In Memoriam

David W. Rohde

The discipline of political science experienced a profound loss on June 20, 2026, with the passing of one of its most influential and respected scholars, David W. Rohde. For more than fifty years, Dave played a pivotal role in defining and advancing the study of American political institutions, with a particular emphasis on the United States Congress. His groundbreaking scholarship, unwavering dedication to the profession, and extraordinary mentorship of countless generations of students have left an indelible mark on the field.

After earning his Bachelor of Science degree from Canisius College and subsequently completing his PhD at the University of Rochester, Dave devoted over three decades to Michigan State University. During his tenure there, he ascended from the position of assistant professor to become a University Distinguished Professor, a testament to his remarkable academic achievements. Along the way, he served as department chair, directed the Political Institutions and Public Choice Program beginning in the mid-1990s, edited the prestigious *American Journal of Political Science*, chaired the American Political Science Association's Legislative Studies Section, and was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 2005, Dave joined the faculty at Duke University, where he continued his distinguished career by serving as co-director of the Political Institutions and Public Choice Program, mentoring yet another generation of graduate students until his retirement several years ago. His professional accomplishments reflect both the breadth of his intellectual interests and the enormous respect he garnered from colleagues throughout the discipline.

Dave's scholarly contributions fundamentally reshaped the study of Congress. His pioneering research on legislative organization, congressional parties, electoral dynamics, and institutional development influenced multiple generations of political scientists. His seminal book, Parties and Leaders in the Postreform House, transformed the way scholars understand party leadership and legislative organization, while his work on Conditional Party Government fundamentally altered the prevailing understanding of party leadership in the modern House of Representatives. This theory has become one of the most widely cited and influential frameworks in legislative studies. Simultaneously, his collaborations with eminent scholars such as John Aldrich, Paul Abramson, Morris Fiorina, Norman Ornstein, and many others demonstrated his remarkable ability to advance important research through enduring and productive scholarly partnerships.

Yet those who knew Dave often speak first not of his extensive publications but of his generosity as a mentor and teacher. I entered the Political Institutions and Public Choice Program at Michigan State in the fall of 1997, when Dave served as its director. Like countless graduate students before and after me, I benefited enormously from his thoughtful guidance and support. Dave possessed a rare and remarkable ability to challenge students intellectually while making them believe wholeheartedly that they could meet those challenges successfully. He asked difficult and probing questions, expected careful and critical thinking, and insisted on rigorous and thorough scholarship, but he did so with patience, humility, and genuine encouragement. He treated graduate students as developing colleagues, giving us both the confidence and the responsibility to become independent and capable scholars.

Many of the lessons I learned from Dave extended well beyond research design or congressional politics. He demonstrated how to mentor with generosity and kindness, how to offer constructive criticism without causing discouragement, and how to cultivate a scholarly community built on mutual respect and collaboration. Nearly three decades later, I still find myself drawing upon his example in working with my own graduate students. His influence continues to shape not only my own career but also the experiences of the many students I have had the privilege to mentor over the years.

Dave's impact on the profession can be measured in many ways: through his influential publications, his distinguished service to academic institutions and professional organizations, the research traditions he helped establish, and the countless scholars whose careers he helped launch and nurture. His intellectual legacy will continue to guide and inspire the study of Congress for many years to come. Equally enduring, however, is the personal legacy he leaves behind through the students, collaborators, and colleagues who were fortunate enough to know him and be touched by his wisdom and kindness.

David Rohde made political science a stronger and more vibrant discipline, Michigan State and Duke richer intellectual communities, and all of us who learned from him better scholars and mentors. He will be deeply missed by the academic community and beyond, but his influence will continue to be felt in classrooms, conference panels, journal pages, and mentoring relationships for generations to come.

— Jamie L. Carson, UGA Athletic Association Professor of Public & International Affairs II, University of Georgia

Raul Pacheco-Vega

Dr. Pacheco-Vega was a professor at FLACSO Mexico affiliated with the Methodological Laboratory (Laboratorio de Metodos). His career was distinguished by his contributions towards mixed method studies, public policy and environmental policies, with a special focus towards topics such as water governance, climate change, and vulnerable communities.

FLACSO Mexico recognizes his academic legacy, his intellect, and the lasting impact he had on those who shared academic spaces and friendship with him. We express our sincere condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, students and the academic communities he took part in. May he rest in peace.

—FLACSO Mexico ■

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