FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Thompson Center on Public Leadership to Fund Faculty Research and Speakers

MADISON—The Thompson Center on Public Leadership will provide faculty research grants and fund speakers across the UW System in the 2021-22 academic year to address three topics: Preparing for Public Emergencies, Reforming the Administrative State, and Privacy in a Digital World. Applications will be accepted in these priority areas identified by the Center’s governing board for the 2021-2022 academic year. Applications are due on May 20, 2021.

“Our state faces significant challenges,” said Director Ryan Owens. “However, Wisconsin has always been a state of forward-thinking and innovation that often leads the country in public policy reforms. Tommy G. Thompson exemplified and modeled this type of state leadership as Governor. In this same spirit, the Thompson Center seeks to leverage the UW System’s resources once again to assist Wisconsin in identifying a path forward as we navigate public emergencies of the present and future, improve the government’s operations, and address privacy challenges in our increasingly digital world.”

The Center seeks grant applications from researchers across the UW System to conduct research on these three topics. The Center has allocated up to $500,000 for faculty to research these areas and, consistent with the Wisconsin Idea, benefit the state with the results. Application information can be found at thompsoncenter.wisc.edu/research-grants/.

The Center is also accepting applications from UW System schools to hold speaking events. Faculty, departments, and student organizations at any UW campus outside of UW-Madison (where the Center is based and holds other planned events) may apply for speaker grants. The Center has allocated a total of $500,000 to support these efforts. While speakers on the topics mentioned above will be given priority, the Center will entertain applications to host expert speakers on other important leadership related topics. The Center’s goal is to fund high quality speakers who can drive important conversations in Wisconsin. Application information can be found at thompsoncenter.wisc.edu/speaker-grants/.

“We also earnestly want UW System schools to apply for speaker grants,” Owens said. “They can use the funds to bring in thought leaders in these three areas or public leadership more generally.”

COVID-19 has caused substantial disruptions to Wisconsin’s health care systems, to the health of our economy, and to the health of our institutions. In an effort to prepare the state better for future public emergencies, the Thompson Center is continuing a round of grant proposals on public emergencies. Possible proposals may investigate questions such as (but not limited to): How can government and the medical community more effectively respond to public emergencies with things like vaccines, treatments, and expedited research and development?
Governing administrative structures contain a large volume of administrative rules and regulations, and many metrics with which to measure if the system is working effectively. Moreover, the judicial branch is frequently called upon to resolve ambiguities and disputes in administering the law. The Thompson Center requests proposals exploring paths forward for administrative reform, with a particular emphasis on opportunities available to the State of Wisconsin across all disciplines and sectors (e.g., administrative simplification, process improvement, policy evaluation, public data collection/dissemination, evidence-based/outcomes-based reforms) or the effectiveness of existing administrative reform efforts (e.g., REINS Act, 2011 Wisconsin Act 21).

Privacy in the digital world is a similarly important topic in Wisconsin today. The rapid growth of information technology in all aspects of American life and industry—and the relative ease with which information can be accessed, shared, or made available to interested parties—affects all citizens, industries, and governments. The increasingly digital world has altered the ways in which individuals, the private sector, and government operate and interact. The Thompson Center requests proposals exploring what this means for management, regulations, ethics, and standards moving forward.

For more details on these funding opportunities and upcoming events, please visit the Thompson Center’s website at thompsoncenter.wisc.edu.