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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Five KU students attend campus civic engagement conference at Harvard**

LAWRENCE -- Five University of Kansas student leaders were selected by the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics to attend the Nov. 5 and 6 research and skills training conference at Harvard University's Institute of Politics. The conference focused on sustaining political engagement on college campuses in a nonelection year.

The Dole Institute is one of 20 entities in a coalition called the National Campaign for Political and Civic Engagement led by the Harvard institute to maintain college students' interest in politics. The two-day conference came a year after the strongest voter turnout by 18- to 24-year-olds in more than a decade.

The Dole Institute selected the following five students to attend on the basis of their leadership activity on campus and in the community:

- Nick Sterner, Shawnee senior and KU student body president
- Marc Langston, Wichita sophomore, student senator
- Elizabeth "Liz" Ann Johnson, Edmond, Okla., junior, student senator
- Josh Bender, Sterling senior, Student Senate legislative director
- Elizabeth "Liz" Paige Stuewe, Lawrence sophomore on Board of Directors for Kids Voting Kansas.

"The 2004 elections got America's youth excited about participating in our political system again. We need to maintain this energy on campus and throughout our country," said Harvard IOP Director Jeanne Shaheen. The conference brought some of the best researchers together with student leaders who are turning new research into action on each of their campuses.

Barbara Ballard, associate director for outreach at the Dole Institute, said, "We need to encourage more civic engagement to prepare a new generation of informed leaders. This conference provided five of our Dole Institute students a unique opportunity to engage in a national discussion on maintaining momentum of political engagement on campuses around the country."

The conference featured research and academic experts discussing civic education, the attitudes of students active in community service and campus social movements. The National Campaign also offered research and focus group training, giving students the ability to gauge peer attitudes toward politics and public service on their own campuses.

Established in October 2003, the National Campaign's purpose is to identify obstacles and promote solutions for bridging the divide between young people and political engagement. All partner schools have committed to improving their students' understanding of and participation in public service.

Other participating institutions are: Allegheny College's Center for Political Participation (Meadville, Pa.); Birmingham Southern College's Hess Center for Leadership and Service (Birmingham, Ala.); Clark Atlanta University's Joseph Lowery Institute (Atlanta, Ga.); Elon University's Institute for Politics and Public Affairs (Elon, N.C.); Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa); Louisiana State University's Reilly Center for Media and Public Affairs (Baton Rouge, La.); Ohio State University's John Glenn Institute (Columbus, Ohio); Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics (New Brunswick, N.J.); Saint Anselm College's New Hampshire Institute of Politics (Manchester, N.H.); Tufts University's College of Citizenship and Public Service (Medford, Mass.); University of Oklahoma's Carl Albert Center for Congressional Research and Studies (Norman, Okla.); the University of Rochester (Rochester, N.Y.); the University of Southern California's Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics (Los Angeles, Calif.); the University of Tennessee at Knoxville's Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy; the University of Texas' Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Participation (Austin, Texas); the University of Utah's Hinckley Institute of Politics (Salt Lake City, Utah); the University of Virginia's Center for Politics (Charlottesville, Va.); and Vanderbilt University's Office of Active Citizenship and Service (Nashville, Tenn.).

The Robert J. Dole Institute, established at KU in 1997 to honor the former Kansas senator and presidential nominee, is designed to foster new thinking on major policy issues and encourage student participation and citizen involvement in public service.

Harvard University's Institute of Politics, located at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, was established in 1966 with an endowment from the John F. Kennedy Library Corporation to engage young people in politics and public service. The Institute has been conducting national political polls of America's college students since 2000. More information is available online at [www.iop.harvard.edu/](http://www.iop.harvard.edu/).

The KU students' hometowns, majors, parents and high schools are:

### **DOUGLAS COUNTY**

*From Lawrence*

Elizabeth Paige Stuewe, sophomore planning to major in secondary education, is the daughter of Beth Wasson and Paul Stuewe and a Lawrence High School graduate.

### **JOHNSON COUNTY**

*From Shawnee*

Nick Sterner, senior in political science and psychology, is the son of Joe and Marilyn Sterner and a Mill Valley High School graduate.

**RICE COUNTY**

*From Sterling*

Josh Bender, senior in history, is the son of Mike and Diane Bender and a Sterling High School graduate.

**SEDGWICK COUNTY**

*From Wichita*

Marc Benjamin Langston, sophomore in art history, is the son of Karen and David Langston and a Wichita High School East graduate.

**OKLAHOMA**

*From Edmond*

Elizabeth Ann Johnson, junior in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, is the daughter of Charles and Karen Johnson and a Edmond (Okla.) North High School graduate.