

**The Ben and Myrna Cardin Center for Civic Engagement and Civil Discourse** at Towson University prepares students and communities to respectfully engage across differences, strengthen democratic participation and lead with integrity and responsibility.

Established in partnership with former U.S. Senator Ben Cardin and his wife and TU alumna Myrna Cardin, the Cardin Center creates opportunities for students, faculty, public leaders, alumni, civic organizations and community members to examine consequential issues with seriousness, respect and purpose. Through public programs, student engagement, faculty collaboration and community conversations, the Cardin Center helps people practice the habits civic society and democratic life requires: listening, learning, questioning, debating, serving and leading.



The Cardin Center brings that responsibility to life at Towson University. It builds on the strong foundation that already is in place: student-focused civic engagement, TU Votes, Community Conversations, public programming, and academic leadership rooted in history, liberal arts and public purpose.

By bringing those building blocks together and giving them a visible, durable platform for civic learning and civil discourse, the Cardin Center is designed to connect students, classrooms, public leaders and community partners around the work democracy requires — becoming informed, listening and engaging respectfully across differences and solving problems together.



*“For 250 years, our Nation has depended on citizens who are informed, engaged, willing to listen and prepared to work across differences in service to something larger than themselves. The Cardin Center exists to carry that responsibility forward, preparing future generations to strengthen their communities, protect democratic life and lead with purpose, respect and conviction.”*

**Ben Cardin**

## Creating a Safe Space for Dialogue and Engagement

The Ben and Myrna Cardin Center for Civic Engagement and Civil Discourse at Towson University is a dynamic hub for open dialogue, respectful debate, and active citizenship. Dedicated to advancing civil discourse and strengthening democratic participation, the Cardin Center brings students, faculty, public leaders, civic organizations, and community members together through programming, events, student engagement, faculty collaboration, and experiential opportunities. Through this work, the Cardin Center fosters an inclusive environment where complex issues are examined with intellectual curiosity, empathy, and mutual respect.

## Signature Initiatives



### The Annual Ben and Myrna Cardin Lecture on Civic Engagement and Civil Discourse

The Annual Ben and Myrna Cardin Lecture is the Cardin Center's premier public program, bringing distinguished national voices to Towson University for timely conversations on democracy, civic responsibility, civil discourse, public service and leadership. The lecture creates a forum where students, faculty, alumni, community members and public leaders can engage the issues shaping democratic life and consider the responsibilities required to strengthen it.

### Cardin Summer Scholars Program

In partnership with the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry (OURCI), the Cardin Summer Scholars Program supports undergraduate students whose research or creative projects advance the Cardin Center's mission of civil discourse, civic responsibility, community leadership, and democratic participation. The program provides funded summer research opportunities guided by faculty mentors and connected to the Cardin Center's public programming. Through this work, students turn civic interest into civic practice.



### Democracy for the Future Series

The Democracy for the Future Series convenes public leaders, scholars, journalists, students, and civic voices to examine urgent questions facing democratic life. Programs in the series explore issues such as public trust, misinformation, transparency, accountability, public health, foreign policy, democratic institutions, and the future of civic participation.

### Campus and Community Programming

The Cardin Center's campus and community programming brings together university and public audiences to explore complex civic issues through respectful, informed and constructive conversation. These events connect classroom learning with public life, create opportunities for dialogue across differences and position Towson University as a trusted gathering place for serious civic engagement.



### Student Engagement

Student engagement is central to the mission. Towson University students work directly with the Cardin Center to support programs, contribute to research, engage with public leaders and participate in civic conversations guided by faculty mentors. Students gain practical experience in dialogue, leadership, public service and the habits of informed citizenship.

## Your Invitation to Get Involved with the Cardin Center

Civic engagement and civil discourse depend on all of us. Whether you are a student, faculty member, alum, community partner, public leader, or supporter, there is a place for you in the work of strengthening dialogue, building community, and preparing the next generation for democratic leadership.

Learn more about upcoming events, student opportunities, or ways to support the Cardin Center, subscribe for updates on our website or contact us at [cardincenter@towson.edu](mailto:cardincenter@towson.edu).