**New Degree Program, Bachelors of Arts in Constitutional Democracy, MU**

**Executive Summary**

Since it opened its doors, the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy has engaged hundreds of MU undergraduates in exploration of the intellectual foundations and historical development of the United States, fields of study that are not simply valuable on their own but also essential to preparing students for meaningful, civil participation in public life. We envision building on this early success by partnering with the College of Arts & Science (A&S) to develop a world-class residential college that provides a foundation for thoughtful citizenship, leadership, and civic engagement through consideration of the nation’s evolution from its beginnings to the present, with particular emphasis on how a thorough knowledge of the United States’ origins can enrich both our understanding of historical progress and our assessment of the cultural, social, political, and economic problems with which the U.S. has long struggled. The academic component of the residential college is a proposed **B.A. in Constitutional Democracy** (CD) housed in A&S, the unique aspects of which include:

* A first-year living and learning community that integrates shared scholastic experience at the Kinder Institute and undergraduate residence in Wolpers Hall
* A common, interdisciplinary B.A. curriculum focused on the ideas and events that shaped the political institutions and culture of the U.S. during the revolutionary and early republic eras
* Continuation of the common curriculum with upper-level coursework and fieldwork that traces the reverberations of the nation’s origins over time and around the globe and that provides students with the opportunity to develop and pursue an area of concentration
* The option to apply to pursue a separately proposed one-year interdisciplinary M.A. in Atlantic History & Politics upon completing the B.A.

At its core, the proposed Kinder Institute Residential College (KIRC) will build and expand on the Freshman Interest Group (FIG) program that for some time has been a cornerstone of MU’s programming for first-year students. Specifically, the KIRC will triple the size of a typical FIG cohort (from 20 to 60); engage students in a year of shared inquiry in the classroom, rather than a single semester; and provide greater thematic cohesion in regard to the courses that all college residents take together. The robust sense of scholarly community and academic rigor that the KIRC offers will not only enrich the first-year experience of MU students who take part in it but will also help attract the state’s best students to Mizzou (as is evidenced in the nine, highly-decorated inaugural recipients of the Morgan Scholarship associated with the KIRC) and prepare them equally for graduate study across multiple disciplines, public service at the state and national level, and a wide variety of careers in the private sector. In addition, the Constitutional Democracy B.A., which students in the KIRC can seamlessly transition into, will serve as a model of interdisciplinary scholarship, cross-departmental collaboration, and integrated experiential learning at a time when not only Mizzou but universities nationwide are prioritizing precisely these outcomes.

With a common curriculum drawn from History and Political Science, and an upper-level curriculum through which students design a focused course of study from classes that span over a dozen departments in A&S, the B.A. can be launched at no cost to the university, using only existing resources, while also providing numerous ways for value to be added through lines built into the Kinder Institute budget for course development, funded research, and student recruitment (among other things). **The Kinder Institute has committed to successfully administering the B.A. and covering any expenses associated with the program through either a new grant agreement or from within the regular annual budget.**

The B.A. is also structured to facilitate double majoring, particularly with History and Political Science, which will only further enhance the interdisciplinary approach of students majoring in it, and we are developing the degree with every intention of pursuing new collaborative opportunities throughout the UM System, whether that be in the form of student exchanges, systemwide faculty and graduate research colloquia and workshops, or something not yet devised. In terms of enrollment, with less than a semester to advertise and promote the Fall 2019 soft launch of the KIRC, the Kinder Institute recruited a cohort of 44 incoming students of diverse background and distinguished academic record, and hitting this target with such a short runway gives us every confidence that we can successfully grow the KIRC and major to our target of 60 students in AY 2020-21 and sustain this momentum going forward.