

CONFIDENTIAL · FOUNDING PLANNING COMMITTEE

Bootcamp for Democracy

A Preliminary Business Model

A proposal for facilities, faculty, staffing, enrollment, and pathways for institutional growth.

Prepared for
Distribution
College of Democratic Leadership

**First Planning Meeting
Founding Board & Advisory Council
Washington, District of Columbia**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A distinctive model — at a lower operating cost.

This proposal advances Bootcamp for Democracy beyond an academic exercise. If designed correctly, the college can operate at a materially lower cost than a traditional liberal arts institution while offering a more distinctive value proposition.

The insight is discipline of focus: the college does not attempt to be everything to everyone. Most liberal arts colleges maintain expensive departments in chemistry, physics, biology, music performance, theater production, studio art, engineering, athletics, and dozens of majors. Bootcamp for Democracy instead organizes around a single interdisciplinary mission — educating professional practitioners of democracy — allowing it to operate with fewer specialized facilities and a leaner, more integrated faculty.

The college's competitive advantage is not scale, but concentration: a single mission, a shared campus, and three parallel schools that share faculty and facilities.

§ I · ENROLLMENT

Sized for community, not spectacle.

Bootcamp for Democracy should not open at 2,000 students. A phased target preserves close faculty interaction while establishing a vibrant academic community.

Phase	Timeline	Students
Launch	Year 1	250
Growth	Year 3	500
Expansion	Year 5	800
Mature	Year 7+	1,000 - 1,200

This size — capping at roughly 1,200 — is large enough to sustain a broad interdisciplinary curriculum and a full residential experience, and small enough to preserve the seminar culture on which the pedagogy depends.

§ II · CAMPUS

What the college does not need.

Unlike a traditional liberal arts campus, Bootcamp for Democracy does not require the following categories of facility:

- Football stadium
- Swimming pool
- Engineering laboratories
- Chemistry laboratories
- Expensive science research buildings
- Large performing arts center
- Agricultural facilities

Instead, the campus is purpose-built for deliberation, simulation, and public engagement. Every square foot serves the mission.

Academic Building · approx. 60,000 sq. ft.

- 25 classrooms
- 10 seminar rooms
- Faculty offices
- Moot courtroom
- Debate chamber
- Media interview studio

Democracy Center · the signature building

The heart of the institution. Every student uses it every week.

- Legislative chamber
- Campaign headquarters simulation
- Election command center
- Polling laboratory
- GIS and data laboratory
- Media, podcast, and television studios
- Press briefing room

Library

Smaller than a traditional research library. Collection depth is concentrated in constitutional law, history, public policy, digital archives, government documents, and collaborative workspaces.

Residence Halls

250 beds at launch. Expandable to approximately 1,000 beds at maturity.

Student Center

Dining, café, bookstore, event space, and homes for student organizations.

§ III · FACULTY

An interdisciplinary faculty, teaching across the curriculum.

Because the curriculum is highly interdisciplinary, faculty are appointed with the expectation that they teach across programs. A political scientist may co-teach with a journalist; a lawyer with a statistician; an economist with a philosopher.

Department	Full-Time Faculty
History	6
Political Science	8
Economics	5
Law	6
Journalism	4
Psychology	4
Communications	5
Philosophy	3
Statistics / Data Science	4
Public Health & Science Policy	4
Computer Science / Civic Technology	5
Arts & Media	4
Total (approximate range 55 - 60)	58

Student-to-faculty ratio: approximately 17 : 1 — competitive with peer liberal arts colleges.

§ IV · STAFF

Lean administration in service of the mission.

Mature-state staffing plan for a 1,000-student college:

Function	Headcount
Admissions	10
Registrar	5
Financial Aid	5
Student Affairs	10
Career Services	5
Information Technology	10
Marketing & Communications	5
Facilities	20
Residence Life	10
Library	5
Finance & Human Resources	10
Executive Administration	5
Total (approximate range 85 - 95)	100

§ V · ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Illustrative budget at 1,000 students.

Line item	Annual estimate
Faculty compensation (salary + benefits)	\$9 - 11 M
Staff compensation	\$7 - 9 M
Facilities, utilities, maintenance	\$4 - 6 M
Technology, software, cybersecurity	\$1 - 2 M
Library and academic resources	\$1 M
Student services and programming	\$2 M
Marketing and admissions	\$2 M
Insurance, legal, administration	\$2 - 3 M
Total annual operating budget	~\$30 - 35 M

§ VI · TUITION & REVENUE

Deliberately positioned below private peers.

Many private liberal arts colleges now charge \$60,000 to \$90,000 per year before financial aid. Bootcamp for Democracy will differentiate itself on price as well as on mission.

Tuition	\$28,000 - 32,000
Housing & Meals	\$12,000 - 15,000
Total cost of attendance (pre-scholarship)	\$42,000 - 47,000

This positions the college well below most private competitors while remaining significantly above public university tuition — a strategically defensible middle range.

Revenue model

At 1,000 students with an average net tuition (after scholarships) of approximately \$24,000, tuition revenue alone is roughly \$24 million. Additional revenue streams:

- Residence and dining fees
- Executive education programs
- Summer institutes
- Public leadership certificates
- Online courses
- Philanthropy and endowment income
- Grants for civic education
- Conferences and events

Combined, these streams bring total annual revenues into the \$35 - 40 million range — approximately matching operating costs at maturity.

§ VII · PATHWAYS FOR GROWTH

Three schools. One campus. One mission.

The single feature most likely to transform the economics of the institution is the creation of three parallel schools that share the same campus, faculty, and Democracy Center.

1 · The Undergraduate College

The traditional four-year Bachelor of Arts in Democratic Leadership — the founding program described elsewhere in the master plan.

2 · Graduate School of Public Leadership

One-year master's programs in fields the country urgently needs and few institutions serve:

- Campaign management
- Public policy
- Election administration
- Nonprofit leadership
- Civic technology

3 · Executive Education

Short residential and hybrid programs for practitioners already in public life:

- Newly elected officials
- School board members
- City council members
- Nonprofit executives
- Campaign volunteers and staff
- Legislative staff
- Journalists covering government
- Election workers

Certificate programs of this kind can generate significant additional revenue while directly advancing the college's mission.

§ VIII · A LONG-TERM VISION

The Democracy Institute.

If the college develops a national reputation, we envision a Democracy Institute operating alongside it: hosting annual conferences, conducting research on civic engagement and democratic resilience, publishing policy reports, and providing training for public officials.

That combination — a selective undergraduate college, a graduate school, executive education, and a public-facing institute — diversifies revenue and makes the institution far more resilient than the many small liberal arts colleges that depend almost entirely on undergraduate tuition.

The principal challenge

The most difficult problem is not academic design. It is fundraising: securing capital for the initial campus and building an endowment sufficient to underwrite scholarships and long-term financial stability.

Once established, however, the focused mission and relatively modest physical footprint make Bootcamp for Democracy a comparatively efficient private institution — one whose per-student cost structure can undercut most private peers while offering a curriculum none of them can match.

Democracy is not inherited. It is learned, practiced, and renewed by every generation.

— College Motto