Proposal

The Center for Civic Engagement (draft name)
at the University of Richmond

Submitted to the Bonner Foundation Board of Trustees
for Consideration at their October 2003 Meeting
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1. Introduction

The University of Richmond hereby requests that the Bonner Foundation Board of Trustees approve the use of Bonner Scholars Program enrichment monies to launch and sustain the Center for Civic Engagement as envisioned in this document. The Center will open by August 2004, and upon approval by the Bonner Board of Trustees, a process of planning will commence immediately. This period from September 2003-July 2004 will generate interest on campus and in the Richmond community. The planning process (detailed at #9, below) will include consultation with a wide group of potential users and beneficiaries of the Center, including students, faculty, staff of the University, leaders of community organizations, and other citizens of metropolitan Richmond, and this process will further specify how community constituencies can inform, contribute to, and benefit from the work of the Center.

The Center for Civic Engagement will be a vibrant, innovative, and academically grounded effort bringing together students, faculty, and staff of the University of Richmond with members of the wider community in order to understand pressing social problems and to find effective and ethical approaches to solving them. The Center will provide the intellectual, experiential, and physical space in which multiple campus and community constituencies can interact and learn together. They will focus on common problems that require civic engagement and thoughtful reflection about the meanings and practices of social justice. The Center will become a catalyst in three ways: First, it will help change the on-campus culture by integrating the academic and co-curricular dimensions of the life of students (and faculty and staff members), bringing the intellectual concerns of the classroom and the pressing issues of the world beyond the University to the center of campus life. Second, it will expand the relationship between the University of Richmond and the wider communities in mutually beneficial ways. Third, the Center will bolster current efforts and enable new initiatives by students, faculty, staff, and local leaders to find innovative, practical solutions to community problems.

In short, the Center’s work will help transform the predominant image of the campus culture from a “bubble” to an active partner with the larger Richmond community—a place in which students engage with faculty, staff, and community members to develop a vision and practices of good and just societies. The process of mutual interaction among multiple constituencies will model the substance of those understandings of engagement and justice.

Prepared by Douglas A. Hicks, in consultation with Provost June Aprille, the faculty planning group, and members of the University of Richmond chaplaincy, staff, and students, and community leaders.
The Center will build on strengths of the University’s already existing courses, programs, and community service efforts and the leadership, experience, and vision of local agencies. From these precedents, the Center will place civic education more integrally in the University’s educational mission and community life.

Civic engagement entails at least three dimensions: (1) a thorough understanding of contexts and problems; (2) a consideration of the moral, political, and economic commitments required to address those problems; and (3) solution-oriented visions, strategies, and competencies. The Center’s location in a university setting affords it the opportunity to become a generator of intellectual capital along all three of these dimensions. The understanding of problems-in-context, commitments, and solutions can be enhanced by disparate approaches, including experiential learning, innovative research and teaching methods such as participatory action research and other forms of community-based research, traditional social-scientific and humanist methods of inquiry, and open public encounter, discussion, and debate. Rather than advocate one position on any given issue, the Center will encourage innovative research and informed debate on various public problems.

One of the elements that will make the Center distinctive and valuable to its constituents is the integration of research-oriented, curricular, and co-curricular programs. A number of fine centers for community service at universities around the country bring together student-led volunteer or community action programs. Some of those centers include support for faculty in their curricular efforts, particularly service learning. Other research-focused centers support scholarship about social ethics, social issues, and civic participation. Few programs seek to encompass research, teaching, and co-curricular dimensions in one Center. The moderate sizes of the University of Richmond and the City of Richmond, respectively, make the campus and community home to a variety of experts on many issues, but at the same time, the scope of campus and community allow manageable, meaningful interaction between the various constituencies.

2. Location

Administratively, the Center will be situated within Academic Affairs with close ties to Student Affairs. In physical terms, the Center will be located in a highly visible, highly trafficked area in the heart of campus. A requisite for the Center’s success is that students, faculty, staff, and community members see the space as their own and take advantage of opportunities for mutual interaction. The Center’s space will contain a conference-style meeting room, a reading/conversation/current events room, and offices for staff members. The Center’s layout will invite students as well as faculty, staff, and community members to access newspapers, magazines, and computer resources. The Center is expected to be located on the main floor of the Tyler Haynes Commons, for these reasons:

- The Center’s work will help “the Commons” to become more than a student center by becoming the public space for student, faculty, staff, and community interaction that the Commons was intended to be;
- Students and other passers-by will see the Center at work;
- Students and others will come to understand that intellectual inquiry, open discussions, and engagement on pressing community problems by faculty, staff, and
community members belong at the center of campus life and play a part in their everyday activities.

3. People

Toward the end of creating a vital community of people across boundaries, the Center will have a variety of affiliates. Student organizations whose purposes relate to civic engagement or social justice and which practice thoughtful reflection on these themes will have a relationship to the Center. Faculty from across the University whose research and teaching relate to civic engagement or understandings of social justice will have the opportunity to become faculty affiliates of the Center. These and other faculty members will be encouraged to develop courses related to the themes of the Center and to work with students and practitioners on research related to community problems. Community leaders—from nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and business enterprises—will advise and work with the Center. Nonprofit agencies and other organizations in metropolitan Richmond will be able to solicit volunteers and research collaboration through the Center.

In its early years, the Center will have three permanent employees: a director, a coordinator, and an administrative assistant. Work-study students will support these staff and help build interest among the student body. The Center will have advisory panels comprised of faculty, staff, students, and community members.

4. Precedents at the University of Richmond

The formation of this Center draws upon a number of intersecting conversations and initiatives at the University. In August 2002, the Community Relations Task Force commissioned by President William E. Cooper called for the creation of a Center for Civic Engagement. Its report calls for a center to integrate the existing service undertaken by students, faculty, and staff; the community-learning teaching and research led by campus faculty; a network of experts and community organizations documented and interlinked by the Campus Community Partnership and its website, Connect Richmond; and various initiatives that bring community leaders to campus and take University leaders into the community. In 2001, a Student Life Task Force report called for the University to transform the Tyler-Haynes Commons into the center of campus life, adding “intellectual-social space” that encourages all community members to interact and learn from one another. Faculty members from an array of academic units met in the summer and fall of 2002 to discuss common concerns and diverse approaches to researching and teaching about community problems and social justice. Faculty conversations and planning continued into fall 2003, with the recent formation of a faculty advisory committee to play a critical role in the planning of the Center for Civic Engagement. Faculty across campus have incorporated service learning into their courses, and the University has offered various kinds of support for that effort, including a service-learning coordinator in the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology. The Bonner Scholars program and the Chaplaincy’s Center for Faith and Service have developed ways in which to help students perform service and to reflect upon the meaning of that service upon the lives of those served and upon their own lives. The Jepson School of Leadership Studies requires its majors and minors to take a course focusing on service and the nature of a just society. Rather than replace
(or bureaucratize) existing service initiatives, the Center will serve a coordinating role and will provide resources to better pursue, and communicate, their work.

5. The Need for the Center

Scholars in many fields have offered evidence that civic engagement by U.S. citizens has declined in the United States in the past three decades. Robert Putnam’s well-known work on civic participation and social capital, *Bowling Alone*, documents the decline in membership in those secondary associations beyond the primary associations of family and close personal relations. Those moral and voluntary associations that are in decline include civic groups like Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lion’s Clubs; religious congregations; parent-teacher associations; scout troops; and labor unions. Neo-Tocquevillians from conservative and liberal perspectives alike emphasize the importance of these associations as “schools of virtue” in which citizens learn how to make democracy flourish. For his part, Putnam names their decline as a loss of “social capital”—those social networks and norms of reciprocity and trust that enable the effective working of democratic (and economic) life. Scholars of local or citizen-based leadership have noted the recent crisis in successful efforts to make positive change for the common good. At an even more basic level of political engagement, voting trends have shown a steady decline in voter participation rates. Economists and sociologists, including Juliet Schor and Arlie Hochshild, have noted the increasing work hours of adult American laborers, and especially the impact on familial and civic life of a massive entrance of women in recent decades into the formal labor market. These and other factors contribute to a decline in the quantity and quality of civic participation.

Even as civic engagement declines, the problems calling for common solutions have become more difficult. One reason is that the very composition of U.S. society has become more demographically complex since 1965, the date of a renewed openness of immigration policy. Almost half of New Mexico’s population is now Hispanic; in California, white, non-Hispanic residents number less than half of the state’s population. About 20% of Virginia’s residents are African American—significantly higher than the national average—with rapidly growing numbers of Hispanics and Asian Americans as well. University of Richmond faculty members and their students have helped to document these changes and consider their implications for a developing metropolitan Richmond. Across the United States discussions about African-American identities and socioeconomic opportunities in the United States continue to develop; race-based violence and debates about affirmative action are merely recent evidence that the twentieth century did not solve the problem of the color line. Religious-studies scholar Diana Eck has documented the striking increase of American newcomers from Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and other religious backgrounds; she asserts that America is now the most religiously diverse nation in the world. Richmond faculty and the Office of the Chaplaincy have explored increasing religious diversity in the local area. These forms of ethnic and religious diversity require mutual learning, at a time in which the civil rights of Arabs and Muslims in America are threatened and efforts to understand Islam have moved from Ivory-tower discussions to public discourse. A recent grant from the National Conference for Community and Justice and the Texaco/Chevron Foundation has created the Metropolitan Richmond Anti-Bias Project, now called “A More Perfect Union,” on campus to address such issues at the local level. Additionally, one need look only at recent battles in major religious denominations in the United
States over the appropriate leadership roles of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons, or at political debates about civil unions, or private-sector discussions about domestic-partner benefits, to know that sexual identity also remains on the national agenda.

In the economic sphere, academic and public debates swirl over whether recent economic productivity and growth have reached lower-class persons and marginalized groups. Roughly the same proportion of U.S. citizens subsists in poverty today as in 1970. Income inequality in the U.S. reached its lowest point about 1970 and increased over three decades. It now stands at the highest level since before World War II. At the global level, scholars and development experts argue whether or not the global income distribution has widened since the 1970s; it is clear that nearly 3 billion people, one half of the world’s population, earn less than the equivalent of 2 U.S. dollars per day. Over one billion persons do not have access to clean water.

Thus the problems that require local, national, or even international coordination have become more intractable even as citizens’ level of engagement with those problems has declined. There is an urgent need for the leaders of today and of tomorrow (e.g., students) to find ways to work together across intellectual, age, political, religious, racial, ethnic, national, social and cultural boundaries to address common problems that require not individual, but collaborative, solutions. How citizens from different backgrounds will live together at the local level and beyond is the most pressing theme of our time—and one of the central challenges of the Center.

On campus, students and faculty alike at the University report the need to nurture a culture of serious and sustained intellectual engagement with issues affecting local, national, and international communities. Although Richmond enjoys a number of high national rankings, including being ranked #1 in its category by *U.S. News and World Report* each year for the past decade, it has in recent years received rankings that are of concern: top-twenty rankings among “most politically apathetic campuses” (Princeton Review, *Best 351 Colleges—2003*) and “most homogeneous student body” (Princeton Review, *Best 351 Colleges—2004*). Current initiatives by top administration officials, faculty members, and student groups are seeking ways in which the University can transform its campus culture to one that is more diverse in multiple ways. At the same time, campus and community constituents have identified potentially mutual benefits for collaborative work on current social problems of the greater Richmond area. The Center for Civic Engagement will address a critical need by helping students and others on campus to broaden their vision about the world beyond campus, to understand their responsibility as educated citizens to work for a good and just society, and, in so doing, to reshape the campus culture to one that is more diverse, intellectually rich, and socially and politically engaged.

6. Components, Initiatives, and Programs

The following are the kinds of activities that the Center will sponsor: (a) community service and experiential learning; (b) curricular support; (c) research; (d) programs, workshops, and symposia; and (e) informal dialogues and presence on campus.
6.A. Community Service and Experiential Education

The Center’s involvement in the various curricular and extra-curricular service undertaken by students will address significant challenges inherent in the current, less centralized model. (The Center will seek to coordinate, but not dictate, these service efforts.) At present community organizations who host volunteers do not know what, if any, training or preparation they have received for their service from the University of Richmond. Service undertaken by some student groups—as opposed to the more staff- or faculty-structured programs—has not always been reliable. The Center’s work will help identify particular problems in students’ service efforts. Assuring that students who undertake service under University auspices are doing so conscientiously and consistently will have positive benefits for all University parties and the Richmond community organizations with which they work.

In conjunction with the other staff members on campus who work on community service, the Center’s coordinator will also maintain regular contact with site supervisors in organizations around the Richmond area who host students. This aspect of the coordinator’s job can increase the probability (but not guarantee) that students performing service will have meaningful and challenging service opportunities. This regular contact with leaders of local organizations will also help enable the Center to become a “clearinghouse” or first contact for organizations who wish to use University volunteers in their work.

In terms of students’ learning through service opportunities, the most distinctive contribution of the Center will be the insistence upon students’ intellectually rigorous critical reflection upon the service they perform. That is, even while the Center will acknowledge that most service is valuable in its own sake, its programs will emphasize the importance of critical thinking about the person(s) served, the organization that addresses their needs, the factors contributing to the need for service, and the server’s own intellectual, personal, and professional growth. Through its curricular and programming efforts, the Center will move beyond customary service-learning pedagogies to encourage examination of the nature of civic engagement and social justice. In this effort, the Center can draw upon the lessons emerging from constructively critical evaluations of community-based research.

As the Center grows, the possibilities are nearly endless, through financial and non-financial efforts, to support students in internship and service opportunities in nonprofit, government, and private-sector organizations that offer insights into civic engagement or social justice. The Center will work with the Career Development Center in these endeavors. Financial support could provide a basic stipend to help students offset expenses and reduce opportunity costs to allow them to accept unpaid or underpaid summer and semester-long opportunities. Students receiving financial support will be asked to provide oral and written reflections on the experience through the Center.

Beyond the experiential opportunities for which direct financial support will be available from the Center, its staff and programs will offer intellectual and social support toward the end of fostering students’ reflective practice. Although the precise nature of the coordination role needs to be delineated during the upcoming planning process, the Center’s full-time coordinator will work with the various service efforts on campus—including the curricular service-learning
programs around the University, the extra-curricular service performed by Bonner Scholars and students in Greek and other campus organizations, and individual student, faculty, and staff members who perform community service. This will involve working closely with, and helping integrate the work of, Richmond staff whose work relates to community service, including staff members in the Center on Faith and Service, the Greek Life coordinator, the Center of Teaching, Learning, and Technology’s coordinator of service learning, and the Jepson School’s coordinator of experiential learning.

6.B. Curricular Support

In coordination with the Center on Teaching, Learning, and Technology, the Center will invite faculty members to develop new courses, or to enhance old ones, in ways that address civic engagement or understanding of social justice or contemporary social problems. Incorporating a service-learning component into the course is one way, but not the only way, to develop or enhance a course consistent with the themes of the Center. A professor of philosophy, religion, or political theory could, for example, develop a course (or adapt an existing one) that examines theories of social justice. A social scientist could add a unit that explores demographic patterns of civic or political participation. A law professor could expand offerings on the juvenile justice system or public interest law. A business professor could add a unit on social responsibility of corporations and encourage students either to read texts on that topic or undertake class-based empirical research with local businesses on their community involvement. Beyond these grants, Center staff will be able to expand the academic and administrative support that the University provides to faculty and students.

The Center’s director and the coordinator will work with other staff members on campus as appropriate to provide resources for faculty. Beyond service-learning pedagogies, the Center’s director and coordinator will design workshops on other aspects of approaching civic engagement and social justice in courses. A September 2002 luncheon for faculty members (sponsored by the Jepson forum) enabled them to debate how faculty can “appropriately and effectively address community problems in their research and teaching.” At that event about fifteen faculty shared their different understandings of civic engagement—and struggled in particular with how fittingly and responsibly to draw upon their own values in their teaching of these topics. A few professors, for instance, discussed participatory action research and community-based research, while others were not familiar with these approaches. The Center will create new space for such crucial pedagogical learning as well as for substantive discussions across disciplinary boundaries about particular social issues.

6.C. Research Initiatives

The Center will aim to help faculty and their students, in consultation with community leaders, to generate substantive, original insights into specific community problems as well as establish broader approaches to civic engagement and social justice. As with community service, the Center will be a first contact for community leaders who seek to locate faculty or students who can perform community-based research within their organizations. This research will be disseminated through the Center and will spark conversation within and among the constituencies. To that end, as the Center develops, it will offer research grants to faculty
members, students under faculty supervision, and collaborative student-faculty research teams. Recipients of such awards will be expected to discuss their processes and findings in public forums sponsored by the Center. Consistent with the broad understanding of research methodologies and community problems, many students and faculty members will be eligible to apply for these grants. Criteria might include: Will this research enhance our understanding of the nature of civic participation? Will it enhance our understanding of the meanings or practices of social justice? Will it enhance our understanding of the complexities of a specific social problem? Does it promise to provide specific insights that will help community organizations to accomplish their work more effectively? Does this research have potential to contribute in positive ways to addressing an important social issue or problem of social justice? The Center, working with the Campus Community Partnership, will act as a vehicle for encouraging faculty and students to establish contact with community organizations that have research needs, and it will help community leaders and citizens to access faculty members whose work is relevant to their organizations.

6.D. Programs, Workshops, and Symposia

The Center will design scheduled programs that invite the various campus and community constituencies to interact. Brown-bag or catered lunch or dinner series will provide occasions for students to discuss their service or internship experiences, for students and faculty to discuss their ongoing research (see above), for faculty, students, or visitors to discuss particular social problems, and for community members to talk about the work of their organizations. For selected programs and events, attendees will be asked to complete a follow-up evaluation.

Working with other academic units and student life departments, the Center will host a series of high-profile and lesser-known community leaders who are “reflective practitioners” as well as academics whose scholarship and teaching address community problems, civic participation, or theories or practices of social justice.

6.E. Presence and Programming on Campus and in the Richmond Community

The Center’s visibility and centrality will enable it to create conversations within and among campus constituencies who might otherwise remain isolated. Faculty and staff as well as students will be encouraged to visit the Center’s space. The Center will provide an inviting reading/interaction room with daily newspapers from various major cities in the United States and Virginia (New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Richmond Times-Dispatch, The Free Press, Virginian-Pilot, etc.) as well as the major commentary magazines and journals (Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, New Yorker, Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, Transitions: An International Review, etc.) and other recent publications that relate to civic engagement or current social problems. Some of these items might duplicate offerings of the University libraries; the focus here (perhaps only a slightly different emphasis from the library’s) is to have recent issues on tables and stands for students and others to encounter, browse, and discuss between classes or while they are “hanging out” or studying. Computer terminals with “wallpaper” photos of students engaged in service, with quick links to major newspapers, community-based organizations, and the Connect Richmond website, could also be placed in this
space. Poster presentations featuring the work of student groups and collaborative research projects, as well as photos and art featuring university or community members engaged in the community, will decorate the space.

The physical presence of the Center on the main floor of the Tyler-Haynes Commons responds directly to the 2001 Student Life Task Force report’s call for “intellectual-social” space in the Commons that would encourage students to take intellectual discussions beyond the classroom into the other dimensions of campus life. The substantive focus of the Center on civic engagement, social problems, and justice, with the explicit invitation for students to reflect upon their community work, will give students plenty of material to discuss amongst themselves and with staff, faculty, and community leaders.

7. Staff and Advisory Panel

The permanent staff of the Center, at least in the first few years, will consist of a director, a coordinator, and an administrative assistant. Work-study students will help these staff members in the Center. The advisory panels will draw from all of the Center’s constituencies and will play a critical role in the Center leadership.

7.A Director

The Center’s director will be a University of Richmond faculty member whose scholarly writings, teaching, and interests intersect with the themes of civic engagement and social justice. The director will maintain his or her research program and approximately one-half of the customary teaching load. In the capacity of director, this person will serve renewable terms and will report to the provost. As a faculty member, he or she will report to the dean of his/her school. He or she will be responsible, in consultation with the staff, advisory panels, and the University of Richmond administration, to establish and maintain appropriate integration of the components of the Center. The director will work with Richmond faculty in particular to assure and nurture the academic grounding of the Center’s mission and to secure their support and participation in the Center’s activities. In addition, he or she will convene the advisory panels; in consultation with those bodies, recruit faculty affiliates as well as grant selection committees; meet regularly with community leaders in metropolitan Richmond; coordinate the process of designing the Center’s presence and programs; and serve as the lead spokesperson for the Center’s mission and initiatives on campus and in the community.

7.B Program Coordinator

The full-time program coordinator will work closely with the director to arrange experiential learning and public programs. The coordinator will cooperate with other staff members around the University who have responsibilities relating to community service or other community involvement to assure, as much as possible, that relationships between off-campus organizations and university constituents are educational and mutually beneficial. She or he will begin with strong knowledge of the Richmond community and its nonprofit organizations and will build strong relations with staff members in those organizations. The coordinator will work with affiliated or designated student organizations. The coordinator will maintain the
reading/interaction room and otherwise work on improving the quality of presence and programming of the Center. The coordinator will cooperate with the director, the administrative assistant, and Information Services staff to maintain a vital, informative, and up-to-date website. Additionally, the coordinator will work with various campus groups and their coordinators to track student service across campus.

7.C Administrative Assistant

The full-time administrative assistant will be a critically thinking, self-motivating, problem-solving person who has enthusiasm for the core mission of the Center. He or she will, with the director and coordinator, help build an inviting community of students, faculty, and staff involved with the Center. He or she will devote significant time, in consultation with the director and others in the University and community, to the process of rigorous assessment of the Center’s outcomes (see below). He or she will provide normal administrative support for the work of the director and coordinator and will be the everyday supervisor of work-study students employed by the Center.

7.D. Work-Study Students

The Center will benefit from the presence of a small band of work-study students who will be paid partially through federal work-study funds. Their work will include, most importantly, advice on and support for outreach efforts to students. They can help assure that the students know about and are enthusiastic about the reading/interaction room and the Center’s other on-campus presence and programs. Work-study students will assist all staff members with basic office tasks.

7.E Advisory Panels

As the Center takes shape, the planning team and the staff will require and benefit from input from all of its constituencies: faculty, staff, students, and community members. The planning team will need to determine how best to coordinate the input from these various groups. Due to the non-parallel nature of the involvement of these various constituencies, the Center will have multiple advisory panels. Because faculty support for the Center is vital to its success as a fundamental part of the University, the provost has recently appointed (August 2003) a faculty advisory committee, with faculty members from across the administrative units. Key administrative, staff, student, and community resource persons have already been contacted, and many others have been identified for consultation as the planning process moves ahead.

8. Outcomes and Assessment

It is not possible at this early stage in the planning to specify exactly the outcome-based indicators by which to evaluate the success of the Center. The elements noted below, however, suggest some critical types of indicators that should be considered. These points can be clarified or adapted in the upcoming planning process.
8.A Scholarship/Research and Curriculum
- What reports, policy papers, journal articles, books, and other publications sponsored by the Center are produced by Richmond faculty and/or students?
- Is there an increase in the number (or quality) of students pursuing professional or graduate degrees related to community problems, civic engagement, or social justice?
- Is there an increase in the number of faculty members offering courses with service learning and civic engagement components?
- Do community organizations report that research generated by the Center has helped them to do their work more effectively?

8.B Positive and Specific Changes in Metropolitan Richmond
- Is there an increase in the quantity and/or quality of service and other community work undertaken by students, faculty, and staff?
- What specific findings from research supported by the Center have made a visible and positive difference in community organizations?
- Are organizations engaged with the Center more effective—for reasons related to involvement with the Center—in meeting their social missions?

8.C University of Richmond Relationships with Wider Community
- Do students, faculty, and staff report more meaningful or educational experiences in the Richmond community?
- Do Richmond city/community members who work with the Center report more meaningful or valuable experiences with University constituents?
- (less direct) Do objective measures of Richmond city residents’ or leaders’ perceptions of the University of Richmond change?

8.D Student Educational Experience (individual)
- How many students (total yearly, weekly, or daily) use the reading/interaction room?
- How do they rate the quality of that experience?
- How many students (yearly or per event) attend the programs about research or reflective practice?
- How do they rate those programs?
- Have students increased the quality of their critical reflection accompanying their community service?
- How many student publications are generated? (and of what quality are they?)

8.E Quality of Intellectual and Social Life on Campus (corporate)
- Are there measurable differences in the integration of academic and co-curricular dimensions of student life?
- How do interactions among faculty, student, and staff members change?
- How do interactions among students groups (organizations, persons by race/ethnicity and nationality, religious background, sexual orientation, etc.) change?
- Are more students knowledgeable about current events and pressing issues?
- Is Richmond (recruiting and) retaining more intellectually curious and justice-minded students?
8.F Students’ Professional and Vocational Reflection and Choices

- Do students report a better match between their own values and their career choices?
- Do students report taking common-good considerations or perspectives into account in their career or vocational planning?
- How many students are choosing service-oriented or justice-oriented careers?


The planning process offers the opportunity to build interest among various on-campus and metropolitan Richmond constituencies, to receive the input of these persons and groups into how the Center can most effectively work, to build upon the list of desired outcomes for student learning and other goals, and to specify the ways in which the Center will can coordinate and help integrate the existing community service, service-learning, and community-based research that occurs at the University of Richmond. This latter task includes clarifying the most fitting and constructive relationship between the Center and the Bonner Scholars Program. The planning process will also clarify the expertise in civic engagement that the University currently has to offer to community organizations and to other academic institutions, and it will outline ways in which the Center can enhance that expertise in coming years.

- The timeline of the planning process includes these steps: Receive approval from Bonner Foundation Board of Trustees to receive Bonner enrichment fund monies to plan for Center and to inaugurate it by August 2004.
- Name director.
- Recruit advisory panel(s).
- Begin planning process to develop and refine vision (and final name) for the Center; first report of faculty planning group, working mission statement, and timeline for phased roll-out of Center planning process and programs due to Provost Aprille by December 15, 2003.
- Communicate vision and cultivate enthusiasm and support among campus and external constituencies.
- Arrange for Bonner enrichment monies to be available for expenses related to staffing, planning, and renovation by December 2003 or January 2004.
- Grant course reduction for spring 2004 to faculty member serving as director.
- Determine location for Center and prepare space for summer 2004 occupancy.
- Hire administrative assistant (by spring 2004).
- Hire program coordinator (by spring 2004).
- Move into renovated space and inaugurate Center (by August 2004).


The projected budget for three academic years is attached. These estimates reflect what the planning team considers to be a minimum budget for a strong launch of the Center’s activities of programming, support and coordination of community service, curricular support, and collaborative research into community issues. The budget reflects a phase-in of many of these efforts (programs, curricular development, research support). The budget does NOT
include many additional initiatives that the Center is projected to undertake, including stipends for student internships in nonprofit and government organizations, additional support of research by students, faculty members, and community leaders, and possible Center-based publications. Additional funds will be needed to make these activities a reality.