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IGS Donor Completes \$250,000 Commitment Two Years Early

Citing the difficult economic challenges facing higher education, Institute of Governmental Studies National Advisory Council member Bill Brandt doubled his scheduled donation to the Institute this year, completing a five-year \$250,000 commitment in just three years.

Mr. Brandt is President and CEO of Development Specialists, Inc., one of the nation's leading firms specializing in the provision of management, consulting and turnaround assistance to troubled or reorganizing enterprises. Widely acknowledged as one of the foremost practitioners in the field of corporate restructuring, bankruptcy and related public policy issues, his firm maintains offices in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, among many other cities. Brandt joined the IGS National Advisory Council in May 2006.

Mr. Brandt also currently serves as the Chair of the Illinois Finance Authority, following appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Illinois Senate. This organization is one of the nation's largest State-sponsored entities principally engaged in economic development and job creation through the issuance of both taxable and tax-exempt bonds for businesses, non-profit organizations and local governmental units.

Given the milieu in which he operates and the current economic climate, Mr. Brandt is acutely aware of the tightening financial pressures on a host of enterprises, particularly on organizations like IGS that rely heavily on grant monies and support from their benefactors.

"These are lean economic times for nonprofit organizations in general, and particularly for California's public system of higher education," Brandt said. "I wanted to show my support for IGS scholars, students, and programs by accelerating this five-year financial commitment."

During a ceremony at the Institute on Feb. 19, Brandt delivered a check for \$100,000, bringing his total donations to IGS during the past three years to \$250,000.

"Thanks to Bill's extraordinary generosity, IGS will continue to pursue its core missions of research, education, and public service even during these hard times," said Institute Director Jack Citrin. "IGS benefits from many wonderful supporters, but no one exceeds Bill's devotion to maintaining the excellence of our programs."

Mr. Brandt's presentation of the \$100,000 check came during a ceremony to award two kinds of research fellowships funded by his annual contribution, the Mike Synar Research Fellowships and the Nelson W. Polsby Grants for Public Affairs Research.

Synar was an eight-term Oklahoma Congressman, and both a close friend of, and inspiration to, Brandt and many others in the political world. He died of a brain tumor in 1996, at the young age of 45.

Polsby was one of the most distinguished political scientists of the 20th century, and was the director of IGS from 1988 to 1999. He passed away two years ago.

The Synar Fellowships award \$3,000 grants to selected Berkeley graduate students, while the Polsby Grants offer awards of up to \$500 to as many as 10 undergraduates conducting research on American politics.

“Berkeley students do compelling research both as undergraduates and graduate students,” said Terri Bimes, director of the IGS Center for the Study of Representation, which administers the Synar and Polsby grants. “Bill’s commitment ensures that our students will be able to complete their work to the best of their ability.”

The Synar and Polsby awards were created through Mr. Brandt’s initial donation to IGS, although his annual contribution also includes funding for discretionary spending on other programs at the Institute.

“Bill has shown time and again that he is a wise and creative advisor to IGS,” Citrin said. “He supports our broad range of programs and events, and without his generosity it would be impossible for the Institute to sustain its wide array of research and public service activities.”