

Toolkit for Social Media Campaigns



Welcome to Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)'s toolkit for election-related nonpartisan social media campaigns. Complementing face-to-face outreach and discussion, social media is a key approach to reach students where they are, helping them vote and get politically involved. We hope this toolkit will help you produce effective messages to engage your students. If you have any questions, please contact [your state director](#) or Samantha Bayne at samantha@campuselect.org.

Nonpartisanship

As a nonpartisan organization, CEEP works not to promote particular candidates or policies, but to help students reflect and vote according to their particular beliefs. We therefore ask that you be nonpartisan when using our content. For instance, tag specific candidates only if they're present at an event on your campus. And please don't mix our resources with more partisan messages. Colleges and universities face significant scrutiny in terms of potential institutional partisanship, so we hope to help you create content that promotes and facilitates the act of voting in general, rather than voting *for particular candidate*.

CEEP Brand

Before jumping into specific topics, we'd like to highlight our own branding. We call our project Campus Election Engagement Project or CEEP; both are accurate. We often use **#CEEP** or **#StudentsVote** in our own postings, and recommend that you particularly use the latter hashtag in your own content creation. We'd like to see your election-engagement posts, so please tag us in your voting content and follow us wherever applicable, which will also allow you to see our nonpartisan social media content as we create it or forward it, like the [downloadable memes](#) we're creating, or our newly updated [Close Elections Video](#):

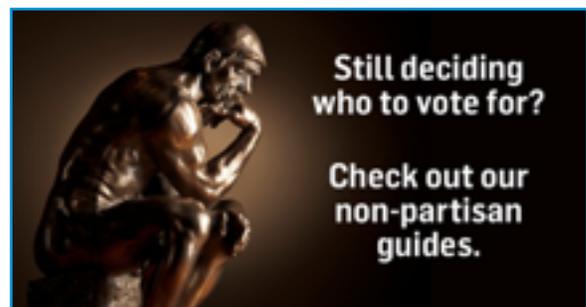
Twitter: @CampusElect

Instagram: @NationalCampusElect

Facebook: /campuselect

LinkedIn: /company/campus-election-engagement-project/

Here's an example of one of [our memes](#), designed to link to our nonpartisan candidate guides.



And our [Close Elections Video](#)



The Importance of Your Brand

Every campus has a “brand”: school colors, a mascot, a motto that students chant at football games. When creating voting-specific content, include items that students already recognize. This helps them identify with the content, even if it’s different from normal campus communications. If your nonpartisan election engagement efforts are part of an official school voter-engagement effort, and they should be, then use the school logo, and see about getting access

to the official university email and social media accounts. That means working to include student leaders or administrators (such as the president, dean of students, or student body president) who have a large following or access to campus-wide networks. We also recommend integrating your brand into your nonpartisan campus election engagement campaign. Think about the brand your students most recognize from your school. And then integrate it in getting them out to vote.

Naming Your Campaign

As a first step, think about creating a name or hashtag around your mascot, university name, or motto. Especially at a big school, create a snappy phrase that students identify with as the university’s voting campaign. Puns and alliteration work great here! Make it no more than four words and no longer than twenty characters.

SAMPLE CAMPAIGNS

- University of Wisconsin-Madison uses [#BadgersVote](#). Check out [this Instagram post](#) and this Election Day-2016 post from UWM’s official Instagram. These posts received thousands of likes and were seen by tens of thousands of students.
- At Ohio State University, students use [#OSUVotes](#), the name of their ongoing election engagement coalition. They’ve used this tag to create a website, student group, and workshops. Although their social media presence is smaller, they’ve been able to physically cover their campus with posters, [a recognizable logo](#), and volunteers.
- Pennsylvania’s West Chester University has created the fun and memorable [“Dub C Votes.”](#) Playing off their school name, Dub C Votes uses Twitter, Facebook, and on-campus events to make voting a part of the campus culture. They engaged with hundreds of students through [“Donut Forget to Vote”](#) and branded pledge cards on which students explained their choice to vote.

Once you have a name, your campaign can begin creating content. *We recommend posting on accounts that already exist, rather than creating entirely new accounts and pages.* The key is for students to identify with the posts. If you have a civic engagement office, student government association, or office of student life that

already has an online presence, use these accounts to share your content. If not, create strategic partnerships with the president’s office or office of communications to make sure you reach as many of your students as possible. A branded logo will help but isn’t essential.

Consider how your campus culture already discusses election engagement. We suggest posting two to three times a week about elections, with more frequent postings leading up to Election Day and on that critical day. If your campus is already engaged with voting, you may want to post more often; three times a week should suffice. If your campus is not as engaged, you may want to post less—with possibly more frequent postings during the weeks of Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, and the beginning of early voting. Don’t overwhelm your students; do make your content impactful and effective.



Content Suggestions

Why this matters: When students move to college, this is likely the first time that they are eligible to vote in a major election. As a result, the university has the responsibility to essentially teach students how to vote and give them tools to do so. Social media can help.

FACEBOOK

- Facebook is for longer posts and can be used for generic information sharing, even when you don't have photos or an upcoming event. Hashtags aren't as common on Facebook, but adding a location or tagging another page or student helps build visibility.
- Use Facebook for resource sharing and event promotion. Students aren't on Facebook as much as other platforms, so you have to be more strategic. Images and links tend to get more engagement, and if your team includes students or can get help from students, having them invite friends to your events will help you to translate online engagement to in-person engagement. Make sure to include your school's hashtag and brand to help students identify with your post.
- Giveaways and "tag your friend" memes are becoming more and more common on Facebook. Ask your student workers how to incorporate them into your voter registration work! You could make a post that says "Tag a friend who needs to register to vote" or give a \$50 Amazon gift card to the person who tags the most students to vote on Election Day or during early voting.
- Facebook posts can occur several times a week, and can be as long as necessary.

INSTAGRAM

- Since Instagram allows only image postings, we recommend photos from voter registration events, especially of actual students registering themselves to vote or helping friends register. Make sure to get the name and username of each student, as well as permission to post the photo. In the caption, include information on why/how they registered as well as how other students can do it. Add a location and tag the student groups involved so students can follow up with more information. An effective caption is no more than three lines with no more than three or four hashtags. Text-only posts receive low engagement on Instagram.
- You can also encourage students to post their own photos. Using the hashtags #WhyIRegistered and #StudentsVote along with your brand have them take photos with a whiteboard where they can write down why they chose to register.

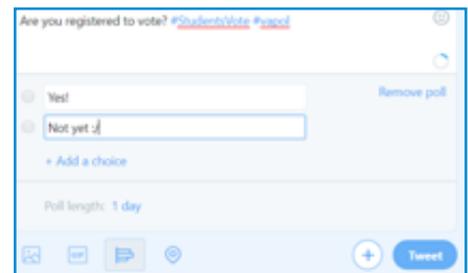
- Instagram stories are a fairly new approach, but can be used effectively on specific holidays, deadlines, or Election Day.

These stories can be used by any Instagram account and last for twenty-four hours. You can add a similar photo to what you've posted, while using fun fonts and tagging student groups. As part of these stories, you can link to a website where students can register to vote (such as your Secretary of State's website or [Turbovote](#)). When you have a day-long event, an Instagram story might be the best option.

- Limit Instagram posts to twice a week.

TWITTER

- It's easy to post and share content to Twitter. You can tweet more than once a day, especially if you are hosting an on-campus event. Be sure to like and retweet anyone who's posting about an event that you are hosting.
- Hashtags are key on Twitter! If you want to track your brand, use the brand name as a hashtag in almost every tweet you post. You could post a registration link with #Go(Team)GoVote. Also, make sure to tag #StudentsVote so CEEP can see your content! We also recommend tagging your state's abbreviation and "pol," "gov," or "sen" (e.g., #iapol, #mosen, or #flgov), because campaigns and pundits track those tags to see what engaged citizens in their state are planning politically.
- The important thing on Twitter is to stay consistent. Plan a schedule so you're not sharing the same things



too often, and stick with a basic message of what you want students to do. From September through early October, the focus should be on registering voters. In October start switching to voter education information, like distribution of CEEP's [nonpartisan candidate guides](#), and later to distributing Get Out The Vote information. Share information on your events, and provide resources on how students can register on campus. Ask what you want students to know, and answer those questions in your posts

- Twitter polls are a new feature that can be used to gauge campus registration levels and interest in voting. See the tweet idea at right. For those who reply “no,” you can reply with a website providing resources on how to register or vote.
- Images do well, especially when you tag organizations, students, or candidates who are depicted! Ask for social media handles when taking photos to ensure that the photos are correctly tagged and seen by their subjects. Your goal is to get a high number of retweets and gain as much exposure as possible. If you're just tweeting text, make sure to tag the handles of any relevant campus groups, like @osuvotes.

SUGGESTED TOPICS

- Voter registration. Since students most likely have a new address each Fall and possibly a new polling location, share information from the beginning of Fall term about registering to vote on campus. Make sure to collect photos from any event that registers voters.
- Education on voter laws. Voting laws are confusing and frequently change. CEEP will provide you with critical information to pass on to students about required identification, deadlines, and regulations on absentee or early voting, like the [election law posters](#) we'll be updating.
- Education on candidates and issues. CEEP will provide your campus nonpartisan engagement coalition with resources like our [nonpartisan candidate guides](#), which you can distribute through email and social media.
- Early Voting. If your state has early voting, use social media to promote it. Then ask students to snap and post photos of themselves on the way to vote, outside the polls, as part of Parades to the Polls, or with I

Voted stickers. It's a great way to remind students that they don't have to wait until Election Day, while building momentum for those who still have a chance to participate later.

- Get Out The Vote information and info on Election Day logistics. On Election Day, dedicate social media to Getting Out The Vote. Share logistics on precinct locations and promote events that students or your school are hosting to get students excited. This is a great way to show that *your students vote*.
- Student election-related events. Make sure to tag students and their organizations! Share and recognize work students are doing to engage their peers in the elections. Share save-the-date notices and images before your events, announcements that you distribute closer in, and post-event pictures.
- Engagement beyond voting. Some of your students will likely be ineligible to vote, like international students, undocumented students, or in some states, former felons. Create content that engages all your students in elections—even those who can't vote—will help these students feel included as well in the political process. Share ways students can volunteer to help in facilitating issue dialogues, candidate events, and other forums that don't directly involve voting but help further a campus climate of participation.

Have fun, be creative, and integrate social media with all your other face-to-face engagement efforts.

