School. It is great to work with folks who step up and do what needs to be done, and everything else takes a back seat to the overarching goal of having an impact.



We are working to examine that part of our culture and make it even stronger as a part of the strategic foresight process. Rebecca Ryan will facilitate two important faculty-staff conversations on January 7 and 8 aimed at helping us continue to function as one strong, collective team. Please contact Kelley O'Brien if you haven't already signed up for one of the sessions.

As we go into the holiday break, I want each of you to know how much I appreciate everything you do for the School—and for one another. I feel blessed to have worked for so long in such a supportive place where people genuinely care about one another. Our sense of community is a key part of the secret sauce that has made the School successful, and it was on display recently at wonderful retirement receptions for three long-time staff members. I look forward to working with you to make our community even stronger in the future. Thanks again for all of your good work and have a great holiday season.