

Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education

Proposed Implementation Date: July 1, 2022

The submission and signing of a proposal to initiate a State of Florida institute/center or the establishment of a University institute/center constitutes a commitment by the university(ies) to ensure that the institute/center's activities support the stated mission(s) and goals of the institution(s).

University of Florida

University Submitting Proposal

President

Date

Provost

Date

University

Type of Institute/Center

Senior Vice President

Date

July 1, 2022

Proposed Implementation Date

Vice President for Research

Date

Associated Discipline (2-digit CIP)

Dean of School or College

Date

 6/14/22

Proposed Institute/Center Director (if known) Date

Vice President and Chief
Financial Officer
(as appropriate)

Date

Other President(s)/
Administrator(s)

Date
(as appropriate)

To: President Kent Fuchs, Provost Joseph Glover

From: John Stinneford

Re: Center Proposal - Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education at the University of Florida

Date: June 14, 2022

Mission Statement and Goals

On January 24, 1783, as the Revolutionary War wound down and the United States prepared for full independence, a congressionally appointed committee led by James Madison recommended “a list of books proper for the use of Congress” in conducting constitutional government. The list included core texts on ethics, political and legal thought, law, religion, and European and American history. The list ranged from ancient authors such as Plato and Aristotle to contemporary writers like Cesare Beccaria and Emer de Vattel. It included “conservative” thinkers like Edmund Burke and “radical” thinkers like Voltaire and David Hume. The legal texts on the list ranged from the Institutes of Justinian to Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England. In short, Madison’s congressional book list contained a fair cross-section of the thought and history of Western civilization. In asking Madison’s committee to compile this list, Congress implied that leadership in a constitutional democracy depends not merely on the raw ability to obtain and use power, but on a deep knowledge of the Western intellectual tradition.

The spirit of the Madison’s congressional book list is reflected in the Florida state legislature’s authorization of a Center named for Madison’s friend and co-founder, Alexander Hamilton.

Pursuant to SB 2524, section 1004.6496, the mission of the Hamilton Center for Classical and Civic Education is to conduct teaching and research concerning the ideas, traditions, and texts that form the foundations of Western and American civilization.

The goals of the center are to:

- (a) Educate university students in core texts and great debates of Western civilization;
- (b) Educate university students in the principles, ideals, and institutions of the American political order;
- (c) Educate university students in the foundations of responsible leadership and informed citizenship;
- (d) Provide programming and training related to civic education and the values of open inquiry and civil discourse to support the K-20 system;
- (e) Coordinate with the Florida Institute of Politics (created pursuant to s. 1004.6499) and The Adam Smith Center for the Study of Economic Freedom (created pursuant to s.

1004.64991) and assist in the curation and implementation of Portraits in Patriotism (created pursuant to s. 1003.44).

Planned Activities

1. Design and offer undergraduate courses

The basic unit of instruction at the university is the course, and so the Hamilton Center must offer courses to fulfill its legislative mandate to educate students in its areas of academic focus. Appendix A features a list of sample courses drawn from Arizona State University's School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership (SCETL), a compelling model for the Hamilton Center. Like SCETL, the Center will ultimately offer a major, a minor, and/or a multidisciplinary certificate program for undergraduate students.

2. Build an externally recruited, regular rank Hamilton Center faculty

The Hamilton Center will externally recruit faculty for appointment at regular rank (tenured or tenure-track) into the Center. In the first year of operation, the Center will recruit several tenured or tenure track faculty members. Faculty appointments will be made into the Hamilton Center, with the option of seeking joint appointment in the department of the faculty member's discipline.

The Center will also recruit visiting faculty to offer courses through the Center, starting in Spring 2023.

The Center's Director and faculty will collaborate with existing UF faculty and academic units in public programming, cross-listing courses, etc.

3. Launch public event series to promote the values of civil discourse and viewpoint diversity

At America's great universities, renewed commitment to civil disagreement and debate in an intellectually diverse community of friends who will both support and challenge one another is needed now more than ever. This is not a partisan issue: The most powerful and articulate voices calling attention to this range from Jonathan Haidt and Cornel West to Robert P. George.

The Hamilton Center can be part of the solution at UF. We will host a series of "Hamilton Conversations" and debates open to the entire UF community, modeled on Claremont McKenna's college's wildly successful Athenaeum Series. This series powered Claremont's rise to the top of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education's (FIRE) ranking of institutions most supportive of a culture of free expression. As UF emerges as a leader among the "public Ivies," we have an opening to set a model for our peers.

The Center will also work with other academic units at UF, such as the Bob Graham Center Center for Public Service, to jointly support programming of mutual interest. I have

already met with Matt Jacobs of the Graham Center to discuss ways we can cooperate and coordinate our activities. Professor Jacobs has been extremely generous with his time, his encouragement, and his advice. It will be a real pleasure to work with him going forward.

4. Host visiting fellows

The Hamilton Center will sponsor several post-doctoral fellows and visiting (sabbatical) fellows to conduct research and teach courses aligned with the academic mission of the center. Although the core of the Center will remain regular rank hires – permanent faculty fully invested in UF's success and advancement – a rotation of outstanding visiting scholars would enrich the work of the Center.

5. Provide undergraduate and graduate opportunities for research and networking

Similar to the Graham Center, the Hamilton Center will provide financial and curricular support for undergraduate and graduate students performing research in areas within the mission of the Center. The Center will also seek to bring in outside speakers and fellows from various professional backgrounds to inform students of possible career paths and to give students opportunities to interact with prominent members of their fields of interest. Finally, the Center will sponsor student reading groups, retreats, and service opportunities to build community, inspire devotion to the public good, and enrich the intellectual life of undergraduate students. This final set of activities will provide fertile ground for working with faculty members from other academic units within the university.

6. Launch the “UF K12 Civics Seminars” for K12 Civics Educators

Pursuant to the legislature's authorizing language, the Hamilton Center will work with national institutional partners to provide content-rich, non-degree civics training for Florida's civics educators. The goal of these seminars is not to offer pedagogical training but rather substantive education focused on America's founding documents.

This will require quickly recruiting a K12 partnerships manager.

7. External Grant-seeking Plans

Academic centers like the Hamilton Center have garnered wide and deep interest from a variety of foundations, alumni, and individual donors. We are confident that when national foundations and individual donors see UF making a serious commitment to expanding our faculty to address the most urgent challenges facing the intellectual life of the university, they will step forward to support the Center.

Moreover, we are confident the state legislature will see continued value in our work.

Organizational Structure and Reporting

The legislature authorized the Hamilton Center as an “academic unit” of the University charged with a distinctive educational mission. Because this mission does not fit within any existing department or college, the creation of a new, interdisciplinary unit is necessary. Luckily, UF has a model for structuring interdisciplinary academic units: the Latin American Studies Center is an independent, university-wide academic unit that operates across the university’s colleges. Its Director reports to the Provost.

Therefore, like the Director of the UF Latin American Studies Center, the Director of the Hamilton Center should report to the Provost, and the Center should exist organizationally outside any particular college.

The first Director of the Hamilton Center should receive a joint appointment in the Center while maintaining the law school as his tenure home.

Council of Advisors

In consultation with university administration, the Director of the Hamilton Center will choose a Council of Advisors, relying (as the UF *Guidelines for Centers and Institutes* suggest is desirable) on external academic experts with a track record of accomplishments consistent with the mission of the Hamilton Center. The Council would advise the Director on the development of the Center’s curricular offerings, pedagogical vision, and public programs.

Space

In year 1 of operation, the Hamilton Center will request sufficient office and commons space to house the Director, up to four faculty members, and five staff members, in addition to classroom space normally required for courses. In the second year of operation, this need will grow in accordance with increased funding and hiring goals.

APPENDIX A.

Sample Courses and Achievements of Arizona State University's School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership (SCETL)

- Enlightenment & Revolution: Political Thought in Europe 1685-1815
- Federalists, Anti-Federalists & Enduring Debate
- Modern Political Thought: origins and Debates about Modern Liberty
- The Trial of Galileo
- Justice and Virtue
- Liberty and Equality
- Natural Law & the Common Good
- Theories of Democratic Citizenship
- Politics & Literature: Shakespeare & Machiavelli
- Arizona Politics & Constitutionalism
- Liberalism and Conservatism in America
- Lincoln: Rhetoric, Thought, Statesmanship
- Political Thought & Leadership of James Madison
- Tocqueville on Liberty, Equality and Democracy
- Transatlantic Perspectives on Democracy
- Civil Liberties and Rights
- Great American Leaders
- Globalism & Nationalism
- Debates in American Public Policy and Civic Affairs
- Political Speechwriting
- Political Rhetoric and Public Speaking
- Politics and Leadership in the Age of Revolutions, 1775-1826
- Ideological Origins of Anglo-American Liberty: Four Modern Revolutions
- Left and Right Around the World

- **Politics & Leadership in the Age of Revolution**
- **Shakespeare's Leadership Lessons: Performance & Politics**
- **U.S. National Security Challenges in the 21st Century**
- **U.S. National Policy & Strategic Leadership: Afghanistan**
- **Classical to Modern Economic Thought**
- **Classics of Modern Economic Thought: Smith to Hayek and Beyond**
- **Entrepreneurialism and Innovation**
- **Modern Political Thought**
- **Philosophy, Politics and Economics**
- **The American Political Economy**
- **Adam Smith and Classical Political Economy**

Additionally, SCETL has developed:

- **The university's most robust debate and speaker series to promote civil discourse on campus;**
- **A Civic Literacy Curriculum for Arizona teachers to help them "prepare the next generation of leaders for American political and civil society";**
- **A State Seal of Civic Literacy for high school diplomas; and**
- **A Civic Leadership Institute for high school students.**