You have a Congressional mandate to conduct a Constitution Day program. We can help.

A Resource for Campus Events
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Understanding the constitutional architecture of our political system is crucial to genuine deliberation about matters of power and policy.

DID YOU KNOW?
In 2004, Congress passed legislation requiring that every institution of higher education that receives federal funds hold an educational program on the Constitution on September 17, the day the drafters of the Constitution met in Philadelphia in 1787 to sign the completed document.

Constitution Day began with good intentions but without resources to help schools fulfill this mandate.

Thus the challenge: educators must do more to remind students of the foundational structures of their freedoms by revisiting the text of the Constitution, its philosophical background, and the struggles associated with writing, ratifying and completing it. Congress (rightly) prescribed no curricula, but it also appropriated no funds to assist schools in fulfilling this mandate.

This is where Jack Miller Center (JMC) comes in.

In partnership with leading experts from universities and colleges across the nation, JMC launched its Constitution Day Initiative (CDI) to help administrators and faculty provide engaging programs on the text and context of the Constitution and the permanent challenges of constitutional government.

REINVIGORATING CIVIC EDUCATION
It’s no secret that civic education is vital to representative democracy. Yet, few will disagree that this education is in serious trouble and that colleges and universities need to do more to educate for citizenship.

In fact, an informal survey of the top 100 colleges and universities showed that only half produced a meaningful program pertaining to the Constitution. With institutions of higher learning facing so many demands already, it’s little wonder that many colleges and universities fall short of meeting the Constitution Day mandate.

Because understanding the constitutional architecture of our political system is crucial to genuine deliberation about matters of power and policy, we should be concerned that the Constitution Day mandate has yet to achieve its potential for deepening students’ grasp of our Founding Principles and enduring political questions.

WHAT CAN WE DO?
With a network of hundreds of professors who specialize in the study and teaching of the American constitutional tradition, and with JMC partner programs on dozens of college and university campuses, our center is well suited to assist colleges and universities in meeting the federal mandate, promoting Constitution Day activities, and – most importantly – revitalizing the civic education that is central to the future of our nation.
Jack Miller Center’s Constitution Day Initiative

JMC shares in the belief that educating future leaders in the foundational principles and ideas that undergird our constitutional republic is a cause both worthy and vital.

We offer a variety of resources to help colleges and universities implement and promote Constitution Day activities and meet the federal mandate.

- Models of compelling, substantive programs
- Programming advice to ensure a successful event
- Online Resource Center that is a one-stop-shop for relevant educational materials, including JMC’s growing library of videos on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution
- Pocket editions of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence
- Access to JMC’s Senior Fellow in Constitutional Studies
- Limited grant support

Many of our sponsored programs have explored philosophical and historical debates about the form and functions of government, while others have focused on current or perennial controversies of constitutional government, such as the protection of civil liberties and the limits of governmental powers in domestic and foreign affairs. Energizing these programs is an impressive array of historians, philosophers, political scientists and legal scholars who have participated in this nationwide effort.

Within the cohesive umbrella of the CDI, programs maintain autonomy and are driven by campus faculty. Each program, however, benefits from the resources, ideas and academic networking offered through JMC.

“"The lecturer answered the question ‘Who Decides What the Constitution Says’ by asking the question ‘Whose Constitution is it?’ and stimulated some outstanding discussion.”

Professor Glenn Moots
Northwood University

Professor Gordon Wood, Brown University

More than 300 students attended a workshop led by American historian and author Dr. Robert Kagan at the 2011 CDI program at Christopher Newport University.
The New York Times attests to the value of JMC-sponsored programs and others agree:

“Our students benefited greatly from the intellectual gravity and civic spiritedness that all of our participants brought to our discussions.”

Bernard J. Dobski, Chair
Department of Political Science
Assumption College

“I’ve never seen the faculty together in a public forum like this, addressing a single topic from different angles; you should do this more often.”

Boston College student on CDI program, “Sources of American Constitutionalism”

The New York Times
That Rare Political Debate: Both Civil and Full of Consequence

By JAMES WARREN
Published: September 17, 2011

Alberto Coll fought fire with ice last week as he confronted provocative actions of former President George W. Bush’s war on terror.

Thursday night, Mr. Coll, a DePaul University law professor, engaged in a formal debate in Chicago over presidential powers with John Yoo, a controversial and fearless University of California law professor. As a Justice Department lawyer, Mr. Yoo helped shape Bush antiterrorism policies, most notably as an author of memos that justified harsh interrogation techniques and wiretapping without court warrants.

“We have a disagreement,” Mr. Coll told me earlier. “I think John is more comfortable putting a great deal of power in the president. I’m much more skeptical.”

The remark was made without a hint of rancor or condescension or frustration. Its tenor coursed a decidedly civil, even dispassionate, confrontation co-sponsored by ideologically diverse groups: the conservative Federalist Society and the liberal American Constitution Society, along with DePaul and the Jack Miller Center for the Teaching of American Founding Principles.
Constitution Day Program Sampler

Illinois Institute of Technology’s Chicago-Kent College of Law. Separate talks by Supreme Court Justices Stephen Breyer and Antonin Scalia on the role of the judiciary within our constitutional system.

DePaul University. Debate on the limits of executive power between DePaul Professor Alberto Coll and Professor John Yoo of Stanford University.

Assumption College and the College of the Holy Cross. Collaborative two-day symposium on “Judicial Supremacy and the Politics of the Constitution” and “Mr. Jefferson’s Constitution.” The sponsors organized two public lectures, a student seminar and a round-table discussion for members of the two colleges and the greater Worcester, MA community.

Brown University. Debate on the constitutionality of the health care mandate between two of the nation’s top constitutional experts, Randy Barnett and former Solicitor-General Charles Fried.

Duke University. Pauline Maier, a leading historian on the American Founding, gave a talk on the ratification of the Constitution and led a separate faculty panel discussion on the limitations of power established by the Constitution.

Cornell University. “Spend Less, Owe Less, and Grow the Economy,” a lecture by Kevin Hassett on macroeconomic policy and limited government.

Emory University. Notre Dame Professor of Political Science Michael Zuckert spoke on how the 14th Amendment completed the Constitution.

Loyola University Chicago. Eminent Enlightenment scholar James Moore discussed the influence of David Hume on the American Framers.

Boston College. Faculty panel on the philosophic sources of modern constitutionalism.

Boise State University. Lecture on the present state of our federal system by Michael Greve.

City College of New York. Lecture on “The Struggle Over the Founding,” by Professor Pauline Maier, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

University of Wisconsin. Faculty Panel on the Constitution and the race for the White House in 2012.


University of Tennessee, Chattanooga. Lecture on “Gratitude and Patriotism,” by Professor James Ceaser, University of Virginia.
Constitution Day Program Sampler

“If this year’s crop of programs is any indication, Constitution Day may be seeing its time come at last.”

**Professor Bill McClay**
University of Tennessee
at Chattanooga

**Columbia University.** Judge Joseph Greenaway, US 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, discussed race and the Constitution.

**Mississippi State University.** Lecture on “William Seward, the South and the Constitution,” by Walter B. Stahr.

**Kenyon College.** Congressman Zachary T. Space spoke on Congress and the separation of powers.

**University of Virginia.** A discussion on John Locke and the Founding with Professor Murray Dry, Middlebury College, and Judge Brett Kavanaugh, US Court of Appeals, Washington DC District.

“**If this year’s crop of programs is any indication, Constitution Day may be seeing its time come at last.”**

**Professor Bill McClay**
University of Tennessee
at Chattanooga
American universities have work to do in educating this generation of citizens about the theory and practice of representative democracy.

**RECENT TOPICS**

- Character of the Federalist Papers
- The Bill of Rights
- Ratification Struggle in the States
- Passage of the 14th Amendment
- The Civil War
- The New Deal
- State of Federalism
- Health Care Mandate
- Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage
- Power of Eminent Domain
- Proper Role of the Judiciary
- 2012 Presidential Election
Now that Constitution Day is a permanent fixture on the academic calendar, JMC hopes to make it a prominent one as well. Our resources, advice and experience can help, whether your interest lies in organizing a lecture or a conference or in holding a faculty symposium or undergraduate workshop.

Many schools have successfully linked their Constitution Day event to ongoing courses by bringing speakers into the classroom, adding a relevant reading to a course syllabus, sponsoring student essay competitions or arranging student dinners with visiting experts. This is a welcome trend, since the larger purpose of Constitution Day is to get students to think about fundamental questions beyond the lecture hall and for the long term.

Additionally, many colleges have begun building on their particular strengths and involving more of their own faculty in Constitution Day programming, a practice that will build institutional commitment and stimulate student interest. For those schools seeking outside support, JMC has compiled an impressive list of speakers for all manner of topics and formats.
JMC’s Online Resource Center’s page on the Constitution Day Initiative provides examples of compelling and substantive campus programs others may use as models. It also includes practical ideas for increasing student turnout for lectures, debates or other Constitution Day events. Faculty will find a variety of resources for campus events, classroom discussions, student prizes or other Constitution Day-related efforts.

Students and faculty can visit JMC’s Online Resource Center to view a growing array of JMC videos on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, thereby gaining direct access to some of our nation’s most thoughtful academic experts on the Constitution and its history.

For example, the video “Liberty” helps students understand this essential concept as our Founders understood it. The video is hosted by Professor Michael Munger (Duke University) and features leading scholars Ralph Lerner (University of Chicago), Lorraine Pangle (University of Texas at Austin), James Ceaser (University of Virginia) and Michael Zuckert (University of Notre Dame).

Such videos are designed to spark interest in and discussion of the Founding among students in a classroom setting. To enhance this education, visitors will find links to the original texts that shaped our Founders’ ideas, such as the Torah, John Locke and Montesquieu, as well as to documents including the Federalist Papers and other texts produced by Founders such as Madison, Hamilton, Jefferson and Adams.

Beyond the classroom, the Online Resource Center will also serve as an invaluable resource for all lifelong learners who are serious about a profound education in America’s experiment with liberty.

We will be regularly updating CDI information within the Online Resource Center.
JMC’s Constitution Day Initiative is led by Dr. Michael Andrews, JMC Executive Officer and Vice President for Academic Programs, and Professor Daniel Cullen, JMC Senior Fellow in Constitutional Studies. Cullen is a professor of political science and humanities at Rhodes College, where he directs “The Project for the Study of Liberal Democracy.”

Educators seeking advice for Constitution Day programming may contact Dr. Andrews at 484-436-2061/mandrews@gojmc.org or Professor Cullen at dcullen@gojmc.org.

Additionally, the JMC Web site, www.jackmillercenter.org, has the latest information regarding Constitution Day programming and online teaching resources for educators. A speakers bureau featuring JMC Fellows, leading scholars in history and political thought, can also be found on our Web site.

For consultation on publicity and media outreach, please contact Mike Deshaies, JMC Vice President for Donor Programs, at mdeshaies@gojmc.org.

www.jackmillercenter.org/educational-resources
“Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of liberty.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON

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