



# The Center for the Study of American Democracy at Kenyon College

## Introduction

Liberal education—the education of a free person—is meant to liberate one from prejudices that confine the mind, partisanship that confines the heart, and necessitous jobs that confine the body. Accordingly, we aim to prepare our students to withstand the various threats that exist to a free mind, a free heart, and a free body as each student, in particular, might encounter them, making for a different kind of parent, entrepreneur, artist, or lawyer than otherwise. As every age is in danger of forgetting certain potentially confining things, there are very good reasons for us to turn the beam of critical self-scrutiny on liberal democracy itself—on the principles, institutions, and values that have influenced us and that we cherish most, but which we often take for granted or only assume we understand. The quest for self-knowledge that is at the heart of liberal education demands above all that we see ourselves both in context and from the outside, which is why we think the searching study of democracy, broadly conceived so as to take in its alternatives, is central to liberal education today. Fundamentally, it is in recognition of the importance of the study of liberal democracy that we propose to establish the Center.

To forward this learning enterprise, we are directed first to the theoretical underpinnings of the American polity. As the 20th century novelist Ralph Ellison reminds us, Americans live on a “terrain of ideas;” our national community is formed by the “sacred principles” enshrined in our founding documents. Our politics are unique, Ellison thought, in that we act in the name of an ideal of democratic perfection that perpetually draws us back to principles of justice enunciated by the founders, though he noted as well that we contend mightily over their interpretation. The American principles call us, as Lincoln also reminded us at Gettysburg, to “unfinished work.” They also interpenetrate our entire culture, giving both individuals and the country as a whole starting assumptions, mores, and goals, all of which have a fundamental impact on our daily lives. We must, however, be trained truly to know our own

terrain. We may infer from Ellison's trenchant comments that we need to study political orders and principles that are very different from our own—being prepared to encounter fundamental political problems that can surprise us by their familiarity—and to study our own polity or political history so as to make the ostensibly familiar new and strange again.

The Center for the Study of American Democracy is intended to promote the historical, political, and cultural studies that will re-animate our principles and practices for today's students and teach them to evaluate their contemporary relevance from several points of view. We think one of the best ways to do this is to re-experience the controversies and debates marking the history of liberal democracy; and, above all, to learn what is at stake in those controversies and debates by reliving crucial political choices, especially at moments of founding or crisis. For instance, we get a better understanding of the choice for liberal democracy when we compare it to its alternatives, including classical alternatives. Students gain a deeper perspective by entering into the disagreements between Federalists and Anti-Federalists or the Lincoln-Douglas debates, or the friendly, but diverging criticisms of liberal democracy put forward by Tocqueville and Mill. The Center's focus will allow the College to promote and undertake historical inquiry, including intellectual history, in a way that will not keep students or faculty at arm's length from the issues. By entering into the minds of political actors, it is rather our hope to integrate questions into students' lives, to persuade students to take them personally and to investigate their own opinions.

We seek to orient ourselves in the manner of Tocqueville, who wrote of *Democracy in America*—in a quotation all our students read: “This book is not precisely in anyone's camp; in writing it I did not mean either to serve or to contest any party; I undertook to see, not differently, but further than the parties; and while they are occupied with the next day, I wanted to ponder the future.”

We also conceive of the Center as a way to combat the insularity that comes from immersion in our immediate circumstances and to expand our students' experience of the world, attending particularly to the intersection of theory and practice and highlighting the importance of political history to the study of politics. Center activities – lectureships, conferences, and summer seminars – will include as

participants leading policy makers, media experts, and public figures, working alongside scholars and Kenyon professors, to illuminate current political issues in light of founding principles.

To illustrate by extending the approach from the political science curriculum: The topic of the Center conference will always be a current, policy related issue that, when seriously explored, reveals its roots in the fundamental political and moral alternatives at the heart of the American Founding. Revealing them is largely the job of the conference moderator, that is, the Director, who will “set the table” by providing founding documents and political thought to frame the discussion of current issues. The Director will provide readings and background for the joint exploration and interpretation of policy experts (possible participants are named below). The historical changes in thinking about questions posed during conferences, whether the development of different assumptions or the forgetting of the significance of others, are usually associated with major political events. One could point, for instance, to the Civil War and the changed understanding of rights or of national unity, or to the Depression, the New Deal, and World War II, which re-defined the role of the Federal government or the national security state.

This model would apply to most of the Center’s work, not just conferences. Thus, when students do research, they would likely work on public policy issues that reveal—as do most when they are probed—their dependence on deeper theoretical assumptions (for example, pragmatist, socialist, constitutional, communitarian) that in turn require attention to the yet deeper foundations in thinkers such as Locke or Aristotle. Attention to affirmative action, for example, would lead from the current policy and legal/constitutional debates back—perhaps through authors such as Ronald Dworkin and Sidney Hook—to the Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights; to utilitarians such as Bentham and Mill, to Locke’s *Second Treatise* (with a view to hearing what we do and do not give up when entering civil society), and perhaps even to broader considerations of distributive justice in Plato and Aristotle.

The Center will be guided by principles of toleration and civility. We are seeking to honor diversity of opinion, serious investigation, and open debate. The Center will not be an advocacy organization, nor advance partisan positions. For all public events of the Center, we will seek out

participants who are not only serious and knowledgeable about the subject at hand, but who also reflect a broad variety of political, moral, and philosophical views. We are aware that the most serious thinking and the deliberative inquiry we support can not simply be characterized as reflecting particular partisan positions. We will seek participants who are known to see difficulties in their own arguments and who respond to opposing views respectfully and with some regard to the force of those views. Rather than a mere array of goods, we think the diversity students learn from puts the alternatives against one another in a serious way and asks each to state its case. Only in that way can any position make a rational claim on students or students on it.

We believe that establishing the Center is especially timely for Kenyon and for the country. By its permanent presence, we wish the Center to express our approval of on-going efforts to keep the study of American democracy a vital part of advanced education. Given the current situation of our country and changes in colleges and universities, we also want to reaffirm our own principles of educating from the perennial questions of human life, being responsive to an ever-changing environment, and promoting open discussion. Our Center will therefore strive to avoid the ubiquitous media-driven view of intellectual balance. Instead, to improve public debate on the issues, we would hope to transcend conventional liberal and conservative positions, to strive in conversation for historical depth about issues, and to put genuine deliberative inquiry in the forefront. The College believes the Center and conference participants will model the civil and probing conversation that the College regards as one of its most precious assets and a key responsibility of academic institutions now and in the future.

Devoid of the polished, edited format of most media, the Center's lectures and conferences will afford invited speakers from the domains of business, public policy, journalism, government and academia an environment for unscripted conversation and intellectual interplay. Kenyon offers to professionals who daily tackle the interpretation of founding principles in the national spotlight a retreat for quiet but invigorating conversation with intellectual depth and challenge, an opportunity for sharing their experiences with colleagues and students in a rare and direct way, and, quite possibly, the time to reflect upon their own work.

We believe the proposed Center also builds on our particular strengths as a liberal arts college. Seamless and synthesizing conversations among students from across the College and exchanges promotive of critical thinking between faculty and students—in informal as well as formal settings—are our life-blood and our tradition. With the Center’s year-round events and reach into the curriculum, we will be able to focus and foster more of such exchanges, giving faculty and students new opportunities to meet on common ground. Indeed, we anticipate the chance to move political discourse here to a wholly new level and to see the Center as a truly influential element in campus life. Specifically, the conferences, smaller panels, and visiting lecturers will give students and faculty a chance to meet representatives of the great world and engage in discussion with them about issues centering on public policy and founding principles. Every public presentation will conclude with discussion periods and receptions where topics can be probed more deeply. Further dialogue can continue in post-conference blogging and online interaction facilitated by the Center’s website. Students will benefit from one-on-one conversations by serving as student guides for conference participants. Also, the completion of a research project by students and faculty who have received Center sponsored grants will be occasions for public presentations of that research to the community.

An NEH *We the People* challenge grant will enable us, our rural location notwithstanding, to establish ourselves as a center for scholarship of enduring significance in a new realm, and to strengthen our connections to the outside world through our commitment to disseminate Center activities by electronic means. As the Center’s public programs and publications in paper or electronic form gain attention and good repute, it should be possible to involve ever greater numbers of scholars and public figures in its work. Among the significant new developments the Center will create are: 1) a unique collection of monographs by both scholars and public figures in media, government and business on fundamental issues in American democracy that will serve as new public resources, 2) an outreach program to members of our consortia, the Great Lakes Colleges Association and Five Colleges of Ohio, that will provide new opportunities for faculty development and curriculum enrichment, and 3) new

opportunities for student internships and research that will provide a bridge between undergraduate class work and the rewards of a career in public policy or scholarly inquiry.

### **Historical Background and Traditions**

As indicated above, we fully expect the proposed Center to transform our campus and to raise the level of political discourse in ways that otherwise would not be possible for us. Nevertheless, the fittingness of the Center for Kenyon is attested to by our history and on-going activities.

#### **A. History of the Public Affairs Conference Center**

The Center for the Study of American Democracy will honor its prototype, the Public Affairs Conference Center (PACC), and build on Kenyon's experience with this sort of enterprise. For more than two decades, from 1967 through 1987, the PACC brought together at a private annual conference political figures, journalists, and academics to discuss papers written on selected and significant public affairs topics. Ensuing discussions over a two day period permitted the participants to exchange ideas about the issues themselves, whether the topic was federalism, the Civil Rights movement, foreign policy, or religion and politics. Conference papers, combined with readings from great figures in American political thought and institutions, were published in the enduring Rand McNally Public Affairs Series and later by the University of Virginia Press. Originally, the books were the chief method by means of which the PACC reached out to the broader public, both students and scholars. Political figures such as James Farmer, journalists such as Robert Novak and George Will; and scholars such as Martin Diamond, Walter Berns, and Herbert Storing attended the conferences. Other participants included Gerald Ford, Thurgood Marshall, Donald Rumsfeld, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Jeane Kirkpatrick, Edmund Muskie, Adlai Stevenson, Wayne C. Booth, James Baldwin, and David S. Broder. The national media took a consistent interest in the PACC's activities. Under the direction of Professor Robert Horwitz, and subsequently Professors Robert Bauer, Harry Clor, and Fred Baumann, the PACC evolved. A seminar for students on the conference themes was added, along with public appearances by some conferees, affording students more opportunities for formal and informal contacts with participants.

The Center will complement the curriculum of the Department of Political Science as originally shaped by Robert Horwitz, and expand the reach of democratic study on campus and beyond.

### **B. Political Science at Kenyon**

The proposed Center for the Study of American Democracy actualizes an important component of the mission statement of the Department of Political Science – how do political decisions affect people's lives? The Department's and the College's long history of public affairs programming has firmly placed civic concerns in the context of liberal arts.

The Political Science Department's curriculum offers consistent evidence of its longstanding commitment to deepen students' understanding and engagement with American founding documents, American liberal democracy and its implications (see Appendix B). The Department places the fundamental normative questions underlying politics at the center of its teaching. These questions not only form the basis of political science but also link political science to the core of liberal education. Because of its focus on these questions, political philosophy plays a key role in the department's teaching and curriculum. The curriculum allows for the exploration of the fundamental questions regarding the nature of man and government by carefully studying the texts of ancient, modern, and post-modern philosophers, as well as great works of literature and the activities of great political leaders, founders, and statesmen. But it seeks to address these questions throughout the curriculum in the broadest and most integrative way in order to encourage students to think more deeply about politics and their own role within the polity. This includes the foundations of U.S. government, the various perspectives on American political life most vital for the thoughtful citizen, and the effects of governmental institutions on policy and politics.

The Quest for Justice—a year-long discussion format course for first year students—addresses the fundamental principles and practices of liberal democracy in an interdisciplinary way, using primary documents drawn from a number of fields, and from multiple points of view, including those of critics—friendly or otherwise—of liberal democracy. The Department has designed this course both to introduce potential majors to the study of politics, and also—since typically one-third of Kenyon students take the

course—as the Department’s contribution to liberal arts education and civic education at Kenyon. The content of the Quest for Justice offers the best evidence of the Department’s approach to politics as a whole: it seeks the integration of theory and practice, that is, the convergence of theoretical and real world politics; it also manifests our respect for the texts of political philosophy, for American founding documents, and for political principles. Links are made in the course that tie political philosophy directly to foreign policy, economics, law, issues of gender and race, and post-modern thinking. The Quest for Justice course has enabled the Department to participate in Kenyon’s outreach programs for high school students. [For more information, please refer to Appendix C for Quest for Justice syllabi, and to the Kenyon Academic Partnership website <http://kap.kenyon.edu/>.]

Twelve faculty members support the Department’s commitment to teaching fundamental principles of political science while also offering students a breadth of specialization to the political science major. In addition to political philosophy and American politics, the Department includes a full array of courses in international relations and comparative politics (<http://www.kenyon.edu/x11426.xml>).

The Department’s commitment to campus-wide education in public policy issues has been consistent and recognized by outside supporters. This commitment began with the advent of the Public Affairs Conference Center and has continued with active annual public lecture series on important topics in political thought. The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation sponsored the series from 1990-1998. The John M. Olin Lectureship Series on American Morale was held during the 2000-2001 academic year. Eminent scholars have addressed such issues as the political thinking of John Locke (e.g., Michael Zuckert and Thomas Pangle), gender and liberal democracy (e.g., Mary Nichols and Jean Elshtain), issues in higher education (e.g., Harvey C. Mansfield), revolutions (e.g., Ralph Lerner), classical political thought (e.g., Joseph Cropsey), and American culture (e.g., Martha Bayles and Greil Marcus). The Bradley Foundation has also awarded the Department a grant for the past decade to fund a post-doctoral Fellow. The final year of the Bradley Foundation grant for this purpose is 2007-8.

The Center will enable us to move civic or citizenship education to a new level in a most exciting way. Recent studies, such as the Intercollegiate Study Institute Report, “The Coming Crisis in



Citizenship,” and Derek Bok’s *Our Underachieving Colleges*, document the sometimes woeful level of civic knowledge characteristic of current college students. Although Political Science has sought to address this concern by a curriculum that integrates political theory and practice and by sponsoring public affairs programming, the Center will enable Kenyon to bring the great world in to our students and faculty, vastly increasing opportunities for life-transforming education. The Department consistently offers programs in response to contemporary issues, for example, lectures on the Western alliance from the point of view of English writer Geoffrey Smith, and debates on the 2000 election (between William Galston, a leading political theorist and Democratic policy advisor, and Professor Jeremy Rabkin of Cornell University), and on the war in Iraq. In short, while we have not had the resources of the old PACC, carrying on its traditions to the extent possible, and exemplifying its spirit, has characterized the outlook and the activities of the Kenyon Political Science Department.

### **Organization and Programming**

Public programming and written documentation will provide the Center’s manifest contribution to the study of American founding principles, yet the quality of the Center’s work will depend on the thoughtful and capable people who create and sustain its vision and endeavor to carry out its mission.

#### **A. Infrastructure**

1. Central to the success of the Center is its Director. We seek support to establish a newly **endowed faculty professorship in the Department of Political Science for the Director**. The Director will carry the vision of the Center in planning and implementation and demonstrate the capacity for scholarship and high standards of teaching. Recruiting for this important position through national search mechanisms will be a matter of collegiate as well as departmental responsibility with oversight from the Provost.

We seek a Director with a notable record of scholarship in American political thought, government, and/or history who has teaching and administrative experience. To be effective, the Director should have one foot in the policy world, perhaps in Washington, with a background and connections in such endeavors as political journalism, political philanthropy, law, think tanks, or perhaps come from the

executive or legislative bureaucracy. The ability to observe issues as they might be experienced in non-American contexts is critical in the context of the Director's role as conference moderator, where it will be necessary to draw policy discussions back to their foundations in the more fundamental questions of political thought. We also aim to find a Director who can develop in students, faculty, and alumni a continuing interest in the formation and application of the ideas underlying American institutions.

As a faculty member holding an endowed post, the Director will be directly responsible to the Provost (see governance, below). He or she will 1) teach one course in conference years and two courses in the Department of Political Science during the years in which no conference was being held<sup>1</sup>, 2) manage the process for judging applicants for student research grants and participants in summer seminar or workshop activities; and 3) have an appropriate degree of participation in the selection of faculty research grants<sup>2</sup>.

As the Center's chief administrator, the Director must envision and convene a biennial conference, to be held at Kenyon, and establish public programming on selected themes (both discussed in detail herein). Responsibilities include supervising the Post-doctoral Fellow, the publication and dissemination of books and other materials arising out of the conferences, and communications on the Center's activities. This includes directing the content for a website (discussed elsewhere in this proposal) and supervising electronic news publications and blogs. The Director will also work with the College's Development Office to raise additional funds that will continue the Center's outreach and service to the community. The Director will represent the Center to the public, develop new Center events and activities, and build alumni support and awareness of its activities. A job description is provided as an attachment to this proposal.

2. **Governance.** The Director will be responsible for the Center's annual operations and programs. Kenyon's **Provost** will have the primary responsibility, in consultation with an **Advisory Board**, to see that the Center is maintaining its mission. Representing Kenyon faculty, distinguished

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<sup>1</sup> This teaching responsibility is equivalent to half-time teaching over a two-year period. The standard teaching schedule at Kenyon is five courses per year.

<sup>2</sup> The Faculty Affairs Committee manages applications for faculty research.

alumni, and professional experts in public affairs, the Advisory Board, with its global perspective, will 1) consult with the Director about Center activities and potential themes to be explored in public programs; 2) integrate the work of the Center into College life; 3) increase our acquaintance with potential conference participants; and 4) make periodic evaluations of the Center. The Advisory Board is not a fiduciary committee nor will it be directly responsible for the events and programming of the Center. Members of the Advisory Board will be appointed by the Provost in consultation with the Department of Political Science, for terms of one, two, and three years. After the first year, we will ask the members of the Advisory Board to nominate potential successors from among their peers. Seven to ten advisors will represent diverse backgrounds, including professional, political, and academic viewpoints. The Provost will seek to bring an invigorating mix of expertise from government, the academy, journalism, legal arenas, and public policy, such as former and current College trustees Ken A. Bode (former host of “Washington Week In Review”), Richard Baehr (Chicago lawyer and writer), and Brackett Denniston (Vice President and General Counsel, General Electric Company); alumni James Ceaser (University of Virginia Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs) and David Horner (Chief Counsel, Federal Transit Administration); and others who have enlivened our national discussion including John Agresto (Professor, former President of St. John’s, Middle East envoy on education), and writers Anna Quindlen and David Brooks. Several of these potential advisors have lectured at Kenyon or are parents of students at the College. The composition of the Advisory Board and its self-perpetuating nature promise to imbue the Center and the College with an animated and global perspective for years to come.

3. During the first year, the Director will teach and establish the infrastructure for the Center. A **Post-doctoral Fellow**, hired in the second year, will primarily serve the interests of the Center and assist the Director in planning and executing public programs, but will also teach one or two courses in the Department of Political Science, for instance, a section of the year-long Quest for Justice introductory course (which counts as two courses). The creation of this new fellowship will complement the College’s existing Yarborough Dissertation Fellowship Program, which encourages doctoral students in their final year of study at research universities to gain teaching experience at a liberal arts college (Kenyon) while

completing their dissertations. To give adequate time for a successful and productive term, the Fellowship will rotate every three years.

4. The Political Science Department will provide administrative support. The experience and expertise of Department faculty will be instrumental in the early phases of establishing the Center, in recommending lecturers, participation in the selection of the Director and Advisory Board, and integrating the Center's activities within the College and curriculum.

## **B. Public Programs**

1. A **biennial conference** will be held at Kenyon College to bring to life salient issues to increase our understanding of American liberal democracy, its founding principles and their contemporary relevance. Because the idea of integrating theory and practice is central to the Center as envisioned, conferences are designed to capture the perspectives of a broad and diverse representation of reputed scholars, journalists, scientists, ethicists, and public and political figures, who will come to campus to explore key issues in democracy alongside their academic counterparts.

The specific topics and formats of the conferences and the combination of private and public sessions will arise from conversations between the Director, the Department of Political Science, and the Advisory Board. The format for conferences and campus events might vary slightly from year to year, but we would expect the conferences to include the following components: 1) ten to twelve diverse participants who will meet to discuss selected participant papers and/or documents over a two- to three-day period; 2) a combination of private sessions and events open to the public; 3) the opportunities for students to interact with the participants formally and informally; and 4) the production of a book—in paper or electronic format—of papers and/or documents as well as podcasts intended for broad classroom use outside of Kenyon (more on dissemination below). In some years, depending on the topic or theme, both professional papers and a public lecture by some of the conferees would occur; in other years a public address by a single conferee with commentary by others might be more appropriate.

The conference will model civil discourse for students. Taking as a prototype for a conference, for instance, the theme of “National Security and the Constitution,” papers might address such questions

as “The Patriot Act and Traditions of Civil Liberties,” which could be used at the first session.

Subsequent sessions might see papers on “The Status of Guerilla Combatants in International Law and American Tradition,” or “When Can Executive Authority Supercede American Law in Cases of National Emergency.” The final session might treat the debate over the Alien and Sedition Acts in the context of the understanding of civil liberties at the time of the American Founding. Even the more policy oriented papers for the first discussion would ground themselves in the history of the American debate about civil liberties and in Founding documents.

Conference participants might include experts in international law; in national security in this country and others such as Frederick Kagan (AEI), Amos Guiora (Cleveland State University Law School expert in counter-terrorism and a Kenyon alumnus), Jeremy Rabkin (Cornell University), and Stephen Macedo (Princeton University); journalists who have made these questions central to their work such as Andrew Sullivan or Christopher Hitchens, or Geoffrey Smith; political appointees, for example a Kenyon alumnus serving in the U. S. Department of Defense; a moral philosopher or theologian such as Gilbert Meilander; and a professor of law specializing in civil liberties such as Harvard’s Frederick Schauer.

As another example, a conference might address "Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law." Perhaps the first founding principle to be explored in such a conference is a basic question: what is constitutionalism and the rule of law? We take note of limited government and the security people derive when they know what the rules are. Is it still possible? Can it be restored if dead? If not, how can it be revitalized and strengthened and do we really need it? What is its relevance for spreading democracy abroad? We might then examine our tradition of a written constitution by comparison to England’s unwritten constitution. Readings could involve the *Federalist Papers*, Blackstone, and Sidney, and, on the problem of prerogative in constitutional government, John Locke, as well as readings on the history of executive power. Discussion of our constitutional solution in enumerated powers, and the role of judiciary in guarding our Constitution would also be enhanced by reading Hamilton on the judiciary and *Marbury v. Madison*. On the problem of constitutional interpretation from Marshall to the progressives to contemporary debates, writings of relevant older figures and of contemporary scholars Walter Berns,

Harry Clor, Justice Antonin Scalia, Cass Sunstein, Jeffrey Rosen, and Bruce Ackerman are very pertinent. Policy issues with which we would begin include replacement of law by bureaucratic regulation (Moynihan, Tocqueville, Rabkin), and replacement of the Constitution by a freely interpreting Supreme Court acting as a super-legislature.

Other potential conference topics include:

- Realism and Idealism in American Foreign Policy
- America and Islam
- What It Means to Be an American: Confronting Issues of Immigration
- Bio-Ethics and American Politics
- The Artist Reflects on the American Polity

Prepared by study on the conference theme, students will have the unique opportunity to engage in conversation with people who are players or former players in our country's development. Whether critical observers or decision-makers, we will bring to campus an array of influential people to whom the core elements of American liberal democracy is key. Our setting in a quiet, rural central Ohio village will nurture the intense exchanges of ideas, critical thinking, and intellectual collaboration we know is possible outside media-saturated environments. We believe that the conference can foster the highest level of thought on challenging topics, and create unparalleled and dynamic dialogue that transcends common expectations.

2. An NEH *We the People* Challenge grant will enable Kenyon, in non-conference years, to host **lecture series** on aspects of American Democracy and its history. These might include debates by invited speakers, public symposia, and short-term visitors in residence who would give lectures and attend on-going classes, opportunities for faculty and students from across the college to interact in intellectually engrossing ways. We will draw on our close contacts with alumni through the Director and Advisory Board to designate participants in campus events or, in conjunction with the Kenyon's *Learning in the Company of Friends* alumni programs across the country, send a prominent speaker to several such alumni programs. Smaller group discussion, layered with information gained through published scholarship and global events, contributes to the progression of ideas for the Center.

In several ways, we expect the Center to contribute directly and fruitfully to public debate. We believe the Center can draw mid-career academics, especially from Ohio and the Midwest, to campus for weekend or week-long seminars or workshops enabling them to gain a more current perspective on cutting edge research on democratic theory or the founding fathers in comparative context and to put them in contact with scholars of the highest caliber. This model embraces the principles of the Midwest Faculty Seminar sponsored by the University of Chicago, which is open to schools in the Great Lakes Colleges Association, American Colleges of the Midwest, and regional historically black colleges. We also envision similar opportunities for mid-career practitioners in law, government, and community service that would enable them to reinvigorate their own experience of liberal arts learning as a life-long endeavor. In addition, and following a model established over several summers by Robert Horwitz, the Center can sponsor short summer workshops that allow us to share the Kenyon model of teaching political science and how it has been influenced by the Center. Kenyon alumni of the Department are interested in greater opportunities for staying connected to their college education as well, which can be made possible through electronic lectures and an interactive website for alumni.

3. **The Internet and electronic communication** play a critical role in access for Center activities and communication among participants, faculty, students, and future audiences. We will use newly created website to reach beyond the campus to post readings and research links, news of Center events, information on public affairs internships, advising, and matters of general interest publicized nationally by the College's Public Affairs office. Using email addresses gathered through the website and using known databases such as the APSA member list, a regularly issued electronic newsletter will be a cost-effective way to send notices about events and speakers and to post links to articles and readings. The website will also invite discussion from other faculty and selected distinguished speakers who may elect to blog throughout the biennial conference, with "ask the participants" features to encourage responses to conference papers or opportunities for follow up conversation. The blog will also extend conference discussion among participants. Faculty and speakers may elect to use the site to respond to off-year lectures.

While Internet connectivity will extend conference discussions throughout the year, its ultimate role is to link the activities of the Center to a national conversation. Improved communications capabilities, e.g., podcasting and webcasting, will be in effect by the third year of the grant, leveraging access for faculty members and thousands of students studying American democracy in regional colleges and high schools who could download a filmed debate between conference participants, read a scholarly paper, or hear a podcast of a lecture by an eminent political figure on founding principles. Following a suitable publishing agreement, the Center's written materials and post-conference papers and documents can be designed for electronic publication available through the website. In the future, collected lectures and papers could be assembled in DVD format for widespread distribution.

### **C . The Center and Kenyon**

After the first seeds of the Center's development have begun to take root, that is, the recruitment and hiring of key personnel and advisors, and public programs have demonstrated the Center's purpose at Kenyon, the Center will implement a number of exciting new initiatives for faculty and students.

1. The enhancement of **Faculty Development Funds** awarded through our established competitive process in the Faculty Affairs Committee and overseen by the Director and Advisory Board will enable Kenyon faculty to progress with research or curricular development related to fundamental questions about the principles and practices of American liberal democracy, across a wide variety of disciplines. This research will complement, prepare for and extend topics discussed in the conferences, seminars, public programs and be specifically designed to enrich classroom teaching. We will follow accepted campus procedure for seeking grants: Applicants supply a two-page cover letter, a project description, a report on previous projects, and an explanation of the importance of the project. Grantees would be expected to produce a final product from their research, to make a public presentation on campus, and to submit a report on the results of their work.

2. Using a traditional Kenyon model for faculty enrichment, the Center will offer an **interdisciplinary summer seminar for faculty** to prepare and present specific research on the principles, institutions, and practices of American liberal democracy, from the perspective of their discipline.



Participants from various departments and from our regional consortia of colleges will increase their expertise, open new paths of scholarship, and aid curricular development; guest participants or speakers will add a workshop component to the two-week sessions that would meet at Kenyon daily. Faculty members would receive an honorarium and certificate for participation in the workshop. Seminars will take place annually for two years, then biennially after the first conference.

3. The NEH endowment will allow us to award annually **three competitive summer grants to Kenyon students** to collaborate with a specific faculty member (advisor) on a special research project, typically an honors project that focuses on a fundamental question, text, or theme of American liberal democracy. The purpose of the summer grants would be both to increase students' knowledge of American political principles and practices, and to foster student-faculty contact quite like summer research conducted between our existing Summer Science Scholars program. Again, decisions will be guided by accepted procedures, in this case a review by the Center's Director and each student's advisor. The student research program is in keeping with the central importance we accord to extensive student-faculty engagement and collaboration made possible by our residential community and our view of students' role as partners in inquiry. Research grants and summer faculty seminars enable this ideal relationship – “learning in the company of friends” – to prosper, have a profound effect on the permeability of Department and program boundaries, inviting collaboration and cross-pollination from across campus, and contribute to the high morale on campus that comes from our long experience of support for individual effort.

### **Project Fundraising**

The Center for American Democracy is a key component of Kenyon College's current \$230 million capital campaign, which began its leadership phase in mid-2005 and has raised more than \$100 million in commitments within its first eighteen months. The campaign, envisioned after over a year of planning involving more than 60 Kenyon faculty as well as trustees, students, parents, alumni, and administrators, addresses the College's central aspirations for the significant expansion of its \$166 million endowment, through the addition of \$126 million in new endowed assets. Enhancement of academic

programs and faculty development resources is a top campaign priority (\$56 million), along with the expansion of endowed financial aid (\$70 million). Establishment of the Center is one of two new institutional programs considered and approved for endowment in perpetuity; the second program is an initiative for teaching pedagogy. At the same time, Kenyon aspires to increase its annual operating resources by raising \$24 million over the campaign period, and will reserve \$78 million for new facilities for the visual arts and student life programs.

The campaign is directed by the 40-member College Relations division under the leadership of vice president Sarah Kahrl, who successfully led the College's recent campaign to construct the \$70 million Kenyon Athletic Center. David W. Horvitz, chair of the previous Claiming Our Place campaign and former chair of the board of trustees, is leading this campaign, along with a standing board committee of ten trustees, including the current chair of the board and the President. This leadership group is backed by a campaign cabinet of 50 alumni leaders and more than 200 volunteers representing classes across six decades, all of which are now laying the groundwork for the campaign that will be public June 1, 2007.

The division includes 10 principal gift officers including veterans of the Claiming Our Place campaign and recently recruited professionals from Johns Hopkins University, Middlebury College, Culver Academy, and the Nature Conservancy, all of which have an assigned prospect base of 1,500 lead donor candidates. A full complement of staff directing annual funds, corporate and foundation relations, research, alumni and parent programs, and public affairs supports the campaign effort.

Alumni support for a center of study of American democracy emerged definitively during campaign feasibility studies. Many alumni who took part in the Public Affairs Conference Center in the 1980s recall this as a central experience of their Kenyon academic careers, and they are eager to provide a similar program for current students. A Kenyon alumnus and trustee has committed to a minimum gift of \$500,000, likely to expand to \$1 million, to match NEH funding, if awarded, to help endow the directorship of the center. A confirmed \$1 million unrestricted endowment gift from a Kenyon trustee is a candidate for assignment to this project. A Kenyon parent has funded the first two years of the summer student research grants with outright contributions as a prelude to an endowment commitment as the

program develops. Proposals are underway with two alumni and a former Kenyon parent who have invited requests and are each considering endowment gifts of \$250,000. The College has also identified a prospect base of approximately 75 alumni candidates who might consider gifts of \$50,000-\$100,000 to endow individual project components, such as faculty research funds and student research opportunities. Because of the special relevance of the Center to Ohio and its political life, Kenyon will pursue local foundation funding from the foundations and corporations including J P Morgan Chase, the Reinberger Foundation, the George Gund Foundation, and other entities with an historic relationship to the College. In addition, the College anticipates designating some of its new annual resources, to be incorporated in Kenyon's annual operating budget, for support of administrative overhead and housing of the center. These programs will be announced in 2007 and extended throughout the campaign, which is slated to conclude in 2010. NEH bridge funding for three years will allow the Center to demonstrate capacity and quality as pledges are received and the endowment grows.

Kenyon has a strong record of fundraising success to support the ambitious planning for this new project. In 2001, the College completed Claiming Our Place, a \$100 million campaign that exceeded its goal by \$16 million adding more than \$50 million in endowment for scholarship and faculty resources. Almost immediately thereafter, the College successfully completed a two-year campaign to support the construction of a new \$70 million facility for fitness, recreation, and athletics, which opened in early 2006. In the past two years, alumni and parent support of the College's annual funds grew more than 20 percent, last year raising more than \$4.4 million; in the current year, annual funds are on track for a similar increase. In addition, in 2004-05 and 2005-6, Kenyon completed back-to-back record fundraising years overall, realizing more than \$24 million (FY 2005) and \$21 million (FY 2006) in cash gifts, bequests, and grants in a non-campaign period.

Thanks to a consistently strong record of admissions and fundraising and a carefully administered budget and expense monitoring program, Kenyon has maintained a balanced operating budget for the last 36 consecutive years. The College has also steadily built its modest endowment through incremental fundraising that has increased the corpus to approximately \$166 million, most notably the \$50 million

addition made possible during Claiming Our Place. The current campaign has made building the endowment a central priority and aspires to double Kenyon's endowment assets through the fundraising program.

### **Assessment**

We will assess our attainment of goals in three areas:

1. The effect on the students: Faculty in Political Science will assess how deeper understanding of founding principles has affected student coursework and the quality of their independent research. Because the Center's programs will reach a campus-wide population, qualitative surveys assessing student integration of founding principles in analysis of issues under discussion in lectures and public presentations will also be analyzed.

2. The effect on the College and curriculum: The Advisory Board and Provost will work with faculty standing committees to assess how the activities of the Center are changing the dialogue about current issues and American political principles within and outside the classroom—truly the transformative effect envisioned for the Center by the College. Instances in which other department embrace Center activities as a complement to their own teaching will be reviewed, as will reported examples of student activities or extracurricular debate or discourse. Within the Political Science Department, enhancements or additions to the curriculum made possible by new personnel and Center activities will be tracked and assessed for their effectiveness.

3. The value to participating communities outside of Kenyon: The College can and will assess this grant's impact in quantitative fashion by tracking enrollment figures over the first few years of the Center's programming, the number of interns placed through the program and, at a much later date, through analysis of student participants' use of their training at Kenyon in their professional lives. Qualitative assessment through recorded interviews or written/electronic surveys will provide better-detailed and far more immediate results from our varied audiences. We will regularly track instances of regional and national recognition as well as the use our website and on-line materials.

### **Kenyon College and the NEH**

In 1987, the NEH awarded an institutional Challenge Grant of \$354,250 to support the renovation of our central Humanities building and current and endowed library acquisitions. With individual contributions and grants from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon and Knox County, the Albert Higley Company, and the J.G. Schmidlapp Trust, Kenyon exceeded the required match by over \$26,000, bringing the total program to \$1,443,648. The grant facilitated the expansion and improvement of Kenyon's library collection in the humanities, emphasizing retrospective collection development and the provision of original source materials such as history. It also provided necessary updating to preserve the historic Ascension Hall. With the success of this challenge grant, Kenyon improved the quality of the physical environment for humanities and the content of its resources, and proved the capability to reach a new level of effective fundraising. Both achievements paved the way for the current request for a *We the People* Challenge grant.

The most recent NEH Challenge Grant was awarded in 1991 in the amount of \$240,000 and was used to create a rotating professorship in the humanities. Support from numerous alumni as well as the Starr Foundation, the George Alden Trust, the McGregor Fund, and the GAR Fund enabled us to meet the match. The resulting \$721,197 gave the endowment fund a total of \$961,197 in initial capital. Four recipients have since held the position of NEH Distinguished Teaching Professor within their own departments; all have contributed important humanities content to College programs and curricula. The first recipient was Howard Sacks, founder of the Rural Life Center; the incumbent is Wendy F. Singer of the Department of History. Professor Sacks and Professor Singer have developed for the College valued interdisciplinary programs that reach beyond their respective departments to engage students and faculty in exploration of worlds as remote as India and as close as the Knox County, Ohio farmland. The 1991 NEH Challenge Grant has enriched and diversified the Kenyon community.

### **The Center's Long Term Impact on Kenyon College**

Our proposal to establish a Center for the Study of American Democracy is eminently in keeping with Kenyon's mission as a liberal arts college, concerned to immerse students in serious study of

fundamentally important questions in ways that will enhance their critical faculties and prepare them for post-graduate life. The intersection of theory and world-class debate brought to the classroom and facilitated by existing faculty, the Center's Director, and the eminent conference and lectureship participants promises to deliver the environment for deeper comprehension of American democracy for students and faculty alike. The establishment of the Center also forms the groundwork for important new developments in the Kenyon curriculum, its faculty development program, and its ability to expand scholarly dialogue with consortial partners.

- The Center will provide the first instance in which a sustained and endowed program of scholarly conferences and lectures is fully integrated in the curriculum of an undergraduate major at Kenyon (see Appendix D: Kenyon Course of Study 2006-07). Currently, the centers at Kenyon - The Rural Life Center (<http://rurallife.kenyon.edu/>), The Brown Family Environmental Center (<http://www2.kenyon.edu/Bfec/>), and *The Kenyon Review* (<http://www.kenyonreview.org/>), offer periodic lectures and community activities and (in the case of the BFEC) a physical laboratory, all of which enrich academic offerings. The Center for American Democracy's involvement, through its Director and Post-doctoral Fellow, will begin with fundamental courses, such as *Quest for Justice*, and extend through coursework to prepare students for participation in the conference, reaching to summer research programs for upper class students, which will itself feed back into the conference and public programs. Throughout, students will participate in in-depth study of founding documents related to themes of the conferences, which themselves will be major campus-wide events on the academic calendar.
- With this grant, for the first time, faculty development programs, including annual funded research and professional development opportunities, will be regularly integrated with the ongoing activities of a Center. Faculty development grants and competitive research programs will provide support for Kenyon's faculty members to bring new findings and perspectives to Center activities and their own classroom teaching. For the first time, Kenyon faculty can regularly incorporate a schedule of

visiting experts and scholars into classroom teaching, while continuing to benefit from valuable professional interaction with these visitors.

- The Center represents a key opportunity to stimulate and shape cross-campus dialogue on key issues of American democracy. Kenyon's size (1,600 students) and residential campus supports the potential for a single issue to be explored inside and outside the classroom through funded public programs, course work and student research programs, and the informal learning opportunities possible with interaction with visiting experts and scholars. Never before has there been the sustained and supportive framework to mount opportunities for continuous learning and discussion on topics relating to civil discourse through a variety of means – student research presentations, conferences and lectures, and student-sponsored fora and debates. The electronic distribution of conference papers and proceedings can ensure that such discussions are framed within the context of founding principles.
- Kenyon College enjoys a close relationship with Ohio's small liberal arts colleges through The Five Colleges of Ohio consortium and the Great Lakes Colleges Association. Cooperative programming enhances our resources and extends opportunities to more students. A wealth of new resources – downloadable conference papers, podcasts, webcasts, and summaries of student/faculty research -- will provide valuable content for our colleagues in higher education. In addition, Kenyon faculty advisors will be able to transfer academically appropriate information to high school teachers in 30 Ohio partner schools, affecting hundreds of high school students participating in the Kenyon Academic Partnership (KAP) program. KAP programs have offered advanced placement courses for high school students in Ohio for over three decades, and will benefit from the Center's activities.

### **Conclusion**

Our vision of the Center reaches beyond the isolated think tank to a place where we are challenged to examine the elasticity of the Constitution and its impact on our lives. With our proven history of scholarship and programming, our Trustees, alumni, and administration stand ready to implement the vision of our Political Science faculty, and to match NEH funding in order to endow a

Center for the Study of American Democracy. For the Department of Political Science, receiving an NEH *We the People* Challenge Grant to establish a Center for the Study of American Democracy at Kenyon would be an extraordinary, inimitable honor. For more than forty years the Department has sought to maintain a much neglected—and sometimes even maligned—tradition of liberal arts political education that grounds policy study in political philosophy and treats the American form of government as a serious and worthy alternative within the large history of political arrangements, rather than as a technical arrangement for the allotment of resources or the satisfaction of particular claims and interests. With the NEH grant and the commitment of generous Kenyon alumni, the Department will be able to make this approach much stronger at Kenyon and allow the College to contribute significantly to the national revival of this approach to learning. Although the PACC had a powerful and beneficial institutional effect, the new Center, through the presence and participation of broadly trained experts and the deliberate reliance on American founding documents, will bring focus to civil and thoughtful discourse. Center activities will show the links between the present and the past and complexities that arise when partisan formulations are replaced by deeper and longer term thinking. Kenyon's President and Provost are committed to making Kenyon a model college for vigorous, but civil and rational, debate. We at Kenyon are fully prepared for the wonderful opportunity provided by the *We the People* Challenge Grant, and request NEH funding to make the Center for the Study of American Democracy a reality.