**Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society Proposal for Full Center Status**

**CAA Review by Subcommittee A**

1. Establishment by State Legislature:

The Salmon P. Chase Center for Civics, Culture, and Society (hereafter referred to as the Chase Center) was initiated by the State of Ohio in 2023 through Ohio Revised Code (ORC) section 3335.39 (Senate Bill 117 and House Bill 33, 135th General Assembly). The Chase Center was created by the state legislature as “an independent academic unit within the Ohio state university… [that] shall conduct teaching and research in the historical ideas, traditions, and texts that have shaped the American constitutional order and society.” The Chase Center was supported by $10M from the state budget ($5M in each of its first two years). The Center was given “the authority to house tenure-track faculty who hold their appointments in the center” where “Not fewer than fifteen tenure-track faculty positions shall be allotted to teach under the center.” The ORC also states that “The center shall be granted the authority to offer courses and develop certificate, minor, and major programs as well as graduate programs, and offer degrees”. Based on the ORC, the Center will be physically located within the college of public affairs, and the Director, and hence the Center, shall report directly to the Provost (ORC states or President) of the University. In addition to reporting directly to the Provost, ORC 3335.39 also gives the Director sole authority to manage faculty and staff hiring and staff termination as well as the authority to oversee, develop, and approve the Center’s curriculum. This extensive authority, and the ability to develop and offer curriculum and to serve as a tenure-initiating unit (TIU) for faculty are both exceptions to typical Ohio State University Centers. We recognize Prof. Strang has committed to following standard OSU procedures with respect to hiring, curriculum, and general Center operations and Subcommittee A hopes any future Directors will do the same.

2. CAA review process:

At the request of the Dean of the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, Trevor Brown, the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) granted the Chase Center the temporary university center status on September 6, 2023, with the plan that the Chase Center would develop a proposal for full Center status. CAA received the proposal for full Center status on Oct. 31, 2024, and assigned it to Subcommittee A for review on November 4, 2024. Because of the complicated nature of this Center proposal, additional measures were taken by CAA to ensure a robust review including adding members to the review subcommittee and planning a series of meetings for initial review and discussion of the proposal. Subcommittee A consists of three faculty members – Profs. Ann Allen (College of Education and Human Ecology), Carlos Castro (College of Engineering), and Valarie Williams (College of Arts and Sciences) – and two students – Mykenna Roy and Nathan Snizik – both members of undergraduate student government. Two additional faculty members were added to the subcommittee for the Chase Center review, John Buford (School of Health and Rehabilitation Services) from the University Senate Fiscal Committee and Leigh Bonds (University Libraries) from University Research Committee. Our subcommittee has met multiple times to discuss the proposal (Nov. 6, 13, 27). In addition, the subcommittee met with the Chase Center Director, Prof. Lee Strang, and Interim Provost Prof. Karla Zadnik two times (Nov. 15, 22) to discuss the proposal. In response to initial feedback from our subcommittee provided on Nov. 14 (feedback discussed with Lee Strang and Karla Zadnik on Nov. 15), Lee Strang provided a draft addendum on Nov. 20 addressing several questions brought up by subcommittee members related to topics including the Center mission, administration, curricula, and faculty. This addendum was reviewed by the subcommittee and further discussed with Lee Strang and Karla Zadnik on Nov. 22. Strang provided a revised addendum on Nov. 27.

Members of the subcommittee attended the University Senate’s meeting of Faculty Council on Nov. 7 where the Chase Center was discussed, the full University Senate Meeting on Nov. 14 when the Chase Center was discussed, and on Nov. 22 met with representatives from OSU’s Office of Government Affairs who were involved in the initial interactions with the state legislature that created the Center. In addition, on Nov. 18, Sara Watson (College of Arts and Sciences), Senate Faculty Council Chair, and Caroline Clark (College of Education and Human Ecology) and Senate Steering Chair, sent Lee Strang follow-up questions from the Senate meetings (Nov. 7 and Nov. 14) where the Chase Center was discussed. Strang provided responses to those follow-up questions on Nov. 27 along with the revised addendum for Subcommittee A and CAA members to review.

3. Proposal Summary:

The overall mission of the Chase Center is to conduct teaching and research in the historical ideas, traditions, and texts that shaped the American constitutional order and society, aspiring to support OSU’s mission of education for citizenship and to propel OSU to become a leader in the field of civic thought and leadership. The Chase Center will carry out this mission through efforts in three primary domains: 1) curriculum development and teaching; 2) multi-disciplinary research and dissemination in civic thought and leadership; and 3) public-facing programming and extracurricular student programming. To carry out its mission, the Chase Center will hire 15 tenure-track faculty and engage faculty fellows from other units at OSU.

3.1 Curriculum development and public-facing programming: The Chase Center’s curricular focus will be in the subject of American citizenship, including both self-government by individual American citizens and self-government of the American political community. The Center will develop a credit-bearing certificate in Civic Thought & Leadership, a minor in Civic Thought & Leadership, and a major in Civic Thought & Leadership.

The Center plans to follow OSU’s curricular approval by submitting its first curriculum proposal in early 2025 to the Council of Academic Affairs. The Center then aims to establish the certificate starting in Spring 2026, the minor starting in Fall 2026, and the major starting in Spring 2027. All of these programs are envisioned to include a foundational course tentatively titled *The American Civic Tradition* and other required and elective courses, with electives including courses from the Center and other units. The exact courses developed and offered will be dependent on the faculty hired, student demand, and the OSU curricular landscape. The curriculum development will be informed by meetings with student groups; meetings with faculty, departments, and colleges to avoid duplication and complementing existing offerings; consulting with similar centers whose curricula have been well-received; input from potential employers; and market analyses of student and market needs. Subcommittee A expects that all curricular programs developed by the Chase Center will participate in OSU’s curriculum approval process to ensure alignment with the university's academic standards and broader educational mission.

The Chase Center will also host public-facing programs, such as lecture series and conferences, which are intended to present students, faculty, and Ohioans with substantive discussions from a variety of viewpoints on topics related to civic thought and leadership, and model dialogue among citizens. The Chase Center has already planned for three such events in Spring 2025 including: 1) the first installment of its Chase Lecture Series, featuring a biographer of Salmon P. Chase, Walter Stahr, who will speak on Chase as a model of civic life; 2) the first annual Ohio Civics Center Summit, bringing together civics centers from Ohio’s public and private universities; and 3) an event tentatively entitled *A Conversation on Civics Education in Research Universities* with Johns Hopkins’ President Ron Daniels, the author of *What Universities Owe Democracy*. Extracurricular student programming will include engagement in public programming, weekly community events, engaging with faculty mentors, and participating in study abroad opportunities that are currently in development.

3.2 Faculty hiring, promotion, and tenure: ORC 3335.39 states that “Not fewer than fifteen tenure-track faculty positions shall be allotted to teach under the center.” The Chase Center aims to hire 10 tenure-track faculty to start in Fall 2025 and another 5 to start in Fall 2026, though exact numbers will depend on the market. The addendum states these faculty are likely to have different ranks and levels of seniority and terminal degrees in multiple disciplines. The proposal states scholars at the Center will “come from all disciplines adjacent to citizenship including, but not limited to: law, politics, history, philosophy, economics, English, religious studies, and various hard sciences.” Subcommittee A expects that the Chase Center will follow the typical faculty hiring process, using search committees of faculty from a variety of relevant disciplines to hire its tenure-track faculty and following hiring guidelines laid out by the Office of Faculty Affairs. Initial search committees will include faculty from other disciplines and departments, and as faculty are hired into the Center, they will also participate in future faculty search committees. The Chase Center started this practice of engaging faculty from other disciplines in search committees with the ongoing search for the Center’s Assistant Directors. The Chase Center will adopt Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure (APT) standards as faculty are hired. The APT document will be developed in consultation with the Office of Faculty Affairs following the template provided by the Office of Academic Affairs. The Center’s APT standards will govern the appointment of faculty along with their promotion and tenure.

3.3 Finances: The Chase Center proposal addendum provides a 5-year budget plan with income coming from three primary sources: support from the State of Ohio, tuition income (i.e. credit hour revenue), and development funds. The Center is currently supported by $10M in funding from the State allotted over two years, $5M per year. The Chase Center and relevant OSU personnel anticipate this state support to continue (the 5-year budget provided in the addendum includes the anticipated 3 additional years of support), based on prior conversations with legislators and prior evidence from other state-supported Centers. The Chase Center estimates revenue from credit hour production to grow to ~$1.5M by its fifth year of operation (27-28 academic year) based on a projection of OSU’s credit hour allotment model and a projection of ~1700 students taking Center courses across the academic year. The Center aims to offer ~50 courses by the 2027-2028 academic year. These projections and credit hour revenue estimate were made in consultation with OSU’s Office of Academic Affairs. The Center is also working with OSU’s Office of Advancement to identify and cultivate advancement support for the Center, already resulting in some donor funds. All donations will follow standard practices and policies of OSU advancement, including adherence to transparency and ethical guidelines, which aim to ensure accountability and trust in donor relationships.

Based on the current and projected income, the Center will operate on an annual budget starting at $5M and rising to ~$7.5M in its fifth year. Total personnel costs are expected to account for ~$800k in year 2 and rise to ~$4M in year 5. Other Center expenses will include Supplies and Services, Public and Student Programming, and Student Aid, which in combination is estimated to rise to ~$715k by year 5. This also includes research support costs for hired faculty, which will be commensurate with the research support provided in their disciplines. Based on the projections, the Chase Center is anticipated to operate comfortably within its means. As noted in the addendum, the Chase Center’s tenure-track faculty are covered by the protections set forth in Faculty Rule 3335-6-06, and they will be protected and reassigned if the Center were to cease to exist through the elimination of its statutory enabling legislation.

3.4 Administration: The Center is led by a Center Director, who according to ORC 3335.39 “shall report directly to the provost or the president of the university”. Hence, the Chase Center Director, its Faculty, and the Center activities will be under the purview of the Ohio State Provost. Following ORC 3335.39, the Director is appointed by the board of trustees advised by a 7-member Chase Center Academic Council. This Academic Council conducts a nationwide search and submits a list of finalists to the University President. The President then selects and appoints the Director, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees. The current Center Director, Prof. Lee Strang, was appointed following this process, and future Center Directors will be appointed following a similar process.

The inaugural Center Director, Prof. Lee Strang, is a nationally recognized legal scholar with significant publication impact in the fields of constitutional law and interpretation, property law, and religion and the First Amendment. Prof. Strang is currently hiring the Center’s administrative team, which will initially consist of an Associate Director (envisioned to be a senior level tenure-track faculty), and up to two assistant directors (envisioned to be non-tenure-track, CTP, faculty members), a project manager, and an executive assistant. Based on discussions with Prof. Strang, the Center is also likely to hire student support staff (e.g. academic advisors) as curriculum is developed and other staff (e.g. post-doctoral scholars) as research and other activities are developed.

The Center’s administrative practices are required to highlight the core of the Center’s mission specified in ORC 3335.39 (details in proposal). The Center will begin consideration of and adopt its Patterns of Administration (POA) in early 2025. The Center’s POA will follow the template of the Office of Academic Affairs and be developed in consultation with the Office of Faculty Affairs. The Center will also rely on models from other units, such as the University Libraries, which is similar to the Chase Center in its reporting structure.

3.5 Research: The Center will conduct multi-disciplinary research in a variety of fields relevant to civic thought and leadership in support of OSU’s mission to generate and disseminate knowledge. The Center will support new faculty with start-up funds consistent with the norms of the faculty member’s field, the University’s practice, and other Centers. The Center also plans to support faculty with research assistants, teaching assistants, and other common OSU practices like reduced teaching course load for pre-tenure faculty. The Center is also pursuing development support for endowed faculty positions, research and travel costs, and faculty scholarship awards. The Center plans to collaborate with the Graduate School to incorporate graduate students into Chase’s academic community and research initiatives.

4. Letters of Support:

In addition to what was laid out in the proposal and addendum. Several letters were provided in support of the proposal to grant the Chase Center full Center status including 11 internal letters of support and three external letters of support. The internal letters are provided from faculty spanning several departments (Law; History; Political Science; Philosophy; Educational Studies; and Theatre, Film, and Media Arts), including Dean of College of Law where Prof. Strang is a faculty member, and multiple Department Chairs. These letters indicate the Chase Center has significant support from several units and faculty across campus and that there are several faculty who are interested in engaging with the Chase Center to advance their own education and scholarship efforts. The external letters of support come from three current or former directors of Centers with similar focus on civic thought and leadership. These letters indicate support from the community and share some of the expected benefits that other similar Centers have provided to their university and local communities.

5. Additional comments from Subcommittee A:

* *Definition of intellectual diversity*:

ORC 3335.39 refers prominently to "intellectual diversity." Intellectual diversity is not specifically defined in the proposal or addendum, but both refer to a multi-disciplinary approach and mentions disciplines where faculty may come from including “law, politics, history, philosophy, economics, English, religious studies, and various hard sciences”. Subcommittee A requests the addition of a definition of the academic intellectual diversity into the addendum (Section 1A and 1B) both in terms of what is expected in the hired faculty composition and what will be included in faculty search committees. CAA expects faculty search committees be formed with representation from at least three other units (i.e. Departments) separate from the Chase Center. This is common practice for inter-disciplinary hires. This will help ensure that the Center’s faculty hires, curriculum, and programming align with the broader goals of promoting a variety of perspectives and fostering robust civil discourse.

* *Review and reporting schedule*:

Subcommittee A recommends implementing a formal reporting and review schedule to evaluate the Center’s progress and ensure accountability. Our subcommittee suggests the following schedule for reporting to formal reviews by CAA:

* + Reports are to be submitted to CAA on an annual basis. This could be the same as the report that will be provided to the General Assembly.
  + Formal CAA Center reviews will occur every two years for the first six years to address the initial development and implementation phases.
  + Reviews will occur every four years thereafter, with the timeline resetting upon any change in Director or substantial structural changes, such as any major change in the Center's legislative mandate, or a reorganization that alters its reporting structure.
  + Current practice is that new OSU Centers are reviewed after two years, again after four years, and then on a four-year cycle thereafter. Given the atypical aspects of the Chase Center, Subcommittee A determines it would benefit all stakeholders to carry out reviews at years 2, 4, and 6 and every four years thereafter (instead of just years 2 and 4 and every four years thereafter). Also, given how much authority the Director has over Center direction, composition, and operations, Subcommittee A notes it would be prudent to reset this review schedule whenever a new Director is appointed.
* *Clarification on donor transparency*:

To address concerns raised in Senate discussions, Subcommittee A recommends explicitly stating the Center’s policy on donor transparency. This was addressed in the response to a question in the full Senate meeting. Subcommittee A requests including a clause clarifying that donor identities will be disclosed unless confidentiality is required under specific agreements, to make clear the Center will align with OSU’s commitment to transparency and accountability.

* *Student representation*:

The proposal does not currently detail how undergraduate and graduate student voices will be incorporated into the Center’s decision-making processes. Subcommittee A requests including a plan to establish Student Advisory Board(s) including both undergraduate and graduate students to ensure students are actively involved in shaping curricular and extracurricular programming and research opportunities.

* *Assessment of public-facing programming*:

While other aspects like faculty performance and curriculum will have assessment mechanisms built in, it is unclear how the impact of the Chase Center public programming will be assessed. Subcommittee A recommends establishing an assessment plan that includes metrics such as attendance numbers, audience diversity, and feedback from participants.

Closing comment: Recognizing the atypical structure of authority established by ORC § 3335.39, Subcommittee A expects the Director of the Chase Center to collaborate with the University in good faith and adhere to Ohio State University’s well-established processes for curriculum development and faculty hiring to ensure alignment with institutional values and academic standards. We are in agreement that this is the best approach to successfully achieve the Chase Center’s goals as a part of OSU and make it a positive force for OSU’s mission of education for citizenship. We acknowledge and appreciate Prof. Strang’s collaborative approach to date, which has been essential to moving this proposal forward, and we expect future Directors to take a similar collaborative approach.