COOKSON LECTURE

Thursday, October 29

NOON – 12:50 PM | BROCK COMMONS

Jonathan C. Zur has served the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities for 20 years, including 17 years as its President & CEO. During his tenure, the organization quadrupled its staff, tripled its budget, and dramatically expanded its impact across the Commonwealth. Zur steps down in December 2026, leaving a lasting legacy of building stronger, more inclusive communities throughout Virginia.

The Things That Actually Bring People Together *(And the Things That Don't)*

JONATHAN ZUR

After 20 years working with schools, businesses, nonprofits, and communities across Virginia, Jonathan Zur has seen thousands of attempts to create belonging. Some succeeded spectacularly. Others sadly made things worse.

What actually changes people? Which conversations matter? Which trainings don't? Why do some communities become more divided after trying so hard to unite?

In one of his final public presentations as CEO of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities, Zur reflects on the biggest surprises of his career and what anyone trying to build healthier communities should know.

The Cookson Lecture was established in honor of Catharine Cookson, PhD, who served as the first full-time director of the Robert Nusbaum Center, formerly the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom.

Immediately following the program, join us for a reception with light refreshments and an opportunity to talk with Jonathan.