



Academic Year 2023-24 Annual Report

Since the Menard Family Center's formal opening in 2019, its mission has been to "creat[e] and suppor[t] direct community-focused programming, engaged teaching and applied research that promotes democratic theory and practice, enhances our understanding of America's civic health and builds the capacity of citizens and communities to collaborate in solving problems across ideological, political and social lines." Below are descriptions of the major initiatives sponsored by and/or hosted by the Menard Family Center between July 2023-June 2024 in support of that mission.

Marquee Public Events

Citizenship and Democracy Week – September 15-22, 2023 (Oxford, Hamilton & Middletown)

In mid-September, the Menard Family Center again served as the lead sponsor and organizer of Miami's annual Citizenship and Democracy Week – a multi-campus, multi-event program aimed at encouraging the University community to think deeply about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society. (Miami's annual Citizenship and Democracy Week was highlighted in the American Political Science Association's [Teaching Civic Engagement Across the Disciplines](#) (2017) as a model of effective interdisciplinary civics programming within higher education.)

In partnership with numerous university and community stakeholders, the 2023 Citizenship and Democracy Week program featured 11 separate events including an on-campus naturalization ceremony, an on-campus appeals court proceeding, several lectures and public discussions and multiple student-led sessions on selected civil liberties issues. *Altogether, over 1000 people participated again this year in Menard Family Center-sponsored events during Citizenship and Democracy Week.*

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, "Belarus's Fight for Democracy" – September 22, 2023 (152 Shideler Hall, Oxford campus) In this public lecture, co-sponsored with the University's Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, Ms. Tsikhanouskaya -- the leader of the Belarusian democratic opposition and the head of Belarus' United Transitional Cabinet in exile -- discussed the current state of democracy in Eastern and Central Europe as well as her views about the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy to defend liberal democratic values. She also answered questions from the audience (consisting of about 300 people) and met with selected students and faculty at a post-lecture dinner/reception.

2023 Nursing Policy Hackathon -- November 3-5, 2023 (Clinical Health Sciences and Wellness Building, Oxford campus) In partnership with Miami's Department of Nursing, the University's ASPIRE office and the Ohio chapter of the American Nurses Association, the Menard Family Center served as the lead institutional sponsor of a weekend-long immersive "policy hackathon" held on the Oxford campus in early November. The event began with a Friday afternoon/evening public policy symposium featuring remarks by U.S. House Rep. (and registered nurse) Lauren Underwood (D-IL) and by Dr. Oriana Beaudet, Vice President of Innovation for the American Nurses Association.

Eighteen teams of participants -- including Miami undergraduates as well as in-career nurses and

health care industry leaders -- then spent two days on the Oxford campus, working collaboratively with key state leaders in health care policy (Ohio Rep. Sara Carruthers, R-Hamilton, Chair of the state House of Representatives' Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services; Ohio Rep. Jennifer Gross, R-West Chester, Vice Chair of the House's Health Provider Services Committee; and Ohio State Senator Mark Romanchuk, R-Ontario, member of the Ohio Senate's Health Committee) to develop concrete policy proposals in four discrete areas: acute care, chronic care, public health and nursing education. The weekend hackathon culminated in presentations by these teams to a panel of judges consisting of state legislators, health care CEOs and nursing education leaders.

A summary of the weekend's proceedings, penned by lead event organizer Dr. Sara Arter (Department of Nursing), was published online in *American Nurse Journal* in March 2024: <https://www.myamericannurse.com/2023-nursing-policy-hackathon-reflection/>

Fall 2023 JANUS Forum: Mitch Daniels and Kristina Johnson, "Is Higher Ed Woke or Broke?"-- November 1, 2023 (Wilks Theater, Oxford campus)

In this lively public forum, former Indiana governor and Purdue University president Mitch Daniels and former Ohio State University president Kristina Johnson debated various issues currently facing higher education in America. This event was co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science and the Menard Family Center, with the generous support of Thomas W. Smith (Miami Class of 1950).

A summary of the event can be found here: <https://miamioh.edu/cas/news/2024/05/janus-forum-and-darrell-west-lecture-2024.html>

2023 O'Hara Lecture in Law and Politics: Adam Liptak, "Reflections on Law, Politics and the Supreme Court," -- November 15, 2023 (Taylor Auditorium, Farmer School of Business, Oxford campus)

Co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science and the Menard Family Center, this lecture by Adam Liptak, U.S. Supreme Court correspondent for the *New York Times*, examined the evolution of the Supreme Court's membership over several decades and the effects of personnel shifts on the Court's decision-making processes. In addition to his delivery of the O'Hara lecture, Mr. Liptak also met while on campus with a group of Menard Family Center-affiliated students and delivered a guest lecture in an upper-division course on media and politics.

Ohio's 8th Congressional District Democratic Candidate Primary Debate -- February 28, 2024 (on Zoom) In partnership with the Miami University College Democrats, the Democratic Women's Club of Southwest Ohio, the Butler County Progressive PAC and the Democratic Parties of Butler, Darke, Hamilton, Miami and Preble Counties, the Menard Family Center hosted this public debate featuring the three candidates (Dr. Vanessa Enoch, David Gelb and Nathaniel Hawkins) vying for the Democratic nomination to take on incumbent Republican Congressman Warren Davidson in November 2024. Menard Family Center Executive Director John Forren moderated the event.

U.S. Senate Republican Primary Debate -- March 6, 2024 (Gates-Abegglen Theatre, Oxford campus)

In partnership with Hearst Broadcasting, the Ohio Republican Party and WLWT-TV (NBC's Cincinnati affiliate), the Menard Family Center hosted the final primary debate among the three candidates (Cleveland businessman Bernie Moreno, State Senator Matt Dolan and Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose) vying for the 2024 Ohio Republican nomination to the U.S. Senate. The debate, broadcast and streamed online live from the Oxford campus, was covered by 189 media outlets throughout the nation, including the [New York Times](#) and television outlets throughout the state. (A sampling of media coverage for the event is included below.) Over 20 Miami undergraduates played direct roles in the planning and execution of the event.

- A summary of the event can be found here: <https://miamioh.edu/news/2024/02/miami-to-host-march-6-primary-debate.html>.
- Photos can be found here: <https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/photos-republican-us-senate->

[candidates-dolan-larose-and-moreno-debate-at-miami-university/AIRTLTAX3ZBGBGGO2CP3KKEWL4/](https://www.wlwt.com/article/ohio-republican-senate-debate-moreno-larose-dolan-replay/60117173)

- Archived video of the broadcast can be found here: <https://www.wlwt.com/article/ohio-republican-senate-debate-moreno-larose-dolan-replay/60117173>

Currently, the Menard Family Center is working with Hearst Broadcasting and WLWT-TV to secure an on-campus, televised general election debate in October 2024 between Republican U.S. Senate nominee Bernie Moreno and incumbent Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown.

Menard Family Center Spring Lecture: Carter Phillips, Esq., “Witness to Democracy: A 40-Year Perspective on the Supreme Court” -- March 15, 2024 (Wilks Theatre, Armstrong Student Center, Oxford campus)

Co-sponsored by Miami’s Sue Henry Center for Pre-Law Education, this event featured a prominent appellate attorney who has argued 90 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court over a decades-long career. In addition to his evening talk, which was attended by approximately 150 people, Mr. Phillips also visited two Miami undergraduate classes and met over lunch with pre-law students on the Oxford campus.

- A summary of the event can be found here: <https://www.journal-news.com/news/attorney-with-90-us-supreme-court-cases-to-speak-at-miami-university/G56I6FZHAFIZDV3HWIAMX5W7Y/>

Spring 2024 JANUS Forum: Mick Mulvaney and Tiffany Muller, “Bought and Paid For? Money, Speech and Elections in America” -- April 15, 2024 (Shriver Center, Oxford campus)

In partnership with Miami’s Department of Political Science, the Center co-hosted this on-campus forum featuring former White House Chief of Staff and Special U.S. Envoy to Ireland Mick Mulvaney and President of End Citizens United Tiffany Muller for a lively discussion of campaign finance in America. Approximately 150 people attended the on-campus lecture. During their time in Oxford, Mr. Mulvaney and Ms. Muller also met with students in separate small-group sessions.

- A summary of the event can be found here: <https://miamioh.edu/cas/news/2024/05/janus-forum-and-darrell-west-lecture-2024.html>

2024 Joyce Hulse Manko Annual Lecture on Government: “Gerrymandering in Ohio and Beyond” -- April 24, 2024 (Wilks Conference Center, Hamilton campus)

This panel discussion -- moderated by Menard Family Center Executive Director John Forren and co-sponsored by Miami Regionals’ Office of Public Programming -- featured four prominent experts on election law and the politics of redistricting: Jen Miller (Executive Director, Ohio League of Women Voters, David Pepper (former chairperson of the Ohio Democratic Party), Robert Paduchik (former chairperson of the Ohio Republican Party) and Frank Strigari (former chief legal counsel for the Ohio Senate and former Ohio governor John Kasich). Approximately 200 people attended the event.

- A summary of the event can be found here: <https://www.journal-news.com/news/miami-hamilton-to-host-panel-on-gerrymandering/4KJ2ZXYPLRD5BEANNDW27DXVGU/>

Other Center-Supported and Sponsored Lectures, Discussions & Public Presentations

August 23, 2023 – Election 2024 Presidential Debate Watch (Harrison Hall, Oxford campus)

This event – the first of several such events that the Menard Family Center will sponsor and host throughout the 2024 election cycle – featured a live telecast of the first Republican primary debate of the presidential election season, followed by a public discussion moderated by Center director John Forren and associate director Anne Whitesell. Approximately 50 faculty, staff,

students and community members attended.

August 28 & 29, 2023 – Welcome Week Meet-and-Greet (Harrison Hall lobby, Oxford campus)

On the first two days of the fall semester, the Center hosted informal meet-and-greet informational events for new and returning students in the lobby of the Political Science building on the Oxford campus. Altogether, Center staff interacted with approximately 35 students over the two days that these events were held.

September 18, 2023 – On-Campus Court Session: Ohio Court of Appeals for the 12th District (Wilks Conference Center, Hamilton campus)

In this on-campus session, a three-judge panel of the Ohio Court of Appeals held live oral arguments in three pending cases before an audience of approximately 100 Miami students, faculty and staff.

September 18, 2023 -- Lunchtime Trivia: Can You Pass the U.S. Citizenship Test? (Jack Rhodes Study, Hamilton campus)

In this highly interactive and lively on-campus event, co-sponsored by the Menard Family Center and the Department of Humanities and Creative Arts, approximately 60 students competed in a game-show format to answer questions about American history and government derived from the USCIS-administered test given to all applicants for U.S. citizenship.

September 19, 2023 – U.S. District Court Naturalization Ceremony (Main Quad, Hamilton campus)

The Menard Family Center hosted the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, the Mayor of the City of Hamilton and numerous campus and community partners for a naturalization ceremony at which 110 new U.S. citizens formally took their oaths of citizenship.

September 20, 2023 – Student Research Symposium -- Rapid Rights! (Jack Rhodes Study, Hamilton campus)

In this student-led public session, co-sponsored by the Department of Justice & Community Studies, 15 Miami undergraduates presented their research into selected civil liberties issues in a poster session format.

September 20 & 21, 2023 -- Student Research Symposium -- Rights Here and There: The U.S. and the World (Jack Rhodes Study, Hamilton campus & Harrison Hall lobby, Oxford campus)

In these sessions, held on back-to-back days in Hamilton and Oxford, upper-division students in comparative law and comparative justice presented their research findings on how the U.S. and other countries define, protect and understand various fundamental rights. Both sessions were hosted and moderated by Dr. Daniel Hall, Department of Justice & Community Studies.

September 21, 2023 -- Open Classroom Discussion: "The State of Polarization and Democracy" (Johnston Hall, Middletown campus)

In this lunchtime forum, moderated by Professors Daniel Young and Beth Dietz of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences as part of Citizenship and Democracy Week, participants discussed the rise of political polarization in the United States, its impact on civic health and how ordinary Americans can act to reach across ideological and political lines to discuss issues of common concern.

September 22, 2023 -- Government and Non-Profit Career Day (Shriver Center, Oxford campus)

Co-sponsored by the Menard Family Center, the Department of Political Science and the University's Center for Career Exploration and Success, this day-long event included several different programs aimed at providing information and support for students interested in public

service and/or nonprofit sector careers.

September 27, 2023 -- Cost of Poverty Simulation: Reentry Edition (Shriver Center, Oxford campus)

In partnership with several other Miami units, the Menard Family Center supported the staging of this immersive simulation of the challenges faced by incarcerated persons who seek to reintegrate into society following their periods of incarceration.

- A summary of the event can be found here:

<https://miamioh.edu/cas/news/2023/10/miamis-center-for-the-study-and-support-of-children-and-families-of-the-incarcerated-encourages-open-conversations-about-poverty-and-incarceration.html>

October 3, 2023 -- Moderated public discussion with Her Excellency Nicole Binter-Bakshian, Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the United States, "Luxembourg and the United States" (MacMillan Great Hall, Oxford campus)

In this on-campus discussion/Q&A, moderated by Center associate director Anne Whitesell and co-sponsored by the Menard Family Center, the Department of Political Science and the Global Initiatives office, Ambassador Nicole Binter-Bakshian shared her experiences as a diplomat and her perspectives on the future of the U.S. relationship with its European allies.

October 5, 2023 -- Meet the Candidates Night: Lakota Local School Board (Miami University Voice of America Learning Center, West Chester)

Co-sponsored by the Menard Family Center and the Lakota Local School District Parent Council, this public forum -- broadcast on local cable television -- was moderated by Center director John Forren and featured the four candidates vying for election in November to a local Butler County school board. Approximately 125 people attended the event in person; the event was also carried on West Chester Community Television.

- Archived video can be found here:

https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/westchester/video/6526a7cd85b9c900087660fb?page=PLAYLIST&fbclid=IwAR2u7F9bxiDoe3yAS4_-5GILHplYV3haIeXPsbTBn34fXJneG5reS6_uN64

October 7, 2023 -- Election 2023 Informational Tailgate (Outside of Yager Stadium, Oxford campus)

This event, co-sponsored by the Wilks Leadership Center, the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and the Menard Family Center, provided nonpartisan information about the upcoming election to attendees at a Miami University football game. Approximately 100 people stopped by the Menard Family Center/Wilks tent during the pre-game event.

November 28-30, 2023 -- Jeff Hartman visit to Miami's Luxembourg campus

In late November, Jeff Hartman, the London-based CEO of Ukrainian Action (and a 2001 graduate of Miami) visited the University's Luxembourg campus for a three-day mini-residency. During his time there, Mr. Hartman delivered a plenary lecture to the campus's faculty, staff and students, entitled "Taking Action to Defend Democracy: A Conversation." He also met with two small groups of students, met with various community partners and led a workshop/brainstorming session with the fall 2023 participants in the Menard Family Center MUDEC Civic Internship Program (described below).

January 22, 2024 & February 19, 2024 -- "Countdown to the Election" public discussions (Miami Hamilton Downtown Center)

In these informal public sessions, co-moderated by Center Executive Director John Forren and Miami Hamilton Downtown Center coordinator John Vaughn, community members gathered to discuss the 2024 elections and the issues and choices facing American voters.

February 8, 2024 -- Menard Civic Summer Fellows Film Showcase (Richard and Carole Cocks Art Museum, Oxford campus)

In this public event, held at Miami's art museum on the Oxford campus, several Menard Family Center Civic Summer Fellows screened their short films (created with Center support and under the supervision of Miami professor Andy Rice) on civic and cultural issues. (Film subjects included the City of Oxford's recycling efforts, the revitalization efforts of a local nonprofit in connection with a Middletown, Ohio civic theater, the civic roles of local public libraries and the University's connection to Freedom Summer in 1964.) Approximately 100 students, faculty and community members attended the screening and subsequent discussion.

February 13, 2024 -- Public Lecture/Discussion: Tim Love, "The Hidden Cyber Persuaders" (National Voice of America Museum of Broadcasting, West Chester, Ohio)

In this public off-campus event, hosted by the National Voice of America Museum of Broadcasting and underwritten in part by the Menard Family Center, Tim Love (author of *Discovering Truth: How to Navigate Between Fact & Fiction in an Overwhelming Social Media World*) discussed practical techniques for combatting disinformation and misinformation in public media.

February 29, 2024 -- Menard Civic Summer Fellows Film Showcase (Miami Hamilton Downtown Center, Hamilton)

This event -- essentially a reprise of the February 8th event on the Oxford campus -- featured public screenings of several short documentary films on civic and cultural issues created by Menard Family Center Civic Summer Fellows. Approximately 50 community members attended this screening and post-screening discussion.

March 9, 2024 -- State of the Union Address Watch Party (Harrison Hall, Oxford campus)

The Center planned and hosted an on-campus public watch session and post-address discussion of President Biden's 2024 State of the Union address. Approximately 50 students, faculty and staff attended.

March 20, 2024 -- Public Debate: College Republicans v. College Democrats (Wilks Theatre, Armstrong Student Center, Oxford campus)

In this event, sponsored primarily by the Miami University College Democrats, the College Republicans and Associated Student Government, representatives of the two organizations staged a formal debate focusing on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues. For this event, the Center provided nonpartisan advice on event planning, logistical support, promotional assistance and the funding for a post-debate reception.

March 22, 2024 -- Women's Club of Cincinnati 30th Annual National Speaker Forum: Jenn White, "Truth in Journalism" (Memorial Hall, Cincinnati)

An award-winning journalist (for NPR and WAMU in Washington) and podcast host, Ms. White's talk focused on the role of journalists in democratic governance, the role of civic education in promoting effective citizenship and the ethical dilemmas faced by journalists in the contemporary political climate in America. The Menard Family Center served as one of the event's sponsors, which included Miami undergraduates in the audience of approximately 300 attendees.

April 2, 2024 -- 2024 Arthur C. Wickenden Wickenden Lecture: Megan Goodwin and Ilyse Morgenstern Fuerst, "Calendars and Privilege: How Race and Religion Take Your Time" (Wilks Theatre, Armstrong Student Center, Oxford campus)

Co-sponsored by the Department of Comparative Religion, the Menard Family Center for Democracy, the Miami University Alumni Association and the Department of Global and Intercultural Studies, this on-campus lecture featured a live recording of the award-winning podcast *Keeping It 101: A Killjoy's Introduction to Religion*. In the session, the two speakers discussed (among other things) the ways in which American practices of event scheduling and timekeeping sometimes fail to account for the particular interests and needs of religious and cultural minorities in society. Altogether, 71 people attended the in-person event, joined by an uncertain number of others who joined virtually through a coordinated Alumni Association webinar and the eventual distribution of the podcast.

Major Co-Curricular Programs

Menard Family Center High School Civic Scholars Program

In summer 2023, the Menard Family Center hosted its third group of High School Civic Scholars on the Oxford campus. The 2023 Program cohort, consisting of 22 rising high school juniors and seniors from 13 different states, completed the residential component of the program in July (July 16-29). During that experience, participants engaged in intensive classroom study of American political and constitutional thought, American governmental processes and techniques of effective civic engagement in a specially designed seminar taught jointly by Menard Family Center director John Forren and associate director Anne Whitesell. Outside the classroom, the group also engaged in a wide variety of experiential learning activities, including two immersive workshops on the sources of and remedies for political polarization (presented by Braver Angels), multiple debates and simulations, visits/conversations with Oxford city council members and city administrators, visits to the U.S. District Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit and a tour of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Upon successful completion of their summer residential experience, participants were invited to join an extended cohort-based learning and mentoring experience (which included up to six tuition-free credit hours of Miami courses and preferred access to selected Center-sponsored civic engagement events) during the 2023-24 academic year. (The Menard Family Center covered all tuition, university fees and supply/book costs associated with the program for all participants regardless of their ability to pay.) Six of the summer 2023 students opted to take advantage of this opportunity during the 2023-24 academic year.

Looking ahead, we anticipate hosting 20-25 high school students for the summer 2024 iteration of the High School Civic Scholars Program, which will take place on the Oxford campus from July 14-26. (As of this writing, final enrollment numbers are not yet available.) Again this summer, the program will be co-led by John Forren and Anne Whitesell and will feature a broad array of experiential learning opportunities as well as intensive classroom study of American politics and American political and legal thought.

Menard Family Center Civic Summer Fellows Program

In summer 2023, the Menard Family Center's Civic Summer Fellows Program again placed significant numbers of current Miami undergraduates into intensive community-based civic learning and service environments for extended periods of time. Altogether, 22 Miami undergraduates – each selected in

competitive processes administered by cooperating faculty – served as Menard Family Center Civic Summer Fellows in summer 2023. Ten of these students worked under the supervision of Dr. Kathleen Knight-Abowitz (Department of Educational Leadership) to learn first-hand about the civic roles and responsibilities of schools and of education-sector nonprofit organizations. Another four Civic Summer Fellows, working under the direction of Professor Andy Rice in Miami's Department of Media, Journalism and Film, worked throughout the summer on various film projects that examined subjects in American history, culture and politics. (As noted above, some of those films were screened in Menard Family Center-hosted events in spring 2024 in Oxford and in Hamilton.) A third group of seven Civic Summer Fellows worked with Dr. John Forren (Center director and Associate Professor, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences) on a project looking at the history of the International Criminal Court and its relationship with the United States. Students who successfully completed their Civic Summer Fellows projects were eligible to receive \$2500 scholarships from the Menard Family Center in recognition and support of their participation in the program.

In summer 2024, we have 14 students participating in the Civic Summer Fellows Program, including seven students working under the supervision of Professor Andy Rice and Rosemary Pennington (Department of Media, Journalism and Film) on films exploring a variety of social, cultural and political issues (*e.g.*, mental health of college students, the ethical implications of artificial intelligence, the use of art in political discourse, the revitalization of indigenous cultural practices within the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and the day-to-day lives of Muslims living in three small towns in Appalachia). Two students are working under the supervision of Professors Joe Sampson and Rosemary Pennington (Department of Media, Journalism and Film) as reporting interns at the *Hamilton Journal-News* in Ohio and at *Milwaukee Magazine*. Three others are serving as interns at educational nonprofits in Illinois, Maryland and Ohio under the faculty supervision of Dr. Kathleen Knight-Abowitz (Department of Educational Leadership). One student is working directly with Center associate director Anne Whitesell (Department of Political Science) on directed research into the influence of religious organizations on state-level ballot initiatives. Additionally, one other student is completing an internship with a county district attorney's office in Missouri under the faculty supervision of Center director John Forren (Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences).

Menard Family Center Pre-Semester First-Year Immersion Program

From August 21-24, 2023, the Menard Family Center hosted 29 incoming first-year Miami undergraduates on the Oxford campus for an intensive pre-semester introduction to college-level civic engagement. During this four-day workshop, co-facilitated by Center director John Forren and Center associate director Anne Whitesell, participating students engaged in a broad variety of in-class simulations, moderated debates and guided discussions of selected legal and political issues. They also interacted directly with Oxford-area political and civic leaders (including members of the Oxford City Council) and met with a variety of on-campus leaders of the University's various community engagement initiatives (including Miami's Pre-Law Program director, the chair of Political Science, the staff of the University's Myaamia Center and members of Miami's Associated Student Government).

As of this writing, Center staff are preparing to lead the summer 2024 iteration of this program, which will take place on the Oxford campus on August 18-23. At this point, we anticipate that 25-30 incoming Oxford first-year students will take part this year.

Menard Family Center MUDEC Civic Internship Program

In January 2023, the Menard Family Center piloted a new civic ‘mini-internship’ program with a two-week, non-credit-bearing immersion program in London (UK) that exposed six Miami undergraduates from various academic majors to the work of a UK-based nonprofit organization. The first week of the program, modeled somewhat after Miami’s successful Inside Washington Program, immersed participating students in the legal, political and economic environments in which leaders and front-line staff members of nonprofits regularly operate. The second week engaged participating students in individualized work projects – in website optimization, marketing, social media communications, graphic design and public outreach -- that aligned with students’ particular skill sets while also addressing organizational needs identified by our cooperating nonprofit partner (Ukrainian Action, a 501(c)3 organization founded by a Miami University alumnus).

Building on the lessons learned from this successful Europe-based pilot project, the Menard Family Center subsequently partnered with the leadership of Miami’s Luxembourg campus (MUDEC) to debut a new MUDEC/Menard Family Center Civic Internship Program in fall 2023. This program -- which is designed to provide a small number of competitively selected students at the Luxembourg campus to work collaboratively to explore an issue of current concern within Europe -- enrolled six students in the fall semester. Under the joint supervision of Dr. Tom Misco (Professor, Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Inquiry) and Dr. John Forren (Center director) -- and with the valuable assistance of Miami alumnus Jeff Hartman, the CEO of Ukrainian Action -- the fall 2023 student cohort worked collaboratively throughout the semester to learn about the Russia-Ukraine conflict and to explore the role of NGOs in providing humanitarian aid to conflict-affected persons. As part of the program, participating students traveled to London in late September to meet with Ukrainian Action leaders and to learn first-hand about that NGOs ongoing aid operations. At the end of the semester, the students presented their research findings to Mr. Hartman during his November 2023 visit to MUDEC.

In spring 2024, the MUDEC/Menard Family Center Civic Internship Program was expanded to include 10 Luxembourg campus-based Miami students, representing eight different majors/programs of study. Again under the joint supervision of John Forren and Tom Misco, the students in this spring 2024 cohort explored the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on a selected community in Poland (Wroclaw) and the responses of government and civil society in Wroclaw to a war-related surge of displaced persons into that community. As part of their internship work, each participating student conducted independent research into a specific issue or area of public policy that was of interest to them. In April, then, the group traveled together to Wroclaw to meet directly with NGO leaders in the field and to discuss ongoing efforts within Wroclaw’s schools, social service agencies and other institutions to deal effectively with the complex social and political problems that are currently facing.

Menard Family Center Diplomacy Lab Initiative

Following preparatory work in fall 2022 by Center Executive Director John Forren and Center affiliate Dr. Phillip Arceneaux (Department of Media, Journalism and Film), the Center launched its “Diplomacy Lab” initiative in January 2023 with three faculty-supervised research projects housed in the Department of Justice & Community Studies, the Department of History and the Department of German, Russian, Asian and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures. (The Diplomacy Lab Program, administered by the U.S. Department of State, invites colleges and universities to ‘bid’ on research projects proposed by U.S. consulates and embassies around the world. Winning bids are selected on a competitive basis.)

In fall 2023, three Miami faculty-authored proposals -- from the Departments of Architecture and Interior Design, Economics and Nursing -- were selected by the U.S. State Department in a competitive bidding process for inclusion in the Diplomacy Lab program. They were:

Diane Fellows, MFA, Professor, Department of Architecture and Interior Design: “Diplomacy in the Metaverse: Creating a Virtual U.S. Embassy”

Dr. Jenny Minier, Chair and Jilian Lange Professor, Department of Economics: “Improving the Business Climate in Turkmenistan”

Dr. Sara Arter, Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing: “The Potential for Climate Change Impacts to Destabilize Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa”

Continuing this expansion effort, we submitted seven faculty-generated proposals in October 2023 for the Diplomacy Lab’s spring 2024 commissioning cycle. Five of the seven submitted proposals were selected by the U.S. Department of State; consequently, the Menard Family Center supported the following Diplomacy Lab projects in the spring 2024 semester:

Dr. Deepak Dawar, Associate Professor, Department of Computer & Information Technology and Anthony Rose, M.B.A., Lecturer, Department of Computer & Information Technology: “Emerging Technologies to Enhance (or Target!) The Department of State”

Dr. Zara Torlone, Professor, Department of French, Italian and Classical Studies: “Understanding and Reaching the Russian Diaspora Population in Serbia”

Dr. Jinyan Chang, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Economics. “Mapping Multicultural Identity and Strengthening U.S.-Singapore Cultural Ties”

Dr. Thomas Bussen, Assistant Teaching Professor, Department of Management: “Strengthening Diplomacy: A Comprehensive Needs Analysis to Enhance Workforce Resilience in the Foreign Affairs Community”

Dr. Nam Vu, Associate Professor, Department of Economics: “Southeast Asia’s Vulnerability to PRC Economic Coercion”

Looking ahead, Miami submitted six proposals in the spring for inclusion in the Fall 2024 program, and the U.S. Department of State selected three of them for participation. Consequently, the Center will support the following fall 2024 projects:

Dr. Chen Ferguson, Associate Professor, Department of Commerce: “U.S. Policy Options for Expanding Quality Electric Power Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure in Foreign Markets”

Dr. Yong Lin, Assistant Teaching Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering: “Leveraging Work Culture to Drive Project Management Success”

Professor Molly Moran, Associate Lecturer, Department of Emerging Technology in Business and Design: “Re-Imagining Innovation Spaces in Government”

Constructive Dialogue Initiative pilot – Spring 2024

In spring 2024, the Menard Family Center partnered with Miami’s Honors College, its ASPIRE office and its Office of Transformational and Inclusive Excellence to pilot a campus-wide program aimed at equipping students to engage effectively with others across ideological, political and cultural divides. In

this pilot, 97 Miami undergraduates -- including Menard Family Center-affiliated student leaders as well as students representing Intercollegiate Athletics, campus Greek organizations, Associated Student Government, College Republicans and College Democrats and a wide range of other on-campus organizations -- completed a three-week blended learning program that both examined the underlying bases and effects of polarization and introduced participants to several effective strategies for carrying out difficult conversations with those who hold opposing viewpoints.

After initial assessment of the spring 2024 pilot suggested a high degree of program effectiveness -- *e.g.*, overall, participants showed statistically significant changes in affective polarization (*i.e.*, the extent to which people dislike and distrust those with different political views) and dichotomous thinking (*i.e.*, the tendency to think in either-or terms when considering issue positions) as a result of the program -- we are now working to expand the program's reach across the Miami student body over the next academic year. (The collaborating partners who sponsored the spring 2024 pilot have agreed to the ambitious goal of including 25% of the entire Oxford campus student body over the next year.)

A description of the spring 2024 pilot program can be found here:

<https://miamioh.edu/news/2024/04/more-than-100-student-leaders-participate-in-constructive-dialogue-perspectives.html>

Courses Sponsored by the Center

During the 2023-24 academic year, the Center's Executive Director and Associate Director together offered 10 civics-related undergraduate courses at Miami, which enrolled a total of 227 students. They were:

Fall 2023

- POL 142: American Politics & Diversity, section HA (3 credit hours), taught by Dr. John Forren on the Hamilton campus -- 37 enrolled students
- POL 142: American Politics & Diversity, section MA (3 credit hours), team-taught by Dr. John Forren and Dr. Daniel Young (Assistant Professor, Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences) on the Middletown campus -- 16 enrolled students
- POL 241: American Political System (3 credit hours), taught by John Forren on the Hamilton campus -- 35 enrolled students
- POL 345N: Fundamentals of Health Policy (3 credit hours), taught by Anne Whitesell on the Oxford campus -- 29 enrolled students
- POL 366: Policy Evaluation (3 credit hours), taught by Anne Whitesell on the Oxford campus -- 23 enrolled students

Winter 2024

- POL 201: Political Thinking, section HA (3 credit hours), taught by John Forren on the Hamilton campus -- 7 enrolled students

Spring 2024

- POL 142: American Politics and Diversity, section HA (3 credit hours), taught by Dr. John Forren (Center director) on the Hamilton campus -- 18 enrolled students
- POL 241: American Political System, section HB (3 credit hours), taught by Dr. John Forren (Center director) on the Hamilton campus -- 13 enrolled students
- POL 349: Voice and Power in U.S. Politics, section A (3 credit hours), taught by Dr. Anne Whitesell (Center associate director) on the Oxford campus -- 25 enrolled students

- POL 366: Policy Evaluation, section A (3 credit hours), taught by Dr. Anne Whitesell (Center associate director) on the Oxford campus -- 24 enrolled students

Additionally, Center Executive Director John Forren supervised one MA-level research project (on the impact of COVID-19 on administrative processes within state judiciaries) and 16 civics-related independent studies during the 2023-24 academic year.

Professional Leadership, Conference Participation and Publications/Media Coverage

Professional Organizations: Throughout the year, Menard Family Center staff continued their efforts to increase the visibility of the Center and its work beyond Miami University. To that end, Center director John Forren continued his service on two committees of the American Political Science Association (APSA)'s Civic Engagement Section: its Mentoring Committee and its Communications and Publications Committee. He also continued service on the APSA's Civic Learning Working Group, which is charged with the development of new civic education and civic engagement initiatives within American political science.

In 2023-24, Dr. Forren also served as co-chair (alongside Dr. Amanda Wintersieck of Virginia Commonwealth University) of an *ad hoc* committee of the American Political Science Association's Civic Engagement Section charged with developing plans for a new section-sponsored academic journal. That *ad hoc* committee completed its work in spring 2024, and its report and recommendations are currently under review by the APSA's leadership.

Additionally, Dr. Forren served in spring 2024 as the chair of the APSA Civic Engagement Section's Best Paper Selection Committee. He is also currently working with APSA Civic Engagement Section co-chair Lauren Bell (Randolph-Macon College) and National Capitol Area Political Science Association (NCAPSA) President Katie Robiadek (Xavier University) to develop a one-day "Teaching Civic Engagement" workshop for higher education faculty that will take place in Washington, DC in the fall. Dr. Forren will co-facilitate that workshop, which will be hosted/sponsored jointly by the American Political Science Association and by NCAPSA, in October.

Center Faculty Publications and Conference Presentations: During the 2023-24 academic year, the Menard Family Center's director and associate director produced the following publications and civics-related scholarship:

- Books
 - Anne Whitesell, *Living Off the Government? Race, Gender, and the Politics of Welfare* (NYU Press, forthcoming in November 2024)
- Book Chapters
 - John P. Forren, "Creating and Sustaining Civic Engagement Initiatives on Campus: Four Questions Administrators Should Always Ask," in Lauren C. Bell, Allison Rank and Carah Ong Whaley, eds., *Civic Pedagogies: Teaching Civic Engagement in an Era of Divisive Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), forthcoming in August 2024
- Journal Articles
 - Susan V. Spellman and John P. Forren, "Canned Speech: Selling Democracy in the

Phonographic Age,” *Enterprise & Society* (2024), 25: 2, 512-535.

- Conference Presentations
 - John P. Forren, “Making It Count: Submitting Applied Civic and Political Engagement Manuscripts,” American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, September 2023
 - Anne Whitesell, “Outreach on Facebook: Adapting School Lunch Programs During COVID-19,” Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 2024
- Other Conference Participation
 - American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, September 2023 (John Forren)
 - National Conference on Citizenship, Washington, DC, November 2023 (John Forren)
 - Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 2024 (Anne Whitesell)
 - Miami Women Leadership Symposium, Oxford, OH, May 2024 (Maggie Simpson)
 - Transatlantic Dialogue Conference, Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg, May 2024 (John Forren)

Center Faculty Public Scholarship: During the 2023-24 academic year, the Center’s staff contributed to public conversation about politics and civic affairs via media participation as follows:

- WVXU Cincinnati Edition, July 27, 2023: <https://www.wvxu.org/show/cincinnati-edition/2023-07-27/trump-indicted-ken-rudin> (Anne Whitesell, panelist)
- WVXU Cincinnati Edition, September 28, 2023: <https://www.wvxu.org/show/cincinnati-edition/2023-09-28/house-republicans-federal-government-shutdown-ken-rudin> (Anne Whitesell, panelist)
- “Fact Checking Ohio Issue 1 Ads as Election Day Nears,” WLWT-TV, November 3, 2023: <https://www.wlwt.com/article/ohio-issue-one-abortion-rights-fact-check-ads/45734763#> (Anne Whitesell, commentator)
- Anne Whitesell, “As Ohio and Other States Decide on Abortion, Anti-Abortion Activists Look to Rebrand Themselves as Not Religious,” *The Conversation*, November 6, 2023: <https://theconversation.com/as-ohio-and-other-states-decide-on-abortion-anti-abortion-activists-look-to-rebrand-themselves-as-not-religious-215408>
- Anne Whitesell, “Voters Don’t Always Have Final Say: State Legislatures and Governors Are Increasingly Undermining Ballot Measures That Win,” *The Conversation*, January 9, 2024: <https://theconversation.com/voters-dont-always-have-final-say-state-legislatures-and-governors-are-increasingly-undermining-ballot-measures-that-win-218764> -- republished in the *Ohio Capital Journal*, January 22, 2024: <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/01/22/state-legislatures-and-governors-are-increasingly-undermining-ballot-measures-that-win/>
- “New Hampshire Primary Results,” WXIX-TV (Cincinnati), January 24, 2024: <https://www.fox19.com/video/2024/01/24/new-hampshire-primary-results/> (Anne Whitesell, commentator)
- Anne Whitesell, “The Increasing Trend of Lawmakers Overriding Ballot Initiatives,” *Governing*, January 30, 2024: <https://www.governing.com/politics/the-increasing-trend-of-lawmakers-overriding-ballot-initiatives>
- Anne Whitesell, “Anti-Abortion Rights Activists Navigate a New, Post-Roe Landscape, As State Bans Mean They Can ‘Save Babies,’” *The Conversation*, June 3, 2024:

<https://theconversation.com/anti-abortion-rights-activists-navigate-a-new-post-roe-landscape-as-state-bans-mean-they-can-save-babies-228764>

Selected Media Coverage of Center-Sponsored Programming: The Center’s work continued to receive considerable attention in both print and broadcast media. Center-sponsored and Center-supported events, programs and other initiatives were cited and/or discussed in the following publications and broadcasts between July 2023 and June 2024:

- Reagan Rude, “The Menard Center: A Place to Flourish Civically and Intellectually,” *The Miami Student*, August 22, 2023: <https://www.miamistudent.net/article/2023/08/the-menard-center-a-place-to-flourish-civically-and-intellectually>
 - Republished as “The Miami Student Visits and Showcases the Menard Family Center Mission,” *The Miami Student*, December 20, 2023: <https://miamioh.edu/centers-institutes/menard-family-center/news/2024/01/the-miami-student-visits-and-showcases-the-menard-family-center-mission.html>
- “Belarusian Opposition Leader to Speak,” *Oxford Observer*, September 14, 2023: <https://oxfordobserver.org/13463/briefs/belarusian-opposition-leader-to-speak-in-oxford/>
- “Miami University Hosts Annual Citizenship and Democracy Week Events,” *Hamilton Journal News*, September 15, 2023: <https://www.journal-news.com/news/miami-university-hosts-annual-citizenship-and-democracy-week-events/I6KGL2S7JJC53L35HNFJIQZD7U/>
- Anastasija Mladenovska, “Harrison Hall: A Beacon of Opportunity Most Students Miss,” *The Miami Student*, November 17, 2023: <https://www.miamistudent.net/article/2023/11/havighurst-center-good>
- “WLWT to Host Final Debate Between Candidates in Ohio’s Republican U.S. Senate Primary,” *wlwt.com* (WLWT-TV in Cincinnati), February 6, 2024: <https://www.wlwt.com/article/wlwt-debate-candidates-ohios-republican-us-senate-primary/46662369>
- Gaby Benedict, “From Sustainable Fashion to Birds, the Documentary Films Showcase Had It All,” *The Miami Student*, February 15, 2024: <https://www.miamistudent.net/article/2024/02/miami-university-spring-2024-documentary-showcase>
- Carlos Mathis, “WLWT, Miami University Holding Ohio Senate Debate,” *wdtn.com* (WDTN-TV website), February 23, 2024: <https://www.wdtn.com/news/your-local-election-hq/wlwt-miami-university-holding-ohio-senate-debate/>
- Jessica Opfer, “Oxford Prepares for U.S. Senate Republican Primary Debate,” *Oxford Observer*, February 29, 2024: <https://oxfordobserver.org/14835/politics/oxford-prepares-for-u-s-senate-republican-primary-debate/>
- Ian Cross, “Watch Live: Final Debate for Republican U.S. Senate Candidates Before Primary,” *news5cleveland.com* (WEWS-TV in Cleveland), March 6, 2024: <https://www.news5cleveland.com/news/political/elections-local/watch-live-final-debate-for-republican-u-s-senate-candidates-before-primary>
- “Final Ohio Republican Senate Primary Candidate Debate Reaction, Fact Checking and Analysis: Ohio Has Issues with Stephanie Haney and Mike Polk, Jr.,” *wkyc.com* (Cleveland), March 6, 2024: <https://www.wkyc.com/article/news/politics/final-ohio-republican-senate-primary-candidate-debate-reaction-fact-checking-expert-analysis-ohio-has-issues-stephanie-haney-mike-polk-jr/95-046f6f80-3f66-4a93-9771-c2ce5de55d3d>
- Jeff Slawson, “Final Ohio Republican Senate Primary Debate Held at Miami University,” *cleveland19.com* (website of WOIO-TV in Cleveland), March 6, 2024: <https://www.cleveland19.com/2024/03/06/final-ohio-republican-senate-primary-debate-held-miami-university/>

- Andrew Tobias, “Ohio Senate Race: GOP Candidates Will Debate for Final Time Tonight,” *Cleveland.com*, March 6, 2024: <https://www.cleveland.com/news/2024/03/ohio-senate-race-gop-candidates-will-debate-for-final-time-tonight-how-to-watch.html>
- Lynn Hulsey, “Miami U to Host Final U.S. Senate GOP Debate: Here’s How to Watch,” *Dayton Daily News*, March 6, 2024: <https://www.daytondailynews.com/elections/miami-u-to-host-final-us-senate-gop-debate-heres-how-to-watch/GTJYRNWHHNBE7PAKASOVVWX4NI/>
- Matthew Dietz, “Ohio Republican Senate Debate: Candidates Talk Biggest Issues Facing Voters,” *wlwt.com* (WLWT-TV website), March 6, 2024: <https://www.wlwt.com/article/ohio-republican-senate-debate-larose-dolan-moreno-miami/60116990>
- Haley BeMiller, “Republicans in 2024 Ohio Senate Race Ramp Up Attacks in Final Debate,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 6, 2024 (no link available)
- “Locked in Tight Race, GOP Ohio Senate Candidates Turn Up Heat, Defend Trump in Last Debate,” March 6, 2024 (carried widely in Ohio newspapers, including the *Columbus Dispatch*, the *Ashland Times-Gazette*, the *Newark Advocate*, the *Akron Beacon-Journal*, the *Wooster Daily Record* and the *Kent Ravenna Record-Courier*)
- Doug Petcash, “Ohio’s GOP Senate Candidates Face Off in Final Debate Before Primary Election,” *10tv.com* (WBNS-TV in Columbus), March 6, 2024: <https://www.10tv.com/article/news/local/ohio/gop-senate-candidates-final-debate-before-ohio-primary/530-fe7050bd-4fdf-4454-bacb-565e21214388>
- Anjali Huynh, “3 Degrees of Trumpiness: Ohio’s Republican Senate Candidates Clash,” *New York Times*, March 7, 2024: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/07/us/politics/ohio-senate-debate-takeaways.html>
- Karen Kasler, “Final Ohio GOP U.S. Senate Debate Features Familiar Positions on Issues and Some Personal Attacks,” *Statehouse News Bureau* (radio), March 7, 2024: <https://www.stateneews.org/government-politics/2024-03-07/final-ohio-gop-u-s-senate-debate-features-familiar-positions-on-issues-and-some-personal-attacks>
- Andrew Tobias, “Ohio Senate Race: 4 Takeaways from the Third and Final GOP Candidate Debate,” *cleveland.com*, March 7, 2024: <https://www.cleveland.com/news/2024/03/ohio-senate-race-4-takeaways-from-the-third-and-final-gop-candidate-debate.html>
- John London, “Ohio Republican Senate Debate: Candidates Discuss Toughest Issues Facing Voters,” *WLWT-TV* (news broadcast), March 7, 2024: <https://www.wlwt.com/article/ohio-republican-senate-debate-voting-moreno-dolan-larose/60130554>
- Lynn Hulsey, “Dolan, LaRose, Moreno, the Three Ohio Republican Candidates for U.S. Senate, Debate at Miami University,” *Dayton Daily News*, March 7, 2024: <https://www.daytondailynews.com/elections/in-final-senate-debate-ohio-gop-candidates-each-say-theyre-best-to-enact-trump-policies/OENV26HUWFC4VIO2SX7DDGQXMI/>
- Olivia Patel and Taylor Stumbaugh, “Ohio U.S. Senator Candidates Debate Abortion, Trump and More at Miami,” *The Miami Student*, March 7, 2024: <https://www.miamistudent.net/article/2024/03/ohio-u-s-senator-candidates-debate-abortion-trump-and-more-at-miami>
- Alice Momany, “Candidates Clash Over Trump During Final U.S. Senate Primary Debate,” *Oxford Observer*, March 7, 2024: <https://oxfordobserver.org/15000/community/candidates-clash-over-party-loyalty-and-abortion-during-final-u-s-senate-gop-primary-debate/>
- Erin Glynn, “West Wing Star Bradley Whitford Talked Progressive Politics at Miami,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 12, 2024: <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/politics/2024/03/12/west-wing-star-bradley-whitford-talked-progressive-politics-at-miami/72877827007/>
- Devin Ankeney, “Bradley Whitford Talks Politics, Brings Laughs to Miami’s Lecture Series,” *The Miami Student*, March 14, 2024: <https://www.miamistudent.net/article/2024/03/bradley-whitford-actor-get-out-the-west-wing-miami-university-lecture-series>

- Jack Schmelzinger, “Bradley Whitford Talks ‘The West Wing’ and Politics at Miami University,” *Oxford Observer*, March 14, 2024: <https://oxfordobserver.org/15101/community/bradley-whitford-talks-the-west-wing-and-politics-at-miami-university/>
- “Attorney With 90 U.S. Supreme Court Cases to Speak at Miami University,” *Hamilton Journal-News*, March 16, 2024: <https://www.journal-news.com/news/attorney-with-90-us-supreme-court-cases-to-speak-at-miami-university/G56I6FZHAVFIZDV3HWIAMX5W7Y/>
- Emily Sanderson, “Key Moments from the Final Ohio Republican Senate Debate Before Primary,” *wlwt.com* (website of WLWT-TV), March 18, 2024: <https://www.wlwt.com/article/key-moments-ohio-republican-senate-debate-bernie-moreno/60116300>
- Liam Miller, “Miami College Republicans and Miami College Democrats Hold First Debate Post-COVID,” *The Miami Student*, March 21, 2024: <https://www.miamistudent.net/article/2024/03/miami-college-republicans-and-miami-college-democrats-hold-first-debate-post-covid>
- Margo Rutledge Kissell, “More Than 100 Student Leaders Participate in Constructive Dialogue Perspectives,” *Miami University News and Events*, April 3, 2024: <https://miamioh.edu/news/2024/04/more-than-100-student-leaders-participate-in-constructive-dialogue-perspectives.html>
- “Miami Hamilton to Host Panel on Gerrymandering,” *Hamilton Journal-News*, April 18, 2024: <https://www.journal-news.com/news/miami-hamilton-to-host-panel-on-gerrymandering/4KJ2ZXYPLRD5BEANNDW27DXVGU/>
- Marisa Kelley, “Republican Claims ‘Dark Money’ in League of Women Voters at Gerrymandering Panel,” *Oxford Observer*, May 9, 2024: <https://oxfordobserver.org/15842/community/republican-claims-dark-money-in-league-of-women-voters-at-gerrymandering-panel/>