

# CAMPUS ELECTION ENGAGEMENT PROJECT



## ENGAGING YOUR CAMPUS IN ELECTIONS: SEVEN KEY WAYS TO ACT

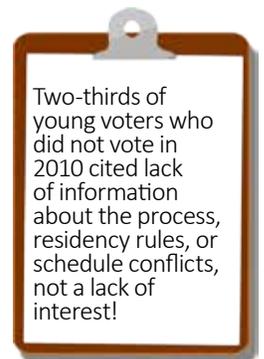
### HOW DO WE ENGAGE AMERICA'S [20 MILLION STUDENTS](#) IN THE NATION'S ELECTIONS?

The Campus Election Engagement Project works with campus administrators, faculty, staff, and student leaders, providing the support needed to engage their students in local, state and federal elections. We combine resources drawn from colleges and universities throughout the country with personalized coaching: guiding campuses on how to use these resources to navigate students through ever-changing barriers to voting.

### WHAT MAKES OUR APPROACH EFFECTIVE?

Student voting doesn't just happen. It takes cultivation. We've developed seven key areas of electoral engagement to create a road map for increasing your level of success, areas that complement each other as you effectively engage your campus. You don't have to do everything on this list to make a major difference, but it's crucial to address all seven areas — choosing approaches that fit your campus best. The earlier you start the better, particularly for approaches that take significant institutional planning.

- 1** Build a team. No one can engage an entire campus, so create a core group to coordinate engagement efforts, divide up the work and ensure key stakeholders communicate.
- 2** Register students to vote. It's the first step to student electoral participation. Set campus-wide goals and plan ways to implement them.
- 3** Educate students on issues and candidates. Offer clear information on where candidates stand, so students can make informed choices.
- 4** Help students to volunteer with partisan or nonpartisan campaigns of their choice. Early civic involvement patterns tend to stick, and this makes future participation more likely.
- 5** Build election excitement and visibility leading up to Election Day, using every appropriate channel.
- 6** Get out the vote. Make sure students know where to vote, when to vote and what to bring. Combine face-to-face and online technologies to engage all eligible students.
- 7** Measure your impact. Document your work as you go so you can see what works and what doesn't, monitor your progress and build a foundation for the future.



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# 1

## BUILD YOUR TEAM AND PLAN YOUR ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

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**Build your team. It's impossible to engage a campus alone, so recruit a core group of administrators, faculty, and staff to coordinate campus election-engagement efforts, divide up the work, and ensure that key stakeholders talk with each other and engage their respective departments and disciplines.**

- ✓ Enlist key campus leaders to implement approaches drawn from this list. Include deans, your provost and president, staff from Student Affairs, Service-Learning and Residence Life, your registrar, IT department, campus newspaper advisor, athletic coaches, faculty development coordinator, faculty from different academic departments and student government leaders.
  - Convene an in-person meeting of campus stakeholders. Email and phone can be effective, but being in the same room allows you to build off each other's energy and ideas far more. Invite your CEEP contact to attend, if possible.
  - Research what your campus has done previously and brainstorm ways to build on it. Use our [Campus Electoral Engagement Assessment](#) to evaluate what you have and haven't done so far, and to see how your campus compares to other schools. Talk with program staff, student leaders and others previously involved, including recent graduates, to fill in the picture with as much detail as possible.
  - Gather previously created program materials and campus specific resources so you don't have to start again from scratch.
  - Ask your President's office if your school participates in the [National Study of Student Learning, Voting, and Engagement](#), and if they'll share your recent campus voter turnout rates with your team. Use this to inspire your school to step up to the next level.
  - Using this guide and our [assessment](#), create a written plan and calendar that maps out how you'll engage students, including when you'll need to launch various elements, who will have to sign off, and how you'll secure resources from administrative and student government funds.
  - Check out other CEEP resources at [www.campuselect.org](http://www.campuselect.org).
- ✓ Help students organize students. Approach student leadership. Connect early on with student government, organizations and programming boards. Encourage them to allocate resources to campus electoral engagement, and to coordinate with administrators, faculty, and staff.
  - Form an all-campus student nonpartisan engagement coalition. Students are the most effective messengers for reaching their peers with a voter engagement message.
  - Give stipends to Election Engagement Fellows who will take charge of organizing other students and mobilizing your campus electorally. Reach out to faculty as they're planning their fall courses to ask them to give general credit for election volunteering.
- ✓ Work with your student government to unite members from diverse campus organizations and political groups in a nonpartisan committee or coalition.
  - Student government and organizational leaders can bring energy, resources, and their campus organizational connections.
  - Some schools have conducted highly successful registration or Get Out The Vote competitions between academic departments, residence halls and nonpartisan student organizations.
  - Having members of College Democrats and College Republicans collaborate on nonpartisan engagement helps keep your engagement efforts unbiased. It can also reduce political demonization and draw on the energy of some of your most politically active students.

Start planning early and always be looking ahead to the next election.

- ✓ Depending on the size and bureaucratic structure of your campus, some of the ideas listed in this guide — such as getting a polling place on campus, getting courses a service-learning designation or building strong relationships with civic leaders and election officials — can take some lead time.

- ✓ Starting early gives you plenty of time to work out the details, but even if the current election is right around the corner, you can start laying the groundwork for the next one.
- ✓ Being active in local or off-year elections, which tend to not get as much attention as presidential elections, can also give you an opportunity to test approaches under less pressure.

Gather information about voting-related regulations and timelines.

- ✓ CEEP will work with our partners at the Fair Elections Legal Network to distribute [concise summaries and periodic updates](#) of how your state election laws affect student voter registration and voting. They'll distribute these to your school directly and post them on their website.
- ✓ Local chapters of the League of Women Voters, your city or county clerk's office, or Board of Elections representative may also be able to help with local information.

Create a working calendar and integrate election-related information. Identify key electoral dates for your state or city.

- ✓ Make sure to include:
  - Deadlines to get an on-campus polling place
  - Voter registration deadlines, including to change registration
  - Deadline to apply for and return absentee ballots
  - Early voting timelines and deadlines
- ✓ Highlight campus timelines, dates of major events, and critical deadlines. Include:
  - Deadlines for online class registration, so you can work with your campus registrar's office and IT department to integrate the online registration tools from [Rock the Vote](#) or [TurboVote](#).
  - Deadlines for submitting election-related materials to be integrated in campus orientation and registration packets
  - Deadlines to include voter registration and other election-engagement activities at new student orientation events
  - Major campus events (e.g., football games and concerts), which provide prime opportunities to engage and register students.
  - Other key dates like the September 27 [National Voter Registration Day](#) and the dates of presidential and state-wide debates as they're announced.

Create an election-related section of your campus website. This gives your voter engagement effort official legitimacy, and provides a central location to post resources.

- ✓ Provide easy-to-access information on state voting rules, deadlines and resources. Include links for students to register to vote, find their polling station, learn about issues and candidates
  - Highlight visible links to the page on your main campus website.
  - Ensure visibility on high-traffic pages like those where students register for classes or buy tickets for campus events.
  - Highlight your existing campus voter participation initiatives and those you'll be developing.
- ✓ Promote these online resources through campus-wide websites, listservs, social media networks and student organizations. Include a visible email address so faculty, students and staff can volunteer and receive updates.

Brainstorm funding sources for ideas not already built into campus budgets. The earlier you start on this the more successful you'll be.

- ✓ Look for sources to give stipends to students who'll run your nonpartisan engagement teams.

Consider costs for printing voter engagement materials, food and sound systems for debate watch events and get-out-the-vote volunteer parties, and transportation to off-campus polling places and for students registering voters in nearby off-campus communities.
- ✓ Explore possible funding from student activities, key administrators and departments, work-study and community service programs, and existing internship programs. If you have a non-federally funded student philanthropy program, they might be able to help with this. We can also give them ideas for election-related micro-grants to help engage your school or other schools.

## TEAM BUILDING AND FUNDING CASE STUDIES

At Virginia's **James Madison University**, four social work seniors received academic credit to coordinate the campus' successful nonpartisan engagement effort, [DukesVote](#). Find tips on how to replicate this model on your campus in our resource, [Academic Credit for Election Engagement Interns: The James Madison University Model](#).

At Iowa's **Simpson College**, a freshman student created the organization Simpson Votes, which is now funded through the student government association. Partnering with media and interfaith departments, the Dean of Students, local politicians and candidates, and a campus service scholars program, they hosted a series of successful voter engagement events in 2014 and are now engaging students for 2016.

Student governments at **University of Wisconsin-Madison** and **University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point** gave \$5,000 each to fund CEEP's student Fellows, who coordinated their campus election engagement nonpartisan efforts and volunteer teams.

In 2014, **Miami Dade College** hosted 11 Fellows, who organized registration, education, GOTV and Election Day events on all campuses, including a National Voter Registration Day rally that drew more than 2,000 participants. Miami Dade's civic engagement director said that supporting the stipended Fellows had a huge impact on the size and impact of their program.

At **University of Michigan-Dearborn**, the Community Involvement and Volunteerism Center, part of the Office for Student Engagement, partnered with the Student Government to lead the election engagement team. Other key partners include faculty from the Political Science Department, Women's Resource Center, the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Student Life, and the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services.

At Ohio's **University of Findlay**, the 2014 student government association president organized a nonpartisan committee with members of both College Democrats and College Republicans. The combined effort resulted in the most successful voter registration drives on record for their campus.

At **Ohio State University**, the student government helped create the nonpartisan organization, [OSU Votes](#), as an ongoing mechanism of engaging OSU students in elections. OSU Votes now gets support from the undergraduate, graduate, and professional school student governments, as well as the Office of Student Life, in which they're now housed.

**Michigan State University's** [YouVote](#) partnership brings together the city of East Lansing, the university administration, and the school's student government, helping students register and conducting coordinated Get Out The Vote efforts.

At **Delta Community College**, in Michigan, the Citizens in Action student organization worked with administrators to spearhead nonpartisan campus engagement efforts.

**Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania** and **West Chester University of Pennsylvania** both secured federally funded work-study positions to assist with campus voter registration and electoral engagement.

**University of Wisconsin-Madison** built a student led coalition, using the hashtag #MADvotes. More recently they've been working to replace student identification cards that are not compliant with the new Wisconsin voter ID laws. They've gained support from their city clerk and are now working with university administrators.

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# 2

## REGISTER STUDENTS TO VOTE

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**The 2008 reauthorization of the Federal Higher Education Act requires colleges and universities to make a “good faith effort” to distribute voter registration materials to all students. Here’s how to take the lead in getting your campus community registered, including helping students change their registration to vote locally.**

- ✓ Provide information and resources on your state’s rules and timelines so students can meet them. CEEP supplies this information through guides and updates prepared by Fair Elections Legal Network. We also hold statewide webinars where you can talk directly to FELN lawyers.
- ✓ Make sure everyone promoting registration understands residency rules and deadlines, which can be areas of confusion for many students. Make it clear that students in every state have the legal right to register where they’re attending school, even if they’re from another state.
- ✓ Distribute information on [long-distance voting](#) for students who prefer to vote from their home addresses.
- ✓ Work with local and state officials to secure an on-campus voting station. This takes some lead time, but can significantly increase turnout by making it easier for students to vote. See our resource on how [Collin County Community College got an on-campus polling place](#).
- ✓ Announce campus-wide goals and goals for departments or residence halls, both to measure progress and to motivate.
- ✓ Remind students who are cynical about candidates or elections in general that they can wait to decide whom to vote for.

Use online registration tools from organizations like [Rock the Vote](#), [TurboVote](#), or the customized version from the [student PIRGs](#) if you have a local PIRG chapter. You’ll still need to do a lot of other things to fully engage your campus, but these can be useful tools.

- ✓ [Rock the Vote](#)’s online registration tool is well tested and easy to use.
  - They’ll provide a simple embed code to use on your campus websites, which allows students to register online, or complete online forms, print them, and mail them in with the necessary signatures and identification. Co-branding this tool with your school logo will help you integrate it into classroom registration or ticket sales for campus concerts or sporting events, and lets you track registrations and voter turnout of those who’ve used it, while protecting individual privacy.
  - Rock the Vote will send state-specific electronic reminders of dates and deadlines to all students registered through their tool.
- ✓ If you can add it to your budget, [TurboVote](#) is another great tool for registering students to vote.
  - TurboVote is a similarly customizable “one-stop” voter registration and engagement platform that helps students register to vote, request absentee ballots, and cast their ballots successfully. Users receive text and email reminders with essential election information, dates and deadlines, including for local elections.
  - The grant-subsidized cost varies based on size and type of school, with a maximum cost of \$4,000. TurboVote will send you ready-to-sign voter registration forms and provides pre-stamped and addressed envelopes to make registration as easy as possible. For more information, contact [partnerships@turbovote.org](mailto:partnerships@turbovote.org).

Make a coordinated effort to register students during [orientation](#), class registration and other major activities.

- ✓ Nothing will register more students than integrating voter registration with course registration, because it involves all students. Ask your registrar to work with the IT department to set up a page with Rock the Vote or TurboVote links that you’ll integrate with your course registration pages, designed so that students will need to make an active choice to not register or not update their registration information.

- ✓ Work with the team that organizes new student orientation to register students when they arrive or during first-year experience seminars. [Northwestern University's Uvote model](#), which helps all first year students register to vote when they receive their student IDs for the first time, has been widely replicated using peer-to-peer outreach. Students can register with each state's mail-in form, and staff mails the completed forms to the appropriate Boards of Elections. They've been able to register between 90 and 95% of incoming freshmen by the end of orientation week. For information email Program Manager Heidi Gross at [heidi-gross@northwestern.edu](mailto:heidi-gross@northwestern.edu).
- ✓ If students live on campus, register them at their residence hall addresses.
  - Register students on move in day. Have student organizations or residence advisors to do a "dorm storm," where students go door to door to register their peers where they live. This will require coordination between Residence Life, Student Activities, and Campus Security to organize the event and waive normal security rules.
  - Host a registration or voter participation competition within or between residence halls, Greek organizations, academic departments, or with a rival campus.
- ✓ Encourage students who are already registered to re-register on campus, to make it as easy as possible for them to participate. Most students don't know that the Supreme Court has ruled that students can make this choice without providing a reason.
  - Students often end up not voting because they can't drive home on Election Day.
  - Students wanting to vote absentee in their home district/state will have different rules, procedures and deadlines from those on their campus. [LongDistanceVoter](#) explains absentee ballot options and provides resources to register either at school or at home.



Distribute and collect voter registration forms in classrooms. If enough faculty members participate, this is a way to potentially reach all students in a school.

- ✓ Ask faculty to distribute registration forms along with course materials and collect them later in class or set aside time for students to fill them out online.
- ✓ Visit classes to make a "pitch" for voter registration, to hand out and collect completed forms, or to have students register online.
- ✓ Invite representatives from your local registrar or the [League of Women Voters](#) to train students for classroom outreach, and then have them register their peers.

Take advantage of campus social and athletic events, where attendance and excitement are high and local "celebrities" can promote voting.

- ✓ Work with the athletic department to follow Central Michigan University's lead, where their football team came out on the field during halftime and held up their voter registration forms while the Jumbotron linked to a campus website with information on how to register to vote.
- ✓ Station volunteers outside major events to register voters, collect pledges to vote, and distribute candidate guides.
- ✓ Host ice cream socials, car washes, and parties to register voters and have group discussions.

Create student-run, off-campus registration drives.

- ✓ Work with your Service-Learning or Civic Engagement Center to have students who are already volunteering with off-campus projects work with these projects to register the communities they reach. See [Nonprofit Vote](#) for resources on how community groups can do this.
- ✓ Run separate campus-based drives in nearby historically underrepresented communities. Use our resource on how [Virginia Commonwealth University](#) students partnered with the tenant's union of the nearby Mosby Court public housing project to register voters, help felons restore voting rights and arrange rides to the polls.

Get out from behind the registration tables — don't wait for students to come to you.

- ✓ Students respond when peers actively reach out to them, but many are cynical or intimidated by the voting process, so won't sign up just because they pass by a registration table.

- ✓ When tabling, have volunteers get out from behind the table to approach fellow students with registration clipboards with registration tools set up on Tablets, Laptops, or SmartPhones.

Use all available technologies and use them to complement each other.

- ✓ Create a prominent link on the university homepage to your election-engagement website and voter registration resources. Promote these links through campus-wide email, social media blasts and pop-ups on pages where students order tickets for entertainment or athletic events.
- ✓ Integrate a QR code linked to your election-engagement site into election-related posters, banners, and other forms of visibility.
- ✓ Send out campus-wide voice, text, and social media messages for key registration-related deadlines that link to your registration tool.
- ✓ Create a simple campus-specific video on why voting matters. You could use [Bowling Green State University's](#) or [Virginia Commonwealth University's](#) as templates.

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## VOTER REGISTRATION CASE STUDIES

**Ohio State University's** [OSU Votes](#) worked during welcome week and student move-in to register students as they arrived on campus, then conducted a coordinated effort to educate the campus on the issues and get students out to the polls. In 2012 they included campus janitors, housekeepers, groundskeepers, and food service workers.

**Central Michigan University's** football players held up their registration cards during the half-time of a major game, while a Jumbotron linked to a website with voter registration information.

Students at **Norfolk State University** created an "Each One Text One" approach — a phone tree series of text messages to remind their friends of registration and voting deadlines, and encourage them to forward them to other friends.

In 2008, **North Carolina A&T University** registered over 12,000 students, staff, faculty, and community members by combining on-campus registration with service projects where students registered voters on six successive weekends in nearby low-income neighborhoods.

At Michigan's **Delta Community College**, teams of students competed to register their peers: Students who brought 10 or more individuals to register won [DeltaVotes! t-shirts](#), and the team that engaged the most peers won a pizza party.

At Philadelphia's **Drexel University** a Civic Engagement 101 course incorporated a "Why Voting Matters" component to discuss voter registration and the importance of youth voting.

In 2012, the **University of Colorado Boulder** and **Colorado State University** competed to register the most on-campus voters, with great success. You can also compete — using the Rock the Vote or TurboVote registration tools — on the highest percentage of registered voters who participate at the polls.

CEEP projects in Florida, Virginia and several other states sponsored the Democracy Cup. Awards were given for the best campus engagement projects statewide. **University of Miami** students won the first Cup for registering 4,000 students on campus and 10,000 off campus.

**University of Michigan's** Voice Your Vote committee, sponsored by their student government, conducted a series of dorm storms and set up locked mailboxes around campus for students to drop off registration forms for the city clerk to pick up.

**Virginia Tech's** 2013 team registered 3,000 students through active tabling — getting out from behind the tables, calling people over, etc. Schools where teams wait for students to come to them tend to register a much smaller number.

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# 3

## EDUCATE ON ISSUES, CANDIDATES AND WHY ELECTIONS MATTER

**Distribute and display nonpartisan information on where candidates stand on issues. Students often say they don't vote because they believe candidates are "all lying and spinning." Offering clear information on where candidates stand therefore plays a critical role in battling cynicism.**

- ✓ Distribute and widely publicize the [nonpartisan voter guides](#) that CEEP will create for major statewide races, like U.S. Senator and Governor, as well as CEEP's presidential guide.
  - Encourage the student newspaper to use these guides as a starting point for their election coverage, highlighting the impact candidate positions can make in student lives.
  - Send out the guides through all-campus email, or print them and put them in students' physical mailboxes.
  - Link to them on your election-related website.
  - Use them to spark discussions in classrooms and residence halls. Give them to professors to distribute during class.
  - Think big: Display information drawn from the guides on posters large enough to be visible to passing students. Display these posters in high-traffic areas of the student union, classroom buildings, or residence halls.
  - Get digital: Millennials love to spread ideas online, so distribute a PDF through social media networks, text-blasts, and use creative approaches like chalking your campus with links to the PDF. It's a bonus if you can track views.
- ✓ Create guides to down-ballot races and key issues, and have conversations around them.
  - If CEEP isn't already doing so, create your own nonpartisan guides to down ballot races, like Secretary of State, Attorney General, Congressional and local legislative races, and local and statewide initiatives. Have students create these guides adapting CEEP's template of key questions under the supervision of political science, communications, or honors faculty, or have the faculty create them. Distribute them in the campus and community as you would the CEEP guides.
  - If your local League of Women Voters chapter is creating guides, particularly for complex issues like statewide initiatives, promote and distribute those as well.



For help facilitating discussions, check out the [Public Conversations Project](#), the [National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation](#), and [Living Room Conversations](#).

**Work with local and student media to highlight issues relevant to young voters.**

- ✓ Ask them to explore specific policy differences between candidates, including important local races, and lower profile statewide races like Attorney General or Secretary of State, so students have more to go on than ads, sound bites and personality spin.
- ✓ Stress to the staff at your student newspaper that students have few trusted sources for information on political candidates, and that they can play a critical role in preparing the campus for Election Day.
- ✓ Encourage your student paper to cover your efforts and student participation in campaigns. They could even run columns by the Young Democrats and Young Republicans members.
- ✓ Ask them to print CEEP's nonpartisan candidate guides as inserts or to build off them for coverage. See our toolkit on [Working with Your Student Newspaper](#) for additional specific ideas.
- ✓ Ask Communications faculty members to let students cover election-related news for class credit.
  - Communications professors often have relationships with local broadcasting stations, so have them see if local stations will air the material, as the Richmond CBS affiliate did with material generated by Virginia Commonwealth University students.

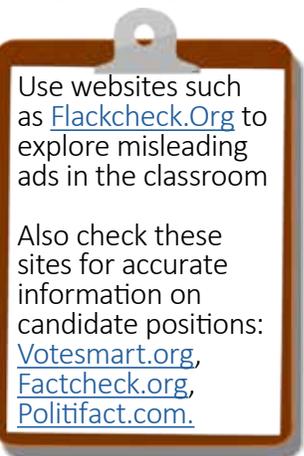
- Communications students at Virginia Commonwealth University and Rhode Island's Roger Williams University both created social media channels with their own reporting and more general election stories. [See our guide](#) for replicating their approach.

Hold debate watch parties and follow-up conversations in major common spaces like large auditoriums or more intimate spaces like residence halls. Have faculty give credit for attending as in the Florida Atlantic University example below.

- ☑ Work with Residence Life to hold simultaneous parties in every dorm, which gives you a chance to reach a large number of students.
- ☑ Use social media to foster discussion on the themes of the debates. Create a social media toolkit with relevant usernames and hashtags so students can easily focus on and join in the conversation.
- ☑ Use apps like [Brigade](#) to see where you and your friends stand on issues, exchange perspectives, and connect with groups that are working to address them.
- ☑ To engage with the larger community, invite students to attend debates or forums hosted by the League of Women Voters or other community groups. Include some way to bring the discussion back to the broader campus community.
- ☑ Hold classroom follow-up discussions afterward. Faculty can have students reflect on the debates through presentations, papers, or classroom-specific debates, exploring relevant policy aspects.

Ask faculty to engage students via their courses, including giving course credit for volunteering in campaigns of their choice or in your school's nonpartisan campus election engagement effort.

- ☑ Hold classroom follow-up discussions after major debates. Faculty can have students reflect on the debates through presentations, papers, or classroom-specific debates, exploring relevant policy aspects.
- ☑ Encourage students to explore the complementary relationship between electoral choices and social movements, from the civil rights movement to the Tea Party and environmental movements.
- ☑ Talk about where candidates stand on key issues of student interest. Be accurate and fair, regardless of your own political views.
- ☑ Professors can give extra credit to students who participate in activities like sending texts or emails to their friends with voter registration-related hyperlinks, writing a report or hosting a conversation on why voting matters to them, or participating in election-related activities.
- ☑ See the article, [My Vote Doesn't Matter](#) for ways to combat cynicism, written by CEEP founder Paul Loeb, UCLA's Alexander Astin, and education writer Parker Palmer.



Foster student discussions. If enough students hold one-on-one or small-group election-related discussions, these can be powerful ways to engage their peers.

- ☑ Have teams hold one-on-one nonpartisan discussions where they'll ask fellow students to [pledge to vote](#), volunteer for election-related events, and help distribute nonpartisan election materials, like CEEP's candidate guides. If they can motivate some of the students they talk with to join the nonpartisan teams, it's a great way to multiply their impact.
- ☑ Hold formal and informal debates and discussion sessions in public places and residence halls where students can discuss issues and candidates and help decide how to vote.
- ☑ Help students personalize issues by publicly sharing their reasons for voting in ways that spark broader campus discussion.
  - Delta Community College's Democracy In Motion wall gives students a physical place to dialogue with others on public issues.
  - Miami Dade's "I Vote for" buttons allow students to publicly express key concerns.
  - Students can also create video and social media testimonies on why they vote
- ☑ Hold dialogues that build bridges across political lines. Help students and community members to find common ground while respecting differing perspectives.

- ✓ Have political science, sociology, or communications classes survey other students for their perspectives, then [publicize the results](#).
- ✓ Encourage specific campus constituencies to hold forums and educational events and comment in the student paper on how differing candidate stands can affect their lives, linking their particular experiences with the issues at stake.
  - Veterans could discuss issues surrounding treatment of veterans returning home.
  - Students with disabilities could address issues of accessibility and inclusion.
  - The campus multicultural center or groups representing immigrant students could talk about candidates' platforms on immigration or disparate racial sentencing.
- ✓ Screen election-related films such as Suffragette, Iron-Jawed Angels (discussion guide [here](#)), The Youngest Candidate or Journeys through the Red, White and Blue.
- ✓ Create a prominent place on your campus website where students can go for election-related concerns, and an easily accessible physical location where volunteers from your nonpartisan engagement team can answer questions and enlist volunteers.

### Encourage students to sign a “Pledge to Vote.”

- ✓ Use online pledges like [Rock the Vote's](#) or distribute actual cards for students to sign. Include information on:
  - Where they'll cast their ballot and how they'll get to the polls, or when they will mail their absentee ballot, if necessary
  - Who they'll take to the polls with them. Voting with friends increases the likelihood of voting for everyone involved.
  - What time works with their schedule on Election Day to go vote. Research shows that the more voters make concrete plans, the more likely they are to show up.
- ✓ Make sure you have a clear plan for who keeps track of these pledges, where the information is stored, and how you'll follow up.

## VOTER EDUCATION CASE STUDIES

**Florida Atlantic University** gave extra credit to 1,100 students who attended a 2012 Debate Watch party in their football stadium. You can do the same thing for the presidential debates or Senatorial or Gubernatorial debates.

New Mexico's **Santa Fe Community College** joined with the city's public radio and TV stations to create a series of 60-second ads on why youth voting matters.

**Bowling Green State University** in Ohio held a contest where students submitted videos on why voting matters. The [winning video](#) was shown on TVs in the Student Union and, during commercial breaks on the residence halls movie channel and in every other visible location on campus.

**Miami Dade Community College** ordered 4,000 “This is Why I Vote” buttons with their Center for Engagement's logo and a blank space where students, faculty, and staff wrote in why they were going to vote, and

students used these personalized responses to spark individual election-related conversations.

**University of Nevada Reno's** journalism school organized a team of graduate and undergraduate students to design and launch a website that provided statewide nonpartisan election information specifically tailored for students.

**Loyola University Chicago** sent out two rounds of mailings to all students living on campus including both student voting rule guides and our non-partisan candidate guides. They also put together a detailed social media plan that included daily updates on where candidates stood on issues of student concern.

**Michigan State University** worked with the city of East Lansing to launch a [YouVote](#) website featuring information on voting rules, registration, and local, state, and national races.

A **University of Kentucky** journalism professor created “Ballot Bomb,” a documentary about the importance of the youth vote that broadcast on public television statewide. His journalism class organized around the Ballot Bomb showing, getting campus administrators and student leaders to send out election questions on a school wide app, post election-related banners and flyers, tweet election information, and advertise a mock election. The school newspaper, the Kentucky Kernel, ran our candidate guide as a deep discounted ad, and the class also promoted and attended Lexington’s mayoral debate.

**University of Miami** hosted a “Healthcare Games” event where the college Republicans and Democrats debated the Affordable Care Act.

**North Carolina Campus Compact** held a statewide “Why I Plan to Vote” contest to collect and distribute the best student video testimonials on why elections mattered.

Virginia’s **James Madison University** was one of many schools that distributed CEEP nonpartisan voter guides in their student newspaper or adapted the guides for their own coverage. Wisconsin’s **Viterbo University** printed copies to put in every student mailbox, and numerous schools sent the guides out campus-wide via email

Political Science Club at Colorado’s **Red Rocks Community College** organized a Fact Checker Voter Information Table. Student Life staff members helped with marketing and logistics, while the college marketing department published information on the school website.

**University of North Carolina at Greensboro** held a “Voting 101” session to educate students on how to research candidates and issues and how and where to vote. They also did a whiteboard project in which they asked students to write down the issue that they cared most, then circulated pictures of their statements on social media.

**Delta College** in Saginaw Michigan created Democracy In Motion, a triangular wall with a writable surface. Every two weeks, the Citizens In Action student club posted a different political topic on the wall, while students responded by writing their responses, generating a public dialogue. A cabinetry class constructed the wall with materials purchased through a grant offered by the college president. Delta also holds regular soapbox events where they set up a stage and sound system in the Commons during peak lunch times, allowing students to share about issues they are passionate about and why they’re motivated to take action.

**University of Michigan-Dearborn** held a well-attended lecture on campaign finance and hosted a Jeopardy game where the questions highlighted election-related information.

The same **University of Kentucky** journalism professor had his students use CEEP’s format to create their own guide for the 2015 Governor’s race, which they distributed on campus and which **Kentucky Campus Compact** distributed to other universities and colleges state-wide.

In 2013, **Virginia Tech** CEEP student volunteers had 1,500 face-to-face conversations while distributing nonpartisan guides for the Governor, Lt Governor and Attorney General’s race.

Ohio’s **Defiance College** used the hiring process of their new university president to compare what it is like to elect a national president.

Richmond Virginia’s CBS affiliate aired student reports on the election from a **Virginia Commonwealth University** communications class. VCU communications students also created and promoted a widely read campus social media channel where student reporters covered the election and posted relevant stories from external sources.

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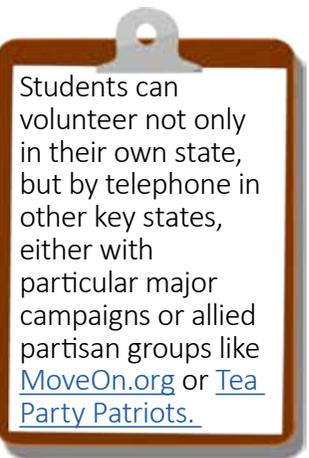
# 4

## ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO VOLUNTEER IN CAMPAIGNS

Students can multiply their impact by volunteering with partisan or nonpartisan campaigns of their choosing. Encourage them to volunteer for campaigns and initiatives on Election Day and in the period leading up to it. Talk about how they can multiply the power of their individual vote by enlisting others or by being poll workers.

Electoral engagement efforts sponsored by schools have to be meticulously nonpartisan, but students can learn valuable skills and make an important impact if you encourage them to embrace their own beliefs and act on them, particularly since patterns of early civic involvement tend to stick.

- ✓ Make information about on- and off-campus volunteer opportunities widely available — making sure to give equal visibility to contacts for both major parties. If third or fourth party candidates have a significant electoral presence, provide their campaign information as well.
- ✓ Promote volunteer opportunities not just with political parties, but with grassroots groups such as student PIRGS, or campus affiliates of the NAACP, Tea Party, NARAL Pro Choice America, National Right to Life, etc.
- ✓ Discuss races decided by as little as a few hundred votes, where grassroots volunteers helped tip the outcome. In our 2013 off-year pilot, 165 votes decided Virginia's Attorney General's race. In 2000, in Florida, 537 votes decided the presidency. In Minnesota in 2008, 312 votes decided a U.S. Senate seat. 39 votes decided a 2015 Seattle City Council Election.
- ✓ Encourage students to knock on doors, make calls, or volunteer as poll-watchers and play a critical role by getting people to vote that might otherwise stay home.
- ✓ Most campuses have College Democrats and College Republicans clubs, and sometimes Libertarian and other third party organizations. Talk to the leaders of these organizations and get a schedule of their upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Then distribute this information to students interested in volunteering. When students do volunteer encourage them to report on their activities in classroom or other public presentations.
- ✓ If graduates of your school hold electoral office or are running for office, invite them to speak at forums along with their opponents.



Remind students that they can volunteer in their own voice and express their own feelings.

- ✓ If they're ambivalent about the candidates for a key office, but still prefer one over the other, suggest that they volunteer. They can voice their mixed sentiments to voters — acknowledging areas where they have differences, yet talking about why they still believe their candidate is still worth electing. This is likely to draw much greater participation than if students feel they have to line up behind a set “party line.”
- ✓ Encourage students to join your campus non-partisan campus engagement teams. Many students will prefer to work on getting their fellow students to vote and not have to publicly promote a particular candidate. Those are the ones you'll want to recruit for your teams.
- ✓ Ask faculty to require students to choose partisan or nonpartisan campaigns to volunteer with and report back on through journals, papers or classroom presentations.
- ✓ Faculty can't mandate particular partisan allegiances when they do this, but they can encourage students to select campaigns that resonate with the students' individual values, and encourage

them to give voice to their convictions. Having students with differing partisan views volunteer and report back to the class can be particularly educational.

Reach out to a variety of student organizations, not just campus political groups.

- ☑ Approach your College Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, etc, and encourage them to collaborate on your nonpartisan campus efforts. It's a great way to model cooperation.
- ☑ Be sure to also reach out to groups like disabled students, veterans, LGBT students, commuter students on residential campuses, and students involved with campus multicultural or diversity centers.
- ☑ Encourage these students to hold forums and educational events for the general campus, as well as reaching out to their own specific groups. If you have living/learning communities have them make election-engagement a core common theme.
- ☑ Encourage students to sign up to volunteer or work as poll-workers. Work with your local county clerk to arrange this.
- ☑ Law students can volunteer for the national nonpartisan [Election Protection](#) voting rights hotline.



At Virginia's James Madison University, four social work grad students received academic credit to coordinate the campus's successful nonpartisan engagement efforts.

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## STUDENT VOLUNTEERING CASE STUDIES

In 2008, a professor at Ohio's **Baldwin Wallace University** required her leadership students to volunteer with a campaign of their choice. She gave them contact information for the McCain and Obama field offices and for the nonprofit Greater Cleveland Voter Registration Coalition, then required them to volunteer for 15 hours with a presidential campaign of their choice, a local or state election race (including ballot initiatives), or a nonprofit group engaging in election-related activities. Students logged their experiences in journal entries, providing details about what occurred, the participants, and their impressions. After the election, students wrote a paper evaluating their experiences.

Every vote counts. A student at Connecticut's **Wesleyan University** registered 300 of her peers in an election where her congressman won by only 21 votes.

Local elections can be opportunities for students to get involved and have a huge impact, because turnout tends to be low. They could even run themselves, like a 22-year-old **College of William & Mary** senior who was elected to the Williamsburg City Council with the help of his fellow students, and a recent **James Madison University** graduate who was re-elected to his second term.

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# 5

## BUILD MOMENTUM FOR ELECTION DAY

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### Build excitement and visibility in advance of Election Day to turn out student voters.

- ✓ Educate on the mechanics of voting, in order to decrease anxiety and avoid confusion.
  - Encourage students to make a plan for how and when they'll cast their vote. Research shows that making a concrete plan significantly increases the likelihood of voting.
  - Set up mock polling places, perhaps in the student union, with sample ballots and voting machines, if you can obtain, them for students to practice voting and consider how they'll vote.
  - Such "dry runs" can assure new voters they're bringing the proper ID and filling out the ballot as they intend. They also encourage them to learn about issues and candidates in advance.
- ✓ Publicize voter ID requirements and help students secure all necessary materials, like letters from the college President, the right kinds of student IDs, or other IDs if your state doesn't accept student IDs as a form of voter ID. The latter may require extra initiative, like car pools or shuttles to Department of Motor Vehicle sites for students who don't drive.
- ✓ Hold rallies and election-related festivals. These should be combined with concrete activities like registration drives, volunteer recruitment and pledges to vote.
- ✓ Entertain as you engage and educate. Capture students' attention with "guerrilla theater." Use flash mobs and theater to gather crowds in visible places and then hand out voter pledges as well as registration and voting information.

Create a visual presence to encourage voting, remind of key deadlines, and educate about what to bring to the polls.

- ✓ Display posters, banners, signs and sandwich boards as permitted.
- ✓ Create voter-participation commercials to play on internal media networks, like residence hall TV channels, the TVs at the student union, or the athletic stadium Jumbotron.
- ✓ Provide chalk so students can draw messages and images on campus walkways to encourage voting, share key websites and reasons they are voting, and announce activities.
- ✓ Combine these kinds of visual approaches with email and social media outreach through platforms such as Instagram, Tumblr, Snapchat, Thunderclap, and Vine.
- ✓ Hand out voting-related [stickers](#) to go on everything from bicycles to water bottles.

Use social media to promote campus events, remind of key deadlines, and connect students to the larger election conversation.

- ✓ Create a hashtag for your campus election efforts (like #UWvotes) and encourage students to share their election activities and GOTV messages through their social media networks.
- ✓ Create and distribute a social media toolkit for campus organizations that includes relevant hashtags, usernames, and suggested language for tweets or postings.
- ✓ Share this toolkit with all the key campus leaders you've been working with, and ask them to use their Twitter or Facebook pages to encourage their followers to vote.
- ✓ Ask prominent campus leaders such as athletes stars and well-known alumni to retweet your content using your election-related hashtag.

If you have the funds, consider placing Facebook ads targeting students on your campus.

- ✓ Try a new ad each day leading up to Election Day with a slightly different message and a countdown to remaining deadlines and to Election Day.
- ✓ In the weeks before the election, encourage students, faculty, and staff to have computer homepages and social media accounts include links to your school's election-related website.

- ✓ Include specific information on where students can vote, hours and locations for any early voting stations, and what they need to bring in terms of voter ID. If you have shuttles to off-campus polls, include that information as well
- ✓ Link to CEEP's nonpartisan candidate guides and distribute them as widely as possible.

Use Halloween to highlight the election.

- ✓ [Trick or Vote](#) encourages canvassing on or around Halloween using trick-or-treating as an opportunity for door-to-door contact with potential voters. Take advantage of parties to spread voter education, voter rights, and get out the vote messages.
- ✓ Hand out candy messages. Get some bags of candy and stick or tie small messages to them ("Vote Nov 6," "Bring ID to the polls," "What time are you voting?" or "How are you getting to the polls?"). Then put on a costume and hand them out on campus.
- ✓ Hold Halloween parties with election-related themes.

Hold absentee ballot parties for students registered out of state.

- ✓ Students can get their necessary ID info photocopied while privately casting their ballots, addressing them, and stacking them to be mailed.
- ✓ Give students stamps to use to mail back their ballots, or make them available to buy.

## BUILDING MOMENTUM CASE STUDIES

**North Carolina Campus Compact** held a statewide "Why I Plan to Vote" contest for student video testimonials on why elections mattered, which they distributed to member schools.

**Florida State University** students formed a flash mob, gathering in the student union with t-shirts promoting the voting date and slogans like "I vote for education" or "I vote for health care." They froze for five minutes to let the crowd look at them. Then they moved on, did the same thing elsewhere on the campus, and repeated it again.

**James Madison University's** 18,000-student campus got 10,000 people attending a series of convention and debate-watch parties, then arranged election-day vans and buses when local transportation authorities refused to help.

In the 2010 midterm elections, a single get-out-the-vote message sent to 61 million Facebook users on Election Day influenced roughly 340,000 people to vote.

**Maine College of Art** had a competition to create voter-engagement posters.

**North Carolina A&T State University's** 2008 "AGGIES Get Out to Vote" rally included live music, food, and voter registration tables. Including off-campus registration drives, the school estimated their efforts reached 12,000 students, faculty, and community members.

At **Bunker Hill Community College**, the largest in Massachusetts, the Office of Community Engagement helped students in Visual Media Art create 300 Get Out the Vote posters that they displayed throughout the campus.

**Miami Dade Community College's** Wolfson campus organized a "Don't Cast a Zombie Vote" event and walk to bring attention to the importance of being an informed voter.

Minnesota's **Anoka-Ramsey Community College** held an event called "Are You Scared to Vote?"

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# 6

## GET OUT THE VOTE

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**Election Day is the culmination of all of your election engagement efforts. Ask faculty and administration to let students miss classes, if need be, to vote. This is particularly valuable at community colleges, where students often have little time between work and school and may be reluctant to stand in long lines.**

Combine face-to-face and online technologies, so all your efforts complement each other.

- ✓ Work with your campus IT department to send reminder emails, voicemails and texts to every student. (Text messages have been found to have the strongest impact!)
  - Messages can include links to resources such as [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) where students can find out where to vote and what they need to bring, and sites where they can verify registration.
  - Send at least one message before the absentee ballot request deadlines as a reminder for those who cannot get to their polling places or vote in other states. Send follow-up messages leading up to the election, and then a final election-day message to remind all students to vote.
  - Check that key campus websites have updated information, like links to voter information sites. Include a countdown to Election Day.
- ✓ Make sure that every student knows the national 866ourvote hotline where they can reach volunteer lawyers and law students if they have a problem at the polls.

Promote early voting where possible to avoid schedule conflicts or long Election Day lines.

- ✓ Piggyback early voting with reminders for students to vote absentee if they're from other states.
- ✓ Have students call students, using the data collected from your registration drives and pledge forms. Make sure this is well-coordinated to avoid needless duplicative calls.
- ✓ Electronic reminders are great, but research shows that nothing is more effective than direct peer-to-peer outreach. Enlist student groups to call their peers.
- ✓ Phone bank all registered voters for whom you have phone numbers, especially those whose contacts you gathered during registration drives. If you have no records of your own, the county election board may have lists of those registered from your campus.

Help students get to the polls.

- ✓ See if local transportation authorities or community groups can run special buses, as they would for major stadium events.
- ✓ Publicize polling locations — include directions, hours, and transportation options
- ✓ If your main polling place is off-campus, encourage your campus to rent buses or vans to shuttle students to their polling places, posting departure and return times in central locations.
- ✓ Ask faculty, staff and student leaders to participate in coordinated car pools to the polls, an approach that underscores the importance of voting.
- ✓ Have a central site to arrange carpooling rides.

Make voting reminders highly visible and creative.

- ✓ Organize election-day dorm storming. Knock on doors and offer rides or company going to the polls to registered students considering staying home. Ask faculty to give reminders in class.
- ✓ Encourage “Take a Date to the Polls” and “Real Friends Don’t Let Friends Vote Alone” messages to foster support within peer groups (publicize with posters, text messages, Facebook ads, etc.)
- ✓ Use social media tools. Various groups are working on new apps and websites to help people pledge to vote and encourage their friends to vote.

## Make voting a community activity.

- ☑ Hold Parades to the Polls to both early voting sites and Election Day sites, building on a sense of school pride.
  - At some schools the college or university president, or the student government president has led the parade, at others, they've been led by student veterans.
  - Schools whose voting sites are further away can do this through carpools.
- ☑ Encourage local restaurants and businesses to give special discounts to students with "I voted" stickers.

## Make sure students' votes count and protect their voting rights.

- ☑ Educate students about potential voter intimidation practices and how to avoid being turned away at the polls.
- ☑ Encourage student groups to organize poll watching activities to guarantee voter rights.
- ☑ Let people know about the 1-866-OURVOTE hotline so students can call for expert advice if problems develop or they think they're being unfairly denied their right to vote.

## Hold get-out-the-vote rallies and parties on Election Day.

- ☑ Plan for entertainment and snacks near the polling places while students wait in line or wait for their friends to make it through.
- ☑ Organize election night parties to watch returns in student unions, dormitories, fraternities, sororities, and other places where students gather.
- ☑ Distribute a list of community parties around town so students can join those who've volunteered in the campaigns.

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## GET OUT THE VOTE CASE STUDIES

**University of Minnesota** hosted a Party at the Polls at their 50,000-student campus: printing posters and flyers to promote voting; providing hot beverages and snacks to encourage students to withstand lengthy voting lines despite bitter cold; and bringing laptops to answer last-minute questions regarding local races and same-day registration.

One of **James Madison University's** a capella groups performed pop up concerts across campus on Election Day, encouraging the gathered crowds to vote while passing out our nonpartisan election materials and those of our partner, Rock the Vote.

When **University of Southern Mississippi's** van driver surveyed students he shuttled, two thirds said providing this service made the difference in their voting.

Faculty at Virginia's **Longwood University** organized carpools to drive students to the polls.

Virginia's **Liberty University** canceled all classes on Election Day and scheduled buses to take students to the polls. They held an all-day concert and party for all of their students.

**Red Rocks Community College** political science students held an "I Voted" party on Election Day.

**Michigan State University** stationed student volunteers at each of their on-campus polling places, and in major public common areas. The volunteers handed out candidate guides and reminded students to vote. The school also sent out a campus wide email with polling locations and information.

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# 7

## MEASURE YOUR IMPACT AND BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

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**You're building not just for this election, but also for future elections. The more you document your efforts, the more effective you'll be for the next election cycle.**

Have your senior administrators sign up for the [National Study of Student Learning, Voting, and Engagement](#), run out of the Tufts University-based [Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement](#), which studies patterns in college student voting, provides campuses with valuable data on student civic/political engagement, and builds a national database for future research on ways to engage students most effectively.

- ✓ Using actual voting data, NSLVE determines how many of your students are registered to vote and how many actually vote. – Learning your turnout rates helps you evaluate whether your campus election engagement efforts are working, so this is one of the keys to creating an effective engagement plan.
  - NSLVE provides voting rates by key demographic data, including field of academic study, as well as gender and race/ethnicity. [See here](#) for a sample report. This information can inform outreach practices and be used to create partnerships with stakeholders across campus and within the local community.
  - NSLVE also breaks down students who vote in-person vs absentee, so you can and make strategic choices about mobilization efforts. For example, if your campus has a large number of students who vote absentee, consider resources that help ease the process such as Long Distance Voter.
  - NSLVE protects student information by working with de-identified student data, fully protecting student privacy in line with FERPA. Student names are completely removed from voting records and assigned a random identity number. Check out their FAQ on privacy for more details.
  - The study also keeps institutional data confidential. NSLVE makes its institutional report available to a single designated campus contact of the institution's choosing and only releases the names of participating schools with their permission. That contact then chooses who to share it with, inside and outside the institution.
  - NSLVE is also free and participation is easy. A generous grant allows CIRCLE to conduct the research and provide institution-level data at no cost to campuses.
  - Sign up is simple: Just complete the authorization form and have it signed by a senior administrator such as the president, chancellor, vice president, dean of the college, or provost. Then have them email it to [nslve@tufts.edu](mailto:nslve@tufts.edu). Because this isn't a survey, there's no need to compile student lists or records or consult your Institutional Review Board.
- ✓ Find out if your campus is an NSLVE participant and gain access to your data
  - Ask your president's office if your school is participating or email [nslve@tufts.edu](mailto:nslve@tufts.edu) to have the contact person at your school get back to you. If your campus isn't already participating, you'll want to encourage them to sign up.
  - If they are participating, ask them to show your nonpartisan engagement team the confidential, tailored report for your school, or at least the key voter registration and turnout data.
  - If possible, share your data with your CEEP contact. You're not obligated to do this and we'd rather your school sign up and keep the data private than avoid signing up. But if your CEEP contact can access the data, they'll be that much more effective in working to help increase electoral participation on your campus.
  - This will also help CEEP draw lessons that help us more effectively engage all of the schools we work with, and get the support to further expand our efforts. And if you're willing to make your data public in general, it can serve as a campus-wide incentive to increase your voter engagement activities.

You can also track your on-campus or near-campus voting rates by precinct participation and through the [Rock the Vote](#) and [TurboVote](#) tools. Talk with your state CEEP coordinator on how best to do this, but here's the basic approach:

- Figure out which all-student or student-dominant precincts students vote at, get the numbers from your state election board, and tally the percentage of active voters who showed up at the polls. If possible, compare these numbers to the comparable precincts from four years ago.
- If you registered students through the Rock the Vote or TurboVote tools, use the dashboard they'll provide to track how many students registered and voted. After a few months, they'll also provide the percentage of students who voted.
- Forward this information to your state CEEP contact so we can measure our organizational impact and progress across all of our partner campuses.

Write up your notes as a follow up to help your team and others continue the work of engagement.

- Who was involved? What's their contact info and position at the school?
- Which approaches worked best for the culture of your campus, both in terms of getting people excited about the work and in producing concrete results, like numbers of students registered and numbers who turn out at the polls?
- What approaches didn't work well, or had less impact than you'd hoped?
- Which approaches would you have wanted to do if you'd had more lead-time?

Document your most effective electoral engagement efforts through photos and videos

- Have students, particularly communications and digital media students, create and edit concise videos where they interview those involved in your campus engagement efforts and document their outreach, as the VCU students did. Also have them take photos.
- Post the most inspiring videos and photos on your campus website, and send them to your state CEEP coordinators so we can suggest your approaches to schools in other states, and help them learn from your approaches.

Continue planning ways to deepen your efforts to engage your students in elections and other ways of having their voices heard no matter whoever wins in November. Some great projects to work on between elections include:

- Securing on-campus voting stations, which three of our Virginia schools did after 2013
- Developing greater faculty involvement, giving faculty examples from schools which integrated election work with coursework
- Developing ongoing campus-funded election activities or having student governments contribute to election activities
- Expanding ways that administrators and staff, such as student activity directors, can engage in election-related activities
- Developing ways to meet the new ID and registration rules passed in many states, which often require complex responses from the schools to ensure their students can vote
- Fostering community outreach such as Virginia Commonwealth University's voter registration partnership with the nearby public housing project
- Working with the advisors and editors of campus newspapers to develop templates for coverage, both in traditional and social media outlets
- Working with university registrars to coordinate voter registration with fall course registration

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