



March 19, 2021

Dear Friends,

It is with profound sadness and boundless gratitude that the David Mathews Center for Civic Life announces the upcoming departure of Executive Director Cristin Foster Brawner. After well over a decade of dedication to the DMC—from student intern to executive director, and every position in between—Cristin’s commitment to the mission and vision of the DMC has been unwavering.

During her tenure as Executive Director, Cristin built on the legacy left by her predecessors, Chris McCauley and Lane McLelland, and propelled the DMC from a still-young and relatively unknown nonprofit to a civic organization with local, statewide, and even national acclaim—all while maintaining a steadfast focus on the organization’s original mission of working alongside Alabama communities as they seek to transform themselves through dialogue and deliberation. Her insistence that the best way for people to learn to be civically engaged is by *being* civically engaged has guided her tenure here, and it will certainly be hard to fill her shoes.

Here at the DMC, we work with a lot of proper nouns—people, communities, and organizations. Our craft is connecting people and forging relationships, because we realize that we cannot be effective as an organization unless we build trust with the people and communities that invite us into their worlds. We know that finding someone as dedicated to building those relationships as Cristin has been will be a challenge, but we know, too, that this organization and the partnerships we have built over the last decade are stronger than any one person.

Cristin has spent her time here propelling the DMC to new heights programmatically. She has overseen the ebb and flow of staff with aplomb, putting together a team that cares for the DMC just as much as she does, and it shows. During her time, Cristin oversaw the expansion of the JOIP internship program, sculpted Alabama Issues Forums into a powerhouse for deliberation, and constantly elevated the reputation of the DMC to statewide and national prominence. She did all of this one email at a time, one phone call at a time, and one relationship at a time. The infrastructure of civic engagement that the DMC has built under her supervision will serve our state for decades, and even generations.

We cannot thank Cristin enough for everything she has done for the DMC including extending her tenure at the DMC, working remotely from her new home in Nashville, to oversee the organization during the uncertainty of the global pandemic. Please join us in letting her know how much you appreciate what she has done for the DMC and for Alabama.

Cristin’s departure on July 31st does not spell an end to her relationship with the Mathews Center. Cristin will remain connected and supportive of the Center’s mission and work into the future, and we look forward to a new stage of our relationship with her. The DMC will begin searching for candidates to fill the Executive Director position in the coming weeks. We look forward to overseeing a seamless transition, and we promise to stay dedicated to the communities we serve. We are humbled to work alongside all of you, and excited about what the future holds!

*Gratefully,*  
*DMC Staff and Board of Directors*