

# Supporting Engagement With Work-Study Students



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One of the most impactful approaches of our Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) has been helping colleges and universities hire students to carry out and amplify the important work of their nonpartisan electoral engagement coalitions. These students are hired and supervised by key coalition participants, like staffers in the civic engagement office, Dean of Students office, or Political Science department. Our State Directors support them with training and intellectual resources as part of their ongoing work furthering nonpartisan electoral engagement. Students hired for this work get powerful learning and leadership opportunities. They also provide substantial support to the faculty, staff, administrators, and student leaders who are working to help your students learn their rights, responsibilities, and potential impact as voters, as part of their broader participation in civic life.

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## How Your Work-Study Students Can Participate

Given limited financial resources, CEEP can only fund students for this role at a modest number of campuses during peak election periods. One excellent alternative or complement is to draw on the energy of Work-Study students, who can help engage your campus throughout the academic year, whether or not there's an immediate election. The rules vary state-by-state and campus-by-campus, but generally campus offices or departments are allocated specific numbers of positions through their school's Financial Aid Office, or can request positions to be allocated. Students filling these positions serve campus needs from helping staff the library or food service, to working in campus offices and serving with off-campus nonprofits, with civic education and community service explicitly mandated. A Work-Study student can similarly help facilitate your nonpartisan campus engagement efforts, much as they'd support any other official and legitimate campus function. You'd want to make sure these efforts are strictly nonpartisan, focused on engaging students (as opposed to off-campus constituencies), and carried out under the official auspices of an administrative office or academic department. The student or students you'd hire for this role would not themselves be engaging in political activity, but instead would be helping your school educate your students about elections, get them registered to vote, and give them the information they need to participate at the polls, whomever they happened to support.

Devoting at least one Work-Study position to furthering your school-sponsored nonpartisan election engagement efforts can make a major difference in campus voter participation. Since campuses vary in their Work-Study approaches, check with your Financial Aid Office, to see if they'd prefer to post the job descriptions and interview the students, or are ok with having interested departments recruit them. Whatever your specific process, your CEEP State Director will gladly help support your participating students with resources and coaching. So long as they're eligible through their Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application, there should be no problem in your assigning them to help.

Here's how it worked at West Chester University of Pennsylvania (WCU), one of various CEEP partners that's implemented this approach:

## The West Chester University Model

CEEP's Pennsylvania director first worked closely with WCU's Director of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs to craft a job description. Financial Aid then posted the description and interviewed and hired an eligible student through Work-Study. The student they found began working with the school's nonpartisan election engagement coalition in early 2016. They then continued helping engage the campus throughout the year, which made a significant difference. A second student Fellow joined the team in Fall term, supported by CEEP resources.



## Bringing the Work-Study Model to Your Campus

### Here are the key steps:

- Work with Financial Aid office staff to create a position description and post it on their website.
- Potential Work-Study Fellows must be currently enrolled students who've have applied for Work-Study as part of their FAFSA application.
- Advertise the position on your campus website, listservs, through your career center, emails, etc.
- Distribute applications to your campus contacts, asking them to think of eligible students they know who would make strong Fellows.
- Cast the widest possible net to increase the chances of finding the best candidates, and create the most equitable hiring environment. (Note that students receiving VISTA funding cannot work on voter registration efforts, so are ineligible to participate).
- Once you do hire someone, give them an on-campus advisor or supervisor to help connect them with other members of the campus nonpartisan engagement team and to assist in campus-level planning (reserving rooms, sound systems, etc.)
- Your state CEEP director will then train, coach, and supervise your Fellows, and help them carry out their efforts in cooperation with their advisor and together with the rest of your team.

For further information, contact your [state CEEP director](#).

## Examples of what Fellows can do.

- Find allies among campus organizations, departments, and leaders, helping them develop their outreach plans.
- Recruit volunteer teams of 15-20 other students, and recruit volunteers, building on existing relationships and networks.
- Help create a nonpartisan brand that uses your campus website, social media and posters to identify your nonpartisan campaign. West Chester created Dub C Votes.
- Promote voter registration, from registering voters at [first year orientation](#) to assisting with National Voter Registration Day.
- Help students get the necessary ID to register and vote, and [meet new legal requirements](#).
- Organize tabling and canvassing activities, from classroom presentations to residential "dorm storms".
- Distribute CEEP's [Nonpartisan Candidate Guides](#) and related nonpartisan materials to engage students in key topical issues, and foster related discussion.
- Organize campus debates, forums, and debate watch parties.
- Work with your campus team to send out campus-wide emails and social media alerts highlighting key election-related information.



- Enlist students as poll workers.
- Collect pledges to vote.
- Run phone banks to confirm student registration status and remind students to vote.



- Create and implement a Get Out The Vote campaign, both for early voting dates and for Election Day. This includes coordinating everything from transportation to visibility, plus providing key information on where students can vote and what ID they need at the polls.

## Job Description Template

Here's an adapted version of West Chester's job description that you can use as a template. Their Work-Study student Fellow focused primarily on voter engagement, but also had other office duties.

### Job Description: Student Fellow to support nonpartisan campus engagement efforts

[Campus Election Engagement Project](#) (CEEP) is a national non-partisan project that partners with our school and others, helping us involve students in elections. Drawing on CEEP resources and coached and trained by CEEP state staffers and by your supervisor in [SCHOOL DEPARTMENT OR OFFICE], you'll help recruit volunteer nonpartisan engagement teams and coordinate with administrators, faculty, and student leaders to engage our campus in the election. You'll help register voters, distribute educational materials, help your peers navigate election rules, and help with our Get Out The Vote effort.

#### Responsibilities:

- Help organize our campus team.
- Work with administrators, faculty, staff, and student leaders.
- Help recruit student volunteers.
- Plan and execute events.
- Assist with general logistics and keep track of data.

#### Specific duties as they relate to this position:

- Collaborate with faculty, staff, administrators, and student organizations to promote voter registration.
- Conduct outreach to clubs and organizations.
- Collect and submit student voter registration information according to state rules, while following campus confidentiality guidelines.
- Help students to find appropriate identification to register and vote.
- Produce, distribute, and post flyers and manage bulletin boards.
- Organize regular tabling and canvassing activities like class raps or dorm storms.
- Organize campus debates, forums, and/or debate watch parties.
- Distribute election-related information through email, printed materials, and social media.



WEST CHESTER CEEP FELLOWS



WEST CHESTER VOTING TABLE MATERIALS



WEST CHESTER DUB C LOGO