MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

THE PRICE OF SUCCESS

An Appeal to Donors to Help Us Save the Founding Ideals for Future Generations

By Jack Miller

Everyone knows there is a price for failure--the loss of money, time and energy; a bruised ego and most importantly the failure to achieve your goal.

People normally don’t think about the price of success. First, of course, we must define success. Personally, I don’t believe that success is reaching some goal. Success is in advancing along the pathway. Goals are just the markers along the way and as soon as you successfully arrive at a particular marker and experience the brief pleasure of getting there, you immediately see more markers in the distance. In my experience, that’s the way life is and that’s what is happening at the Jack Miller Center.

Consider the markers we have passed so far:

• A network of 550 professors teaching on more than 180 campuses;
• Support for 52 academic centers that offer expanded opportunities for students to learn about our nation’s constitutional traditions;

The JMC’s ninth Annual National Summit on Higher Education was held October 25-27 in Chicago.

The summit brings together distinguished scholars, public intellectuals, journalists, and foundation leaders to discuss the challenges of improving education in American history and political thought on our nation’s college campuses.

Featured speakers were Mr. Frank Brogan, chancellor of the State University System of Florida, and Professor Andrew Delbanco of Columbia University. Chancellor Brogan addressed his remarks to the importance of civic education for our colleges and universities.

Professor Delbanco, the Mendelson Family Chair of American Studies at Columbia, spoke about his recently published book, College, What it Was, Is, and Should be. Professor Delbanco makes the case that the ideal of a democratic education — an experience that challenges students to develop as individuals and gain a sense of ethical responsibility — is in danger of becoming a thing of the past. See page 8 for a transcript of Professor Delbanco’s remarks.

Panel discussions were led by the JMC’s academic staff — Dr. Michael Andrews, Dr. Rafe Major, and Dr. Pamela Edwards. The staff focused on efforts led by regional networks of faculty and donors to improve education and strengthen the core curriculum and the role of foundation philanthropy.

During the summit Professor Bill McClay of the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga awarded Professor Delbanco with the annual Jack Miller Award for Academic Excellence.

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Jack Miller Receives Citizen of the Year Award

Presentation made at the 67th Annual Meeting of the National Conference on Citizenship in Philadelphia

JMC Chairman Jack Miller received the Joseph H. Kanter Citizen of the Year Award at the annual meeting of the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), held on September 14th in Philadelphia.

The award recognizes a private citizen who has made exemplary contributions in championing civic participation in the United States. Previous recipients include Jean and Steve Case of the Case Foundation; Time magazine’s Managing Editor, Rick Stengel; former U.S. Senator Harris Wofford; and 9-11 Commission Co-chair and former Congressman Lee Hamilton.

“The Kanter Citizen of the Year Award is given to those truly outstanding citizens who do the most to advance good citizenship,” says Rear Admiral Mike Ratliff (USN ret.), president of the Jack Miller Center. “Jack Miller’s philanthropy and his tireless efforts to help colleges and universities build an engaged citizenry. Mr. Bob Nardelli, former CEO of Home Depot; Christina Lurie, co-owner of the Philadelphia Eagles; and Norman Mineta, former Secretary of Commerce (Clinton administration) and Transportation (George W. Bush administration) joined Mr. Miller at the conference.

Mr. Miller thanked the hundreds of educators, policy makers, and community builders present at the conference for the award. He accepted the Citizen of the Year Award “on behalf of the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Constitutional Principles and History” and its work to advance this essential education on American college and university campuses.

Later both Mr. Nardelli and Secretary Mineta remarked on Jack’s characterization of how young our nation is because it is “really only three times a lifetime such as mine.”

The National Conference on Citizenship is a public-private partnership that grew from an idea discussed by President Truman and former general of the Army Dwight Eisenhower. The conference was later mandated by Congress in 1953.

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To watch Mr. Miller’s acceptance speech, and to learn more about the National Council on Citizenship, please visit www.ncoc.net.

Constitution Day Initiative Gains Momentum with Compelling Topics and Dignitaries

The character of The Federalist Papers, the healthcare mandate, and the proper role of the Judiciary were among the topics covered on the 41 college campuses participating in the JMC Constitution Day Initiative (CDI) in September.

Programs featured dignitaries, including retired U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens and U.S. Deputy Solicitor General Michael Dreeben, as well as preeminent scholars such as Professor Jack Greene, Johns Hopkins University; Professor Pauline Maier, MIT; and Professor James Ceaser, University of Virginia.

Reports on Constitution Day 2012 from partner programs documented a concerted effort to link CDI events to ongoing courses. This trend supports restoration of the study of constitutionalism in the curriculum as it rekindles student interest in the critical study of their political heritage.

Attendance was high at the campus-wide events: 400 people, for example, attended a lecture by Professor James Ceaser at Louisiana Tech University.

“Without exaggeration, the event was a remarkable success. The turnout for the talk was an unexpected though welcome surprise. Many students showed up of their own accord, and many others were brought by faculty who were themselves interested in the talk. We have done Constitution Day talks before, but none produced even half the turnout,” said Louisiana Tech Professor Jeremy Mhire.

The JMC initiative was launched in 2011 to help enrich understanding of the constitutional architecture of our political system that is crucial to genuine deliberation about matters of power and policy on college campuses. The JMC initiative assists schools in meeting a federal law that requires all schools receiving federal funds to hold an educational program on the United States Constitution in connection with Constitution Day (September 17) for their students.

The Constitution Day Initiative is made possible through the generosity of the Andrea Wait Carlton Foundation and other donor partners. Dr. Daniel Cullen, senior fellow for constitutional studies, leads the JMC Constitution Day effort.
Ohio University's George Washington Forum hosted an international conference on God and the Enlightenment October 4-6.

The conference, open to the public, brought together scholars of early modern European religious and intellectual history to consider the relationship between religion and many of the intellectual innovations associated with the Enlightenment.

The conference opened with a keynote address by David Ruderman on “The Jewish Enlightenment: Mysticism, Science and Moral Cosmopolitanism.” Ruderman’s remarks addressed the work of 18th Century Jewish scholar Pinchas Horowitz on religion and the natural world.

Ruderman is the Joseph Mayerhoff Professor of Modern Jewish History and the Ella Darivoff Director of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He was previously the Frederick P. Rose Professor of Jewish History at Yale University. One of the world’s leading historians on early modern Jewish intellectual history, Ruderman has published most recently Connecting the Covenants: Judaism and the Search for Christian Identity in Eighteenth-Century England in 2007 and Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History in 2010, which won the National Jewish Book Award in History.

Sixteen scholars from the U.S. and Europe presented papers at the three-day conference.

A partner program of the JMC, the George Washington Forum on American Ideas, Politics, and Institutions teaches America’s foundational principles in their Western intellectual, political, and institutional contexts. It is grounded on the idea that students facing an increasingly globalized world need to understand what characterizes and distinguishes the nation they live in and the civilization from which it emerged.

The Forum helps students become enlightened citizens in a liberal democracy whose roots run deep in Western civilization, but whose ideals and interests transcend the West.
We certainly have come a long way from our first conference for America’s constitutional heritage. Opportunities to deepen their knowledge and appreciation have proven that students are willing to take advantage of new learning experiences. We, along with our faculty and donor partners, have proven that students are willing to take advantage of new opportunities to deepen their knowledge and appreciation for America’s constitutional heritage.

The Price of Success

The price of our success comes in the need for more donor partners to join us in our mission to reinvigorate education in America’s Founding Principles and history. We see more markers, more exciting opportunities for success down the road.

There are still more than two thousand universities and colleges we haven’t reached, plus more than a thousand community colleges and untold numbers of high school teachers who could be reaching millions of students.

“Tremendous Opportunities with Our Existing Partners

Our existing network of partner programs need substantially increased support if they are to realize their potential on campuses such as Yale, MIT, the University of Virginia, Notre Dame, and the University of Texas. Our postdoctoral initiative is changing careers and creating jobs for dedicated young professors who will teach America’s Founding Principles to millions of students over the coming decades, and it, too, needs to be sustained. What’s the price if we are to realize even a fraction of the potential of these growing efforts to advance this essential education? We are adding another staff member, but we need an Academic Initiative Fund that will allow us to support each of these programs over the coming five years as they establish themselves and are able to stand on their own.

JMC Online Resource Center

We are now developing the “JMC Online Resource Center,” which will include a full semester series of videos on the most important concepts in our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution. Each video will come complete with an online anthology of the works that our founders read and wrote on that particular topic.

This resource center is going to be a powerful tool that will allow us to reach thousands of universities, colleges and high schools across the country. Professors and high school teachers could use this resource center in any way they see fit, including showing the videos in class, assigning readings from the anthology included, or just learning more about the subject themselves. The first video, which will be available in December, is on “Liberty” and what our founders meant by it in their Declaration of Independence. What’s the price of this new marker? This first effort is being done by our current staff working “overtime,” and, fortunately, several of our faculty partners are donating their precious time to advise and to lecture in the series. To produce the entire series and market it successfully we need to add one or two more individuals to our staff. Then, of course, there’s the cost of producing the videos, about $30,000 each. We will need several million dollars to do this as well as we want.

High Schools

For the past three years we have supported initiatives to help high school teachers in partnership with Roosevelt University in Chicago and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We have gotten rave reviews. The following comment reflects the feedback we have received from many of the participants, “I have been to dozens of teacher programs, and this is the first time I have learned ‘content’ on the subject I am teaching, not just more teaching techniques.”

These programs at Roosevelt and Wisconsin are just the beginning of what we can do to help at the high school level. With additional donor support, we can do so much more to enhance the teaching of our founding principles and history to high school students across the country. But as you know from your own business experience it’s going to take a focused effort from a very capable person (plus enough support to allow us to expand the teacher program to other campuses) to successfully grow this program. That’s probably another one and half to two million in salaries and expenses over the next five years.

Constitution Day Initiative

In 2011, we launched our Constitution Day Initiative to help colleges engage in meaningful Constitution Day (September 17) programs for students. With our help, 27 colleges held programs in 2011; in 2012, our faculty partners on 42 campuses held lectures, workshops, debates, etc. involving experts on the Constitution.

Twenty-seven schools the first year, 42 the second year—that’s a good start; however, it’s far, far, too few. We recently mailed to some 600 college presidents, provosts and department chairpersons an information booklet on our Constitution Day Initiative and will follow-up with more information early next year. This outreach effort combined with our on-line resource center means that we will have the potential to eventually help thousands of schools at all levels. But, again, it’s going to take someone to make it happen, someone to reach out to all those schools. More money.

If you would like to learn more about our mission and programs, please visit www.jackmillercenter.org, or better yet, call me at 847-892-0469 or Mike Ratliff at 440-436-2065.
Are Colleges Endangered?

Professor Andrew Delbanco delivered the keynote address at the the Jack Miller Center’s Annual Summit held in Chicago in October. He discussed the past, present, and future of American higher education. The following is an excerpt of his closing remarks on technology and its impact on the traditional college classroom.

"I think we need to prepare for the digital future, to try to engage it for the purposes we believe in. But we also want to keep in mind some of the prospective perils that it may bring."

"Are colleges endangered?" I believe the answer is yes. In some ways, the premise behind everything I’ve said tonight is a conservative one— that the institutions we remember from our own student days, and where many of us have spent our lives as teachers, will continue to exist in something like their traditional form. Maybe not in the ideal form of the tree-lined campus with its walkways and dorms and libraries, but recognizable as the college or university we remember and still know.

Yet there are some very smart people who don’t think that’s the case; who think that these institutions are likely to be transformed beyond recognition—sooner rather than later. One of the reasons they say that, a reason hard to refute, is that the financial burden of running these institutions appears in many cases to be unsustainable.

The business model of American higher education appears to be broken, both the public model, because of massive disinvestment by the states; and the private model as well, at least for institutions without large endowments and secure “market share.”

It’s in this context that we are seeing huge investments in various forms of “distance learning” that some people believe will furnish a viable alternative to the traditional college. Harvard, MIT, Berkeley and most recently the University of Texas have invested something north of 60 million dollars in a new online project called “edX.”

In just the past few months, the word MOOC, the acronym for massive open online courses, has become part of the language. Meanwhile, for-profit “universities,” which operate almost exclusively online, are by far the fastest growing sector of American higher education. So I think it’s a good bet that a new world is coming and that higher education will be thought of more and more exclusively as the transmission of information and the provision of training—at the expense of reflection, self-knowledge and insight into deep human problems.

As a testament to the kind of educational experience we don’t want to lose, I’d like to close with an email that was sent to one of my teaching assistants the week before last.

The student wrote: “I just wanted to let you know that our section meeting tonight had a profound effect on me. I got more out of that discussion than I could have ever imagined. Perhaps there are good reasons not to try. Rather, I think we need to prepare for the digital future, to try to engage it for the purposes we believe in. But we also want to keep in mind some of the prospective perils that it may bring.

I worry about the potential of these new technologies to destroy, damage, or at least make much more difficult, the life of the teacher as a vocation or calling. Many of us already know how difficult it is to sustain a true sense of academic or intellectual community in our own institutions. One question to ponder is how, in this digitized future, will we train, develop, and inspire a future faculty?

The second—though ultimately even more important—question is what will this new technology mean for students? To the extent that college education moves online, it will have moved into the same space where students go to shop, where they go for entertainment, and where they go to socialize. Historically, the university has been a sequestered if not cloistered space, but I think that’s going to change as we go forward.

Finally, what are the implications of these new technologies for the humanities in particular? Studies have shown that online learning works well for some courses. In a statistics course, for example, students may do just as well, and maybe even a little better, online than their peers do with the in-person class experience. But I have trouble imagining the experience of a humanities seminar being replicated online. I fear that the decline of the humanities, already far advanced, will accelerate, and that education will be thought of more and more exclusively as the transmission of information and the provision of training— at the expense of reflection, self-knowledge and insight into deep human problems.

As a response to the kind of educational experience we don’t want to lose, I’d like to close with a message that was sent to one of my teaching assistants the week before last.

The student wrote: “I just wanted to let you know that our section meeting tonight had a profound effect on me. I got more out of that discussion than I could have ever imagined. I don’t know why it should have happened tonight, because I’ve read Emerson before, but I felt what I can only describe as a religious experience in class. It was like being lit within me tonight.”

This is an enormously precious kind of experience, much like what my Puritan friends would have called conversion — and we need to fight to defend and protect it for the sake of future students. It is something I find hard to imagine in the brave new world that’s emerging before our eyes. One thing’s for sure: we don’t want to look back a few years from now and say, as Henry David Thoreau said about an earlier technological revolution, “we do not ride upon the railroad, the railroad rides upon us.” Thanks very much.
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Brown Program Focuses on ‘What Works in the World’

The Political Theory Project (PTP), a vibrant research center at Brown University, provides a space for students of diverse perspectives to freely discuss the most pressing political problems of our day.

The Project brings to this study a synthesis of humanistic and social scientific tools. It aims to encourage discussions that are more than merely academic or intellectually fashionable.

The Project delves beneath familiar ideological labels, focusing on questions about what actually works in the world. According to Professor John Tomasi, director of the PTP, responsible criticism of political institutions must be conducted in light of economic realities and the findings of mainstream social science, rather than a mere rehearsal of ideology or an expression of intellectual fashion.

“We are interested in ideas and are committed to searching out insights from whatever parts of the political spectrum we might find them. Our interest in connecting normative theory to actual practice, however, does direct our attention to a set of norms that have a record of providing modern societies with a measure of stability, wealth, and well-being: individual rights, the rule of law, private property and systems of market exchange, individual rights, the rule of law, private property and systems of market exchange, religious liberty, freedoms of speech and property and systems of market exchange, and Social Order, and Globalization and Development.

A sampling of undergraduate courses developed by the PTP include Constitutional Theory, Defenses of Capitalism, Constitutional Law: Government Powers, and U.S. Legal and Business History: Regulating the Marketplace.

The Janus Forum, the student arm of the PTP, sponsors a variety of university-wide lectures, debates, seminars and conversations. The Janus Forum is the student arm of the PTP. They encourage open-minded debate about political ideas through lectures, debates, seminars, and town hall meetings. Janus Lectures bring together two or more speakers with opposing viewpoints on relevant social and political issues. Janus Lectures are chosen by the Janus Steering Committee, a group comprised of representatives from Brown’s major political and religious groups.

The Project also supports Brown Political Science and Business History: Regulating the Marketplace.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

OHIO UNIVERSITY: Shakespeare and History, December 3, 2012


GETTYSBURG COLLEGE: 150th Anniversary of the American Civil War, February 20, 2013

OHIO UNIVERSITY: A Capitalism for the People, February 21, 2013

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE: 150th Anniversary of the American Civil War, March 20, 2013

BOSTON: Bradley Conference, April 4-6, 2013

CHICAGO: Midwest Political Science Conference, April 11, 2013

For information about these and other events, go to http://www.jackmillercenter.org/regional-initiatives/calendar-of-events