

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT 360:
WILLIAM AND MARY’S COMPREHENSIVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE**

William and Mary’s Legacy of Public Service

The College of William and Mary’s history gives us a unique perspective on the importance and meaning of civic engagement and public service in a democracy. Contemplating the accomplishments of the four United States presidents who have studied at the College, we are well-positioned to appreciate the importance of steady leadership at the highest levels of our nation’s government. Yet we have equal admiration for our alumni who have dedicated themselves to local communities all over the world by starting non-profits that meet critical human needs in the areas of education, public health, and the environment. The College’s graduates have made their marks in both government and non-profit service; they have made distinguished contributions within the institutions where national and state-wide policies are made, and within the face-to-face settings where these policies are experienced.

Above all, perhaps, they have followed the precedent set when Thomas Jefferson studied law with his mentor, George Wythe: they have remained dedicated to the proposition that public service is most likely to have a substantial and lasting impact when it is guided by scholarly knowledge and perspective. Jefferson represents a model of the Citizen-Scholar that has inspired generations of William and Mary students and faculty.

Drawing on this rich legacy, we seek to build a balanced and comprehensive civic engagement program – spanning all 360 degrees of the compass - that is unique in the United States. Unlike other institutions that may be tempted to follow passing fads, we are aware that flourishing democracies require versatile citizens who can contribute in a variety of ways and at a variety of levels. We will build a program that celebrates democratic citizenship in all of its diversity, that will give our students the passion to serve and the intellectual tools to serve effectively.

Civic Engagement 360: An Overview

Civic Engagement 360 will be a new initiative formed by co-locating, unifying, and augmenting The Sharpe Program and the Office of Student Volunteer Services. The new whole that will result will be far more than the sum of its antecedent parts. There will, first, be significant efficiencies that will result from this collaboration; but more important, we will have the capacity to marry the cultivation of citizenship and scholarship in a way that will have a transformative impact on our students and faculty.

At the core of this new center will be an annual *Civic Engagement Project 360*. Each year the College will select an organizing theme – for example, civic engagement and public health, or civic engagement and government/non-profit collaboration. This theme will be pursued with a year-long series of activities that will start with Convocation and end with a spring working conference that will draw together the insights accumulated over the year. The Project will include courses, community projects, and a William and Mary poll on the year’s topic. It will bring our students and faculty together with distinguished non-profit leaders, public officials, and journalists.

The goal of *Project 360* will be to place the academic resources of the College at the service of civic entrepreneurs and public officials, while in return our students and faculty receive practical experience and advice from these seasoned practitioners. Our students and faculty need to test their ideas and aspirations against the world beyond the College's walls, to permit this world to challenge us even as we challenge it. *Project 360* will be the primary forum for the College and the outside world will meet for their mutual benefit.

Comprehensiveness

Civic Engagement 360 will be comprehensive in at least three ways.

First, it will be a true collaboration between the Sharpe Program's service-learning courses and the volunteer and personal development initiatives of Student Affairs. It is William and Mary's mission to have both an intellectual and an affective impact on students, to build both well-trained scholars and responsible citizens. It is our goal, then, to help students become both engaged scholars and scholarly citizens, and to accomplish this our new *Civic Engagement 360* must build institutionalized links between the academic and Student Affairs sides of the house.

Second, we will avoid the bias on behalf of public, non-profit, or private approaches to social problems and civic engagement that is so common in higher education by building a program that engages the perspectives of all three of these sectors. In the 1960s, students flocked to government service inspired by the idealism of the Peace Corps and the programs of The Great Society; today, they are more likely to turn to private-sector and non-profit entrepreneurs for their models of responsible citizenship. *Civic Engagement 360* as a whole, and the annual *Project 360* in particular, will include voices from all three of these sectors, profiting from the strengths of each and looking for ways for them to work productively together.

Third, *Civic Engagement 360* will work with the communities that it serves to build new public fora and practices of engaged citizenship. As Robert Putnam and others have demonstrated, the last half-century has been marked by patterns of growing civic disengagement at all levels of American society. University programs that see social problems exclusively as technical policy issues, or as bundles of needs to be met with philanthropy and service, can unintentionally perpetuate this disengagement by adopting a mentality of "government for the people" rather than "government of the people." Initiatives under *Civic Engagement 360* will be designed to augment the autonomy and resiliency of individuals and their communities rather than treating them as the passive recipients of our policy ingenuity and personal generosity.

The Office of Student Volunteer Services (OSVS) and The Sharpe Community Scholars Program

The OSVS was founded in 1993 thanks to seed funding from the Jesse Ball duPont Foundation. However, service initiatives under the Student Affairs division date back at least to 1957 when Circle K (now CKI) was chartered. The College completed its first campus-wide assessment of service in 1994 and found that our students had completed 34,500 hours of service in the previous year. In 2007, just 13 years later, a similar study documented 323,000 hours of service in the previous year, an increase of nearly ten-fold, and found that 75% of seniors reported

participating in service activities on a weekly basis. Fully 90% of these seniors expressed their intention to continue this participate after graduation.

Today the OSVS coordinates an amazing variety of programs, working with 90 non-profit agencies and schools, all with just two permanent staff and a meager budget. Two longstanding programs are Project Phoenix, a tutoring and mentoring program for at-risk middle school students, and College Partnership for Kids, a tutoring program that places about 200 College students each year in 14 local schools. More recently, both domestic and international service trips have exploded in popularity, stretching OSVS's resources beyond their limit.

Since the 1970s several William and Mary faculty members have experimented with using community-based projects to augment the learning in their courses ("service-learning" or "community-based learning"). But the College did not have an institutional home to encourage and support these efforts until the Sharpe Community Scholars Program was initiated in 2001, thanks to the generosity of Robert and Jane Sharpe. Sharpe has been primarily a freshman program that combines a residential experience, freshman seminars, and community projects that give about 75 Sharpe Scholars the opportunity to experience and put into practice the themes and analytic techniques that they are learning into their classes.

Like the OSVS, Sharpe has pressure and aspirations to grow without the resources it needs to accomplish this. Increasingly, students are turning to independent study courses and self-designed interdisciplinary majors as ad hoc strategies to integrate service and learning in their curriculum beyond the freshman program. The Sharpe Program would like to build a minor with a strong community-based research component that would meet some of this demand. Sharpe also needs to expand its faculty development initiatives so that faculty across the College can learn more about community-based teaching and research strategies.

The OSVS / Sharpe Collaboration

This collaboration is necessary, first, because the developmental and affective goals that govern the OSVS programs and the diverse academic goals that govern Sharpe initiatives require different training, management strategies, and assessment techniques. The clear lesson from institutions that have built civic engagement centers under the leadership of one person, rather than the co-direction that we propose here, is that one side gets diminished in importance, mis-conceived, or underfunded – and usually all three -- in the bargain.

In addition, the College will realize several efficiencies when it co-locates and integrates the OSVS and Sharpe. For instance, these two programs work with the same array of schools, government agencies, and non-profits in the community, and it makes sense to place the coordination of the College's interactions with these community partners under one roof. In addition, OSVS and Sharpe both maintain multiple vans for students to use for transportation to community sites. These could be allocated much more efficiently if they could be combined into a single transportation pool. There is at present considerable overlap in the students who are most active in OSVS and in Sharpe, and multiple missed opportunities for joint community projects, shared speakers and films, joint honors and awards events, etc.

But most important will be the intellectual and educational synergy that will be created by the union of these two programs. This potential can perhaps best be appreciated by looking at snapshots of two William and Mary students, George Srour, 05, and Jeree Harris, 08.

George was a member of our first class of Sharpe Scholars. However, after his freshman year, he had few opportunities to integrate his academic studies as a Government major with his extensive extra-curricular work with Special Olympics and other efforts focused on children. In his senior year George founded Building Tomorrow, a non-profit that builds schools in Africa with funds raised by chapters on U.S. college campuses. William and Mary provided George with a strong background in African politics and international relations that helped prepare him to launch and sustain his successful non-profit; the College also provided him with a wide range of volunteer opportunities that sealed his dedication to children and honed his leadership skills: however, there was no systematic curriculum or program at the College that brought together the academic reflection and community experience that would have been the perfect preparation for his career as a non-profit director.

Jeree Harris, also a Sharpe Scholar, has found an ad hoc solution to this problem by creating a self-designed major that combines her community work with at-risk youth with her academic studies of education policy and related social justice topics. Jeree has worked in particular with the local alternative education high school, developing curriculum, tutoring and mentoring students, and playing a major role in spring 2007, helping to build public support for the school when its funding was threatened. Jeree plans to attend law school and to continue to dedicate herself to improving the responsiveness of American schools to the needs of at-risk students.

Civic Engagement 360, and *Project 360* in particular, will provide the ideal support for the growing number of students at the College who, like George and Jeree, plan to pursue public service careers. The *Project* will allow us to bring together scholars and practitioners, including non-profit entrepreneurs, journalists, and government employees, who will collaborate on courses, and on extracurricular and community initiatives. This collaboration will give faculty and students an unparalleled opportunity to explore the subtle ways that academic and pragmatic considerations interact in the world. Research on students like George and Jeree who become public servants and non-profit entrepreneurs demonstrates that their leadership skills and motivation to serve the public often originate with concrete volunteer experiences in the community. When these personal commitments and civic skills are united with associated academic training, as they were for Thomas Jefferson, our students will have everything they need to realize their potential as public servants.

Civic Engagement 360, then, will be an institutionalized program for meeting the needs of students who wish to pursue public service careers. And by focusing on a different topic each year, *Project 360* will, over time, permit us to involve a large number of students and faculty with a wide range of disciplinary interests.

This variety of substantive and process-oriented topics will also allow us to have a more organized and lasting impact on the communities that our students and faculty serve. For example, the *Project* might focus on civic engagement and public health or the environment in one year, and on strategies for sustaining non-profits, or for encouraging government/non-profit cooperation, in another year. Each year we would concentrate on building substantial community projects around the year's theme, including helping to initiate public fora for community stakeholders. Of course, each of these efforts will continue, although with a lower profile, beyond the year that it is the *Project's* specific focus. Whereas now our community projects can be somewhat scatter-shot in their impact, this systematic approach will have a deeper and more transformative and lasting consequence.

If *Civic Engagement 360* will have a significant effect on our students, faculty and on the communities that they serve, it will also have an impact on the non-profit leaders, government officials, and journalists that come to campus and participate in our programs and year-end working conference. These "practitioners" will have the opportunity and time to read and think deeply, and to interact with students, faculty specialists and each other, on subjects that relate to their work. After our year-long program, these practitioners will return to their work with new ideas, as well as new energy and dedication.

The Co-location of OSVS and Sharpe

While it will not be necessary to co-locate these two programs immediately, *Civic Engagement 360* will not be able to achieve its full potential to undertake collaborative projects until this is accomplished. This conclusion is grounded in a sober survey of previous efforts on our campus to build true sustained collaborations between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. It is also well-supported by the experience of other institutions and the substantial literature that has been written addressing this subject.

A Possible Organizational Structure for Civic Engagement 360

The center will be co-directed by an Associate Vice-President for Student Affairs for Civic Engagement and an Associate Provost for Civic Engagement (see figure). This structure will permit the co-directors to report at the highest levels within Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, respectively. We have concluded that this co-direction, rather than single-direction, is the best structure because we want to be absolutely certain that we maintain balance and collaboration between these two divisions. The co-directors will be jointly responsible for organizing the annual *Project 360*, as well as general oversight of programs under their respective wings of the center.

One additional "Director" position will be added to each of the wings of the center to make it possible for these programs to meet current demand and to grow. For example, the OSVS has a significant challenge to meet the exploding demand for alternative spring break and international service programs, and Sharpe wants to develop a new minor and to support new department-based courses. But it is important to appreciate that this growth will often be different in kind from existing programs. For example, at present there is considerable pressure from students for

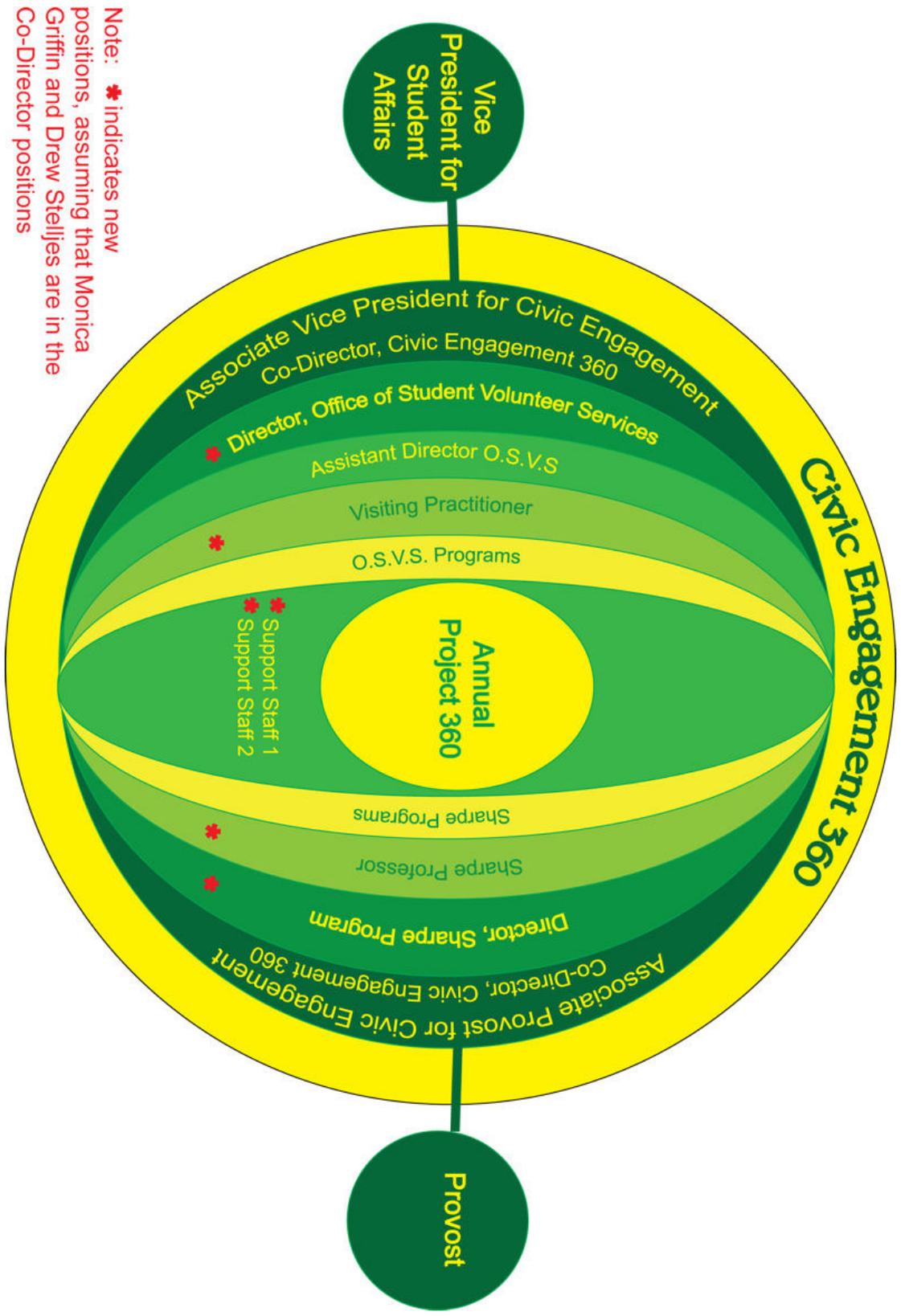
the College to create courses that support and enrich international service programs. The course David Aday has supervised that is affiliated with the College's medical mission initiative in the Dominican Republic is an ideal model for how we can integrate service with a rigorous academic course. The two new "directors" will be responsible for developing many other similar service/academic co-initiatives.

Each wing of the *Civic Engagement 360* will have an additional position to fill on a rotating year-to-year basis. On the OSVS side this will be a "visiting practitioner" position which will be used

to bring a non-profit leader, a government employee, or a journalist to campus each year that represents a good fit with our annual *Project 360* theme. We might elect to have one practitioner in residence for the entire year; more likely, we will have several practitioners who come to campus for shorter periods over the year. Visiting practitioners will contribute to all aspects of the *Project 360* program, as well as working with a variety of service and leadership initiatives within Students Affairs. On the Sharpe side, we will add a Sharpe Faculty Fellow who will be selected from among applicants who are appropriate for the year's *Project 360* theme. Funding will be used to release an appropriate William and Mary faculty member from current teaching duties so that he or she can play a full-time role for the academic year in *Civic Engagement 360*.

New funding will also make it possible for us to support students in an exciting range of new ways. Examples:

- ! We propose to fund approximately 30% of the trip costs for students participating in College-recognized domestic and international service trips.
- ! We propose to significantly expand the successful Sharpe Teaching Fellows Program. These Fellows help faculty supervise community research projects and additional funding will allow us to extend this cost-effective tool to courses in the new Sharpe minor, as well as to appropriate departmental courses.
- ! We propose to employ students who are veterans of some of our domestic and international community initiatives to serve as co-project directors and co-educators in these programs. For example, the international medical service programs could profit immensely from the assistance of experienced recent graduates.
- ! We propose to initiate a fund that would directly support student community initiatives, including funding to help student file 501(c)3 applications, as well as other start-up costs associated with these endeavors.



Note: * indicates new positions, assuming that Monica Griffin and Drew Stelljes are in the Co-Director positions

The William and Mary Poll

Each year we will do a nation-wide poll, significantly over-sampling the local community, that focuses on the annual *Project 360* topic. Community service projects and community-based research projects make assumptions about the opinions of members of the communities that they work with, often with only anecdotal evidence to back them up. A professional poll will allow us to have accurate information about how members of different demographic groups perceive human needs and priorities. Faculty, students, and community partners will be able to shape the questions that are asked and as a result the poll will make a significant contribution to the success of *Project 360* and the courses and community projects that make them up.

The poll will be coordinated on campus by a faculty member experienced with survey research. Our current plan is that this will be taken on as a class project in a survey research or research methods class in a social science discipline. The survey itself will be contracted out to a professional polling house that has the infrastructure to do a professional job with quick turn-around.

An annual William and Mary poll would make a significant contribution to , and especially the annual *Project*. It would also provide the College each year with valuable publicity and an opportunity to publicize our programs.

Opportunities for Alumni

William and Mary alumni are deeply involved with public service at the local, state, national, and international levels. As *Civic Engagement 360* develops there will be many opportunities to bring our talented and dedicated alumni into its programs. First, there will be opportunities for alumni to join programs here on campus at Homecoming. For example, a group that graduated from the College in the mid-1970s has been working closely with the Sharpe program over the past three years, funding summer student projects and returning at Homecoming to work in the community side-by-side with current students. Other alumni have joined current William and Mary students on medical service projects in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. We intend to cultivate more of these off-campus opportunities in the future.

Finally, we will initiate a summer program that will encourage and support alumni who will “host” current students doing summer public service projects in cities across the country. For instance, an alumnus in Seattle who serves on the board of a local environmental non-profit could support and mentor a current student who is also from the Seattle area who would like to work with that non-profit over the summer. We will have a symposium at Homecoming each year that features the student-alumni pairs that worked together in the previous summer.

The Public Face of Civic Engagement 360

It will be important to develop an ambitious web site that will help coordinate and promote *Civic Engagement 360* initiatives on and off campus. This site will be particularly important as a vehicle to communicate with alumni, community partners, non-profit leaders, and others who will be participating in our initiatives.

Immediate Budget Needs

Sharpe and OSVS require \$80,000 each right away to deal with current programmatic demands.

Sharpe

All of Sharpe's current funding is required to fund the compensation for the director and the secretary. \$80,000 would allow us to independently fund the director's compensation, freeing up the money that currently is used for this purpose to fund an additional position (an assistant director, under our current structure; a Sharpe director, under the new structure) and the most pressing programmatic needs.

OSVS

At present there is a radical shortfall in OSVS's ability to support the growth in international service initiatives. \$80,000 would allow the office to hire an Assistant Director for International Service and to meet at least a small fraction of the trip costs for College-recognized service trips.

Interim Budget Objectives

Our interim objective is to co-locate Sharpe and the OSVS and to continue to build the infrastructure necessary to fully launch the annual ***Project 360***. For instance, at this stage it will be appropriate to add the Visiting Practitioner and the Sharpe Professor, which will make it possible to expand OSVS initiatives, to fully institutionalize the new Sharpe minor, and to launch elements of the annual ***Project 360***

Full Civic Engagement 360 Budget

It will require a significant budget, probably requiring an independent endowment, to fully fund this initiative.