

Senate Meeting 11/14

Questions from the Chat for Professor Strang

1. To some, the mission of the center sounds like a form of enforced patriotism. How should we respond to colleagues who have this sense?

There appear to be two related aspects to this concern. The first is “enforced.” The Chase Center’s courses will be available on the same basis as other OSU courses; that is, on a voluntary basis. Students may take courses in engineering, biology, history, or civic thought, as they choose. Similarly with faculty who wish to join the Chase Center’s academic community; it is one of very many options faculty have at OSU. In both instances, students and faculty are choosing to research and study civic thought, just like students and faculty in engineering, biology, and history research and study those subjects.

It's worth noting at this point two related and relevant aspects of the American civic tradition. First, the precise contours of the tradition—what is in and what is not in it—are debated by Americans. Second, the ethical soundness of aspects of the tradition—and of the tradition itself—are also debated. In other words, robust debate is itself a key aspect of the tradition.

The second aspect of this concern is “patriotism.” Patriotism without any modifier is suspected by many Americans of encouraging the vice of extremism. The conception of patriotism typically employed in civic thought is known as [reflective patriotism](#). This conception of patriotism affirms the value of a proper love (in Aristotle’s sense) of one’s political community to an integrated human life, and also that such love should be reasonable; reflective patriotism recognizes both the good of one’s political community along with its imperfections and the corresponding need to better secure the common good.

2. The diversity of programming and ideas is impressive and ambitious. How does Prof. Strang plan to ensure the diversity of opinions and thought in the Center's programming, as well as among its (affiliate) faculty?

There are a number of means employed by the Chase Center to ensure that the Center’s public-facing programming reflects a wide variety of viewpoints. One is to use a conversation or debate format that requires two or more participants with a corresponding variety of viewpoints. Another is to solicit suggestions on events and speakers from scholars with a variety of perspectives. Third, the Center is working with partners on and off campus to co-sponsor events and thereby ensure broad input into programming.

The events hosted at the [Institute of American Constitutional Thought & Leadership](#), and the events planned by the Chase Center, concretely demonstrate the effectiveness of

this approach. The Institute's public-facing programming included debates from different perspectives, it included conversations with a variety of viewpoints, and it included lectures from scholars thoughtfully navigating challenging issues in a manner sensitive to a variety of viewpoints. Similarly, the Chase Center's planned programming, discussed below, intentionally includes numerous perspectives in its events.

The Center will invite faculty from other units to become Chase Faculty Fellows and join the Center's intellectual community. These faculty will be attracted to the Center's mission to teach and research American citizenship from a variety of disciplinary and other perspectives. Many faculty have already inquired about becoming Fellows. The Center does not ask about the viewpoints of its faculty. Instead, because existing OSU faculty have a wide variety of viewpoints, and because existing faculty (with their corresponding variety of viewpoints) are attracted to the Center's mission, then the Fellows will bring to Chase OSU's existing viewpoint diversity. Indeed, this is what happened with the Institute of American Constitutional Thought & Leadership.

3. Can Prof Strang share an example of how he and his colleagues have dealt with any particular ideas that they had disagreed with? (It will greatly help me structure the debate/dialectic around ideas that I may disagree with).

The Chase Center will engage in ideas related to citizenship and the various perspectives on those ideas in the manner appropriate to an academic community: it will provide fora for the civil evaluation, contestation, and discussion of them. This will take many forms including: workshops, symposia, and conferences on scholarly presentations of ideas; courses, seminars, and series of courses on the classroom presentation of ideas; and debates, conversations, lectures, and series of lectures on popularly debated ideas.

The Center is sponsoring the first annual Ohio Civics Center Summit in April, 2025, at which the approximately nineteen Ohio civic centers will discuss civics education in higher education in both formal scholarly presentations and in informal workshops. This event will include all of the perspectives on the subject from the scholars at Ohio's public and private universities. The Center's internal workshop series and external workshop exchange will begin in Fall, 2025, and they will include scholars and scholarship on self-government. The Center is also planning for Fall, 2025, the first annual national scholarly conference on civics education in higher education, which will include scholars of all backgrounds and disciplines on panels, in keynote addresses, and in workshops. The Center is beginning the conversation on its courses and academic programs. One may look to the courses offered at the [Institute of American Constitutional Thought & Leadership](#) to see an example of academic engagement in the classroom with numerous perspectives on ideas including, for example, a series of classes on *American Liberalism* and *American Conservatism*, and

Competing Theories of Justice, which exposes students to the diversity of conceptions of justice operative in America. These are a sample of the ways in which the Chase Center will engage with a wide variety of perspectives.

4. Please elaborate on the place of graduate students in the Center? How will the Center serve students across program – graduate, undergraduate, and profession?

The Chase Center is tasked by the Board of Trustees to initially focus on undergraduate education. To accomplish this aspect of its mission, the Center will provide courses, degrees, and an invitation to join the Chase Center's robust academic community via its student program.

At the same time, the Center is learning from its conversations with graduate and professional students how best to serve them. The Center's student program will launch in Fall, 2025, and all OSU students will be invited to participate in it. This program will include multiple tiers to accommodate different student goals and time investments. The Center is also exploring how it could offer micro-credentialing that may support graduate and professional students. Third, the Center is planning to provide employment opportunities to graduate and professional students to help with the Chase Center's activities including research, teaching, and programming. Lastly, the Chase Center will begin to provide graduate education in approximately three-four years.

5. One concern that I have is that the Chase Center is taking time and energy away from the myriad of other successes and challenges in research and education that we have at OSU; e.g. efforts to improve conditions for students / student housing; infrastructure and budget challenges; research and education achievements of the university (despite the aforementioned challenges). This alone is cause for frustration with the Chase Center. I do appreciate the collaborative tone of the presentation but given that the Chase Center is already "behind" by taking so much energy from the university. How will the Chase Center use its platform to actively contribute to the university by raising the profile of the good things that are happening here? How will it help with the real challenges we have, such as conditions for students?

The Chase Center is working diligently and collaboratively to integrate itself within the OSU ecosystem. This process takes the time and energy of both the Chase Center and other parts of OSU. The University and the Center chose this route of collaborative integration, even though it takes time and energy, because it's healthier both for Chase and for OSU than the alternative siloed approach.

The Chase Center will draw attention to OSU's good work through new means and to new audiences. The Chase Center is partnering with other OSU units on many of its activities, and this will highlight those units' value. For instance, the Center's inaugural event, *Conversation on Civics Education in Research Universities* with Presidents Carter and Ron Daniels is being co-sponsored with the Center for Ethics and Human Values and the Glenn College. This and other similar partnerships will allow the Chase Center to highlight these other units' contributions to the University. Relatedly, the Chase Center will bring information about OSU's good work to new audiences who are following the Chase Center's growth. Previously, some of these audiences either did not pay attention to OSU or viewed it from a negative perspective, and Chase is drawing their attention to other units' positive contributions.

It's important to note that one of the most important challenges facing higher education is the growing perception that it does not provide public goods to all Americans. One doesn't have to agree with that perception to recognize that incorporating the Chase Center into the OSU ecosystem is a concrete way to rebut it, and in doing so, invite renewed support of OSU by all Ohioans.