

ANNUAL REPORT OUR INAUGURAL YEAR

2019|2020



CENTER FOR
FAITH AND
FLOURISHING



Greetings

I reflect on the inaugural year of the Center for Faith and Flourishing with a mixture of deep satisfaction and coronavirus-inspired whiplash. Let's start with the good news: I had very high expectations for us at the start of this academic year. I wanted to show our supporters that we can be good and faithful stewards of their investments. I am happy to say we exceeded my highest expectations, from the quality of programming we produced to the number of students we reached.

Indeed, when you look at **By the Numbers**, you'll see a visual depiction of our success. We had over 3,000 participants in lectures, events, and meetings—from large gatherings numbering in the hundreds to smaller ones with just a handful. Some participants were repeat customers, but with 1,200 undergraduates on campus we can reasonably say that, within our first year, we reached the majority of JBU's students. Indeed, at one event we had exactly 800 students, or two-thirds of our undergraduate population. The top 10 universities in terms of numbers of undergraduates have over 45,000 students on average (according to our analysis of data from *U.S. News & World Report*), so for them to achieve a comparable reach in percentage terms would require centers there to have a single event with over 30,000 students—something that would happen, I imagine, only if they somehow arranged for a guest lecture to be delivered as part of the halftime show at a football game! Being **In the News** certainly helped our cause.

We had a total of 43 different opportunities for JBU's students, faculty, and staff to engage with guests and ideas—and with each other. For a quick list of our 43 events, see **The Year in Review**. Under **Lectures**, we give the juicy details for our exciting, large events. We hosted 17 of them this year, with an average attendance of 166 people.

But we didn't just have big events. We had more intimate gatherings, too. We see this variety in our programming as a strength, and it's something I want to have as part of our DNA. I'm happy to say we hosted 26 smaller

gatherings, described in greater detail under **Meetings**. These meetings had, on average, 13 people in attendance. (My apologies to those with triskaidekaphobia.) We also helped our JBU Golden Eagles go places. We highlight some of these trips under **Travel**.

Large events helped establish us as a known entity on campus and allowed us to reach a wide audience. But smaller events allowed community members—especially students—to receive advice and counsel that can be transformative. They spoke in their own voice and found their comments respectfully received—an ennobling experience.

Consider the personal benefit to the sixteen people who met with Congressman Steve Womack, the U.S. Representative for Arkansas's 3rd congressional district, this September. My favorite aside from that visit: Congressman Womack mentioned that, as a freshman congressman, you're just trying to find where the restrooms are. That was great! Students need to hear that our elected representatives are people, too—because they are.

Or imagine the helpful advice given to five undergraduates interested in a legal career by Judge Vence Smith, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. JBU has the privilege of teaching students who are the first people in their families ever to attend college. When a federal judge says you can make it beyond college to law school and a legal career, you listen!

So I am truly grateful to God for all we have been able to do—grateful, and even surprised and delighted. We were able to do so much this year because we had so many people, both on and off campus, willing to work with us to make this programming possible. We recognize our **Partnerships** with gratitude. We could not have done it without your help!

But the following pages are not mere hagiography. As we detail in **COVID-19**, many events had to be cancelled—or, as we prefer to say, *postponed*. We are still new at this game, and I am sure that, in addition to our own recognition of **Missed Opportunities**, careful readers will find



other ways we can improve that we have yet to consider. If you think of anything, please email me at jbruce@jbu.edu—most especially if you'd like to remedy our deficiency with financial support!

And let's be honest: We simply had no idea at the start of this academic year that JBU students would be sent away in March, not to return except via Zoom, or that toilet paper would become a cherished global commodity. We have tried to continue virtual programming, with some success, but we long for the day when students are back on campus and we can all be within six feet of each other. See what we hope to be doing in **Mark Your Calendars**.

Read about our students under **Internships** and **Life After JBU**. Check out **Our Team** as well as a **Q & A with Our New Hire** to find out why Harvard's loss is JBU's gain. And if you are ever in Northwest Arkansas, be sure to look us up. We're not hard to find, even when we are sheltering in place.

JAMES E. BRUCE, PH.D.
Director, Center for Faith and Flourishing

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“The Center introduced me to the Institute for Humane Studies early in my college career and exposed me to challenging debate and historical texts in an accessible manner. As a result, IHS hired me to work remotely throughout my senior year, and I will be continuing after graduation. The Center for Faith and Flourishing facilitates colloquia that consistently stretch me to evaluate my preconceptions and defend my beliefs. It prepares me to be a lifelong critical thinker.”

—Maddie Madewell
JBU Class of 2020

By the Numbers

3,161 PEOPLE
43 EVENTS

17 LECTURES 26 MEETINGS

At one event,
we had 800
undergraduates
or 67% of JBU's
traditional
undergraduate
population.

800 of 1,200



67% of John Brown University's
traditional undergraduate population



7,764 miles
traveled by speakers

students read
3,600 pages



73 handwritten notes
to prospective students



39 undergraduate
majors were represented

100 cups
of coffee

In the News

RELIGION
NORTHWEST ARKANSAS Democrat-Gazette
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SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2019

ON THE WEB nwdag.com

FAITH MATTERS
ROBB RYERSE
Through others' eyes
Film festival an inspiration

Life, faith and everything
JBU brings together elements of Christianity

BECCA MARTIN-BROWN
NWA DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

The Center for Faith and Flourishing arose organically from what we have been doing at JBU for 100 years," says James Bruce, associate professor of philosophy at John Brown University in Siloam Springs. "The relationship between Christianity and life at work, at home and in society has always been complicated. [At JBU] we seek academic excellence and the cultivation of the intellectual lives of our students; we want students to discover who they are and what they should do with their lives; and we equip students to impact the world, starting with themselves and their local communities."

Although it has no soaring new edifice, the Center for Faith and Flourishing has attained a more concrete existence with the recent gifts

Jay Bruce (pictured), an associate professor of philosophy at JBU, will serve as the CFF's inaugural director, and Daniel Bennett, JBU assistant professor of political science, will be the assistant director. Bruce also preaches part time at Covenant Church in Fayetteville.

Courtesy Photo

are sharp thinkers, and they are also great people." The course description says PPE I "examines central questions in the human experience at the intersection of these three important fields of study. The course promotes cross-disciplinary discussions about key texts and historical figures from the earliest civilizations to the early modern era. Far from being an arbitrary amalgamation of disparate fields, PPE recognizes the rich tradition of major thinkers who were philosophers, political theorists and economists all at once."

"By adding an extra class from each of the three disciplines and offering one additional class as an elective, we generated the minor," Bruce adds. "I say 'we generated the minor,' but that's incorrect. We talked about the idea. Dr. Posey did the hard work of actually making the minor and also the two-course sequence of PPE

Grand Opening

On June 8, 2019, the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* profiled the launch of the Center for Faith and Flourishing, the longest of several articles detailing our new endeavor. We are grateful for this favorable press coverage in our inaugural year, and we sincerely hope it continues!

Going Online

The Center for Faith and Flourishing made news of its own. We crowd sourced a logo; got our own domain; built a website; and the rest is history. Go to faithandflourishing.org, sign up for our newsletter, and find us on your preferred social media platform.



Alumni Article

"Though some would argue that political involvement is necessary to maintain the freedom of Christians to proclaim the gospel, such political involvement can too easily lead to a misunderstanding of the church's mission."

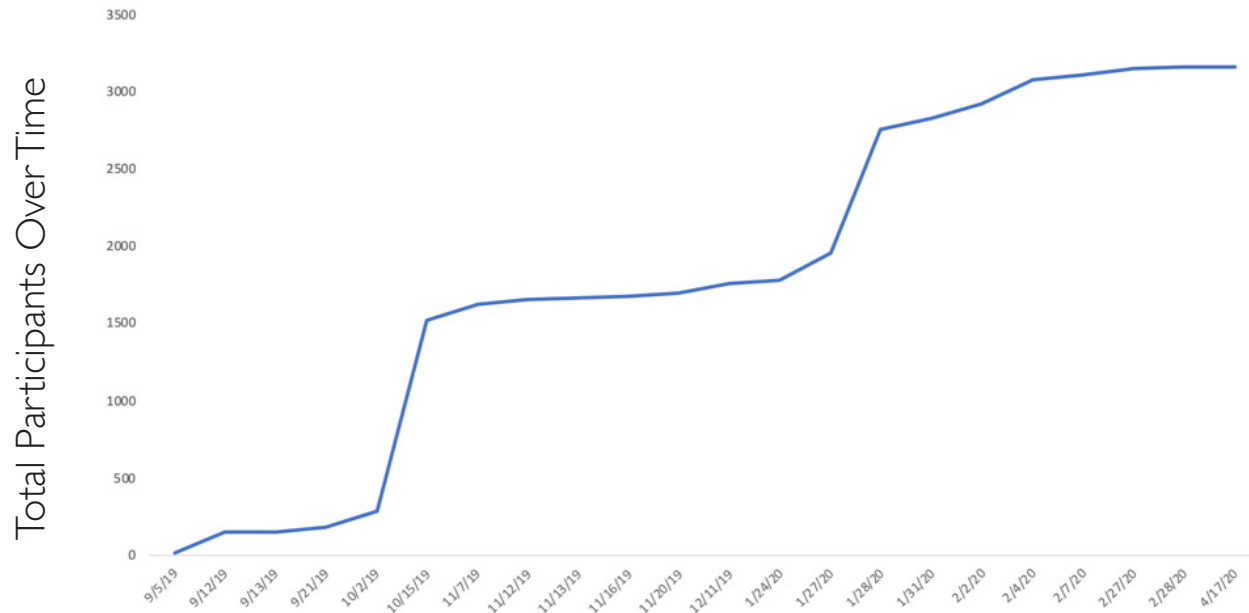
Jonathan Marks, Center for Faith and Flourishing Alumni Fellow, published an opinion piece in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* this December. In his op-ed, Marks (a 2014 JBU graduate) explores the relationship between faith and politics. Congrats, Jonathan!

CENTER FOR FAITH AND FLOURISHING
About Us Events News

Approaching human flourishing from a Christian foundation.

Upcoming Events

The Year in Review



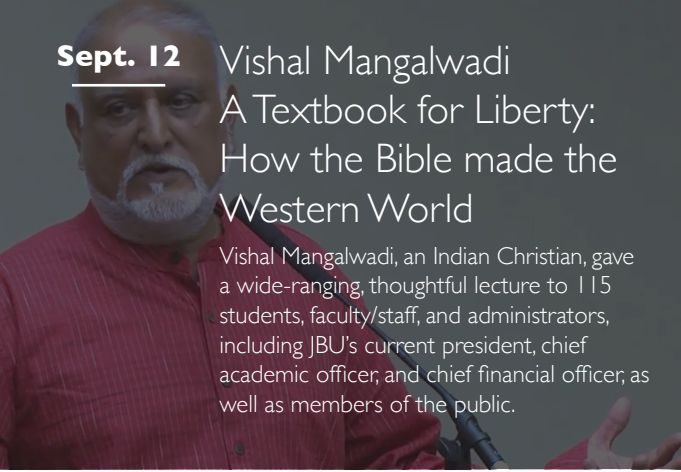
<p>Sept. 5</p> <p>Meeting with Congressman Steve Womack</p> <p>16</p>	<p>Sept. 12</p> <p>Lunch at President's House with Vishal Mangalwadi</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Sept. 12</p> <p>Dinner with Faculty, Guests, & Vishal Mangalwadi</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Sept. 12</p> <p>Vishal Mangalwadi A Textbook for Liberty: How the Bible made the Western World</p> <p>115</p>	<p>Sept. 13</p> <p>Student Lunch with Vishal Mangalwadi</p> <p>9</p>
<p>Sept. 20-21</p> <p>Liberty Tree Seminar Human Trafficking & Liberty</p> <p>28</p>	<p>Oct. 2</p> <p>Engaging in Civil Dialogue: Having Hard Conversations in the Midst of Disagreement</p> <p>100</p>	<p>Oct. 15</p> <p>Jemar Tisby Chapel Lecture on the Imago Dei in Political Engagement</p> <p>900</p>	<p>Oct. 15</p> <p>Jenny Yang Lunchtime Faculty Lecture on Evangelical Relief Efforts</p> <p>40</p>	<p>Oct. 15</p> <p>Class Visit by Jemar Tisby</p> <p>25</p>
<p>Oct. 15</p> <p>Reading Discussion with David French</p> <p>18</p>	<p>Oct. 15</p> <p>The Future of Faith & Public Life: David French, Jemar Tisby, & Jenny Yang</p> <p>250</p>	<p>Nov. 7</p> <p>Class Visit by Rob Simpson</p> <p>25</p>	<p>Nov. 7</p> <p>Faculty Dinner with Anne Bradley & Rob Simpson</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Nov. 7</p> <p>Anne Bradley Economics of Terrorism: Economic Freedom as the Counter Measure</p> <p>77</p>

■ Lectures ■ Meetings

<p>Nov. 12</p> <p>Student Meet & Greet with Travis Wussow</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Nov. 12</p> <p>Faculty Dinner with Travis Wussow</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Nov. 12</p> <p>Travis Wussow The Role of Government in Christians' Pursuit of Justice</p> <p>17</p>	<p>Nov. 13</p> <p>Arkansas Student Leadership Forum Debrief</p> <p>10</p>	<p>Nov. 16</p> <p>Institute for Humane Studies Colloquium, Sacred Rights of Conscience</p> <p>15</p>
<p>Nov. 20</p> <p>Student Mock Debate JBU is not a Good Place for the Exchange of Ideas</p> <p>17</p>	<p>Dec. 11</p> <p>Economic Impact of the Denial of Human and Civil Rights Panel with AEI Executive Council</p> <p>65</p>	<p>Jan. 24</p> <p>Gateway Director Candidate Lecture on Philosophy, Politics, & Economics</p> <p>14</p>	<p>Jan. 24</p> <p>Dinner with Gateway Director Candidate</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Jan. 27</p> <p>Working for the Common Good Workshop with Haley Robison</p> <p>40</p>
<p>Jan. 27</p> <p>Haley Robison How to Build a Redemptive Business</p> <p>130</p>	<p>Jan. 28</p> <p>Haley Robison Chapel Lecture on How Daily Practices Inform our Habits</p> <p>800</p>	<p>Jan. 31</p> <p>Faculty Dinner with Wilfred McClay</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Jan. 31</p> <p>Wilfred McClay Why Does the United States Have Two Political Parties?</p> <p>42</p>	<p>Jan. 31</p> <p>PPE Symposium on Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton with Wilfred McClay</p> <p>25</p>
<p>Feb. 4</p> <p>Class Visit by Judge Vence Smith</p> <p>12</p>	<p>Feb. 4</p> <p>Pre-Law Student Meeting with Judge Vence Smith</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Feb. 4</p> <p>Dinner at President's House with Judge Vence Smith</p> <p>20</p>	<p>Feb. 4</p> <p>Judge Vence Smith Barnett Civic Leadership Speaker Series, Without Respect of Persons</p> <p>120</p>	<p>Feb. 7</p> <p>Matthew Wilson, Taking Ownership while Giving Glory to God</p> <p>20</p>
<p>Feb. 7</p> <p>Candidate Dinner with Matt Wilson</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Feb. 20</p> <p>Climate Change Panel with AEI Executive Council</p> <p>97</p>	<p>Feb. 27</p> <p>Class Visit by Matthew Wright</p> <p>12</p>	<p>Feb. 27</p> <p>Book Club Meeting with Matthew Wright</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Feb. 27</p> <p>Dinner with Matthew Wright</p> <p>6</p>
<p>Feb. 27</p> <p>Matthew Wright Politics & Flourishing: Exploring an Improbable Connection</p> <p>17</p>	<p>Feb. 28</p> <p>Faculty & Staff Lunch with Matthew Wright</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Apr. 13-17</p> <p>PPE Pharmacy</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Total</p> <p>3,161</p>	

■ Lectures ■ Meetings

Lectures



Sept. 12 Vishal Mangalwadi
A Textbook for Liberty:
How the Bible made the
Western World

Vishal Mangalwadi, an Indian Christian, gave a wide-ranging, thoughtful lecture to 115 students, faculty/staff, and administrators, including JBU's current president, chief academic officer, and chief financial officer, as well as members of the public.



Oct. 15 Jemar Tisby
Chapel Lecture on
the Imago Dei in
Political Engagement

Nine hundred people, including 773 students, attended this rousing chapel address by Jemar Tisby, as part of Reimagining Faith & Public Life.

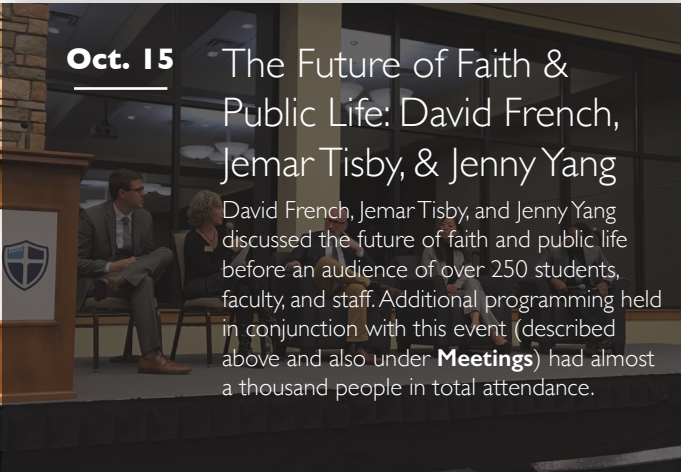
Oct. 2 Engaging in Civil Dialogue:
Having Hard
Conversations in the
Midst of Disagreement

After a productive meeting between the center's director and assistant director with JBU's vice president for student development and dean of student life, the center's assistant director addressed approximately 100 people at this event sponsored by JBU's Office of Student Development.



Oct. 15 Jenny Yang
Lunchtime Faculty
Lecture on Evangelical
Relief Efforts

Jenny Yang talked openly about her role as Vice President for Public Policy and Advocacy at World Relief to 40 faculty and staff.



Oct. 15 The Future of Faith &
Public Life: David French,
Jemar Tisby, & Jenny Yang

David French, Jemar Tisby, and Jenny Yang discussed the future of faith and public life before an audience of over 250 students, faculty, and staff. Additional programming held in conjunction with this event (described above and also under **Meetings**) had almost a thousand people in total attendance.



Nov. 7 Anne Bradley
Economics of Terrorism:
Economic Freedom as
the Counter Measure

Anne Bradley, an engaging libertarian economist with The Fund for American Studies, worked for the CIA in a former life. She captivated the audience of 77 students who were wise enough to attend her lecture.

Nov. 12

Travis Wussow
The Role of Government
in Christians' Pursuit
of Justice

Travis Wussow, the Vice President of Public Policy and General Counsel at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission engaged in a Socratic discussion with 17 students on an important topic.

Nov. 20

Student Mock Debate,
JBU is not a Good Place
for the Exchange of Ideas

A senior philosophy major from the JBU debate team and team's staff sponsor took opposing sides. The debate team organized the event; *The Defendant*, a student newspaper, moderated; and the center purchased coffee and snacks. Seventeen people attended. Many students asked questions at the end, both about the arguments given and about the different organizations that hosted the event!

Dec. 11

Economic Impact of the
Denial of Human &
Civil Rights Panel with the
AEI Executive Council

The Center for Faith and Flourishing cosponsored the event, and our assistant director participated on the panel. Approximately 70 people attended.

Jan. 24

Gateway Director
Candidate Lecture on
Philosophy, Politics, &
Economics

A very competitive, but ultimately unsuccessful, candidate for the Gateway directorship delivered a carefully crafted lecture on the interrelation of philosophy, politics, and economics to 14 people.

Jan. 27

Haley Robison
How to Build a
Redemptive Business

Robison spoke to 130 students and faculty about how to grow a business that fosters genuine transformation.

Jan. 28

Haley Robison
Chapel Lecture on How
Daily Practices Inform
our Habits

Robison delivered a focused lecture to 800 students—that is the exact number!—on how our routines inform our characters and shape our lives. We should be careful about how our day to day choices shape our longterm habits.

Jan. 31

Wilfred McClay Why Does the United States Have Two Political Parties?

The answer: Because Jean-Jacques Rousseau was wrong—and there is no general will—citizens of the United States have found themselves bound together in the rough and tumble of political life to band together with people that they may not always like, but like better than their ideological opponents.

Feb. 7

Matthew Wilson Taking Ownership while Giving Glory to God

The successful candidate for our Gateway directorship offered an elegant lecture developing the virtue of taking ownership, situated between two vices. The lecture showed us how beautifully the candidate—who arrives from Harvard this summer—fits within both Gateway and PPE. Some of us take our work too seriously, finding our identity in our labor instead of Christ. Others consider our responsibilities with glib nonchalance, a position that is no less vicious. Finding the mean between the two extremes? That's the virtue of taking ownership.

Feb. 4

Judge Vance Smith Barnett Civic Leadership Speaker Series, Without Respect of Persons

Our center had the honor of planning the eponymous lecture in JBU's annual Barnett Civic Leadership Speaker Series. Judge Vance Smith, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, offered a compelling, meaningful address on the history of impartiality in judging. The judge worked his way from the Old Testament to American jurisprudence, telling his audience of 120 that because God judges impartially, human judges should, too. Judges should look to the law and not to the socioeconomic status of the people involved.

Feb. 20

Climate Change Panel with the AEI Executive Council

Four professors talked about the way climate change relates to their disciplines and answered questions from among the 97 students and faculty that attended. Cosponsored with the AEI Executive Council.

Feb. 27

Matthew Wright Politics and Flourishing: Exploring an Improbable Connection

Matthew Wright, a native of Arkansas, represented Biola's Torrey Honors Institute and Princeton University's James Madison Program, as he lectured on the relationship between the practice of politics and a concern for genuine flourishing. The audience included 17 people, including Matthew's parents and a past JBU president.




Meetings



Sept. 5 Meeting with Congressman Steve Womack

Congressman Steve Womack, the U.S. Representative for Arkansas's 3rd congressional district, met with 11 students. JBU's current president, Chip Pollard, and past president, John Brown III, also attended. We enjoyed hosting the congressman, and he said he enjoyed his time, too. He even offered to come again, and we hope to take him up on his offer!



Oct. 15 Reimagining Faith & Public Life

In addition to the major evening event for Reimagining Faith & Public Life, Jemar Tisby and David French offered smaller audiences the opportunity to engage more directly with their ideas. Tisby addressed a class of 25; David French talked with 18 students, faculty, and staff.

Sept. 13 Two Days with Vishal Mangalwadi

In addition to offering our inaugural lecture (detailed under **Lectures**) Vishal Mangalwadi graciously offered his time to students, faculty, staff, and guests (some from out of state). He met with 22 people over two days.

Nov. 7 A Visit with Anne Bradley & Rob Simpson

Rob Simpson, Manager of the U.S. Public Policy and Economic Programs for The Fund for American Studies, visited a political science class. Simpson and Anne Bradley, an economist at The Fund for American Studies, kindly joined JBU faculty for dinner.



Sept. 20-21 Liberty Tree Seminar Human Trafficking & Liberty

Twenty-four students, chosen from a waitlist, represented a wide variety of majors. We think this event was better attended than most Liberty Tree Seminars, and the event was a major success for us, too!

Nov. 12 Travis Wussow at JBU

Travis Wussow, the Vice President of Public Policy and General Counsel at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, met with students informally and also met with faculty over dinner. During his visit students had an opportunity to talk with Wussow about possible internship opportunities.

Nov. 13

Arkansas Student Leadership Forum Debrief

We sent seven students to Little Rock this fall, sophomores through seniors. We hosted a discussion with them upon their return to learn more about the event and to encourage students to participate in it next academic year. One key takeaway: we should target JBU students who are themselves Arkansas natives.

Nov. 16

Institute for Humane Studies Colloquium, Sacred Rights of Conscience

Our director led a lively discussion of seminal works in the history of religious liberty in the American context. The 15 students read 163 pages for the colloquium. Excerpts ranged from the Mayflower Compact of 1620 and the U.S. Constitution to James Madison's letter to Jacob de la Motta in August 1820.

Jan. 27

Working for the Common Good Workshop with Haley Robison

Haley Robison, the former CEO of Kammok, facilitated a workshop with 40 students. The center sponsored this event organized by the Soderquist College of Business.

Jan. 31

PPE Symposium on Thomas Jefferson & Alexander Hamilton with Wilfred McClay

As part of the programming for the new minor in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, the center cosponsored a symposium on Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton with the Honors Scholars Program, which received a generous grant from the Jack Miller Center. Wilfred McClay, the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty at the University of Oklahoma, offered a series of prompts for our lively symposium on Saturday in order to encourage 19 students to consider the ideas of Jefferson and Hamilton under the direction of four JBU faculty members: Trisha Posey, James Bruce, Daniel Bennett, and Randall Waldron. McClay also offered a lecture on politics parties in the United States (discussed under **Lectures**).

Feb. 4

A Day with Judge Vence Smith

In addition to his marvelous lecture (detailed under **Lectures**), Judge Vence Smith, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, also visited with a class of Honors Political Philosophy; met with five future law school students, giving them practical advice about applying to law school and an insider's guide into a legal or judicial career; and attended dinner at the university president's home with faculty as well as prominent members of the Barnett family.

Feb. 7

Candidate Dinner with Matt Wilson

Matt Wilson, his wife, and one of their children attended dinner with JBU faculty and spouses.

Feb. 28

Two Days with Matthew Wright

Matthew Wright, associate professor of government in Biola University's Torrey Honors Institute and the John and Daria Barry Visiting Research Scholar in Princeton University's James Madison Program, met with academic leaders in JBU's Honors Scholars Program; facilitated a class of Honors Political Philosophy; discussed his book *A Vindication of Politics: On the Common Good and Human Flourishing* with a book club of students who had read his book before meeting him; dined with faculty and staff; and attended a luncheon with Honors Scholars Program professors to exchange ideas about how to make their respective honors classes more successful. Preston Jones, a professor of history at JBU, recorded an interview with Wright about his book. And lest you think we worked him too hard, we actually worked him harder than that. He also gave a lecture on politics and flourishing (detailed under **Lectures**).

**Apr.
13-17**

PPE Pharmacy

Philosophy, politics, and economics can be good medicine. (When this idea came to us, the world had yet to associate PPE with personal protective equipment.) So James Bruce, Daniel Bennett, and Randall Waldron—a philosopher, a political scientist, and an economist—offered thirty minute Zoom “appointments” to students in order to consider their PPE-related issues or interests. The good doctors then “prescribed” some academic medicine in the form of books the center will buy and have shipped directly to them.

Travel

Summer 2019

We sent seven students and one faculty member to the Institute for Humane Studies Summer Program, Praxis Academy, and the Faith & Freedom Coalition.

Mercatus Center, A Free Society and the Academy

Director James Bruce participated in the three-day summit for university-based center directors, hosted by the Mercatus Center. With the center officially less than a month old, he was one of the newer directors in attendance!

Fall 2019

Arkansas Student Leadership Forum

We sent seven students, sophomores through seniors. A talk-back session happened on Nov. 13, described under **Meetings**, in order to get feedback from students and also to encourage future participation.

Philadelphia Society

Director James Bruce attended the society meetings as a member and met with leaders of various organizations in the hopes of securing speakers for future events.

Presidential Politics Conference of Iowa

Assistant Director Daniel Bennett took five students to Sioux City. One of the students presented her own research on judicial appointments.

American Enterprise Institute Annual Dinner with Nikki Haley

Director James Bruce received an invitation to attend the American Enterprise Institute's annual dinner and did so with a view to furthering the center's partnership with AEI.

Arkansas Center for Research in Economics, Nan Doyal Book Club & Lecture

Program manager Bailey Coleman participated in a book club on Nan Doyal's *Dig Where You Are* as well as a public lecture. Coleman participated in the events but also observed ACRE's best practices.

James Bruce Acton Institute, Evaluating the Idea of Social Justice

Director James Bruce delivered a lecture on "What is justice?" before a colloquium sponsored by the Acton Institute and Liberty Fund.

Koch Center for Leadership and Ethics, Undergraduate Morality & Economics Colloquium

One JBU student from Kansas attended this colloquium.

Arkansas Center for Research in Economics, Annual Colloquium

JBU faculty member Randall Waldron and a JBU student attended.



PRAXIS ACADEMY

Spring 2020

James Bruce Mays Innovation Research Center at Texas A&M

Director James Bruce delivered a lecture on "Faith and Innovation" for the Professional Speaker Series at the Mays Innovation Research Center at Texas A&M. They had more people RSVP for this lecture than any previous one in the series, and they kindly featured Bruce and his lecture on the front page of their February newsletter, writing, "As you can imagine, this interesting topic sparked dialogue, debates, and a series of questions. We are excited to say that his presentation brought the most diverse group of attendees we have ever had."

James Bruce Cedarville University

Director James Bruce was supposed to fly to Ohio to lecture on "The Siren Song of Equality" at Cedarville University for a series of lectures on socialism set to include James Otteson, professor and executive director of the Eudaimonia Institute at Wake Forest University; renowned American theologian Wayne Grudem; and Jay Richards, author of the bestselling *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem*. But Bruce's trip was cancelled due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, he worked diligently with professionals in JBU's Office for Advancement of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship to record a professional quality video of the lecture and deliver it to Cedarville.

COVID-19

Assistant Director Daniel Bennett was going to present research on tolerance and constitutional protections at the Midwest Political Science Association on April 16-19 and at a meeting of Christians in Political Science on June 11-13 (of which he is currently the president), but both meetings were cancelled due to COVID-19. (For cancellations on JBU's campus, turn to **COVID-19**.)

Summer 2020

Great Opportunities

We are happy to help support two students at The Fund for American Studies this summer, and we are excited to report that two other students have found places with the American Enterprise Institute. And yet another JBU student will participate in the Koch Internship Program! For more news on what our students will be doing in the months ahead, please see **Internships** and **Life after JBU**.



INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE STUDIES



FAITH & FREEDOM COALITION

Partnerships

We are grateful to the many partners we have been privileged to have in our inaugural year: They have supported our mission by giving us supplemental funds, ideas for events, free advertising, and, perhaps most important of all, some fantastic advice. In fact, given the extensive support we have received, we wonder whether we have forgotten important people. Our apologies if we have. To all our partners, named and unnamed, we give our hearty and sincere thanks.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

1 for All	The Fund for American Studies
Arkansas Center for Research in Economics	Institute for Humane Studies
Arkansas Student Leadership Forum	Intercollegiate Studies Institute
American Enterprise Institute	Jack Miller Center
Charles Koch Foundation	Liberty Tree Seminar
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission	

INTERNAL PARTNERS

Office of the President	Center for Healthy Relationships
Office of Academic Affairs	Honors Scholars Program
Office of Admissions	Soderquist College of Business
Office of University Advancement	Debate Club
Office for Advancement of Teaching, Learning, & Scholarship	The Defendant
Office of Christian Formation	Philosophy Club
Office of Student Development	Biblical Studies
Residence Life	Communication and Fine Arts
University Communications	Humanities and Social Sciences
Barnett Civic Leadership Speaker Series	

Covid-19

Postponed Events

The coronavirus pandemic found the Center for Faith and Flourishing as it found the entire world: unprepared for its existence. Nevertheless, under **Meetings**, you can read about our post-COVID-19 attempts at meeting with students. You can read about one event we still hope to do via Zoom but also about many events we sadly had to cancel—or perhaps we should say *postpone*, because we still hope to pursue these events in the future. They were great ideas for this spring, and the coronavirus cannot change that. So watch this space!

TBD

Greg Jao Gateway Professor Meet & Greet

As part of our Gateway programming and shift to online programming, Greg Jao, the author of one of the Gateway class required readings, has agreed to host a Meet and Greet with the Author over Zoom with our faculty.

March 17

1 for All Focus Groups

Brian Hinote, a representative from 1 for All, an initiative of the Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University, planned to host two focus groups, one with students and one with faculty, on perceptions about free speech at JBU. Hinote plans to conduct his research at JBU in the fall instead.

March 14

Latino First-Gen Celebration Dinner

Sadly, we had to cancel this event for 50 people, which we were going to cosponsor with the Center for Healthy Relationships. The masters of ceremony for the event were going to be two first generation Latino students with a special guest, a recent JBU graduate, who was going to offer encouragement to students from her own experience. Though this event was cancelled due to COVID-19, we are hoping to recreate this event and making it bigger next spring. Many students showed interest in the event, and Latino first generation students have one of the lowest first-year retention rates.

April 2

Student Mock Debate, Religious Liberty is Under Threat in America

April 4

Institute for Humane Studies Colloquium, Democracy in America

Our assistant director was going to lead fourteen students in a Saturday colloquium on the thought of Alexis de Tocqueville. Sadly, this event was cancelled due to COVID-19, but we hope to have an IHS colloquium in the fall.

Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming Events 2020

TBD

Historians

We talked to George Nash, for whom we may be able to receive additional support from the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and D. G. Hart about coming to JBU. Nash wrote the authoritative history of the conservative movement in the United States, and Hart has written widely on theological history and American politics.

TBD

Immigration Panel

We talked to Alex Nowrasteh of Cato and David Azerrad of Hillsdale (formerly of Heritage) about the possibility of coming to JBU in April to give two competing perspectives on immigration in America. Nothing was set in place, however, and we halted plans due to COVID-19. We may try to do this panel in the coming year. Our director heard Nowrasteh and Azerrad at a Philadelphia Society meeting, and he thought they were fantastic!

TBD

Gateway Faculty Workshop

We planned to have a Saturday workshop with faculty offering short pieces they think every student should read in his or her inaugural year of higher education, with the center printing a reader in advance of the sessions. This event was cancelled due to COVID-19 but also due to the realization that Matt Wilson, our incoming Gateway Director, should be the one to think about how best to organize this event.

Sept. 8

Eric Metaxas & David French
Can Christians Vote Trump?

Sept. 29

Reimagining Faith & Public
Life: Seeing Politics
Beyond 2020

Nov. 20

Matthew Kaemingk on
Christian Hospitality
Towards Muslims

TBD

William Struthers on
Neuroscience &
Human Flourishing

Missed Opportunities

When our center director wrote on religion for WORLD for two years, the magazine's editor in chief, Marvin Olasky, rejected any statements that assiduously avoided the attribution of blame. "Mistakes were made" is something that organizations want to say in order to avoid taking responsibility for errors. Reporters should not let them get away with it. Mistakes do not happen on their own. They are made by someone.

Well, we will not have the Center for Faith and Flourishing accused of such avoidance. Mistakes were made, and we made them. But, given that it's our fledgling year, we hope to learn from them. Much better to do that than to allow them to fossilize into horrible habits.

So let's review our mistakes. First—while it's fresh on our minds—we need to start the coming academic year with a process of information gathering in order to make the production of our annual report less onerous. We need to take more professional photos of our lectures and our meetings. We should keep a running spreadsheet of the dates of our events, its subject matter, and the number of people in attendance. Mercifully, regular updates to donors provided us data to assimilate, but a little regular work throughout the year will make the task easier; we hope!

Interestingly, we wonder whether we would have been able to do such accounting in the frenzy of all our programming. That leads to another question: Did we simply try to do too much? Our inclination leans towards the negative (being overachievers), but it's a question worth asking, though we do not have an answer.

Additionally, we have not been as open to technology as we should be. Our new Zoom lifestyles raise the possibility that we can extend our reach by learning to, e.g., Facebook livestream or to record and edit lectures.

Our proposed Gateway faculty workshop did not materialize amidst the coronavirus, but, in retrospect, the event should not have been in our thoughts this year anyway. That

may sound surprising, but consider the facts: We spent this year searching for the best person to be JBU's new Gateway director. The great news: we found him. Matt Wilson leaves Harvard University this year to find his true home at JBU. But let's be clear about our mistake: We should not be the ones to think about how to develop and encourage the faculty that teach every first year student. Matt Wilson should do so, after he arrives. (Speaking of Matt Wilson, be sure to read our **Q & A with Our New Hire.**)

Finally, we simply need to do better at following through with possible partnerships—and strengthening those already in place. After the favorable press coverage for the center, the director and assistant director met with Robert Anthony Maranto and Albert A. Cheng from the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas. They were kind to contact us, and we were grateful for the time together. But we have yet to do anything with them, and we assume responsibility. Here's hoping that even as we continue our partnership with the Arkansas Center for Research in Economics at the University of Central Arkansas, we will begin a new one closer to home.

Perhaps our biggest surprise was how well the student debate went in the fall. The event cost us little—we bought snacks and our ever-present coffee—but attendance exceeded our expectations, and, more importantly, the students themselves hosted the event. They considered a question important for the center but also understandably important for undergraduates, whether or not JBU is a good place for the exchange of ideas. Given its low cost and high level of student engagement, we should have planned many more such debates. But we planned only one more, and that was cancelled by the dreaded COVID-19.

Here's hoping we learn from our mistakes and have an even better second year at the Center for Faith and Flourishing!

Internships

MORIAH LAWRENCE



"I was accepted into the Koch Internship Program through the Charles Koch Institute, and will be specifically interning at Pacific Legal Foundation in Arlington, VA this summer. As the Strategic Research and Legal Policy intern, I expect that my internship will entail data collection and analysis, reading legislation, doing policy research, and possibly making phone calls to state agencies in order to obtain public records. I am hoping to gain more experience with both research and legal work in a professional setting, especially as I am considering law school as a possibility after graduation."

CAITLYN AVERSMAN



Caitlyn Aversman is a second-year Social Studies Education student and Philosophy, Politics, and Economics and Pre-Law minor. Through the American Enterprise Institute's Summer Associates Program, she plans to intern in the office of her home state senator, Senator Roy Blunt (Missouri). She will work four weeks in the public relations and constituent division and the remaining four weeks in one of Senator Blunt's committee assignments. She anticipates gaining vocational experience and networking through the internship, academic knowledge through the Summer Honors Program—with AEI's Ryan Streeter teaching on *Renewing America's Social Fabric: Faith, Community, and Public Policy*—and spiritual insight through the readings and being in community with other Summer Associates.

OWEN TEIXEIRA



"This summer I will be interning with the Public Spend Forum in Washington, D.C. As a research analysis intern, I will be conducting market research, and assisting in the process of linking government contracts with market suppliers. This internship will offer me an amazing opportunity to get hands on experience within the intersection of government and the private sector. This opportunity will allow me to utilize my passions of government and economics within the context of a professional career, and will hopefully offer me insight into the future paths I choose to take after graduation!"

Life After JBU

MORGAN GUREL



"This fall, I will enter with the 2024 class of students at the University of Arkansas School for Medical Sciences (UAMS). I had multiple opportunities last year to shadow physicians at the UAMS hospital, tour the medical school facilities, and speak to current students. These experiences revealed the dynamic, collaborative, and creative nature of the MD program; I chose UAMS because I am confident that it will shape me into a skilled physician. My long-term goal is to become a pathologist or oncologist and serve my community in Arkansas; I hope also to one day teach within my profession. I'm thrilled and humbled to be able to pursue my passion through this next step. In medicine, I find an outlet for my curiosity, ambition, and desire to develop the world around me; I am fascinated by the ethos of science and medicine, and by the marvel that is the human body."

CHANDLER COLEMAN



"In September, I will begin my pursuit of an MLitt in Analytic and Exegetical Theology at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. I chose this program because its design enables me to study under several of the philosophers and theologians that I've read throughout my undergraduate research. This program holds an honorable reputation around the world, so my hope is that it would open doors for a PhD later, should I choose to pursue one. Whether the MLitt is the end of my formal education or not, I hope to find myself teaching and relating with people in some capacity, which is the vocation I feel the Lord has called me to."

GRACE MAYES SCHIEFFER



"I am thrilled to say that I will be attending Georgetown Law in Washington, D.C. in the fall. I am so thankful to be given the opportunity to pursue law and learn to contribute meaningfully to the distribution of justice in our country. My short-term plan will be to focus on public interest work while in law school. After school, I hope to pursue a career in government or non-profit work."

Our Team



JAMES BRUCE
Director

James Bruce is associate professor of philosophy and the inaugural director of the Center for Faith and Flourishing at John Brown University.

Educated at Dartmouth, Oxford, and Baylor in Engineering Sciences and English, Theology, and Philosophy, Jay loves to follow ideas across academic disciplines. His book *Rights in the Law* considers the relationship between God and morality in the thought of Francis Turretin (1623–1687). Jay's next book—in progress—explores the relationship between Christianity, justice, and equality.

In addition to his academic work, Jay has written opinion pieces for everything from *Arkansas Business* to *The Wall Street Journal*. Jay was elected to membership of the Philadelphia Society in 2012, and, in 2014, he received JBU's Faculty Excellence Award. Ordained as a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America in 2018, Jay serves as associate pastor of Covenant Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

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DANIEL BENNETT
Assistant Director

Dr. Daniel Bennett is an expert on the intersection of law, politics, and religion in the United States. He is the author of *Defending Faith: The Politics of the Christian Conservative Legal Movement* and has written academic articles and book chapters on political behavior; legal advocacy, and the federal courts. He has been interviewed about his research in *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, and *Associated Press*, among others.

In addition to his academic writing, Dr. Bennett has also written for The Gospel Coalition, *Christianity Today*, Religion and Politics, The Monkey Cage, and Front Porch Republic. He is a founding contributor to the blog Religion in Public and also regularly blogs at Uneasy Citizenship. He is serving a two-year term as president of Christians in Political Science.

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BAILEY COLEMAN
Program Manager

Bailey Coleman graduated in 2019 with a B.S. in Political Science from John Brown University. Her current academic interests lie in environmental law and policy, women's issues, and rural sociology. She plans to attend law school in fall 2021.

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Harvard's Loss is JBU's Gain

**An Interview with Dr. Matthew Wilson,
our new Faculty Fellow, Gateway Director,
& Assistant Professor of Philosophy**



MATT WILSON

Q: What drew you to JBU?

A: I love teaching and mentoring students, which I am not able to do at Harvard. I am ready to get back into the classroom. The opportunity to come to JBU was the perfect trifecta. First, my faith in Jesus Christ is the most important and central thing in my life. I am thrilled about the opportunity to teach and work among faculty and students who share a commitment to following Christ, including the shared belief that God's Word must shape how we learn, think, act, and feel. Second, faith needs to be brought front and center to the conversation of human flourishing! Faith must inform how we think about the various aspects of human flourishing, such as those mentioned below. Since my new position is funded largely through the generosity of those who support the Center, I will have the opportunity to serve and collaborate in the Center's activities. This fits my current role at Harvard. Finally, part of the Center for Faith and Flourishing's work is to provide content for, and to assist with, JBU's Gateway freshman seminar. Part of my job will be to help guide this program. This Gateway seminar is mission critical to how students experience their first year on campus, and I am excited to leverage my leadership and administrative skills to help build and sustain this important program. Like I said: a perfect trifecta.

Q: Can you say more about your current position at Harvard, and where did you work before that?

A: I serve as the Associate Director at Harvard University's Human Flourishing Program, an interdisciplinary research program focused on five domains of human life: Happiness and Life Satisfaction, Physical and Mental Health, Meaning and Purpose, Close Social Relationships, and Character and Virtue. Prior to Harvard, I did my Ph.D. in philosophy but, before that, I worked in finance, marketing, and product management for companies like Volvo AB and Danaher Corporation.

Q: What's your favorite class/subject to teach?

A: I have many interests, but my favorite subject is philosophy. I love helping students wrestle with questions about what there is, what we can know, and what makes a good life. With that said, I am very excited to teach Gateway, too. Next year a significant portion of the Gateway seminar will be focused on questions concerning vocation. These questions are ones I have wrestled with personally, and, having had exposure to many different kinds of vocations throughout my own career, I look forward to helping students think through this important topic.

Q: What appeals to you about small-town life compared to life in Boston?

A: My wife and I have a three-year old daughter and a six-month old son. Boston is a great city with a lot to offer, but we found that we couldn't ever take advantage of it. Having moved to the northeast from Texas, we also found that, culturally, it just wasn't a good fit. We are looking forward to a slower pace of life and settling into a community where we know our neighbors and where things aren't so expensive. We both love the outdoors—I was a whitewater rafting and backpacking guide in college, and she loves to hike—so we are excited to experience all that Northwest Arkansas has to offer.

Q: How do you typically order your coffee (or are you a tea drinker)?

A: Cream and sugar. I used to drink 4–6 cups a day, but I was getting health problems. Now I try to limit myself to one cup of regular and one cup of decaf every morning.

Q: What's your favorite book (or go-to book recommendation for others)?

A: I love the *Cross and the Switchblade*, by David Wilkerson. This book was instrumental in giving me the courage to follow God in leaving my corporate career.

Q: Are there any particular experiences you hope to have while being on faculty at JBU?

A: I hope to get to know my students and to develop friendships with them that will last throughout college and beyond. Same goes for faculty. I am also excited to see how the Holy Spirit will work in my own life, and in the lives of those within the JBU community, as we worship, learn, and serve together. I guess this last one is not so much a hope as an expectation. I know that when we seek him in earnest, he shows up!



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