

November 4, 2024

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15th Avenue,  
Columbus, OH 43210

RE: Support for Salmon P. Chase Center and Permanent University Status

Dear Council Members:

I offer this letter in strong support of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society's proposal for permanent university center status.

Professor Strang is the Chase Center's inaugural executive director. He is a member of the Moritz College of Law faculty, and he has demonstrated a deep personal commitment to research and scholarship. It may be valuable for me to spend a moment describing Professor Strang's qualifications as a scholar for colleagues of different disciplines. He has demonstrated his commitment to excellence in research through cutting-edge scholarship on a number of related subjects including constitutional law, law and religion, the history of legal education, and property law. He has published over thirty-five articles and essays, three book chapters, and ten book reviews, in addition to his unique, multi-volume constitutional law casebook, *Federal Constitutional Law* (Carolina Academic Press), which is now in its third edition and adopted by faculty around the nation including at Harvard Law School. He published *Originalism's Promise: A Natural Law Account of the American Constitution* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). He recently convened the first symposium on common good constitutionalism at Harvard Law School, featuring leading scholars from around the world. He is finalizing a book manuscript on the history of Catholic legal education (with Professor John M. Breen), which was already the subject of a symposium hosted by St. John's University School of Law.

I am confident that, with Professor Strang at its helm, the Chase Center will hire scholars who enhance OSU's research mission because he is passionate about the scholarly vocation. Professor Strang's work has been published in leading forums including Cambridge University Press, the *Southern California Law Review*, the *Notre Dame Law Review*, *Constitutional Commentary*, and the *Fordham Law Review*. His scholarship has been cited by the United States Supreme Court, federal and state courts, and the most well-respected scholars in his fields. He has presented his scholarship at over 300 conferences, symposia, colloquia, panels, workshops, lectures, and debates.

I had the opportunity to meet with Professor Strang during his interview process. We discussed his plans for the Chase Center. It was clear to me then and has since been confirmed that Professor Strang wanted the Chase Center to become an asset to Ohio State's students and faculty. He explained that the Chase Center would create an academic community that would research and teach about citizenship in the United States. For instance, the Center would provide classes that conveyed knowledge about America's civic tradition and permitted heterodox approaches to the material. He indicated that one of his goals was to work closely with existing academic units, like the College of Law. Indeed, he confirmed in discussion with the law school faculty that he and the center are committed to an inclusive hiring process with participation of the units to ensure students encounter a panoply of viewpoints.

Since coming to Ohio State in late August, Professor Strang is making good on his plans. I'll note two examples. Professor Strang presented to the entire law faculty about his vision for the Chase Center, and I heard from numerous faculty that it was an attractive vision. Second and related, a number of law faculty have met with Professor Strang about partnerships with the Chase Center. These relationships are at different stages of development. But one of them is already moving forward: the first national symposium on the topic of Originalism and Criminal Justice, co-sponsored by Moritz's Drug Enforcement and Policy Center and the Chase Center. This symposium will be good for Moritz, our faculty, OSU's research profile, and for our entire justice system.

The Chase Center will lead to many more valuable contribution and collaboration, and for this reason I strongly support its permanent center proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kent H. Barnett".

Kent Barnett  
Dean | Moritz College of Law

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**November 12, 2024**

Vice Provost W. Randy Smith  
Council on Academic Affairs  
Office of Academic Affairs  
University Square South  
15 E. 15th Ave.  
Columbus, OH 43201

Dear Provost Smith,

The Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society has applied for permanent university center status. I write to convey my wholehearted support for the Chase Center's application.

I am the Newton D. Baker—Baker & Hostetler Chair in Law at the Moritz College of Law, where I have been teaching for nearly three decades. Though our areas of expertise are different, I know that Professor Strang is a leading scholar of originalist constitutional interpretation. I was delighted he joined our faculty not only because of his record of scholarly excellence, but also because his expertise adds considerable value to our students and adds depth to our faculty. And I see extraordinary benefits flowing to the entire University community from Professor Strang's work through the development of the Chase Center.

I can detail here one already developing benefit from an opportunity to work with Professor Strang and the Chase Center. As you may recall, earlier this Fall, Professor Strang, along with Dean Trevor Brown, presented to the College of Law faculty about the Chase Center; during his remarks Professor Strang invited the faculty to connect with him about collaborating with the Chase Center. Immediately after that meeting, Professor Strang and I spoke, and we then set up a meeting to discuss a partnership between the Drug Enforcement and Policy Center, which I direct, and the Chase Center.



We met in October, along with my Center's Administrative Director, Jana Hrdinova, to discuss, among other things, a joint symposium on originalism and criminal law and procedure. Generally speaking, scholars who write about originalism as a methodology for constitutional interpretation do not focus on criminal law and procedure, and vice-versa. Therefore, we are planning what will be the first scholarly conference to focus on originalist interpretations of the Constitution's criminal law and procedure provisions. We expect to invite leading jurists and scholars from around the country who specialize in — and are critical of — originalist interpretations of the Constitution and applications to criminal law and procedure.

The Chase Center is contributing essential logistical support and resources, and most importantly ideas and expertise, all of which will complement and advance the work of the Drug Enforcement and Policy Center. This conference and the publications that will come out of it will be a huge benefit to the legal profession and courts. It will also definitely increase the research profile of OSU.

In this way, I have already seen first-hand that the Chase Center is a value-added to OSU. And I expect that our partnership is to be just one of many productive partnerships between the Chase Center and other units on campus. Permanent center status will ensure that these partnerships multiply for the betterment of our students, faculty, and the broader community.

Sincerely,

Douglas A. Berman  
Newton D. Baker—Baker & Hostetler Chair in Law  
Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University



## THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
Columbus, OH 43210

December 4, 2024

Dear Council on Academic Affairs,

I write to support the proposal to provide permanent center status to the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society at the Ohio State University.

I have been deeply involved in the development of the center as the legislation mandating the creation of the center specifies that it will be physically located in the Glenn College. In addition, the proposed mission of the center – particularly the focus on civics, civic leadership, and an understanding of America’s democratic founding and tradition – overlap with the mission of the Glenn College, namely to “inspire citizenship and develop leadership.”

With the passage of the legislation in the summer of 2023, I partnered with Randy Smith (Vice Provost for Academic Affairs), Brandon Lester (Office of Legal Affairs), and Ben Kanzeg (Office of Government Relations) to ensure that the university adhered to the letter and spirit of the law while also aligning the center with university processes. Our first formal step was to bring forward a proposal for temporary center status for the Chase Center to CAA in the fall of 2023. Simultaneously, Vice Provost Smith and I organized an academic advisory committee made up of faculty from the disciplines most likely to interact with the Chase Center and faculty in leadership roles in the university’s shared governance bodies. This committee has met monthly over the academic year to provide input and guidance on developing and launching the center. One of the main tasks this committee conducted was to develop a “map” of all the curricula and programming in the civics and civic leadership domain here at OSU. I have also worked with Vice Provost Smith to inform various stakeholder groups about the Chase Center and our developmental process (e.g., Council of Deans, Board of Trustees, OAA leadership). More recently, I have helped onboard the Chase Center’s inaugural executive director, Professor Lee Strang.



A guiding principle throughout this process has been to ensure that the Chase Center is of the highest academic caliber that complements the existing civics and civic leadership offerings here at Ohio State. The process we have undertaken over these past 18 months has laid the groundwork for such an outcome. The hire of Professor Strang, a nationally recognized constitutional law scholar who has successfully established and run a comparable center at another Ohio university, is the best evidence of this commitment to academic quality. Perhaps more importantly, Professor Strang has taken a highly collaborative approach in developing his vision for the center and is working to ensure that the center aligns to university processes, complements existing offerings, and positions Ohio State to be a national leader in civics education.

I support Professor Strang's center proposal and look forward to finding ways for the Glenn College to work collaboratively with the center to advance civics and civic leadership at Ohio State.

Sincerely,

Trevor Brown  
Dean

November 4, 2024

Vice Provost W. Randy Smith  
Council on Academic Affairs  
Office of Academic Affairs  
University Square South  
15 E. 15th Ave.  
Columbus, OH 43201

Dear Vice Provost Smith:

I write in my capacity as ENGIE-Axium Endowed Professor of Political Science to provide my full support for the establishment of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society here at The Ohio State University. The purpose of the Chase Center is to offer undergraduate and graduate teaching and conduct research on the historical ideas, traditions, and texts associated with the American constitutional order. As I explain below, I am confident that the proposed permanent center, led by its new Executive Director, Professor Lee J. Strang, will operate in the spirit intended by the Ohio legislative history that guided its creation. In short, the Chase Center will:

- Educate students through free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth;
- Equip students with the skills, habits, and dispositions of mind needed to reach their informed conclusions on matters of social importance;
- Affirm the value of intellectual diversity in higher education;
- Aspire to enhance the intellectual diversity of the university; and,
- Affirm a commitment to create a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry.

In my capacity as Executive Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity I had the pleasure of working with Director Strang in his previous role at the University of Toledo's Institute for American Constitutional Thought and Leadership. In that short time as a campus visitor for an event I recognized his efforts to curate and foster a collegial and rigorous culture of intellectual exchange, efforts that remain all too rare in higher education at the present moment.

As a faculty member affiliated with the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, I am also committed to the mission laid out by our dean, Trevor W. Brown, to serve as a model in public higher education for producing democratic citizens and public and nonprofit leaders, and creating, translating, and applying research that serves the public interest across the State of Ohio and the nation. With this letter I want to affirm my belief that the Chase Center will be a significant part of achieving that mission in the years to come. While the Kirwan Institute is not situated in the Glenn College nor does it aspire to offer undergraduate and graduate teaching in addition to its research, we are open to considering future collaborations with the Chase Center as they might arise going forward.



## THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

It is therefore without hesitation that I support the establishment of a permanent Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture and Society within the John Glenn College of Public Affairs here at The Ohio State University. The Kirwan Institute's mission is broad-minded enough to welcome opportunities for all community members to engage in thoughtful and respectful dialogue in the spirit of the university's motto, "Education for citizenship."

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out for additional details.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ange-Marie Hancock  
Executive Director, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity  
ENGIE-Axium Endowed Professor of Political Science  
The Ohio State University

cc: Wendy Smooth, Senior Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence





October 26, 2024

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15th Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201.

Dear Council on Academic Affairs Members,

I'm writing to offer my enthusiastic support for the Chase Center securing permanent university center status. In this letter, I'll briefly — or, at least as briefly as I can — summarize why I'm so enthusiastic about the Chase Center, its founding Executive Director, Prof. Lee Strang, and this proposal. The Chase Center promises to fill an essential but unmet need by bringing together diverse perspectives on the topic of American citizenship and by helping promote civil and constructive dialogue on important topics of public concern at a very difficult time for our democracy. I'll speak to this need, and why I think the Chase Center will play an important and positive role in filling it, based on my own experiences as the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Political Science over the past five years; an original member of the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee (ASCC) charged with approving courses for the new General Education citizenship theme; and most recently as a member of the Chase Center Academic Council.

*Founding of the Chase Center*

It was with some trepidation that I agreed to serve on the Academic Council charged with finding the Chase Center's inaugural director. The center was created through legislation at a time of increasing partisan discord about the state of higher education in the United States, and the search committee charged with hiring the director — the Academic Council — was structured to have only one internal Ohio State member. Both developments created considerable distrust and skepticism among my colleagues, to say the least. When I began my service on the Academic Council, one of my main priorities was to ensure that the founding Executive Director would be someone who would address the natural skepticism and concerns of various stakeholders at the university,

while staying true to the vision of the center laid out in the legislation and the charge given to us by the Board of Trustees.

In particular, my top priorities were identifying an Executive Director who (1) was a world-class scholar that would command the respect of fellow academics (rather than a political hack); (2) would approach the position with a truly nonpartisan perspective and welcome a diverse set of viewpoints (instead of pushing a narrow ideological agenda); and (3) embrace collaboration with existing initiatives and programs at Ohio State and build on our many strengths (instead of trying to reinvent the wheel or create a siloed organization completely disconnected from the rest of the university).

I was incredibly excited when Prof. Strang applied for the position, as he exemplified exactly these qualities through his work building a similar center at the University of Toledo and his experience chairing the Ohio Advisory Committee of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, a bipartisan and intellectually diverse body. I was thrilled when Prof. Strang was chosen unanimously by the Academic Council in our recommendation to President Carter. We could not ask for a better founding Executive Director!

### *Filling a Big Need*

The legislation that created the Chase Center charges it with a multidimensional mission that includes: (1) providing instruction on the books and major debates that form the intellectual foundation of free societies (especially America); (2) helping students understand the principles, ideals, and institutions of the American constitutional order; (3) developing foundations of responsible leadership and informed citizenship; (4) offering programming related to the values of free speech and civil discourse; and (5) expanding the intellectual diversity of the university's academic community.

I'm embarrassed to admit that I was quite late to recognizing that existing programs and offerings at Ohio State have not fully met many of these needs. Looking back, two events stand out in demonstrating the relatively narrow range of ideas and perspectives around these ideas that were available at our university until recently.

The first was an e-mail sent by our department staff person to faculty in April 2016. A group of OSU undergraduates had registered a new organization called "Students for Trump," to support Donald Trump's candidacy for the presidency. Despite completing all of the formal requirements to form a student organization and registering with the university, the group was stuck in bureaucratic limbo because they could not find a faculty member who would be willing to serve as the group's advisor, as is required under university policy. In desperation, they had reached out to our department, given our substantive focus, with the hope that someone would volunteer. At the time, I didn't think much about it, although in retrospect it should've seemed odd that a group supporting a

presidential candidate who would carry our state by more than eight points couldn't find a single faculty member willing to serve as its formal advisor. (Note that supporting candidate Trump was not a prerequisite and advising the group did not connote such support.)

The second was an experience I had teaching a class in fall 2020. The class is called Law and Politics and focuses on election law — the legal rules and related Supreme Court precedents surrounding elections. It was, as we all remember, a particularly fraught time, and running an election amidst the pandemic raised important new legal questions, as did the dramatic increase in mail voting. We addressed these issues in our class and spent considerable time discussing the efforts by then-President Trump to sow doubt about the security of mail voting and the prevalence of fraud in U.S. elections. Although the class was on Zoom (as we exceeded the 50-person limit for holding in person classes that semester) and I thought the quality of the discussion was quite excellent and nuanced, a student attended my (virtual) office hours one evening and confided that he had felt considerable discomfort. As a Republican — and one, he hastened to add, who was not a Trump supporter — he did not feel comfortable speaking up during our discussions out of fear of stigma that “coming out” in this way would generate.

I was distressed to learn about this student's experience, and in the years since, have become much more sensitive to similar concerns from other students. For example, every spring graduating seniors complete a survey about their time at the university and near the end, they are asked to provide an open-ended response to “share any positive or negative feedback you might have regarding your Arts and Sciences major.” I review these surveys as part of my responsibility of completing our program's annual assessment report, and in my first few years as the Director of Undergraduate Studies, a common theme in the negative feedback was about the lack of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among our faculty. Over time, however, a growing number of comments have focused on ideological diversity and lack of support for discussion open to different viewpoints. I'll provide a few actual examples from the student comments I have seen on the survey:

- “I found that a few professors in the political science department are more biased than necessary. I felt that this was sometimes quite inappropriate, especially when teaching a subject such as political science.”
- “Sometimes it was very difficult to feel included in our classroom environments (even prior to Covid). I have often felt that my ideas and questions were not supported or taken seriously by a few professors, and advisors.”

- “Professors must continue to advance the notion that universities are forums of free discussion.”
- “Overwhelming bias in certain political science courses by professors. Some professors such as [Name Redacted] in PS are very good at making a classroom be a neutral environment for some students and others seem to embrace or encourage political bias in the liberal side of the political spectrum and this hurts the quality of the course, department, and university as a whole.”

Of course, I don't want to overstate the magnitude of the problem, and I'm generally inclined to take all anonymous comments with a grain of salt, to avoid over-indexing on the most vocal and outspoken students. Such critical comments are still rare, and positive feedback is much more common than negative feedback. But these comments have further driven home to me the need for more intellectual diversity among the faculty in the social sciences and the demand for programs and venues that allow reasonable people with good-faith disagreements to come together to have civil conversations about salient political and policy issues in a way that builds mutual understanding and respect. The need for such programming is particularly pressing in light of growing affective polarization and reliance on social media as our primary source of political news, which seems designed to only enflame passions and exacerbate conflict. I'm confident the Chase Center is well-positioned to fill this need.

The final experience that informs my perspective for why the Chase Center promises to address a gap in our curricular offerings is my three years on the ASCC. During this period, we met every other week and reviewed up to 15 new course proposals at each meeting as the university was getting ready to roll out the new General Education program in fall 2022. Our committee was initially charged with reviewing *all* of the theme courses, although most of the proposals we saw were targeting the citizenship theme.<sup>1</sup>

During my time on the committee, we reviewed and approved literally dozens of citizenship course (almost certainly more than one hundred) — ranging from “Sociology of Immigration” and “Application of Ethical Decision Making in Health Care” to classes on the “Art and Politics of Hip Hop” and “Intellectual and Social Movements in the Muslim World.” There was even a fascinating film studies course that used Bollywood cinema to understand Indian society, developed by a fellow member of our curriculum committee.

All of the courses we approved were appropriate for the citizenship theme, and a few were truly outstanding. Yet I can't recall seeing a single course focused primarily on the

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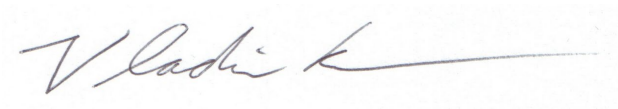
<sup>1</sup> Later, as new theme categories were created, the committee was split into two separate theme committees.

founding “principles and ideals” of American democracy — both what they are and the extent to which we as a society have lived up to them.<sup>2</sup> With our political institutions and norms under incredible strain, it seems we need to do much more to actively help students develop greater understanding and appreciation for our country’s founding ideals and aspirations and to ensure that, upon graduation, they are prepared to play an active and constructive role as citizens in our democracy. Again, I believe the Chase Center is well-positioned to contribute to this effort.

•••

To conclude, I’ll return to where I started: Ohio State is a world class university, and we have a number of permanent centers and institutes working generally in the area of American civic life. These include the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity, the Humanities Institute, the Center for Ethics and Human Values, and Institute for Democratic Engagement & Accountability. The Chase Center promises to be a great addition to this list, complementing the scholarly and teaching offerings from these units and expanding the range of perspectives on many of the difficult questions that these units tackle. It will help us live up to the promise we make in our university motto — providing students Education for Citizenship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vladimir Kogan", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Vladimir Kogan, Professor

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<sup>2</sup> We did approve several courses, including from our department, focused on the “institutions” of American government.



November 7, 2024

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15th Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201

Dear Council Members:

I write in support of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society's proposal for permanent university center status. The Chase Center will contribute to our university in critical ways. Most centrally, the Chase Center's mission is to 1) offer courses and programming on civil discourse and 2) support free and open inquiry. Both are needed if The Ohio State University is to fulfill its land-grant mission and meet the needs of the State of Ohio and its citizens.

Most of us agree that civil discourse is in short supply in the United States, and U.S. higher education has done a poor job of promoting it. Indeed, some of the most egregious examples of *uncivil* discourse come from university campuses, as students have shouted down speakers and revealed in surveys that they are less inclined to engage in constructive dialogue with those with whom they disagree. This secular trend has permeated Ohio State as well, and it directly affects the quality of intellectual pursuits on campus. Open inquiry and exchange are essential to OSU's mission to create knowledge and its land grant mission to educate for citizenship. Without the freedom to investigate, articulate, criticize, and revise research conclusions, Ohio State's research and teaching languish, and the downstream consequences for democracy are serious. Citizenship in a country like ours, one characterized by pluralism, requires that citizens accommodate their fellow citizens' search for and articulation of the truth, even when they disagree.

The Chase Center will support our students and future citizens through courses on civil discourse, and it will enrich our community with public programs that both teach about and model it. The center will also support robust intellectual inquiry and exchange. It will host talks on the value of free and open inquiry, and it will create an academic community in which faculty and students are encouraged to debate and discuss ideas openly. The faculty the center hires will practice open intellectual inquiry and exchange in their scholarship and courses. Importantly, as a center, it would be a relatively enduring Ohio State institution—one that can help ensure that we do not take our eyes off the ball.

It should go without saying that many (hopefully most) of Ohio State's colleges, departments, programs, and individual faculty both promote civil discourse and support free and open inquiry. The Chase Center will add to and cooperate with these laudable existing efforts. The Chase Center recently demonstrated this approach when it co-sponsored, with the Institute for Democratic Engagement and Accountability, a program the night before the election on healthy and productive ways for citizens of all perspectives to live well together the day after the election. The Chase Center's participation added



## THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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credibility and valuable ideas to the event. Establishing the Chase Center would not undermine Ohio State's existing efforts—it would enhance them.

I anticipate that the Chase Center will work closely with my own college, the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, on these and other projects. Both Glenn and Chase focus their efforts on citizenship and leadership. As Professor Strang's next-door neighbor in Page Hall, I have had lots of discussions about these and other forms of cooperation. I am excited to see what the future holds.

I hope this letter conveys my strong support for the Chase Center's proposal.

Sincerely,

Stéphane Lavertu  
Professor  
John Glenn College of Public Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
lavertu.1@osu.edu; 216-659-0090 (cell)



November 8, 2024

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Columbus, OH 43201

Dear colleagues:

The Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society has submitted a proposal for permanent university center status. I am writing in support of that proposal.

I first learned of the Chase Center over a year ago, as it was brought to my attention in my role as the chair of the Department of History. At that time, the creation of this new center raised several concerns, the most important of which is how the Chase Center's mission and activities might affect my department. For instance, would the Center seek to develop its own U.S. history curriculum? Would that curriculum compete with the curriculum that my department offers? Most importantly, what are the budgetary implications for my unit?

Following his appointment as Director of the Chase Center, I met with Professor Strang in mid-August. He had reached out to me before his official start date to learn about the History Department's course offerings and he indicated that he did not want the Chase Center to replicate what we were offering. We discussed the department's goals and needs. He shared his preliminary thoughts on how the Chase Center would offer programming and courses focused on civic thought and leadership. He offered assurances that the faculty the Chase would hire would be accomplished scholars who raise OSU's research profile. He also invited me to think about ways the Department of History could collaborate with the Chase Center in pursuit of a mutually advantageous relationship. Ideas we discussed include joint appointments, cross-listed courses, joint programs, and public events.

Professor Strang and I met again in late October and continued our conversation about collaboration. We discussed the Department of History's hiring needs, the Chase Center's hiring plans, and ways that the Chase Center and Department of History might work together. Professor Strang said he would keep me updated as the Center grows and alert me if opportunities arise that might benefit History. He reiterated his ongoing invitation to me on the same lines.



My strong impression is that Professor Strang is dedicated to integrating the Chase Center into Ohio State in a way that aligns with the Center's declared mission to advance civic thought, benefitting and supporting other units. As he described the Center's mission to me, its curriculum will not overlap with that offered by the History Department. The Chase Center will include faculty from a variety of disciplines, and these faculty will teach and research on American citizenship. Some of those faculty will likely have Ph.D.s in history, and some of the courses taught, knowledge conveyed, and scholarship produced, will engage historical themes. Where appropriate, the department and the center will cross-list courses.

The Chase Center will create collaborative opportunities for the History Department and other OSU units to strengthen our commitment to civic education, genuinely enhance intellectual diversity, and better serve our students. For these reasons, I support the Chase Center's proposal for permanent university center status.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott Levi".

Dr. Scott Levi  
levi.18@osu.edu



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

MORITZ COLLEGE OF LAW

Drinko Hall  
55 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210

Alan C. Michaels  
Edwin M. Cooperman Chair in Law  
Email: [michaels.23@osu.edu](mailto:michaels.23@osu.edu)

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15th Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201.

November 14, 2024

Re: Chase Center Application for Permanent University Center Status

Dear Members of the Council on Academic Affairs:

I am writing in support of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society's proposal for permanent university center status. The Chase Center comes to OSU with significant new resources, and those resources have the potential to grow as the Center pursues its mission: to teach and research on citizenship and include numerous perspectives in doing so. As a former dean of Moritz, I can easily see how the Chase Center's assets, strategically employed in conjunction with other units' resources, will create win-win situations within the University--allowing units to pursue goals that were previously inaccessible and allowing the Chase Center to thrive through collaboration. Indeed, collectively this combination of resources and relationships can create synergies that make the whole more than the sum of the parts.

Professor Strang has met and is meeting with many academic units, including my own College of Law, and he invites precisely these sorts of partnerships. I have heard that a number of programs have accepted Chase's invitation and that they are in the process of working together. I also have had a couple of opportunities to engage with Professor Strang, and in each of our interactions, I found him to be forthright, thoughtful, engaging, and, most importantly, willing and able to pursue the Center's mission through the collaborations described above.

My experience also teaches, however, that such partnerships and synergies are most likely to occur across our campus, and to be successful when they do, if the Chase Center is an independent unit, not beholden to a particular College and not the responsibility of a particular College. For this reason, I think the Chase Center's application is particularly important to make the most of this opportunity for the University.

Starting and growing the Chase Center and integrating it into Ohio State will present challenges, but Professor Strang seems both cognizant of those challenges and capable of

successfully navigating the Chase Center, working closely with a variety of other units, to a position as a valued leader regarding civic thought and leadership at Ohio State.

For these reasons, I am pleased to support the Chase Center's proposal.



Alan C. Michaels  
Edwin M. Cooperman Chair in Law

November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15th Ave.  
Columbus, OH 43201

Dear Council Members,

I write to convey my strong support for granting the *Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society* permanent university center status.

I have served on the political science faculty at OSU for twenty years, with courtesy appointments in philosophy, communication, and public affairs. More importantly, for present purposes, I direct the *Institute for Democratic Engagement & Accountability (IDEA)*. We (1) conduct impact-inspired basic research designed to contribute both to knowledge and the public good, (2) offer courses integrating the theory, history, and science of democracy, (3) sponsor programs to support and encourage students' self-education for citizenship, and (4) develop democratic innovations to help citizens and governments around the world collaborate in new and constructive ways.

The Chase Center's official mandate aligns well with IDEA's mission. Although we may inflect our efforts differently, my conversations with Prof. Strang make me confident that we share the same basic values and goals, especially regarding campus activities related to American democracy.

Ohio State is big. We boast people in numbers, ability, and diversity few can rival. We sprawl across physical space, map every corner in the realm of ideas, and extend through time from a long and storied past into a hopeful future. We contain multitudes that often stand in creative tension, but seldom in contradiction. Our open frontiers provide ample room (despite overlap) for *IDEA* and *Chase* to advance the university's common mission along parallel paths. In fact, we have already enjoyed great success going beyond parallel paths to synergistic collaboration. The night before the election we co-sponsored a civic education event for undergraduates, *Back to Being Buckeyes After the Election*. The goal was to model civil, constructive dialogue across difference among faculty, then prompt such engagement among students. Separately, we could not have recruited politically diverse students—which would have defeated the point. I expect many such opportunities for collaborative synergy between *IDEA* and *Chase*.

As academics, we profess open dialogue. So, I will hazard closing in pointed candor: Two months ago, I was unsure whether I would be able to write this letter, never mind with the sincere enthusiasm I do today. From the start, I wanted to welcome the *Chase Center* as an opportunity to expand, broaden, and strengthen the community of scholars teaching and studying democracy at OSU. However, the lead-up made taking matters at face value difficult, and the unusual insularity of the director's search deepened my concerns.

Happily, when I first met Prof. Strang for lunch, I quickly sensed that he was someone I could work with. By the end of the meal, I knew it went beyond merely "could work with"—we could make each other (and our centers) better. Our pre-election collaboration *already* made IDEA's programming better (under rushed and difficult circumstances). Further meetings have already helped me personally, for example, in finding a better way to interact with a challenging student situation. I expect these examples are only the beginning. In my experience, Prof. Strang maintains an exemplary academic posture, prioritizing scholarly values, collaborating in good faith, and responding to disagreement with respect, openness, and charity. So, I have come to believe that, under Prof. Strang's leadership, we can more than merely "work with" the *Chase Center*—Ohio State and IDEA can be much better for it. I am committed to doing my part to help Prof. Strang realize his vision and the *Chase Center* succeed in its officially stated mission.

Sincerely yours,

*Michael A. Neblo*

Michael A. Neblo  
Director, the Institute for Democratic Engagement & Accountability (IDEA)  
Arts & Science Alumni Professor of Political Science and (by courtesy)  
Philosophy, Communication, and Public Affairs  
The Ohio State University



October 28, 2024

Dear Committee on Academic Affairs,

I am writing on the occasion of the establishment of the new Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society. I write with enthusiasm and optimism for the promising impact that this Center might have on our university community. Having dedicated much of my own career to exploring, *inter alia*, the intersections of civic education, ethics in educational contexts, and the delicate work of navigating contentious societal issues in the service of broader developmental goals, I have seen firsthand how universities play a uniquely pivotal social role in fostering rigorous, sustained, and nuanced dialogue across a diverse array of perspectives and traditions.

My previous work, both within university contexts and K-12 settings, has reinforced the importance of creating spaces where students and scholars can thoughtfully engage with challenging questions and learn to constructively navigate their disagreements towards increased clarity of moral vision. Over the years, I have collaborated on initiatives designed to enhance civic understanding – from ethics-based courses that probe the foundations of democratic society to university-wide forums that bring together speakers hailing from varied traditions. These experiences have consistently highlighted how well-structured university programs and units can equip students with the skills necessary for becoming engaged, informed citizens prepared for civic participation and leadership.

The Chase Center promises to be a valuable asset in this endeavor. By holding space for deep engagement within and across political and civic traditions, the Center can enhance our university's mission to cultivate an environment that continues to celebrate diverse reasonable viewpoints. Through collaborations with departments across campus, I anticipate that the Center can be a pivotal resource, contributing valuable programming and support for faculty, students, and the broader community.

I look forward to collaborating with Executive Director Lee Strang as the Center organizes future initiatives that align with shared goal of fostering a campus culture rooted in respect, dialogue, and intellectual curiosity. Together, I believe we can all expand the reach and depth of civic education at OSU, making our institution a model for engaged and inclusive discourse on the past and future of the American project.

Thank you for considering this letter of endorsement. I am confident that the Chase Center can be a vital contributor to the intellectual life of our campus and contribute to OSU's standing as a shining example of what public, land grant university-based civic education can achieve.

Respectfully,

Winston C. Thompson

William H. and Laceryjette V. Casto Professorship in Interprofessional Education

Associate Professor, Education | Associate Professor, Philosophy (by courtesy)

The Ohio State University

614.688.3057 | Thompson.3588@osu.edu



October 22, 2024

Dear Council on Academic Affairs,

I am writing in support of CAA's granting permanent center status to the new Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society.

Through the Center for Ethics and Human Values (CEHV) and the undergraduate major in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE), I have worked with colleagues for many years to create programming and advance a culture at Ohio State that fosters constructive discussion across disagreements on contentious social and political questions. Besides our PPE program, which introduces its 220 majors to political thinkers from across the political spectrum, our efforts have included a new course on civil discourse, a new academic certificate, in-person and online training programs for students and instructors, civil discourse forums featuring speakers who disagree on contentious issues, and dozens of tailored workshops for students and staff, all in support of what we call "Civil Discourse for Citizenship." We have also played a central role in the development of Ohio State's Shared Values, a framework for constructive engagement across the university. In pursuing those efforts, we have worked with all colleges, and dozens of units, at Ohio State—representing a wide diversity of disciplinary, institutional, and intellectual perspectives—and we look forward to working with the Chase Center in that same spirit.

I believe that Executive Director and Professor Lee Strang's vision for the Chase Center—focused on scholarship and teaching about democratic citizenship and constitutionalism, and committed to hiring excellent scholars who will engage faculty in other departments and centers—will result in a valuable partner for CEHV in our work. Professor Strang has shown a strong interest in collaborating with other units on campus as he lays the groundwork for the Chase Center. Given that, I am also optimistic that it will provide beneficial resources, programming, and expertise for students and others on campus. We hope and expect that CEHV and Chase will be able to pursue their respective missions in a way that is complementary rather than duplicative.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,

**Piers Norris Turner**

Center for Ethics and Human Values | Director  
Philosophy | Associate Professor and PPE Coordinator  
The Ohio State University  
Email: [turner.894@osu.edu](mailto:turner.894@osu.edu) / Phone: 614-313-5611





November 21, 2024

### **Letter in Support of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society**

I am pleased to support the proposal for permanent university center status for the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society. As Chair of the Department of Theatre, Film, and Media Arts, I initially had limited awareness of how the Chase Center might intersect with the work of our department. However, my recent conversations with Professor Lee J. Strang have brought to light the opportunities for collaboration.

In early September, Professor Strang reached out to me to discuss ways TFMA and the Chase Center could work in dialogue. He demonstrated a thoughtful understanding of the intersections between the arts and the Center's mission. Specifically, he proposed the possibility of a staged reading of plays such as Joseph Addison's *Cato*—a seminal 18th-century play influential in the early United States—or Plato's *Apology*, among other works significant to the American civic tradition. His proposals were well-considered, but also aligned with the land-grant mission of Ohio State to engage with diverse communities and promote civic education through the arts.

Professor Strang's vision for the Chase Center includes incorporating the arts as a means of fostering dialogue and connection among students of diverse backgrounds. He recognizes the dialectical power of art and its central role in the American civic tradition. TFMA shares this commitment to using art as a forum for engagement, and I see great promise in this collaboration to broaden our reach and enhance our impact.





**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

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The Chase Center's mission offers an opportunity for the arts to contribute to a multidisciplinary approach to civics, culture, and society. As the Center develops its administrative structure, I look forward to re-engaging with Professor Strang and his team to explore specific projects. The members of TFMA will be interested to work with the Chase Center in advancing these shared goals.

Sincerely,

Dr. E.J. Westlake  
Professor and Chair  
westlake.35@osu.edu



**SCHOOL OF CIVIC LIFE  
AND LEADERSHIP**

in the College of Arts and Sciences

**JED ATKINS**  
DIRECTOR AND DEAN

jed.atkins@unc.edu  
919-962-8106

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL**  
**SCHOOL OF CIVIC LIFE AND LEADERSHIP**  
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November 17, 2024

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Columbus  
OH 43201

Dear Members of the Council on Academic Affairs,

I have the honor to serve as the inaugural director and dean of the School of Civic Life and Leadership (SCiLL) at UNC-Chapel Hill. I believe the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society will be of great benefit to your university and the entire state of Ohio. Please accept this letter in support of the Chase Center's proposal for permanent university center status at Ohio State.

The School of Civic Life and Leadership "provides an interdisciplinary home specifically for the study and practice of public discourse, civic life, and civic leadership." Our School houses a world-class, multi-disciplinary faculty and offers a minor in Civic Life and Leadership. Through our Program for Public Discourse, we offer civic discourse programming for the Carolina community. SCiLL is committed to offering these courses and programming in an environment that promotes free speech, civil discourse, and intellectual diversity. By bringing together students, faculty, and the public community, we provide a forum for people to discuss challenging political and societal issues in a spirit of charity and intellectual friendship.

The Chase Center's mission includes important similarities to that of SCiLL. SCiLL is committed to teaching our students the foundations of the American civic tradition and democratic experience *and* providing opportunities for students to develop the capacities for civil discourse and good leadership. These skills are not innate; we have to teach them. These courses and programming will enable our students to become thoughtful citizens and trustworthy leaders in North Carolina, the United States, and around the world.

The Chase Center's complimentary mission, courses, and programming will be of great value to students at Ohio State. Providing students with the knowledge of our democratic tradition will help them understand more deeply common civic bonds and shared challenges. Allowing students to explore and discuss challenging topics in an

environment that encourages freedom of thought will equip students with the essential skills of citizenship.

The School of Civic Life and Leadership is responding to the problem of polarization in North Carolina, but this is a deep and growing challenge facing the entire country. The Chase Center's response of providing students with common civic knowledge and the capacities for civil discourse is a healthy and productive way for Ohio State to help Ohio respond to rampant polarization. I therefore believe that the Chase Center will be of great benefit to OSU and Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jed Atkins".

Jed W. Atkins  
Director and Dean  
School of Civic Life and Leadership  
UNC-CH

*Paul Carrese, Professor*  
[pcarrese@asu.edu](mailto:pcarrese@asu.edu)

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South, 15 E. 15th Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201

November 20, 2024

To the members of the Council on Academic Affairs,

I enthusiastically support the proposal of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society for permanent university center status at Ohio State. As Founding Director of the School of Civic & Economic Thought and Leadership (SCETL) at Arizona State University from 2016 to 2023, I believe the Chase Center will follow the same path of growth to success. The Chase Center will be of great benefit to your diverse internal and extended university community as well as to the entire state of Ohio – but needs the permanence and degree of independence provided by permanent university center status at OSU in order to achieve such success.

Our School was established in 2016 by the Arizona government, and has grown to include over twenty tenure-line and career-track faculty; undergraduate degrees (majors, minors, certificates); an M.A. degree; study abroad opportunities; professional internships; a public lecture series and podcast in partnership with Arizona PBS; a center supporting K-12 civics renewal; and partnerships with other ASU units as well as the President's office. In its first seven years SCETL has enrolled and graduated hundreds of degree students, and this academic year enrolls 1,700 students across its courses; we also provide professional development for hundreds of K-12 Arizona teachers every year. This record has earned renewal of annual support from state government each year; a doubling of the annual funding after our sixth year; and bipartisan support in the legislature as well as from a Republican and a Democratic governor – along with many other indications of support from across the ideological spectrum.

Like SCETL, the study and teaching of civic thought and leadership is at the heart of Chase's mission. If the Center is to fully undertake such missions it needs, however, the same kind of independent and permanent status SCETL always has enjoyed. Providing an education on the theory and practice of American citizenship through foundational courses and programming in an environment that promotes free speech, civil discourse, and intellectual diversity is much needed in our polarized nation. By bringing together students, faculty, staff, and the larger community, the Center is dedicated to providing a forum for people to discuss challenging and divisive societal issues without demonizing opposing views. Students and a wider community of participants will utilize these learned skills – these civic virtues – well beyond classrooms and programs to the benefit of American society.


Students from SCETL graduate ready for careers in government, law, business, journalism, and civil society. Several of our graduates have earned scholarships to Oxford University and the U.S. State Department's Pickering fellowship, as well as interviews for the Truman, Rhodes,

Marshall, and Fulbright scholarships. Students in our civic thought and leadership courses learn an important and increasingly-rare set of transferrable skills. All of courses require writing experiences; students regularly are expected to orally articulate and defend positions; and they are offered leadership opportunities – indeed, our majors are required to complete an internship. Our first few graduating classes show that a range of employers value our graduates because of their rigorous academic experiences and civic abilities. The Chase Center’s similar course of study and academic programming will offer its students these rich academic experiences and development of life skills.

Just as SCETL and its two research centers operate at ASU, the Chase Center is designed to be a multi-disciplinary and independent academic unit, led by faculty and scholars possessing expertise from several disciplinary perspectives relevant to teaching and researching American citizenship. The Center’s intent will be to not duplicate current courses and programs at the university, but rather to supplement them, providing students with diverse course options and learning experiences not available to them before. SCETL has established just this record at ASU, and after initial concerns from departments with adjacent curricula and expertise, we have established partnerships and good working relationships. Ohio State should ensure the Chase Center can achieve this same position. Indeed, there is a renewal across higher education, in private as well as public institutions, of the need to restore space for a serious civic education – paraphrasing the title of the 2021 book by Johns Hopkins president Ronald Daniels, to re-focus on *What Universities Owe Democracy*. The Stanford Civics Initiative and the new required course in citizenship for first-year Stanford students; the new “democracy education” requirement at Hopkins; the launch just this fall of a network of professors from a huge range of institutions across the country, the Alliance for Civics in the Academy (led by Stanford professor Josiah Ober, and with Chase director Lee Strang one of the inaugural members): these and other developments indicate why OSU as a leading national university, committed to *Disciplina in civitatem*, should provide all the support and standing necessary to ensure the success of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society.

For these reasons, I urge approval of the Chase Center’s permanent center application. I hope you won’t hesitate to contact me if I could provide further information; my email is above, and further information is below my signature.

With best regards,



Paul Carrese

Professor  
School of Civic & Economic Thought and Leadership  
Arizona State University  
mobile: 719 235 3298  
ASU bio page: <https://search.asu.edu/profile/3062537>



November 19, 2024

Council on Academic Affairs  
The Ohio State University  
University Square South  
15 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Columbia, OH 43201

Dear Members of the OSU Council on Academic Affairs,

I write in support of the Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society's proposal for permanent university center status at The Ohio State University. In my current role as founding dean of The University of Texas Austin's School of Civic Leadership, and as the inaugural director of the Civitas Institute, I am confident that the Chase Center will enhance and benefit Ohio State University and the greater Ohio community, just as our School has at UT Austin.

The UT Austin School of Civic Leadership houses the Civitas Institute, and together they offer courses, degrees, student programming, and public programs that create "a community of scholars committed to exploring the ideas and institutions that sustain a free society and enable individuals to flourish." We are committed to providing these opportunities in an environment that promotes free speech, civil discourse, intellectual curiosity, and diversity of thought.

The School of Civic Leadership has benefitted UT's students and faculty, and the state of Texas. We offer courses, majors, and minors that did not exist before; we host world-class scholars and thought-leaders for lectures; we have hired well-published faculty of all ranks to enrich the intellectual life of UT Austin; and we support programs that enhance Texas' K-12 civic education. In a short period of time, we have built a vibrant academic community that is adding value to UT Austin.

The Chase Center's mission to "conduct teaching and research in the historical ideas, traditions, and texts that have shaped the American constitutional order and society" is very similar to ours, and the Center's commitment to an environment of academic freedom is as well. As the Chase Center grows toward maturity, it will be of great value to the students and faculty of Ohio State. Providing students with the knowledge of America's common civic heritage through foundational texts, and helping students hone the skills needed for effective civil discourse on today's college campuses and in our broader society, will equip students for citizenship in all walks of life.

The Chase Center, like the School of Civic Leadership, is a multi-disciplinary center of excellence for research and scholarship, teaching, and service in the field of civic thought and leadership. Chase Center faculty will possess expertise from numerous disciplinary perspectives relevant to teaching and research in these fields. This variety of disciplinary perspectives will ensure that Chase does not duplicate current departments at Ohio State but rather complements and collaborates with them. As importantly, the Chase Center will hire extraordinary scholars who



raise OSU's research profile. We have attracted both established scholars and promising new faculty who came to UT in order to join our academic community.

UT Austin's motto is "education is the guardian genius of democracy." Not surprisingly, it is very similar to OSU's mission of "education for citizenship." Ohio, like Texas, was facing some of the same problems in the 1870s, and both states responded by focusing their flagship universities on civic education. I'm confident that the Chase Center's mission will enhance OSU's land-grant mission under the thoughtful direction of Professor Lee Strang. The Chase Center is needed today and will certainly benefit OSU's students—future leaders—and the broader Ohio community through programs that both teach and model OSU's mission to educate for citizenship.

Sincerely,

Justin B. Dyer, PhD  
Dean, School of Civic Leadership  
Jack G. Taylor Regents Professor