

Alexander C. Furnas, Ph.D.

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Appointments

2020 – Present  **Northwestern University**, Kellogg School of Management, Evanston, Illinois, USA

- **Research Assistant Professor**, Center for Science of Science and Innovation 2021-
- **Faculty Affiliate**, Ryan Institute on Complexity 2024-
- **Faculty Affiliate**, Northwestern Innovation Institute 2025-
- **Faculty Associate**, Institute for Policy Research 2022-
- **Postdoctoral Scholar**, Center for Science of Science and Innovation 2020-2021

2017 – 2020  **University of Michigan**, Department of Political Science, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

- **Rackham Predoctoral Fellow**, Rackham Graduate School 2019-2020
- **Gerald R. Ford Fellow**, Department of Political Science 2017-2019

Education

2020  **Ph.D., University of Michigan**, Department of Political Science, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
American Politics Major *with Honors* and Quantitative Methods Minor
Dissertation title: *Outsourced Congress: How Congress Relies on Outside Organizational Policy Information*
Committee: Richard Hall (Co-Chair), Charles Shipan (Co-Chair), Brendan Nyhan, Arthur Lupia

2012  **M.Sc., University of Oxford**, Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford, United Kingdom
Distinction, Social Science of the Internet.
Thesis title: *You Are Who You Follow?: Semantic Similarity of Political Partisans' Ego-Networks on Twitter*.
Advisor: Sandra González-Bailón

2011  **B.A., Wesleyan University**, Middletown, Connecticut, USA
High Honors, The College of Social Studies
Thesis title: *e-Pluribus Unum: Direct Democracy through Peer Production*

Publications

Refereed Articles

1 Wu, W., Furnas, A. C., Yang, E., Liu, G., Akella, A. P., Song, X., ... Liu, H. (2026). Sci2pol: Evaluating and fine-tuning llms on scientific-to-policy brief generation. In *Proceedings of the international conference on learning representations (ICLR)*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

2 Crosson, J., Lorenz, G., & Furnas, A. C. (2025). Pivots or partisans? proposal-making strategy and status quo selection in congress. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 20(2), 139–181.

3 Furnas, A. C., Fishman, N., Rosenstiel, L., & Wang, D. (2025). Partisan disparities in the funding of science in the united states. *Science*, 389(6766), 1195–1200.
◆Covered in *Time*, *Northwestern Now*, *Kellogg Insight*, *PsyPost*, *Digital Journal*, *EurekAlert!*, *ScienceBlog*, *the Atlantic*, *the Economist*.

4 Furnas, A. C., LaPira, T. M., & Brock, C. (2025). Conflating lobbying and pacs: The surprisingly low overlap in organizational lobbying and campaign expenditures. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 1–9.

5 Furnas, A. C., LaPira, T. M., & Wang, D. (2025). Partisan disparities in the use of science in policy. *Science*, 388(6745), 362–367.
◆Covered in *Nature* (x2), *Splinter News*, *Kellogg Insight*, *The Daily Northwestern*, *Phys.org*, *IFLScience*, *The Journalists Resource at the Shorenstein Center*, *Public News Service*.

6 Fagan, E., & Furnas, A. C. (2024). Lobbying responsiveness to congressional policy agendas. *Policy Studies Journal*, 52(1), 11–29.

7 Fagan, E., Furnas, A. C., Koski, C., Thomas, H., Workman, S., & Connor, C. (2024). The dynamics of issue attention in policy process scholarship. *Policy Studies Journal*, 52(3), 481–492.

8 Furnas, A. C., & LaPira, T. M. (2024). The people think what i think: False consensus and unelected elite misperception of public opinion. *American Journal of Political Science*.
◆Covered in *Psychology Today*, *Slow Boring*, *the Financial Times*.

9 Furnas, A. C., LaPira, T. M., Hertel-Fernandez, A., Drutman, L., & Kosar, K. (2023). More than mere access: An experiment on moneyed interests, information provision, and legislative action in congress. *Political Research Quarterly*, 76(1), 348–364.

10 Ladam, C., Bussing, A., Furnas, A. C., McCrain, J., Miller, D. R., & Porter, R. (2022). The junior americanist workshop series. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 55(3), 552–553.

11 Crosson, J. M., Furnas, A. C., Lapira, T. M., & Burgat, C. (2021). Partisan competition and the decline in legislative capacity among congressional offices. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 46(3), 745–789.
◆2022 Best Publication on Effective Lawmaking from the Center for Effective Lawmaking
◆Named '2021-2022 Top Cited Article' by Wiley Publishers
◆Named '2020-2021 Top Cited Article' by Wiley Publishers.

12 Crosson, J. M., Furnas, A. C., & Lorenz, G. M. (2021). Resources and agendas: Combining walker's insights with new data sources to chart a path ahead. *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 10(1), 85–90.

13 Furnas, A. C., Crosson, J. M., & Lorenz, G. M. (2021). Pandemic pluralism: Legislator championing of organized interests in response to covid-19. *Journal of Political Institutions and Political Economy*, 2(1), 23–41.

14 Crosson, J. M., Furnas, A. C., & Lorenz, G. M. (2020). Polarized pluralism: Organizational preferences and biases in the american pressure system. *American Political Science Review*, 114(4), 1117–1137.
◆2019 Best Paper Award from the section on Political Organizations and Parties of the American Political Science Association.

15 Furnas, A. C. (2020). Coalitions and coordination in washington think tanks: Board interlock among washington dc-based policy research and planning organizations. *Applied Network Science*, 5(1), 1–17.

16 Lorenz, G. M., Furnas, A. C., & Crosson, J. M. (2020). Large-n bill positions data from maplight. org: What can we learn from interest groups' publicly observable legislative positions? *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 9(3), 342–360.

17 Furnas, A. C., Heaney, M. T., & LaPira, T. M. (2019). The partisan ties of lobbying firms. *Research & Politics*, 6(3), 10.1177/2053168019877039.

- ◆ 2017 Best Paper Award from the section on Political Organizations and Parties of the American Political Science Association
- ◆ Honorable Mention for the 2018 Best Paper Award from the Standing Group on Interest Groups of the European Consortium on Political Research (ECPR).

18 Edwards, B., Furnas, A. C., Forrest, S., & Axelrod, R. (2017). Strategic aspects of cyberattack, attribution, and blame. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 114(11), 2825–2830.

Book Chapters

- 1 Furnas, A. C., Drutman, L., Hertel-Fernandez, A., LaPira, T. M., & Kosar, K. R. (2020). The congressional capacity survey: Who staff are, how they got there, what they do, and where they go. In T. M. LaPira, L. Drutman, & K. R. Kosar (Eds.), *Congress overwhelmed: The decline in congressional capacity and prospects for reform* (pp. 75–93). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- 2 Furnas, A. C., & Drutman, L. (2017). Descriptive network analysis: Interest group lobbying dynamics around immigration. In J. Bachner, B. Ginsberg, & K. Wagner Hill (Eds.), *Analytics, policy, and governance* (pp. 91–117). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- 3 Furnas, A. C. (2015). Procurement disclosure in the slovak republic. In E. Gordon & P. Mihailidis (Eds.), *Civic media project* (online supplement). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Book Project

1 Crosson, J. M., Furnas, A. C., & Lorenz, G. (Under Preparation). *Polarizing pluralism: Party competition, interest group strategy, and the resurgent mischiefs of faction*.

Given their usual depiction as parochial and pragmatic policy-seekers, our findings in “Polarized Pluralism” regarding the polarization of modern-day interest groups are puzzling. Particularly in an era wherein predicting party control of government is especially difficult, why would policy-motivated interests seemingly align themselves with just one political party? In this book, we seek to answer this question. To do so, we draw on original large-scale data collection of interest group position-taking over time and analyze these data using cutting-edge computational methods. Through a series of empirical exercises, we test a new theory of interest group partisanship, wherein we argue that the rise of insecure partisan majorities in Congress has led members of Congress to look for signals of allegiance to party, above and beyond the usual signals of alignment of (issue-specific) preferences.

Reports

- 1 Crosson, J. M., Furnas, A. C., Lorenz, G. M. C., & McAlister, K. (2023). The multiplicity of factions: Uncovering hidden multidimensionality within congress and among organized interests. New America.
<https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/the-multiplicity-of-factions/>.
- 2 Furnas, A. C., & LaPira, T. M. (2020). Congressional brain drain: Legislative capacity in the 21st century. New America.
<https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/congressional-brain-drain/>
 - ◆ Cited in the Final Report of The Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, October 2020.
 - ◆ Cited at length in letter from Majority Leader Steny Hoyer and Democratic House Caucus chair Hakeem Jeffries to the chairs of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch strongly urging a 20 percent increase in money allocated to pay congressional staffers (in line with increases that we suggested in our white paper).
 - ◆ Letter from Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and 110 other members of the house sent a letter to the subcommittee urging a similar reform used our finding that staffers leave congress on average, after three years.
 - ◆ 21 percent increase to Members Representative Allowance was included in Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, which was signed into law.

Working Papers

- 1 Crosson, J. M., Furnas, A. C., & Lapira, T. M. (n.d.). *Congressional staffer policy portfolios*.
- 2 Fagan, E., & Furnas, A. C. (n.d.). *Privately-funded think tanks and bias in the u.s. policy advisory system*.
- 3 Furnas, A. C. (n.d.). *Biasing their bosses: Staff ideology, motivated reasoning, and the distortion of information in congress*.
- 4 Furnas, A. C., & LaPira, T. M. (n.d.). *Elite ideology, partisanship & information: Two experiments on political elites*.
- 5 Furnas, A. C., LaPira, T. M., & Benegal, S. (n.d.). *Political elites' partisan beliefs about climate change*. (RR at Environmental Research Communications).
- 6 Furnas, A. C., Shipan, C., & Worthington, A. B. H. (n.d.). *Using model legislation to estimate ideology scores for state legislators*.
- 7 Furnas, A. C., & Wang, D. (n.d.). *Bipartisan-cited science*. **Manuscript under revision at PNAS (revision invited following appeal)**.
- 8 Furnas, A. C., Yin, Y., Gao, J., & Wang, D. (n.d.). *Partisan disparities in the production of science*.
- 9 Hall, R., Van Houweling, R., & Furnas, A. C. (n.d.). *Gaining access without buying it: Campaign contributions, allies, and lobbying on capitol hill*.
- 10 Kim, T., Furnas, A. C., & Wang, D. (n.d.). *Science and polarization of public policymaking: Analysis of u.s. think tanks' policy documents*.
- 11 Mahfouz, B., Furnas, A. C., Mason, M., & Wang, D. (n.d.). *Mapping policy opportunities in science*.
- 12 Saab, A., Furnas, A. C., & Wang, D. (n.d.). *Policy impact and scientific tradeoffs of service on federal advisory committees*.
- 13 Fagan, E., Furnas, A. C., Koski, C., Lee, J., Thomas, H. F., & Workman, S. (2025). *The policy agenda of social scientific research: Assessing institutional alignment, funding bias, and disparities across disciplines*. Working Paper.

Selected Public Writing

- Furnas, Alexander C. and Dashun Wang. "The Party that Keeps Funding Science" *The Atlantic*. February, 17 2026.
- Furnas, Alexander C. and Timothy M. LaPira. "Will House Offices Increase Staff Pay? Hypothetically, Yes. Actually, Maybe Not." *First Branch Forecast*. April 11, 2022.
- Furnas, Alexander C. and Timothy M. LaPira. "Political Elites Are More Supportive of Progressive Policies Than the Average Voter" *Data For Progress*. December 9, 2021.
- Furnas, Alexander C. and Timothy M. LaPira. "Almost a quarter of influential Republicans deny Biden's victory, survey says." *Washington Post's Monkey Cage*. January 12, 2021.
- Furnas, Alexander C. and Michael T. Heaney. "How does changing control of Congress affect the fortunes of lobbying firms?" *Mischiefs of Faction*. October 3, 2019.
- LaPira, Timothy M, and Alexander C. Furnas. "Paying Congress's interns a living wage is a good idea. Paying professional staff one is even better." *Vox*. December 13, 2018.
- Furnas, Alexander C. "Legislative staff are spending an increasing amount of time on constituent services." *LegBranch.org*. April 11, 2018.
- Drutman, Lee and Alexander Furnas. "Who's putting the most money against net neutrality?" *Daily Dot*. September 4, 2014.

Selected Public Writing (continued)

- Furnas, Alexander. "Why Representative Democracies Can't Write Off Transparency." *The Atlantic*. January 16, 2014.
- Drutman, Lee and Alexander Furnas. "K Street pays top dollar for revolving door talent." *Sunlight Foundation*. January 21, 2014.
- Furnas, Alexander. "You Can't Use Twitter to Predict Election Results" *The Atlantic*. May 15, 2012.

Invited Talks, Workshops, and Media Appearances

- "Science in Polarized Policy System," Policy Plenary Talk, American Astronomical Society Winter Conference, Phoenix, AZ January 7, 2026
- "Partisan disparities in the use, trust, production, and funding of science in the United States," School of Computer, Data, and Information Sciences, University of Wisconsin Madison, February 7, 2025
- "Partisan disparities in the use, trust, production, and funding of science in the United States," CNS Research Showcase, University of Indiana Bloomington, February 3, 2025
- "Partisan disparities in the use, trust, production, and funding of science in the United States," Center for Informatics Research in Science and Scholarship Speaker Series, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, November 15, 2024.
- "Partisan disparities in the use, trust, production, and funding of science in the United States," Oxford Reputation Symposium, Oxford University Centre for Corporate Reputation, Said Business School, Oxford University, August 28, 2024.
- "Partisan disparities in the use, trust, production, and funding of science in the United States," University of California San Diego, April 26, 2024
- *The Science of Politics*, Podcast, "Elite Misperceptions of Public Opinion," Niskanen Center, January 2024
- "Doing Data Viz Together How we use data viz in all parts of our lives", Data Analytics & Visualization Expert Speaker Series, Maryland Institute College of Art, September 12 2023
- "False Consensus and Elite Misperceptions of Public Opinion," Center for Effective Government American Politics Conference , University of Chicago, June 22th 2023
- "Fractional Differences in the Use, Trust, and Funding of Science in the United States," Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, April 24th 2023
- "Taking Sides: Party Competition, Interest Group Strategy, and the Polarization of American Pluralism," American Politics & Public Policy Workshop, Yale University, April 19th 2023
- "Fractional Differences in the Use, Trust, and Funding of Science in the United States," College of Social Studies Monday Speaker Series, Wesleyan University, April 17th 2023
- "Politicizing Pluralism: Interest Groups, Party Programs and Issue Polarization," (With Jesse Crosson and Geoff Lorenz), Trinity University, January 13th 2022
- "Politicizing Pluralism: Interest Groups, Party Programs and Issue Polarization," (With Jesse Crosson and Geoff Lorenz), University of Wisconsin - Madison, December 6th 2021
- *Wireframe*, Podcast, "How do designers use data visualization to take the numb out of numbers?", June 7, 2021
- "Data Sources for Interest Group Research," Political Organizations and Parties (POP) Section, September 29, 2021
- "Interest Groups and Representation *with an application to legislative politics in the United States*," ECPR summer school on interest groups and lobbying, University of Ljubljana, July 6, 2021
- *Politics In Question*, Podcast, "How Important is Expertise and Experience in Congress?", September 14, 2020

Invited Talks, Workshops, and Media Appearances (continued)

- “Congress and Information,” Dept. of Pharmacology, University of Michigan, December 2, 2019
- Computing Up*, Podcast, “Zander Furnas on Politics as Computation”, December 1, 2019
- Data Viz Today*, Podcast, “How to Use Data Viz to Bring People Together and Feel Connected”, July 30, 2019
- “2019 Congressional Capacity Survey,” Democracy Fund, February 1, 2019
- “Who Actually Develops Policy?,” New America, March 1, 2018
- “Introduction to Network Visualization,” Johns Hopkins Krieger School, November 11, 2015.
- “Untangling the Webs of Immigration Lobbying,” Data Science D.C., June 18, 2013
- Spark with Nora Young*, CBC Radio, Episode #184, June 3, 2012

Conference Presentations and Posters

- International Conference on Computational Social Science (2024)
- International Conference on Science of Science and Innovation (2022, 2023, 2024)
- Annual Research Conference at the Center for Effective Lawmaking (2022)
- Chicago Area Behavior Workshop (2022)
- American Political Science Association Annual Meeting & Exhibition (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022)
- Outlier Conference (2021)
- Annual Political Networks Conference (PolNet) (2013, 2015, 2016)
- European Consortium for Political Research General Conference (2018)
- Midwest Political Science Association Conference Annual Conference (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024)
- National Council for Science and the Environment Conference (2020)
- Southern Political Science Association Conference Annual Meeting (2018)

Funding

Extramural Funding

2021	New America and Electoral Reform Research Group Grant, <i>New America</i> (\$31,322)
2020	Research Grant, <i>Tides Advocacy</i> (\$19,681)
	Congressional Research Grant, <i>Dirksen Congressional Center</i> (\$3,480)
2019	AWS Cloud Credits for Research, <i>Amazon</i> (in kind \$2,400)
	Humane Studies Fellowship, <i>Institute for Humane Studies</i> (\$4,000)
2018	Research Grant, <i>Democracy Fund</i> (\$10,401)
	Research Grant, <i>Center for Effective Lawmaking</i> (\$2,000)
2017	Summer Fellowship, <i>Government Reform Program, New America</i> (\$11,000)
2016	NSF PolNet Travel Fellowship (\$900)

Intramural Funding

2019-2020	Rackham Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, <i>University of Michigan</i> (\$44,956 plus benefits)
2017-2019	Ford Fellowship, <i>University of Michigan</i> (\$35,316 per year, plus benefits)
2018	Ford Fellowship Research Grant, <i>University of Michigan</i> (\$3,000)
2017	Ford Fellowship Research Grant, <i>University of Michigan</i> (\$3,700)

Funding (continued)

- 2016 └─ Library Data Grant, *University of Michigan* (in kind ~\$5,000)
- 2016 └─ Summer Collaboration Grant, *Political Science, University of Michigan* (\$2,000)
- 2015 └─ ISR-Rackham Summer Training Award (\$2,500)
- 2015 └─ Summer Collaboration Grant, *Political Science, University of Michigan* (\$8,000)
- 2010 └─ Davenport Study Grant, *Wesleyan University* (\$2,500)

Honors & Awards

- 2024 └─ 3rd Place, Berwyn Avenue Bake-off (Savory)
- 2023 └─ Winner, Policy Track, International Conference on Science of Science and Innovation Metascience Hackathon
- 2022 └─ Best Publication on Effective Lawmaking, Center for Effective Lawmaking
- 2019 └─ Silver (Unusual Category), Information is Beautiful Awards
- 2019 └─ Best APSA Paper Award, Political Organizations and Parties Section
- 2018 └─ Honorable Mention Best Paper Award, ECPR Standing Group on Interest Groups
- 2017 └─ Best APSA Paper Award, Political Organizations and Parties Section

Instructional Experience

Teaching

- 2025 └─ Instructional Assistant, Winning with Networks, Kellogg School of Management Executive Education MBA, Northwestern University
- 2025 └─ Co-Instructor, Topics in Computational Social Science, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University
- 2024 └─ Co-Instructor, Topics in Computational Social Science, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University
- 2021 └─ Instructor, R and SQL Workshop, Maryland Institute College of Art
- 2019 └─ Instructor, ICOS Big Data Camp, University of Michigan
- 2018 └─ Instructor, POLSCI 111: Introduction to American Politics, University of Michigan
- 2017 └─ Graduate Student Instructor, Text as Data with Brandon Stewart, (Computational Social Science Initiative Methods Workshop)
- 2017 └─ Graduate Student Instructor, POLSCI 381: Political Science Research Design, University of Michigan
- 2017 └─ Instructor, POLSCI 514: The Use of Social Science Computer Programs, University of Michigan
- 2010-2011 └─ Preceptor, Government Tutorial, College of Social Studies, Wesleyan University

Pedagogical Training

- 2017 └─ Sweetland Writing Center 993, University of Michigan (half-semester training for upper-level writing instructors)
- 2014-2015 └─ POLSCI 993, University of Michigan (two-semester instructor training)
- 2015 └─ GSI Teaching Orientation, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching

Service

- 2025  Editorial Board Member, *Interest Groups and Advocacy*
- 2022-2024  Junior Americanist Workshop Series (JAWS), Organizational Board Member
- 2023  National Science Foundation, Review Committee Member
-  Junior Americanist Workshop Series (JAWS) MPSA Conference-within-a-Conference, Co-Organizer
-  Post-doc Hiring Committee, Center for Science of Science and Innovation, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern
- 2020-2022  Junior Americanist Workshop Series (JAWS), Co-Founding Coordinator
- 2021  Journal Club Coordinator, Center for Science of Science and Innovation, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern
- 2019-2021  Data Visualization Society, Moderator, Facilitator
- 2018-2019  Professional Development Committee, Member, University of Michigan
- 2017-2018  American Institutions Group, Co-Coordinator, University of Michigan
- 2017  American Institutions Search Committee, Member, University of Michigan
- 2015-2016  Interdisciplinary Workshop on American Politics, Co-Coordinator, University of Michigan

Discussant:  JAWS (2020,2021); Midwest Political Science Association (2019,2021); American Political Science Association (2019); "The State of Congressional Capacity Conference", New America Foundation (2018); "The Role of Special Interests in American Politics", University of Michigan (2015); Interdisciplinary Workshop on American Politics, University of Michigan (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018).

Reviewer:  *American Political Science Review; American Journal of Political Science; Journal of Politics; Legislative Studies Quarterly; Political Research Quarterly; Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics; European Journal of Political Science; Social Network Analysis and Mining; PLOS ONE; Interest Groups & Advocacy; Journal of Legislative Studies; British Journal of Political Science; Nature Human Behavior, EPJ Data Science, European Journal of Political Research.*

Skills

- Coding  Python, R, SQL
- Statistical Computing  the Tidyverse in R; Python data analysis libraries (e.g. Pandas, Numpy, Scipy, SciKit-Learn), NLTK and Genesim for text processing and topic modeling, BeautifulSoup and Selenium for web-scraping; rusty STATA
- Applications  Most network analysis tools (especially igraph, statnet, Pajek and Gephi), L^AT_EX, common database, spreadsheet, and presentation software
- Misc.  Data Visualization Consulting

References

Available on Request