



May 22, 2024

To: The Board of Visitors  
The Faculty Senate

From: Stephen M. Burns, Chair  
George Keith Martin, Vice Chair  
On Behalf of the Governing Council of the Miller Center

Subject: Support for President James E. Ryan

The Miller Center's Governing Council would like to express its support for President James E. Ryan and his leadership of the University. In these challenging times, we believe that President Ryan has had to balance the University's commitments to the free expression of ideas, civil discourse, and civic responsibility.

Across the nation, University presidents have had to help their communities grapple with a range of challenges at home and abroad. President Ryan has consistently addressed these matters with grace, integrity, and compassion, and in the best interests of the University as a whole. He has regularly promoted and defended the free expression of ideas and the need for reasoned, civil conversation. Examples of this include the launch of the Karsh Institute of Democracy; the university's inclusive response to the COVID pandemic; his efforts to address pressing issues of racial reconciliation and justice; his promotion of a dynamic, prosperous, and equitable economy in our commonwealth and city; and his efforts to advance breakthroughs in medical sciences and clinical applications that advance human health and well-being.

The Miller Center shares the commitment to reasoned discourse. Almost fifty years ago, the Center was founded to examine issues of national importance and to help devise solutions to national challenges -- with a special emphasis on issues concerning the American presidency. It was also vested with the responsibility of providing a forum for discussing these challenges with the public at large.

Earlier this year, at President Ryan's urging, the Miller Center addressed the particularly vexing challenge of realizing peace and justice in the Middle East. The Center organized a discussion about the path forward featuring former peace negotiators from Israel, the Palestinian Authorities, and leading American national security experts. This conversation would not have happened and would not have been as valuable had President Ryan not encouraged us to pursue it. Indeed, it is a testament to President Ryan's leadership that we at the Miller Center, along with partners throughout the University, continue to engage in difficult conversations about contested matters.

We will continue to work with President Ryan to promote civil discourse on topics of national concern and the free expression of ideas on critical issues.