Engaging Your Campus in Elections:
Getting Out the Vote

CAMPUS ELECTION ENGAGEMENT PROJECT
register. volunteer. vote.

BUILD MOMENTUM TOWARD ELECTION DAY

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 websites 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," [Or whatever date you're publicizing] "Bring ID to the polls," "What time are you voting?" or "How are you getting to the polls?"). 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.

Maine College of Art had a competition to create voter-engagement posters. Art departments at other schools have done the same.

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.

GET OUT THE VOTE

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 commuter 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 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 1-866-OURVOTE 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.

- Use all-campus emails and social media to tell students Make sure to look up your precinct at vote411.org.
- 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. Students at Virginia's Longwood University loved it when faculty volunteered to drive them—they said it made them feel that voting was really important.
- 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. We'll be distributing any effective apps we encounter to help people pledge to vote and encourage their friends to do so.

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 stickers that encourage voting.

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.

GET OUT THE VOTE CASE STUDIES

West Chester University CEEP fellows planned an event called Donut Forget to Vote. The event celebrated voter identity and provided students with polling information materials, nonpartisan candidate guides, and "Donut Forget to Vote" pins at residence halls. Due to these and other efforts, 1500 more students voted than the previous election and a candidate who lost on Election Day won by 18 votes after student provisional ballots were counted.

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 cappella 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.

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.