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Correspondence from the Miller Center Governing Council

Recently there has been a significant amount of attention surrounding the appointment of Marc Short as a senior fellow at the Miller Center. Marc, in his former role as the director of legislative affairs in the Trump White House, was the key intermediary between the White House and Congress. While the current administration certainly has created a fair amount of controversy, and despite the intense response to this appointment from both sides, we support the decision to bring Marc Short on as a senior fellow at the Center and feel he will bring valuable insights to our work.

Senior fellowship positions are part-time, non-faculty appointments, one year in duration, in the Center's Presidential Studies program. Marc joins a list of other practitioners, from both Democratic and Republican administrations, who form a critical bridge for our scholars to the policy-making community, and vice versa. The balance of fellows from "both sides of the aisle" is no accident, as it is important to our mission. Our full-time scholars and the shared faculty with the University of Virginia form the backbone of the Miller Center and create the intellectual content that makes us unique. The senior fellows provide valuable input into this scholarship and our understanding of the current political environment.

A number of our scholars and subsequently other members of the community reacted strongly to Marc's appointment. Indeed, two of our esteemed scholars from UVA's Department of History have resigned their Miller Center affiliations in protest. The Governing Council deeply regrets this. We appreciate the outstanding scholarship these individuals have brought to the Center over many years. We wish them well and hope the Center can collaborate with them in the future.

We feel it important at this stage to remind our community of the Center's mission. We believe the Miller Center is the leading institution focused on studying and understanding the presidency, which includes the study of all presidents, not just certain ones. We impart this understanding via scholarly research, insights from practitioners, and importantly, civil public discourse, which has long been the hallmark of our democracy and a founding principle of the nonpartisan Miller Center. The Governing Council feels that our mission is especially important in these challenging times, during which our country has become increasingly polarized.

Alice Handy
Chair of the Miller Center Council