

Spring Public Policy Conference



**We Hold These Truths:
The Quest for Liberty**

Tuesday, March 31, 2026 - Thursday, April 2, 2026

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY

HELMS SCHOOL
of GOVERNMENT



LIBERTY UNIVERSITY **JOURNAL OF
STATESMANSHIP
& PUBLIC POLICY**

**Scan here for Conference Schedule
and Virtual Attendance**



“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore,
And do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

-Galatians 5:1, English Standard Version



“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created
equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain
unalienable Rights, that among these are
Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

- The Declaration of Independence



“Liberty, when it begins to take root,
is a plant of rapid growth.”

- George Washington, in a letter to James Madison



CONFERENCE WELCOME

Welcome and thank you for attending the Helms School of Government's 6th annual Spring Public Policy Conference. We have an exceptional lineup of students, guests, and faculty who will be presenting their research on several thought-provoking topics covering a wide range of subjects concerning law, governance, and policy throughout 15 sessions and over 50 papers. I am confident that they will generate discussion, debate, and learning.

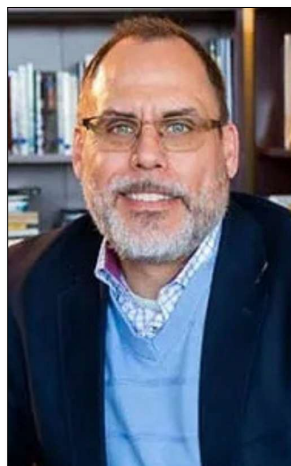
We intend to address the pressing policy issues of our time while providing a Biblical, scholarly, and nuanced perspective on these issues. In honor of recognizing and celebrating our Nation's 250th anniversary, our guests will address and remind us of how the American experiment was founded on such principles that safeguard human freedom and dignity, highlighting the conviction that all people are created equal and endowed with certain unalienable Rights. These discussions will examine laws, regulations, and court decisions that protect Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness, while also drawing from theological and philosophical traditions that affirm public safety, private property, peace among nations, and more.

Thank you for choosing to participate in this year's conference. I pray that it will challenge you to wrestle with these crucial topics and to equip you to have a positive impact in the public arena!

God Bless and Semper Fidelis



Dean Jason Bohm



Dr. Kahlib Fischer



Dr. Mary Prentice

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM.....Breakout Session 1

9:45 AM – 9:55 AM.....Welcome with Dean Jason Bohm

9:55 AM – 11:00 AM.....**Foreign Policy & International Relations Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**
*Colonel Karen Meeker, United States Army
Dr. Mary Prentice, Moderator*

11:15 AM – 12:30 PM..... **Economic Policy Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**
*Delegate Tim Griffin, Virginia House of Delegates
Senator Marke Peake, Virginia Senate
Delegate Wendell Walker, Virginia House of Delegates
Delegate Eric Zebr, Virginia House of Delegates
Professor Aaron Van Allen, Moderator*

12:45 PM – 2:00 PM..... Break-Out Session 2

2:15 PM – 3:30 PM..... **Criminal Justice Policy & Legal Issues Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**
*Joy Cover, President, Freedom 4/24
Dyimon Hills, Survivor Leader with Human Trafficking Experience
Professor Larry Presley, Moderator*

3:45 PM – 5:00 PM..... **National Security & Immigration Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**
*Judge Andrew Arthur, Resident Fellow in the Law & Policy at the Center for Immigration Studies
Dr. Edna Udobong, Moderator*

5:30 PM – 8:00 PM..... **The Quest for Liberty: A Celebration of
America’s 250th Anniversary
in the Montview Ballroom**

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

- 9:20 AM – 10:10 AM..... **Constitutionalism Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**
*Brian Rogers, President of the Jesse Helms Center
Dr. Gai Fardon, Moderator*

- 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM..... Convocation
in the Vine Center

- 12:00 PM – 12:50 PM..... Break-Out Session 3

- 1:05 PM – 1:55 PM..... Break-Out Session 4

- 2:10 PM – 3:00 PM..... Break-Out Session 5

- 3:15 PM – 4:05 PM..... Break-Out Session 6

Thursday, April 2, 2026

- 11:15 AM – 12:20 PM.....**Social Policy Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**
*Dr. Roger Erdvig, Director of the Center for Biblical Worldview Formation, Summit Ministries
Dr. Todd Gathje, The Family Foundation of Virginia
Dr. Kablib Fischer, Moderator*

- 12:20 PM – 12:30 PM..... Closing Remarks with Dean Jason Bohm

Notes

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026

GENERAL SCHEDULE

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM..... Breakout Session 1

Challenges & Opportunities in Africa I in Montview 2580A

Dr. Mary Prentice, Moderator

9:45 AM – 9:55 AM..... Conference Welcome

Dean Jason Bohm

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM.....**Foreign Policy & International Relations Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**

Colonel Karen Meeker, United States Army

Dr. Mary Prentice, Moderator

11:15 AM – 12:30 PM..... **Economic Policy Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**

Delegate Tim Griffin, Virginia House of Delegates

Senator Mark Peake, Virginia State Senate

Delegate Wendell Walker, Virginia House of Delegates

Delegate Eric Zaber, Virginia House of Delegates

Professor Aaron Van Allen, Moderator

12:45 PM – 2:00 PM..... Break-Out Session 2

Challenges & Opportunities in Africa II in Montview 2580A

Dr. Mary Prentice, Moderator

Foreign Policy I in Montview 2610

Dr. Timothy O'Brien, Moderator

Political Philosophy I in Montview 3570

Dr. Scott Daniels, Moderator

2:15 PM – 3:30 PM.....**Criminal Justice Policy & Legal Issues Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**

Joy Cover, President, Freedom 4/24

Dyimon Hills, Survivor Leader with Human Trafficking Experience

Professor Larry Presley, Moderator

3:45 PM – 5:00 PM..... **National Security & Immigration Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**

Judge Andrew Arthur, Resident Fellow in the Law & Policy at the Center for Immigration Studies

Dr. Edna Udobong, Moderator



Colonel Karen Meeker enlisted in the Army in 1986 followed by receiving an ROTC scholarship at Bucknell University, earning her commission after graduation. Meeker received her Master's in Divinity from Harvard Divinity School in 1994 and entered active duty as an Army Chaplain in 1997. Colonel Meeker has served in numerous assignments around the world with her most recent deployment as the Chaplain for CENTCOM Forward Jordan. She holds a Master Parachutist badge, and she is the the first woman chaplain to serve in Special Operations and the first woman chaplain jumpmaster.



Delegate Tim Griffin is a member of the Virginia House of Delegates, where he proudly represents the citizens of District 53. Formerly a Virginia State Prosecutor, he diligently served as an Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney, overseeing thousands of criminal and constitutional cases. He champions Constitutional Rights and Election Integrity. He boasts a diverse legal background, holding expertise in areas like Election, Constitutional, Criminal, Administrative, and Education Law, as well as the Freedom of Information Act. Beyond the courtroom, Tim also instructs as a university professor in the areas of United States Constitution, Civil Procedure, Criminal Justice, and American Legal History.



Senator Mark Peake is a senator for the 8th district of Virginia. He was elected to the Virginia Senate in January 2017. Senator Mike Peake serves on the Courts of Justice, Commerce & Labor, Education & Health, and Rules Senate Committees. He graduated from Virginia Tech and Washington and Lee Law School. Senator Peake has served his community by being involved with many organizations such as the Commonwealth Transportation Board, the Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Lynchburg Bar Association, and the Lynchburg Republican Committee.



Delegate Wendell Walker was first elected in November of 2019, and he represents the 52nd District in the Virginia House of Delegates, which covers the entirety of the City of Lynchburg and a portion of Campbell County.

Wendell has been a consistent voice for the taxpayers, fighting for fiscal responsibility, limited government, and protecting our shared Virginia values. He understands the challenges that currently face our community and has been committed to finding solutions to enhance the quality of life in Central Virginia.



Delegate Eric Zaher has served in the Virginia House of Delegates since January 2024, where he represents the 51st District and seeks to uphold conservative values in government. He graduated from Liberty University, where he spearheaded a resolution supporting the university's initiative to permit students to carry firearms on campus. He represented the Rustburg District on Campbell County Board of Supervisors, served on Campbell County Social Services Board, and was a Chairman to the Campbell County Republican Party.



Ms. Joy Cover serves as the President of Freedom 4/24, a non-profit with the mission of preventing and ending sexual exploitation and trafficking. Freedom 4/24 raises awareness, provides prevention education, and supports organization working to end exploitation by providing a pathway to freedom for trafficked and exploited women and children. Ms. Cover's non-profit work has included experience in identifying priority needs within a community, developing organizational strategy and education initiatives, program implementation and management, and international staff management.



Dyimon Hills was lured in by a monster who was posing as a man. He used the most common tactic to lure victims in the U.S.—the boyfriend tactic. He made her believe they were a couple in love, and Dyimon flew 2,000 miles to be with him. When she arrived, she was forced into the sex industry. “During my time being trafficked, I was brutally beaten, starved, psychologically abused, and passed around as an object with no feelings.” She was sexually exploited and trafficked for a year and three months before making it back home to her family. Now, she lives to tell the story of trafficking and is passionate about preventing it from happening to others. “My hope is that my fellow survivors and I can be the loudest voices in leading the way to end human trafficking, that we can start a powerful conversation and help educate people about the realities of trafficking.”



Judge Andrew Arthur is an internationally recognized as a national-security and immigration expert. He is a Resident Fellow for Law and Policy in the Center for Immigration Studies. He served as staff director for the National Security Subcommittee at the U.S. House of Representatives’ Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and he also served as oversight counsel for immigration on the House Judiciary Committee. After that, he served as an Immigration Judge at the York Immigration Court. He was a trial attorney and Associate General Counsel at the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service as well as an Acting Chief of the National Security Law Division.

Notes

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY | HELMS SCHOOL of GOVERNMENT

250th Anniversary Gala
Sponsored by LU One

A very special evening of celebrating our nation's amazing history!

Tuesday, March 31, 2026 from 5:30pm - 8:00pm
in the Montview Ballroom

Music ★ **Heavy Hor D'oeuvres** ★ **Dancing**
Historical Reenactors ★ **Special Guests**



Bill Barker, the renowned historical actor-interpreter recognized as the foremost portrayer of Thomas Jefferson, will join us to celebrate the nation's anniversary.



Patrick Henry Jolly, the descendent of Patrick and Sarah Henry, will join us to deliver the "Give Me Liberty" speech during the anniversary gala.

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM BREAK-OUT SESSION ONE

<u>Challenges & Opportunities in Africa I</u> in Montview 2580A	
Moderator:	Dr. Mary Prentice
<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Ben Ellis	Violent Extremism in West Africa
Dr. Mary Prentice, Ani Rostomyan, and Tim Hebb	The Potential for Emerging Technologies, Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building Training to Assist in Stabilizing Africa
Juan-Pablo Gonzalez	We Hold These Truths: A Declaration-based Approach to Overhauling International Political Institutions and Establishing Fundamental Rights for the Eradication and Prevention of Sexual Minority Genocide in African Nations

12:45 PM – 2:00 PM BREAK-OUT SESSION TWO

<u>Challenges & Opportunities in Africa II</u> in Montview 2580A	
Moderator:	Dr. Mary Prentice
<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Dr. Mary Prentice, Peter Joilah Lambon, and Ben Ellis	Security Partnerships in West Africa and the Sahel: Strategies to Prevent Violent Extremism and Terrorism Spillover into Ghana
Virgile Samba Moussinga	African Union and Electoral Transparency in Africa
Peter Lambon	Beyond Community Policing: Integrating Stability Policing Models as a Framework in Addressing Conflicts, Instability and Emerging Extremism in Northern Ghana

<u>Foreign Policy I</u> in Montview 2610	
Moderator:	Dr. Timothy O'Brien
<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Kaitlyn Early and Carl Rehberg	Deterrence Under Strain: Assessing US-Japan Strategic Alignment
Jelili Afolabi	Artificial Intelligence, U.S.- China Trade Dynamics, and Their Implications for African Economics: Assessing Opportunities, Risks and Policy Responses
Vincenzo Germinario	Energy, Sovereignty and Geopolitics: The New Italy–United States Energy Alliance in the Context of European Energy Security
Boyan Mitrakiev	The trap of a Multipolar World – BRICS using reflexive control to Lure USA and Europe into liberal self-defeating assumptions

<u>Political Philosophy I</u> in Montview 3570	
Moderator:	Dr. Scott Daniels
Presenter	Topic
Travis Younce	Tribal Sovereignty in the 21st Century: The Divergence of the Founder’s Vision to Embracing Tribal Exclusivity
Virgile Samba Moussinga	A Renewed American Conservatism or the End of the American Republic?
Antonio Lattanzio	The “crisis” of democratic systems: problem or challenge? A Christian approach to the thought of Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859)
Vituli Musukuma	The Rise of the “Religious Nones” and the Future of the American Social Contract: Policy Implications of a Secularizing Electorate

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

GENERAL SCHEDULE

9:20 AM – 10:10 AM..... **Constitutionalism Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**
*Brian Rogers, President of the Jesse Helms Center
Dr. Gai Fardon, Moderator*

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM..... Convocation
in the Vine Center

12:00 PM – 12:50 PM..... Break-Out Session 3

Human Rights in the Global Context in Montview 2580A

Dr. Mary Prentice, Moderator

National Security I in Montview 2610

Dr. David Holt, Moderator

Political Philosophy II in Montview 3570

Dr. Scott Daniels, Moderator

1:05 PM – 1:55 PM..... Break-Out Session 3

Rights, Law, & Theory in Montview 2610

Dr. Tim O'Brien, Moderator

National Security II in Montview 3570

Dr. Carl Rebbert, Moderator

2:10 PM – 3:00 PM..... Break-Out Session 4

[Family Policy](#) in Montview 2580A

Dr. Kablib Fischer, Moderator

[Rights, Law, & Theory II](#) in Montview 2610

Dr. Timothy O'Brien, Moderator

[National Security III](#) in Montview 3570

Prof. Scott Strobel, Moderator

3:15 PM – 4:05 PM..... Break-Out Session 5

[Health Policy](#) in Montview 2580A

Dr. Kablib Fischer, Moderator

[Foreign Policy II](#) in Montview 2610

Dr. Anthony Hughes, Moderator

[From the Founding to the Future](#) in Montview 3570

Prof. Zane Richer, Moderator



Mr. Brian Rogers leads the Jesse Helms Center, a non-profit, non-political foundation which focuses on the principles of the U.S. Founding Fathers, traditional Constitutional values, and the causes which U.S. Senator Jesse Helms championed throughout his 30-year career. Mr. Rogers became the President in June 2019. He graduated from Wingate University and previously served as the executive director of the Defenders of Property Rights and was the director of special projects for the Leadership Institute. He began his policy work in 1993, and he has managed multiple parts of The Jesse Helms Center such as the development of the innovative online curriculum, Free Enterprise Now.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

12:00 PM – 12:50 PM BREAK-OUT SESSION THREE

<u>Human Rights in the Global Context</u> in Montview 2580A	
Moderator:	Dr. Mary Prentice
Presenter	Topic
Ben Ellis, Diana Chako Beato, Daiwei Huang, Kehaun Ren, and Ali Macovei	Countering Violent Extremism in the Sahel Region: Roles of the U.S. and EU
Dr. Carl Rehberg and Dr. Anthony Hughes	Making Just War Tradition (JWT) More Relevant
Daniel Fodorean	Human dignity in the constitutions of post-communist European states: comparative perspectives and implications for religious freedom

<u>National Security I</u> in Montview 2610	
Moderator:	Dr. David Holt
Presenter	Topic
Christopher Boosey and Franklin Patterson	Sanctuary and Sovereignty: The Constitutional and Christian Mandate for Order in U.S. Immigration Policy
Dr. Anthony Hughes	Strategy in a Disrupted World: Evaluating the 2025 NSS Through the Five Disruptions Framework
Peter Aubrey	Foreign Military Financing and Influencing Foreign Policy and National Security Alignment

<u>Political Philosophy II</u> in Montview 3570	
Moderator:	Dr. Scott Daniels
Presenter	Topic
Emma Burns	Epistemological Take on the Problem of Evil: St. Augustine vs. Rousseau
Adam Opp	Private Property in the Social Contract: Locke versus Rousseau
Dylan Coombs	The Return of Regime Politics: Liberator or Tyrant
Hannah Bechtel	Institutional Gateways for Ideological Contestation: A Schattschneiderian Analysis of School Board Policy Disputes

Notes

1:05 PM – 1:55 PM BREAK-OUT SESSION FOUR

<u>Rights, Law, & Theory I</u> in Montview 2610	
Moderator:	Dr. Timothy O'Brien
<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Dimitar Stoyanov	<i>Inter Arma Silent Leges</i> : How War and Emergency Legislation Can Impact Constitutional Foundations and Freedoms?
Samuel Whatley	Predictive Modeling in Social Media Deepfake Identification
Dr. Georgiana Constantin-Parke	The Right to Rock the Cradle: Parental Leave and Flexible Work Arrangements as Social and National Capacity Priorities for 21st-Century U.S. Public Policy
Dr. David Bolton	Cannabis Reclassification: Economic, Legal, and Ethical Implications of Executive Order 12866

<u>National Security II</u> in Montview 3570	
Moderator:	Dr. Carl Rehberg
<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Naomi Park	Applying Aristotle's Ethics to Intelligence
Michael Haak	Reassessing Cartel-Related Activity in the United States: An OSINT-Based Geospatial Analysis
Beata Chako	From "Only We Belong" to "Neither of Us Was Here First:" Re-Thinking the Two-State Solution for Israel and Palestine

2:10 PM – 3:00 PM BREAK-OUT SESSION FIVE

<u>Family Policy</u> in Montview 2580A	
Moderator:	Dr. Kahlib Fischer
<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Alex Petry	When Morals and Systems Fail: Understanding the Roots of Youth Violence
William McCain	Psychological Effects of Problem Gambling on Adolescents
Judson Starling	The Purest Form of Religion: Christians' Obligation to Foster and Adopt
Madeline Schlautman	Manipulation Behind the Pro-Choice Movement

<u>Rights, Law, & Theory II</u> in Montview 2610	
Moderator:	Dr. Timothy O'Brien
<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Lawrence Berdan	The Rise of Quasi-Law: Administrative Governance and the Erosion of America's Constitutional Order
James Black	Judicial Review: A Hallmark of American Jurisprudence, or a Weapon of the Judicial Activists?
Stephen Andy Langeland	A Quantitative Study of the Influence of Natural Rights on Virginia Manumission
Michael Macharia	Human rights, equality and the quest for liberty

National Security III in Montview 3570	
Moderator:	Prof. Scott Strobel
Presenter	Topic
Naomi Park, Rachel Conger, and Hannah Worthen	CCP Political Warfare Campaigns against the U.S.
Dwight Bishop	What the United States can learn from the European Union: The lessons we can take from the E.U. to better our union, promote pluralism, and safeguard state and tribal rights.
Madison Doyle	The Impact of AI on the U.S. Electrical Grid

3:15 PM – 4:05 PM BREAK-OUT SESSION SIX

Health Policy in Montview 2580A	
Moderator:	Dr. Kahlib Fischer
Presenter	Topic
Luke Lee	Health Care Policy
Giancarlo Newsome, Merrick Davis, and Andrew Bibb	Beyond Therapy Culture: Solutions for our Digital Hubris, Spiritual Bankruptcy, and the Moral Imperative of Humility
Venture Ciccarelli	Assisted Suicide and the Absolute: Autonomy or God’s Word?
Lydia Couric	The Illicit Fentanyl Crisis in the United States: Root Causes, Federal Policy Responses, and State-Level Solutions

Foreign Policy II in Montview 2610	
Moderator:	Dr. Anthony Hughes
Presenter	Topic
Alethia Jones	China's Rise
Paul Aginnah	Fostering Ubuntu in Countering the Spread of Terrorist Ideologies in Africa: A Case Study of the East African Community (EAC)
Paul Aginnah	UNSC at a Crossroads: Rethinking Power and Representation in a Multipolar World
Apolo Fernandez	Energy, Computation, and the Nuclear Renaissance: Material Foundations of the Data Economy

From the Founding to the Future in Montview 3570	
Moderator:	Prof. Zane Richer
Presenter	Topic
Katrina Jorquez	Concepts of Nationality and Ethnicity Within America
Ellie Shoemaker	Picking Sides: How Political Polarization Has Impacted the Understanding of the Judicial Restraint found in the Dobbs decision.
Shannon Morlock	The Mission of America: A reminder of who we are and where we go from here.
Katie Cassady	Judicial Legacy, Presidential Controversy: Ronald Reagan’s Appointment of Sandra Day O’Connor

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

GENERAL SCHEDULE

11:15 AM – 12:20 PM.....**Social Policy Panel
in the Montview Ballroom**

*Dr. Roger Erdvig, Director of the Center for Biblical Worldview Formation, Summit Ministries
Dr. Todd Gathje, The Family Foundation of Virginia
Dr. Kahlib Fischer, Moderator*

12:20 PM – 12:30 PM..... Closing Remarks with Dean Jason Bohm



Dr. Todd Gathje is Vice President of Government Relations at The Family Foundation. Prior to joining The Family Foundation, he worked for the Virginia Department of Education and managed the state’s School Choice program. This program has become one of the most effective initiatives for giving more parents greater options in providing the best quality education for their children. He also spent time at the Attorney General’s Office under then Attorney General Bob McDonnell. Dr. Gathje’s public policy interests include school choice, stem cell research, foster care and adoption, and the protection of religious liberty.



Dr. Roger C.S. Erdvig is an author, speaker, and scholar who finds his greatest joy in helping to develop emerging leaders. He serves as the Director for Biblical Worldview Formation at Summit Ministries, the premier Biblical worldview training organization in the U.S. His role with Summit involves speaking and writing to equip schools, churches, parents, and Christian universities as they endeavor to cultivate a Biblical worldview in the emerging generations.

CAMPUS DINING OPTIONS



Liberty University offers a wide variety of dining options throughout campus. Meal times are not built into the conference schedule, so feel free to stop for a bite to eat at any time which suits your personal needs. Use this QR code to learn more about our many available dining locations.



Notes



LIBERTY UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF STATESMANSHIP & PUBLIC POLICY

[The Liberty University Journal of Statesmanship & Public Policy](#) explores topics in the realms of national security, international relations, domestic policy, and political philosophy from a deeply thoughtful, ethical, and Christian perspective. Current residential and online undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students along with faculty of Liberty University are invited to submit original articles by May 15, 2025, for the next issues.



LIBERTY UNIVERSITY | HELMS SCHOOL of GOVERNMENT

Master of Arts in Public Policy

With the new Dual Degree, students can earn a B.S./B.A. in Government: Politics & Policy **and** our Residential M.A. in Public Policy-Think Tank & Policy Research in as soon as **4 years***!

- 6 Credit Hours of Dual Credit
- 9-15 Graduate Credit Hours of Focused Policy Research
- Interact with External Policy Stakeholders
- Present Research in Our Public Policy Journal & Conference

Contact Dr. Kablib Fischer (kfischer@liberty.edu) for more information!

*To complete the degree in four years, students must follow the Government: Politics & Policy/MAPP-Think Tank & Policy Research Dual Degree plan Degree Plan

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY | HELMS SCHOOL of GOVERNMENT

Rise to the challenge and prepare for a career in Criminal Justice, Government, International Relations, Pre-Law, Public Policy, and more from the [Helms School of Government](#). Learn from professors who have held esteemed positions in government while also being grounded in the Christian faith.

