



Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce  
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## Spring 2019 Candidate Questionnaire At-Large Eau Claire City Council General Election: April 2

**What's it about:** There are 5 At-Large seats on the 11-member Eau Claire City Council, who will be elected to 3-year terms this spring. On April 2, the top 5 vote getters will be elected to those seats.

**Election Day: Tuesday, April 2, 2019.** Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**Early voting:** Weekdays from Monday, March 18 to Friday, March 29. The Elections Office is located through the alleyway behind 203 S. Farwell Street.

**Who can vote:** The election is open to all eligible voters who live in the City of Eau Claire. The At-Large City Council positions are elected based upon vote totals in the entire city.

**Where you vote and who is on your ballot:**

- Go to [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov) Enter your voting address to learn which races are on your ballot and where to vote.

### **About this questionnaire:**

The Good Government Council (GGC) is a committee of the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce dedicated to encouraging voter participation and providing members of the business community with non-biased information about candidates' positions on important issues. Although the Chamber is active in policy issues, it is non-partisan and does not endorse political candidates.

**Who is running:** All 10 individuals who will be on the ballot on April 2 answered this questionnaire. On the following pages, you will find their answers as provided by them. The candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

Kirk Ausman	John Lor
Kate Beaton (incumbent)	Kate Martin
Laura Benjamin	Donald Motzing
Catherine Emmanuelle (incumbent)	Dale Poynter
David Klinkhammer	Kyle Woodman

### **Candidate Questions:**

1. What are your background and qualifications for this position, and why are you a candidate?
2. What is the role of the City Council in fostering economic development, business maintenance and commercial growth in the city?
3. The 2019 budget process involved the adoption of several amendments at the final City Council budget meeting, shifting funds from one line item to another, including creating new programs and positions. Given Eau Claire's Council-Manager form of government, what is the appropriate process in developing and finalizing the City's annual budget?
4. Q4. Some issues that the City Council has debated within the past year have been criticized as topics more appropriate to be dealt with on a state or national level. Others agree that Council members should spend time on any issue they believe is important to the community. What is your view on determining which issues are appropriate for the Council's time and attention?

**Q1. What are your background and qualifications for this position, and why are you a candidate?**

**Kirk Ausman:**

I have been the president of two Neighborhood associations.  
Chairman of the Eau Claire Housing Advisory Board  
President of Eau Claire Regional Arts Council  
Member of the Pablo Center at the Confluence Design Committee  
Owner of my own Business

I have spent a life in service to my community and would like to continue that service on the City Council.

**Kate Beaton (i):**

I've served on the city council for 3 years and have sat on various boards and commissions including Waterways and Parks Commission, Housing Authority, Appointments Committee, and the Visit Eau Claire Grants Committee. I also served on the update committee for the Comprehensive Plan before being elected. In my day job, I work for a nonprofit advocating for state policies to protect our natural resources.

I am an alum of UWEC with a degree in social work and environmental science. I got my start in community leadership working with the downtown farmers market to found the program Market Match, making healthy, local food accessible to low-income residents. I coordinated with businesses, local hospitals and insurance agencies, the non-profit community, and local governments to raise funds and build the infrastructure for the program.

The program jump started my interest to serve my community and has since served hundreds of neighbors.

**Laura Benjamin:**

Hello! My name is Laura Benjamin, and I moved here in 1999 to attend UW - Eau Claire. With 20 years in the area, and seeing the community change and evolve, I believe that I am ready to be one of the 10 servant leaders who sit on the City Council to continue to move our community forward.

My experience as an entrepreneur and in the entrepreneurship community would bring a unique background to the City Council. While I am still studying the ins and outs of government operations, I have had to work for the last 8 years balancing the needs of a budget with the quality of services, and the the needs of a staff of, on average, 6-10 people. Sustainability is an absolute must. I also believe in servant leadership and the bottom-up approach, and that particularly in government, it is important to weigh in ideas from people of diverse backgrounds in one's decision-making process.

**Catherine Emmanuelle (i):**

I want to provide leadership that helps Eau Claire be resilient, move forward, and thrive, and humbly ask for your vote. I attended CVTC and graduated from UW-Eau Claire. I work as the Area Extension Director for UW-Madison, Division of Extension, in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. I am the second-longest serving city council member, since being appointed in 2012 and re-elected in 2013 and 2016. I serve on the Visit Eau Claire Board of Directors, and am the Chair for the Destination Development Committee. I also serve on the Redevelopment Authority, Downtown Eau Claire Inc, and the League of Wisconsin Municipalities Policy Advisory Council. In 2017, I received the Outstanding Recent Alumnus Award from the UW-Eau Claire. My husband is a small business owner, musician, and educator. Together, we have three children and live in the Historic Randall Park Neighborhood.

**David Klinkhammer:**

Since graduating from UWEC with a BS degree, I've been a resident and homeowner of Eau Claire. While serving four terms as the representative of District Two on the EC City Council, I was selected to serve on the Plan Commission, Redevelopment Authority, Waterways and Parks Commission, the Library Board and many other Boards and Commissions.

**John Lor:**

My name is John Lor. I am excited to announce my candidacy for an at-large city council seat in Eau Claire. I strongly believe the love I hold for our community, my public service commitments, and my prior leadership experiences have prepared me well to serve and represent the city as whole.

My wife and I are self-employed. We own 19 rental properties in Eau Claire that contain about 54 units. At the same time, I also working full time as real estate agent from 1998 to present for American Realty Partner. I jointed the Keller Williams Integrity Realty of Hudson office as January 2019. Since 2006, I have been licensing sale agent for Hmong American Insurance Services to sale affordable life insurance to the Hmong Communities.

**Kate Martin:**

I have been a Chippewa Valley resident for over 15 years. I am a homeowner, taxpayer, full-time professional employee, and mother of three. I consider myself to be a practical, reasonable person with common sense.

I have been very displeased with some of the decisions of the current council. I am tired of seeing my earned tax money spent frivolously. I support decisions that make the best use of the taxpayers' money in the City of Eau Claire. My money. Your money. Money that we work for. I want to establish a core budget that supports the people and departments that take care of the City of Eau Claire. Keep it safe. Keep it clean.

I believe that the council needs change. Why not vote for me?

**Donald Motzing:**

I have had a 45-year history of working in diversity of professions in the public & private sectors. I have worked for a large Fortune 100 corporation and two small businesses here in the Chippewa Valley.

My professional experience, and owner/operator of student housing has informed me that risk taking entrepreneurs need a business supporting council that removes barriers to be a successful enterprise. I will be the council member that listens to the concerns and issues of the business community of Eau Claire.

**Dale Poynter:**

My background is both academic and professional. I have a Master of Architecture degree and was an Assistant Professor of design at the University of Illinois School of Architecture for six years and have been an Architect for 34 years. My wife and I chose to move to Eau Claire nearly 30 years ago; I am currently a small business owner in downtown Eau Claire (SDS Architects) and have three grown sons. I have served our community through participation on the Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors, the city's Landmarks Commission, CVTC's Architecture Advisory Committee, and as a BSA Cubmaster and Scoutmaster (My three sons and I are all Eagle Scouts).

I believe my background and life experiences have prepared me for positions of leadership. I am a good listener and I recognize the need to have input from others in order to make use of their experience and understanding. Years of interacting with a multitude of different people have increased my patience beyond what I would have thought possible. I believe it is important to make decisions rationally -- based on objective information rather than subjective emotions -- and that people must take responsibility for their own actions.

I am a candidate because I believe that the personal agendas of some current council members have superseded sound leadership, and that a desire to promote special interests has resulted in shortsighted and ungrounded decisions and legislation.

**Kyle Woodman:**

I was born in Eau Claire and have spent most of my life in Eau Claire and the surrounding area. My occupation has been in construction for the majority of my life and I still spend much of my summers as a Heavy Equipment Operator doing excavation work on projects in Eau Claire. In more recent years I started a business conducting in-home care for developmentally disabled and elderly people. I own and operate a state licensed adult family home that my wife and I currently manage. Five months ago I became a father to a baby boy. My wife and I couldn't be more proud! Being a resident in the city of Eau Claire, raising my family, running my business, and working construction on the streets of our city has given me a much invested interest in the success and the direction of our city. That's why I am running for Eau Claire City Council.

## **Q2. What is the role of the City Council in fostering economic development, business maintenance and commercial growth in the city?**

### **Kirk Ausman:**

The city must maintain the infrastructure (sewer, water, and roads) as a basic start. It must have first rate police and fire protection. On top of that they must help make the city a place where people want to live and work. To do this it must have parks and recreational facilities and facilitate artistic/cultural venues.

The planning and engineering departments should work with builders and developers to keep with the spirit of the city's comprehensive plan.

Eau Claire is well known as a vibrant place to live and work. A safe place to raise a family. The task ahead is to balance the needs of the population with the resources available. Commercial growth helps to create jobs and higher wages.

The City Council by being a friend to business can help meet many of the social goals without legislating mandatory measures.

### **Kate Beaton (i):**

The city's economic development strategy has long been to cultivate a community that people want to live in by investing in our parks, trails, infrastructure and quality of life as a key way to draw workforce, employers, and industries to our city. As a young professional who moved here for college and decided to stay in Eau Claire, work here, buy a home here, and spend my money here, I know this strategy is working!

The City Council must play an active role in continuing to foster that pro-growth business climate and a pro-resident city climate. As a Council member, I have been an advocate for this winning strategy that has contributed to Eau Claire having the 4th lowest unemployment out of Wisconsin's largest municipalities.

### **Laura Benjamin:**

The City Council cannot create a culture of economic and business development all on its own, however it can balance the promotion of business interests alongside goals of job creation and wages, using its best judgment, so that our community thrives. I believe it can also foster the connections between public and private services, incentivizing new start-up activity and job creation above a certain wage level within our community.

When it comes to entrepreneurship, I believe that City Council can create opportunities to connect the various resources and services available, so that in addition to incentives, the entrepreneur community is further enabled to access resources and programs to get their ideas off the ground.

### **Catherine Emmanuelle (i):**

I have a strong voting record that supports excellent public infrastructure, responsible tax incremental financing, existing and new businesses, the revolving loan fund, and business improvement districts. The City Council should be a partner to create a community that lifts aspirations up, incubates new ideas, maintains successes, and supports risk-taking. A guiding principle in my vision for our city is to make decisions that lead to community resilience. The American Planning Association defines community resilience as "the capacity of the community to anticipate, prepare for, and adopt to changing conditions and withstand, respond to, and recover rapidly from shocks" (APA, 2017). One example of a community resilience that I support is the innovative Menomonie Street redevelopment, that will bring together wellness, recreation, & tourism - a gem of a space for locals and visitors to enjoy together, while addressing health, fun, and ways to generate more money in our community.

### **David Klinkhammer:**

One of the more important roles the Council has in fostering economic development is ensuring that our City is, and continues to be, safe and functional. For Eau Claire to be economically strong, it must be a City where people want to live and raise a family. The Council also to play a strong role in making sure an organized and effective Economic Development effort is adequately funded.

**John Lor:**

The role of the City Council is to foster the economic development, business maintenance and commercial growth in the city. To do this, the city council must continue to provide an adequate and balanced inventory of planned and zoned locations for future growth needs for industrial, office, and retail. The council members shall continue to strengthen the economic vitality of Eau Claire and guide public investment in economic development.

The desired outcomes are higher household incomes, lower unemployment, greater job security and increased opportunity for all. I believe that the city council need to work cooperatively with private industry, regional economic development partners, and state and federal agencies to promote investment in projects that will create good-quality employment opportunities for area residents and a strong tax base that supports public facilities and services. Local business development and job creation can be guided to central locations, promoting redevelopment and infill growth for the economic development. The city needs to provide competitive wages and benefits to recruit and retain a highly skilled work force because more and more baby-boomer are retiring.

**Kate Martin:**

The city council should work together with businesses to create objectives and mutual goals. Relationships are necessary, as well as health, stability, and sustainable growth.

**Donald Motzing:**

The current council has pushed agendas that are viewed as hostile to business. Family supporting wages come from businesses that grow or locate here. Strategic use of tax incentives (TIF) & regulatory reform motivates entrepreneurs to invest their business in this city. I intend to be an active council member with the Eau Claire Economic Development Department.

I will lead the effort to reduce burdensome regulation & hold the line on tax levies and/or fee increases. I will fight against any initiative, like a so called "living wage" proposal or other such anti-business, anti-liberty, job killing policy proposals. I will be a key ally with the business community to create a healthy business environment to retain businesses & recruit new ones to Eau Claire.

**Dale Poynter:**

The proper role of government is the fundamental question in all of politics. I believe that our government's role (whether local, state or national) is primarily to protect citizens' rights affecting life, liberty, and private property. Ideally, all human relationships and transactions should be voluntary and based on mutual consent, and government can best foster economic growth and business development by placing the fewest obstacles in the way of a free market, while affording protection from theft, fraud, etc.

It is certainly within the scope of good government to support existing business in our area, as well as to attract responsible business and commercial interests by promoting our community as the outstanding city that it, in fact, has become.

It is not the responsibility of government to try to assure certain outcomes (or incomes) -- or forms of behavior, for that matter. It is the role of government to act as an impartial umpire or judge, working to assure an "even playing field" -- equal opportunity for all participants.

**Kyle Woodman:**

The City Council has a large role in fostering economic development in Eau Claire. It's the City Council's job to provide a stable set of institutions and rules, promote effective and workable competition, correct for externalities, ensure economic stability and growth, provide for public goods and services, and adjust for undesired market results. The role of the City Council is to encourage an environment in our city that draws businesses and industry to the area. If a business wants to come we should do whatever we can to ease the process whether it's rezoning, splitting the cost of running utilities, etc. I will do whatever I can to continue economic growth and welcome businesses to our community.

**Q3. The 2019 budget process involved the adoption of several amendments at the final City Council budget meeting, shifting funds from one line item to another, including creating new programs and positions. Given Eau Claire's Council-Manager form of government, what is the appropriate process in developing and finalizing the City's annual budget?**

**Kirk Ausman:**

The council should work with the staff to explore the need for any proposal to the budget.

The staff should be given time to study a proposal so that the impact on other parts of the budget can be fully explored.

Last minute changes are inappropriate.

**Kate Beaton (i):**

While a city manager is charged by the Wisconsin State Constitution to draft a city budget, the Constitution gives the final authority and responsibility to the City Council to amend and approve a city budget according to a community's needs and values.

This standing constitutional authority has been well codified in the culture of our routine City budgetary process. In eight of the past ten years, City Council has passed various budget amendments. In some previous budgets, as many as 8 amendments were passed in just one year totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Just as in business, local governments must be flexible and quickly adapt to changing economic and cultural trends or else risk being left behind in the ever changing global economy. I am proud that our city continues to show that flexibility.

**Laura Benjamin:**

I believe it's the role of City Council to represent the voices and goals of the city district they represent, or the community at-large. Because of this I believe that once the plan is drafted, sufficient time must be given to review, discuss, and analyze the potential impact of any new proposed programs, positions, or amendments to that budget prior to adoption. It is ultimately the responsibility of the City Council to approve the budget and ensure they feel our community's resources are being spent efficiently and effectively, with the goals of synthesizing our community's goals, being responsible stewards of our spaces, and acting sustainably to ensure our community's positive future.

**Catherine Emmanuelle (i):**

According to the International City/County Management Association, "under the council-manager form, elected officials are the legislative body and the community's policy makers," including the budget. Each year council members learn from staff and engage with one another to adopt a balanced budget that reflects our community's needs and desires. Budget amendments are not new for this year. Over the last 10 years, council members have passed amendments such as increasing funds for outside organizations, applying fund balance for capital improvement projects, reducing city council training funds to create training resources for members of city boards and commissions, study and design of a new transfer center, and many more successful amendments. One improvement sorely needed is meaningful opportunity for citizens to participate in the budget process. I'm proud to have co-sponsored an amendment that will empower neighborhoods and residents to have more direct budget influence for next year.

**David Klinkhammer:**

Our City Charter requires the City Manager to annually present a balanced budget to the Council. Working with the Department Heads, the Manager is responsible for ensuring that all departments are adequately funded to provide City Services at an acceptable level. If a Council Member(s) wish to amend the proposed budget, it is incumbent upon them to identify what line item, program, or service is going to be reduced or eliminated to fund their proposed amendment. This process provides our citizens the opportunity to know the priorities of the sitting Council regarding the operation of our City.

**John Lor:**

The budgeting process for a city is very important. It represents the mission, vision and future of the city. The process developing the city budget needs be open and transparent with adequate opportunities for city staffs and the public to review the budget and provide input to the budget priorities. Making several changes in last meeting is not in the spirit of an open, transparent, and planful process.

**Kate Martin:**

The appropriate process was ignored. As I understand it, rules were not followed. The public was denied the chance to have input. "Robbing Peter to pay Paul" is no way to conduct city business. You are only as good as your word, and when you break contracts, verbal or legal, you are sacrificing the public's confidence and trust. There should be adequate time and attention given to the city budget before approval, especially when you are dealing with over a million dollars of its residents' money.

The council cannot solve every problem in the city. There are many programs and alternatives to handle secondary issues.

**Donald Motzing:**

Given the significant lead time required by the city manager & staff to gain input from all departments and develop a comprehensive balance budget, council and its members should submit requests for new programs and/or positions early in the budget development process to properly deliberate, rebalance fiscal priorities and conduct community hearings on new initiatives prior to the final budget approval discussions.

New programs or positions must NEVER be brought to the final approval meeting. I will vote against any motion or amendment, which substantially alters a proposed budget that has not had a full public hearing, whether it comes early in the process, or the last day of approval.

I will hold city staff accountable to provide council non-tax increasing options during the budget approval process within their department's budget. I will expect them to find efficiencies using technology & creativity to deliver city services in a fiscally prudent way.

**Dale Poynter:**

It is the City Manager's responsibility to develop and propose a budget, which is then considered and voted on by the council. During the proper period of deliberations related to city personnel, both the Police and IT departments requested additional positions to deal with an increase in their required tasks. It was determined that these could not be accommodated. Very late in the game, several council members (including those running for re-election) chose to introduce new positions at the library (which were not requested by library staff). (There was also the adoption of a budgeting policy consultant, the cost of which was funded by removing parking enforcement downtown).

The correct process for these changes would have been to make a proposal in a timely manner directing the City Manager to appropriate funds for these positions so they could be planned and budgeted for in an appropriate manner. This would have included discussion during council sessions, an opportunity for public input, and adoption by council resolution.

**Kyle Woodman:**

I don't agree at all with how the 2019 budget was passed last year. The Eau Claire City Council should not have the power to randomly create positions, shift funds and pass the budget all within one evening. I believe that if there are any changes to the budget or any positions being created, it should be put on paper and publicly posted for at least a week for the citizens of our city to see and review before being passed. Any concerns or oppositions can be expressed at the next open meeting. If any changes need to be made then they can be made, put on paper and posted again for another week. Once an agreement is made we can then pass the budget with peace of mind. Eleven people getting together late at night and passing a budget that no one has seen is not my idea of an open and transparent government.

**Q4. Some issues that the City Council has debated within the past year have been criticized as topics more appropriate to be dealt with on a state or national level. Others agree that Council members should spend time on any issue they believe is important to the community. What is your view on determining which issues are appropriate for the Council's time and attention?**

**Kirk Ausman:**

The council should not move into areas already covered by other levels of government. It weakens the cities resources and detracts from basic service.

**Kate Beaton (i):**

Our country is dealing with huge issues that affect people very directly. Given the size and complexity of the issues our country is facing, we all have a responsibility to take these issues on--the federal government, state government, local governments, business community, non-profits, and individuals.

I've been so impressed that the Chamber has been a partner with the City Council in cultivating this spirit of advocacy by organizing the Chippewa Valley Rally. Our partnership in advocating for the UWEC science building, passenger rail, the performing arts center, and other projects and ideas is exactly what we need to be doing more of. It is a responsibility of the City Council to advocate for the people of Eau Claire and the issues that are affecting our community.

**Laura Benjamin:**

It's my belief that an issue is worth the City Council's time if it is something that affects, or has the potential to affect our community at-large, particularly if not acted on with immediacy. Whether it is more appropriate at the state or national level is itself often up for debate, and it's my belief that if Eau Claire wants to further differentiate itself from other communities in Wisconsin and show leadership up to Madison and beyond, that the City Council will on occasion need to tackle issues that on the surface may seem beyond the immediate purview of our local community.

**Catherine Emmanuelle (i):**

I've voted in support and against advisory resolutions, and received criticism either way I've voted. A citizen shared she was upset that I didn't support a resolution, even when I said that I agreed with the principle, I wasn't sure that voting for the resolution was effective. A thoughtful leader and friend to Eau Claire - she implored, "that is what we want you to do, lift up our voice to influence larger organizations' thoughts and actions." Her words made an impact: I believe local governments should utilize the option to deliberate advisory resolutions. Council adopted a resolution unanimously a few months ago, and worked marvelously as a body to compromise until we reached agreement. I've received praise from national civic leaders on the way council deliberated the resolution and have been told that Eau Claire could be a model on how differing opinions come together to advance the common good.

**David Klinkhammer:**

As elected representatives of the community, the Council should have the latitude to bring any issue forward they feel is of importance to the City. It is possible that this question, if not the most important on this questionnaire, is of great importance in the upcoming election. In my opinion, it's not a question of what issues should be brought before the Council but rather is the Council truly representative of the entire Community as opposed to a very politically active minority. The greater the voter turnout on election day, the more likely the Council will be made up of eleven voices. Eleven voices thinking, debating, and more importantly, voting independently about what is both important to the City but what is of great importance to how the City operates. With a more diverse make up of the Council, our City will greatly benefit.

**John Lor:**

I think that it is smart that the city council pays attention and is aware of issues on state and national level to help make good decisions for the community. Right now, more and better jobs are of critical importance to Eau Claire as it struggles to evolve from an economy highly dependent on manufacturing and assembly to one that is more diverse and in tune with the industries of the future.

State and national level issues can affect the growth of living-wage jobs, help raise average incomes and reduce the rate of poverty, unemployment, under-employment and their debilitating personal effects among Eau Claire residents, particularly households with children.

**Kate Martin:**

Stick to the basics. Once the core business issues of the city have been taken care of, only then should extemporaneous issues be addressed.

Every council member should be prepared to focus 100% on the City of Eau Claire.  
You are not being elected for any other reason. You are not getting paid for any other reason.

The council should be composed of competent people who have the interest of maintaining a beautiful city at heart. Keep it safe. Keep it clean. We are all adults and bring various business and life experience to the table. However, we should

also be cognizant of the fact that we are spending money that comes from the taxpayers of the City of Eau Claire, and make decisions that are in the best interest of those people. The residents are the people voting for us. The residents are the people who are going to instill their trust and confidence in us. I strive to be a council member who will not let them down.

**Donald Motzing:**

Eau Claire City Council is 'non-partisan', Council should not be addressing policy that are legislated in Madison or Washington, DC. If city council members want to make federal law, they should run for congress.

Citizens are telling me that they want Council to return to common sense, and deal with issues that taxpayers need, like economic development and holding the line on spending & taxes.

I will vote against any motion or amendment that is more appropriately addressed on the State or Federal level.

**Dale Poynter:**

It is my position that our city council acts irresponsibly when it takes on matters outside of its purview, such as those that are properly within the scope of state or federal legislative bodies (introducing local legislation contrary to our state or U.S. constitutions or conflicting with matters of national security would fall in this category).

The city council should concern itself solely with matters that pertain to protecting the rights of all of its citizens, not just select groups or special interests. While care and compassion for all those around us is important (and at times their needs are urgent), it is primarily the place of other, already existing community structures (individuals, families, churches, charitable groups) to voluntarily help to clothe, feed and house those in need. Our city and businesses should support and encourage those private efforts, but it is not government's primary purpose. The principle functions of city government include providing Law Enforcement, Fire Protection Services and Public Works; helping to develop a strong local community by promoting a robust business climate and developing healthy recreational opportunities; and providing other services promoting public health and safety.

**Kyle Woodman:**

I feel that Council members should spend a little bit of time on almost every issue that a citizen of the community brings to the Council, but if after a short discussion the Council determines that a specific issue that has been raised is coming to close to infringing on a constitutional right then it should be dismissed. The Eau Claire City Council should be focused on infrastructural needs, zoning, public services, parks, and things of the sort. Not dabbling in social issues and trying to micromanage peoples social lives. I am not a councilmember that will get involved in social issues. I most definitely will not be voting in favor of city ordinances that come even close to infringing on our constitutional rights.