

Announcing the LBJ School Washington Center

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Robert Hutchings, Dean

Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs

Thank you, Ben, for your vision and passion for helping make this Washington Center a reality. Thanks as well to the Foundation Board of Trustees for their commitment to the School and for inviting us to be a part of this special event today. It is fitting that we make the announcement of the creation of the LBJ School Washington Center at an occasion celebrating D.B. Hardeman, who was a distinguished scholar and teacher as well a politician and political advisor.

The Washington Center has been my vision and my highest priority since becoming dean, and it has been a vision among many of our closest supporters for a long time. The LBJ School will establish a physical presence and platform in downtown DC and create an 18-month degree program whose curriculum will help students develop a mastery of how to operate in the DC policy environment.

Now that the first part of this vision is becoming a reality, I have another vision – namely, that in five years' time:

- People will say, "What? Do you mean the LBJ Washington Center wasn't always here?" We will have put down roots "deep in the heart of DC."
- Texas and its flagship university will be at the heart of the most important policy discussions taking place at the federal level.
- The academic program will be seen as the gold standard among policy programs in DC, just as our program back in Austin is seen as the gold standard in Texas.
- We will have brought to DC a new standard for cutting-edge policy research that is objective, evidence-based, and nonpartisan, yet directly relevant to the great policy challenges of our day.

- Our application numbers will have grown so rapidly that we will have had to figure out a new model to accommodate a much larger student body.
- Our friends and supporters will have become so enthusiastic and committed that they will have helped us raise funds to realize the full potential of this center, which will have moved into its own building, hired additional faculty, and provided every student at least some financial aid.

Nearly 50 years ago, early in Lyndon Johnson's presidency, I rolled into this town on a Trailways bus, headed for plebe year at the U.S. Naval Academy, fired by the ideals of public service that I got from President Johnson and President Kennedy before him. I have been in public service ever since, much of it here in Washington, and I have seen some worrying trends:

- My generation was turned on to public service; too many of this generation are turned off by the gridlock and hyper-partisanship they see in our public sphere, especially at the federal level.
- The academic disciplines have moved more and more into the realm of pure theory, turning out graduates who have little practical grounding in how to "get things done." The gulf between the worlds of learning and of policy has never been wider.
- The policy discourse inside the Beltway has deteriorated sharply. Even the more distinguished think tanks have become partisan advocacy operations, focused on short-term "policy briefs" rather than on the serious analysis and policy recommendations that our government so badly needs.

But a school named for Lyndon Johnson doesn't throw up its hands in despair. It rolls up its sleeves and gets to work.... *LBJ is coming back to Washington.* We will not solve all of these problems – we are ambitious, but not delusional – but we will be part of the solution:

- We will work to inspire a new generation to enter public service.
- We will import to Washington a curriculum that combines cutting-edge policy research with the practical skills and leadership training needed to operate effectively at the level of federal policy making.

- We will be the model of how to produce and project policy-relevant research that finds that elusive middle ground between theory and practice.
- And through our research and our graduates, we will demonstrate that it is still possible to "get it done" for the public good, inspired by the example of our founder and namesake.

Thank you so much for being "present at the creation" of the LBJ Washington Center. It is an exciting moment for the LBJ School, the University of Texas, and indeed for the state of Texas. And it is exciting for all those who care about inspiring and empowering the next generation of national leaders.

We are on our way. Let me extend special thanks to the members of the Founding Committee for the LBJ Washington Center: Kay Bailey Hutchison, Tom Daschle, Robert Allbritton, Ben Barnes, Bill Archer, Joe O'Neill, and, not least, Lynda Johnson Robb and Luci Baines Johnson. We will soon be moving into office space with Politico, thanks to the generous help of Robert Allbritton. We will then hire a director and secure permanent office and classroom space, so that we can open our doors next year.

But we need help to ensure that this new Center realizes its full potential. We need help in recruiting students, spreading the word, identifying apprenticeships for our students, and providing financial support so that this Center can go "all the way with LBJ" to greatness.

Our program is outlined in the "deep in the heart of DC" handouts that you received, and our funding priorities are listed on the accompanying card. We would be grateful for your support.

Thank you....