

Contact: Rachel Boon

**PRESENTATION AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:**  
**“STILL SWINGING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS”**

**Action Requested:** Receive the presentation.

**Executive Summary:** During the 2016 presidential election, Iowa did not deviate from its recent history of being a swing state. In the five presidential cycles since 2000, three of the contests have gone to the Democratic nominee, and two have gone to the Republican nominee. Furthermore, the margins separating the two candidates were twice under 1%. We argue that Iowa's competitiveness can be attributed to three main structural features: 1) the precinct caucuses, 2) the use of a nonpartisan redistricting scheme, and 3) a unique and divided political geography. We will discuss how these features of Iowa politics explain why the state has been competitive in the past, and why we expect it to remain competitive for the foreseeable future.

Dr. Donna R. Hoffman is Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the co-author of *Addressing the State of the Union: The Evolution and Impact of the President's Big Speech*. Her research has been published in such outlets as *Social Science Quarterly*, *Political Research Quarterly*, and *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Donna regularly contributes political commentary as a guest on Iowa Public Radio's River to River and is frequently called upon to explain the Iowa Caucuses and other intricacies of Iowa politics to the national and international media.

Dr. Christopher Larimer is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of *Gubernatorial Stability in Iowa: A Stranglehold on Power* as well as the co-author of *The Public Policy Theory Primer*, *The Public Administration Theory Primer* (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> editions). His research has been published in such outlets as the *American Political Science Review*, *Political Behavior*, and *Journal of Politics*. Chris is a past President of the Iowa Association of Political Scientists and a frequent commentator on Iowa politics to a wide variety of media outlets. He also serves as the political analyst for KWWL television news and writes a blog, "Politics in Iowa," for the station.