

# John Zumbrunnen

Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Professor of Political Science  
University of Wisconsin, Madison

## Education

Ph.D., Political Science, University of Minnesota, March 2000  
Thesis: *Democratic Politics and Political Judgment in Thucydides*

B.S., Political Science, Southwest Missouri State University, 1993  
*Summa Cum Laude* in the Honors College with Distinction in Political Science

## Academic leadership appointments

### Interim Provost and Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2025-

- Provide supervision, leadership, mentoring for all deans and vice-provosts, with a focus on building capacity for strategic teamwork in academic affairs leadership.
- Engage regularly with shared governance leaders in both formal and informal interactions, with a focus on building relationships, fostering collaboration, and ensuring timely and effective communication.
- In partnership with the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, exercise responsible decision-making for academic budgets, including implementation of FY26 5-7% budget reductions
- Working closely with the Vice Chancellor for University Relations and University of Wisconsin System administration, lead UW-Madison response to and implementation of new statutory general education and instructional workload provisions in Wisconsin Act 15
- In partnership with the Vice Chancellor for Research and the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, oversee the \$150 million Wisconsin Research, Innovation, and Scholarly Excellence (RISE) initiative.
- Work with the Chancellor to develop, implement, and lead the Wisconsin Exchange initiative.
- Oversee planning for and creation of new College of Computing and Artificial Intelligence
- Co-lead with the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration development and implementation of new hybrid budget approach with new activities-based components.
- Partner with the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration and work with deans and vice-provosts to enhance administrative functioning of schools, colleges and other academic units, including finance, human resources, information technology, and facilities.

### Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2023-2025

- New role created upon arrival of Provost Charles Isbell in 2023. Involved in many of the core functions of the Office of the Provost, including but not limited to the following.

- Participated in planning work for Wisconsin RISE. Upon launch of RISE in February 2024, assumed lead responsibility for implementation. Created / creating new processes and structures to facilitate and track hiring; improve infrastructure; and enhance pathways to collaboration on campus.
- Served on the steering committee, co-led by the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, designing and preparing to implement new hybrid budget approach. Chaired budget approach task force on undergraduate tuition allocation
- Participated in Provost-led effort to shape new strategic framework for UW-Madison.
- Served as campus lead for Native Nations UW, the university's effort to coordinate and enhance UW-Madison's approach to learning with and from the tribal nations of Wisconsin. Worked with the UW Tribal Relations director, supervised Native Nations UW coordinator, helped shape strategy, and served as a liaison to Provost and Chancellor.
- With Chancellor's Chief of Staff, co-led UW Madison engagement with [Citizens & Scholars](#) to advance pluralism and civil dialogue on campus.
- Worked with Vice Chancellor for University Relations on new strategic approach and structure for academic public engagement.
- Engaged in a range of issues management, including but not limited to:
  - Served as lead negotiator with Students for Justice in Palestine in May 2024 negotiations that produced agreement to end encampment. Subsequently played key role in implementation of agreement, including facilitating SJP meetings with alumni foundation and board of regents.
  - Following dismissal of Vice Chancellor for Inclusive Excellence, served as "administrative liaison" for Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement. Helped shape strategy for future of student and employee support in context of fluid and complex state and national events.

### **Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, 2020-2025**

- Led transformation of Collaborative for Advancing Learning and Teaching into [Division for Teaching and Learning](#) (DTL). The division grew from ~50 staff and ~\$3 million annual budget in FY20 to ~130 staff and ~\$12 million annual budget in FY25.
  - Guided creation of new Center for Teaching, Learning & Mentoring in 2021
  - Welcomed Morgridge Center for Public Service and Greater University Tutoring Service to DTL in 2022
  - Guided creation of Rebecca M. Blank Center for Campus History in DTL in 2023.
  - Oversaw planning for relocation of Testing & Evaluation Services to DTL in 2025
- Played a central role in continuity of operations and led communications to teaching & learning community during COVID
- Post-COVID, drew on lessons learned to co-create Coordinating the Academic Student Experience (CASE) steering group, with Registrar, Director of Advising, and Vice Provost for Data, Academic Planning and Institutional Research. Created new School/College Instructional Leaders (SCIL) group to help facilitate collaboration among CASE and school/college colleagues.
- Secured \$1 million gift to launch Mental Health First Aid Training program for instructors and advisors.

- Testified before state assembly and senate committees on legislation related to teaching and learning, including bills on critical race theory and ethnic studies general education requirement.
- Created working group on research education to explore enhancements to undergraduate research at UW-Madison; those enhancements are moving forward in the context of the movement to DTL of high impact practices unit formerly in DDEEA.

**Chair, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2017-2020**

- Led department with an annual budget of nearly \$5 million and endowments at the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association of nearly \$20 million. Department included 30 faculty, 11 full time staff, 75 graduate students, and approximately 1000 undergraduate majors.
- Partnered with development staff and department Board of Visitors to advance fundraising efforts.
- Supported undergraduate program staff in launching undergraduate engagement initiative, including peer mentor program, alumni mentor-matching program, two new registered student organizations, and student-led podcast
- Worked to advance a climate of inclusion and belonging with creation of department climate survey and participation in campus “target of opportunity” hiring program
- Collaborated with department staff and Office of Strategic Consulting to sharpen administrative processes.

**Senior Fellow, Educational Innovation Initiative, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2018-2020**

- Co-led a comprehensive inventory and analysis of online courses at UW-Madison
- Co-led creation and shared governance approval of principles for digital education
- Served on a campus level team that led the transition to Canvas as sole campus LMS.

**Faculty Director, Chadbourne Residential College, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2015-2019**

- Served as a member of collaborative leadership team, partnering with residence life, advising, academic affairs colleagues to shape programming for 700-student living learning community
- Had lead responsibility for academic components, including first year seminar, peer mentor program, common read program.

**Director, American Democracy Forum, University of Wisconsin—Madison, 2010-2020**

**Faculty appointments**

Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin—Madison

- Professor, 2012-present
- Associate Professor, 2008-2012

Study Abroad Program Leader, University of Wisconsin—Madison,

- Dominican Republic (2016, 2017)

- Ireland (2019, 2022, 2023, 2024)
- Puerto Rico (2022)
- Ecuador (2023, 2024, 2025, 2026)
- Singapore (2025)

Department of Political Science, Union College

- Associate Professor, 2007-2008
- Assistant Professor, 2001-2007
- Visiting Assistant Professor, 2000-2001

## **Awards and Honors**

Big Ten Academic Alliance Academic Leadership Program, 2018-2019

Alliant Energy Underkofler Excellence in Teaching Award, UW System, 2014-2015.

Fellow, University of Wisconsin-Madison Teaching Academy, inducted Spring 2015.

Phi Beta Kappa Teaching Award, University of Wisconsin, 2014-2015

Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award, University of Wisconsin, Madison. 2011-2012.

Meiklejohn-Powell Fellowship. Integrated Liberal Studies, University of Wisconsin. 2012.

University Housing Honored Instructor Award, University of Wisconsin. S2009, S2012, F2012, F2015, F2018

## **Publications**

### **Books**

Zumbrunnen, John. *Aristophanic Comedy and the Challenge of Democratic Citizenship*. Boydell & Brewer/University of Rochester Press. 2012. E-book edition 2013. Paperback edition 2017.

Subject of roundtables at:

- 2012 Annual Meeting of Northeastern Political Science Association
- 2013 Annual Meeting of Midwest Political Science Association

Zumbrunnen, John. *Silence and Democracy: Athenian Politics in Thucydides' History*. Penn State University Press, 2008. Paperback edition published in November, 2010.

Subject of roundtables at:

- 2009 Annual Meeting of Northeastern Political Science Association
- 2011 Annual Meeting of Midwest Political Science Association

## **Articles and Book Chapters**

Zumbrunnen, John. "Thucydides and Crowds." *The Oxford Handbook to Thucydides*. Edited by Ryan Balot, Sarah Forsdyke, and Edith Foster. Oxford: Oxford, 2017.

Zumbrunnen, John. "Realism, Constructivism and Democracy in the History." In *A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides*, edited by Neville Morley and Christine Lee. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

Zumbrunnen, John. "Persuasion in Comedy and Comic Persuasion" in *The Political Theory of Aristophanes: Explorations in Poetic Wisdom*, edited by Jeremy Mhire and Bryan-Paul Frost; SUNY Press, 2014

Zumbrunnen, John. "Comedy, Tragedy and the Salvation of the City in Aristophanes' *Frogs*." in J. Peter Euben and Karen Bassi, eds, *When Worlds Elide: Political Theory, Cultural Studies and the Effects of Hellenism*. Roman and Littlefield, 2010.

Zumbrunnen, John. "Rejection, Ratification, and the Evolution of a People: The Case of Wisconsin." In *Constitutionalism in the American States*, edited by George Connor and Christopher Hammons. University of Missouri Press, 2008.

Zumbrunnen, John and Amy Gangl, "Conflict, Fusion, or Coexistence? The Complexity of Contemporary American Conservatism." *Political Behavior* 30:2 (June 2008).

Zumbrunnen, John. "Fantasy, Irony, and Economic Justice in Aristophanes' *Assemblywomen* and *Wealth*." *American Political Science Review*, 100:3 (August 2006).

Zumbrunnen, John. "Elite Domination and the Ordinary Citizen: Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and *Knights*," *Political Theory*, 23:5 (October 2004).

Zumbrunnen, John. "Courage in the Face of Reality: Nietzsche's Admiration for Thucydides." *Polity* 35:2 (Winter 2002).

Zumbrunnen, John. "Democratic Politics and the 'Character' of the City in Thucydides." *History of Political Thought* 23:4 (Winter 2002).

## **Book Reviews**

Review of John Lombardini, *The Politics of Socratic Humor*. *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought* 37 (2). 2020

Review of Stephanie Nelson, *Aristophanes and His Tragic Muse*. *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought* 36 (2). 2019

Review of Mary P. Nichols. *Thucydides and the Pursuit of Freedom*. *The Review of Politics* 78 (01). 2015.

Review of Wilfred Major, *The Court of Comedy: Aristophanes, Rhetoric and Democracy in 5<sup>th</sup> C. Athens*. *Polis*, 2015.

Review of Paul Lyons, *American Conservatism: Thinking It, Teaching It*, *Political Science Quarterly*, Winter 2009-2010.

Review of Edith Foster, *Thucydides, Pericles and Periclean Imperialism*. *Polis* 28:1 (2011).

### **Encyclopedia Entries**

“Republic.” *American Governance*. Ed. Stephen L. Schechter. 5 vols. Detroit: Macmillan, 2016.

“Republicanism.” *American Governance*. Ed. Stephen L. Schechter. 5 vols. Detroit: Macmillan, 2016.

### **— Conference Participation and Invited Talks (since 2014)**

Panelist, “#SquadGoals: Why Dynamic Study Abroad Programming Is Built on Relationships,”  
The Forum on Education Abroad. March 2025

Invited Participant, Citizens and Scholars Public Policy Symposium, December 2024

“From Educational Innovation to Strategic Institutional Change: The Relevance of Assessment” Thematic  
Keynote Address at The Assessment Institute. October 2024

Panel Participant, “Bright Spots,” Undergraduate Education at Research Universities (UERU) Teaching &  
Learning Colloquium, November 2021

“Study Away and the Wisconsin Experience,” Keynote Address, International Academic Programs Winter  
Scholarship Ceremony, December 2019

“The (Global) Education of a Professor,” International Learning Community, UW-Madison, September 2019

“Separation of Powers and American Political Thought.” National Constitution Center Summer Teacher  
Institute. July 2019

“The Wisconsin Online Course Inventory: Combining Best Practices and Campus-Specific Goals,” paper  
presented at April 2019 Unizin Consortium Summit.

Keynote, “Benjamin Franklin and Humble Leadership.” Junior State of America, Midwest Fall State,  
November 2018.

Invited Talk, “Benjamin Franklin and Virtue,” Newberry Library/Jack Miller Center Summer  
Institute, July 2018

“Between Principle and Inclination: Franklin on Political Legitimacy” Duke Political Theory Workshop.  
September 2017.

“‘If you can keep it:’ Benjamin Franklin and Constitutional Legitimacy.” Constitution Day Lecture. Duke University. September 2017.

“‘Founded in Opinion:’ Franklin and Hume on Political Legitimacy.” Paper presented at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Invited Talk, “Benjamin Franklin and the Idea of America,” Newberry Library/Jack Miller Center Summer Institute, July 2017

“Creating engaging yet manageable online discussions.” Webinar on online teaching and learning. UW-Madison, May 2017

Invited Talk, “Benjamin Franklin and the Pursuit of Happiness,” Newberry Library/Jack Miller Center Summer Institute, July 2016

Invited Participant, University of Wisconsin-Peking University Workshop on Higher Education, May 2016

“Educational Innovation and UW Political Science,” presented at Political Science Board of Visitors meeting and Political Science Alumni Breakfast Briefing, November 2015

Invited Participant, Jack Miller Summer Institute, Pasadena, July 2015

“Challenges of Blending,” Teaching with Moodle Conference, UW—Madison, April 2015

“Teaching and Learning with Technology: A Faculty Perspective.” Nazarbayev University (Astana, Kazakhstan), March 2015.

“Blended Learning Design Challenges: Large Lecture Courses,” Blended Learning Campus Community, March 2015.

“Online Teaching and Learning,” Summer Term Advisers Luncheon, UW-Madison, February, 2015.

“Benjamin Franklin and the Politics of Humility,” Political Theory Workshop, UW-Madison, April 2015.

Invited Lecture, “Rousseau on Self-Government and Self-Education,” *Great World Texts in Wisconsin*, Center for the Study of Humanities, UW-Madison, February 2015

Invited Lecture, “Benjamin Franklin on Self-Government and Self-Education,” Missouri State University, February 2015

Discussant, “Political Play: Comedy, Tragedy and Performance.” 2014 annual meeting of the Association for Political Theory.

Discussant, First Book Manuscript Workshop, 2014 annual meeting of the Association for Political Theory.

Discussant, “Early American Political Thought and the American Dream,” 2014 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Panel Chair, “Philosophy and the Problems of Citizenship in the Ancient World,” 2014 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Invited Participant, Jack Miller Center Summer Institute, July 2014

“Rhetoric and Education in the Work of Alexander Meiklejohn.” 2014 annual conference of the Rhetorical Studies Association.

Panel on blended learning for Delta Program course “Expeditions in Learning: Blended Learning.” May 2, 2014

Keynote Address. Teaching with Moodle Conference. School of Education, UW—Madison, April 24, 2014

“New Approaches to Teaching Political Theory.” UW Showcase. April 2, 2014.

“Teaching Old Things with New Tools.” Invited presentation at “The Infrastructures of Creativity,” conference at Illinois Institute of Technology, April 11, 2014

“Blending PS 566: Contemporary American Political Thought.” Educational Innovation Series. Department of Political Science, UW—Madison, March 12, 2014

## Grants

“American Democracy Forum,” Funding for conferences, workshops, summer teacher’s forum, postdoctoral fellowships, undergraduate fellows program and assistant professorship obtained through Jack Miller Center. Lead gift plus fundraising total: \$750,000.

Educational Innovation Mini-Grant, E-Text for PS 209, 2015-2016, \$10,000

TeachOnline@UW, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2014-2015, \$4000.

Summer Online Course Development Grant, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2014-2015. \$26,717.25. (extends sabbatical to full year).

“Educational Innovation in Political Science.” Education Innovation Mini-Grant, University of Wisconsin, Madison. 2014-2015, \$1000

Blended Learning Fellowship, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2013-2014. \$4,000.

“Blending and Flipping PS 566: Contemporary American Political Thought.” Education Innovation Fund grant, University of Wisconsin, Madison. 2013-2014. \$19,950.

Constitution Day Grants, 2012, 2013, 2014. \$2000 per year, \$6000 total.

“Benjamin Franklin Initiative of the American Democracy Forum.” Grant from Jack Miller Center, in partnership with the John Templeton Foundation, for postdoctoral fellowship, conferences,

workshops, project assistant. 2013-2016. \$300,000.

“The Tea Party and the Challenge of Democratic Citizenship.” Summer salary funding (one-ninth) for 2012 through UW Graduate School fall research competition.

“The Challenge of Democratic Citizenship.” Summer salary funding (one-ninth) for 2011 through UW Graduate School fall research competition.

“American Studies: Keywords” Faculty Development Seminar, Center for the Humanities, UW-Madison. Fall 2010. Includes \$500 award for research expenses.

“World Democracy Forum.” World Universities Network (WUN) seed grant. 2009. \$2,500.

“Ordinary Citizenship: Democratic Possibilities in Aristophanes’ Comedies.” Summer salary funding (one-ninth) for 2009 through UW Graduate School fall research competition.

“Market Populism, Cultural Conservatism and the Complexity of Conservative Ideology,” with Amy Gangl. Survey funded and conducted by Time-Shared Experiments for the Social Sciences

“The Language of the Market in the Rhetoric of U. S. Politics Elites,” Union College Faculty Research Grant, Winter 2006, \$2100.

“Constitutionalism in Wisconsin,” Union College Faculty Research Grant Union, Fall 2003, \$380.

## Service

### Department, College, University

Gap Year Planning Committee, UW-Madison, 2019-2020

Co-Chair, UW Teaching Academy, UW-Madison, 2017-2018

Co-facilitator, Chair’s Climate Workshop, UW-Madison, 2017-2018

Chair, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Search Committee, Spring 2018

Chair’s Climate Workshop, UW-Madison, 2017-2018

Online Learning Initiative / Online Course Inventory, UW-Madison, 2017-2018.

Program Review Committee, Center for Humanities, UW-Madison, 2017

Information Technology Steering Committee, UW-Madison, 2016-2017

Past Chair, Teaching and Learning Technology Advisory Group, UW-Madison, 2016-2017

Dean’s Ad Hoc Task Force on Teaching and Learning, UW—Madison, 2016-2017

International Student Summer Institute Committee, UW-Madison, 2016-2020

High Impact Practices Working Group, UW—Madison, 2016-2020

Teaching Academy Executive Committee, UW—Madison, 2016-2019

Faculty Appeals, College of Letters & Science, UW—Madison, 2015, 2016

Summer Term Steering Committee, UW—Madison, 2016- 2020

Chair, Canvas LMS Support Subgroup, UW—Madison, 2016-2018

Search and Screen Committee, Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs, UW—Madison, 2015-2016

UW2020 Council, UW—Madison, 2015-2016

Development Chair, Department of Political Science, UW—Madison, Fall 2014-2017  
 Search and Screen Committee, Campus Assessment Specialist, UW—Madison, Fall 2014  
 Chair, Teaching and Learning with Technology—Madison Advisory Group, UW—Madison, 2014-2016  
 Educational Innovation Design Team, Self-Paced, Modularized Learning, UW—Madison, Spring, 2014  
 Faculty Advisor, Pi Sigma Alpha, UW—Madison, 2013-2014  
 Chair, Undergraduate Program Committee, Dept. of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 2013-2014  
 Teaching Evaluation Committee, Dept. of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, Fall 2013  
 Graduate School Research Committee, UW—Madison, 2012-2014; 2015-2016  
 Public Humanities Advisory Board, UW—Madison, 2011-2016  
 Chair, Political Theory Search Committee, Dept. of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 2011-2012  
 Review Committees, Depart. Of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 13 reviews, including 5 tenure reviews.  
 Ad Hoc committee on Madison Initiative Proposal, Dept. of Pol. Sci., UW-Madison, 2010-2011  
 Chair, Political Theory Search Committee, Dept. of Pol. Sci. UW--Madison, 2010-2011.  
 Director, American Democracy Forum, UW-Madison, 2010-present  
 Mellon Humanities Post-doctoral Fellowship Selection Committee, UW—Madison, 2010-2011, 2012-2013  
 Mellon Humanities Post-doctoral Fellowship Steering Committee, UW—Madison, 2009-2011  
 Graduate Admissions Committee, Dept. of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 2009-2010  
 Graduate Admissions Committee, Dept. of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 2010-2011  
 Political Theory Field Chair, Dept. of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 2009-2014  
 Undergraduate Program Committee, Department of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 2008-2009  
 Faculty Senate, UW—Madison, 2008-2009  
 Secretary of Executive Committee, Department of Pol. Sci., UW—Madison, 2008-2009

Intellectual Enrichment Grant Committee, Union College, 2006-2007  
 Member, Departmental Search Committee, Union College, One-Year Position in Comparative Politics, 2006-2007  
 Member, Departmental Search Committee, Union College, Tenure-Track Position in Comparative Politics, 2006-2007  
 Watson Fellowship Committee, Union College, 2006-2008  
 At-Large Junior Rep., Faculty Review Board, Union College, 2004-2005  
 Division II Rep., Organizing Theme Major Advisory Committee, Union College, 2003-5  
 Division II Rep., Liaison Committee for Admissions & Financial Aid, Union College, 2002-5  
 Columnist (“Opposition Research”), Union College *Concordensis*, 2005-6  
 Faculty Adviser, Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society, Union College, 2000-6  
 Coordinator, “Pizza and Politics” luncheon discussion series, Union College, 2000-6  
 Member, Dept. Search Committee, One-Year Position in American Politics, Union College, 2003-2004

### **Professional**

Section Co-Chair, Political Thought and Philosophy, 2014 American Political Science Association Meeting.  
 Member, Foundations of Political Theory First Book Award Committee, 2013.  
 Section Chair, Foundations of Political Thought: Ancient, 2010 Midwest Political Science Association.  
 Editorial Board Member, *Pi Sigma Alpha Undergraduate Journal of Politics*, 2006-2010  
 Referee for *Journal of Politics*, *Political Theory*, *Review of Politics*, *Phoenix*, *American Political Science Review*, *Contemporary Political Theory*, *Transformations*, *Political Studies*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Polity*, *Journal of Health Diplomacy*, *Citizenship Studies*, *Social Movement Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Cornell University Press, Johns Hopkins University Press, University of Rochester Press, Sage, California University Press  
 Tenure/Promotion Reviewer: College of William and Mary, Columbia University, Georgetown University,

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Georgia State University, Loyola Marymount University, Mount Holyoke College, University of Utah, Florida International University, North Carolina State University, Tulane University, Bryn Mawr, Nebraska