CAMPUS ELECTION ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

HOW CEEP IS ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE NEW COVID ERA

Due to COVID, America's campuses have had to integrate new virtual learning approaches alongside traditional classroom settings. And schools may shift between modes on short notice as they respond to outbreaks of the virus or shifts in state laws. This creates major voter engagement challenges, as described in a Sabato's Crystal Ball piece that references our work.

But as our successful Wisconsin primary experience attested, we've found effective ways to meet these challenges. And precisely because schools have so much else on their plates, they're relying on our resources and approaches more than ever for their nonpartisan election engagement. We've shifted or adapted existing approaches and developed new ones that should continue to be useful even when COVID is no longer a factor. Here are a few quick examples:

- Shift events and meetings online--like the successful statewide Student Voting Summits in Arizona, Colorado, Maine, Michigan (with partners), and (upcoming) in North Carolina.
- Help faculty leverage their access. Focus on bringing election-related resources and approaches that they can use either in physical or online learning environments. Resources include how diverse disciplines can address COVID as a teachable moment, a collection of online civic learning resources, and a guide to detecting disinformation. Tailor new voting resources to integrate with remote teaching platforms.
- Help schools register students virtually at orientation and course registration. Switch to using online tools or QR codes—offered free to our campus partners—to conduct voter outreach to dispersed student populations and minimize COVID risks.
- Promote mail-in balloting, especially early mail-in voting, where students can have the choice of mailing ballots back, dropping them in official drop boxes, or taking them to early voting centers. We've created a trio of one-to-two-minute animated videos that direct viewers to our mailvote.org webpage: COVID NO, Voting Yes, How to Vote by Mail, and Voting by Mail: Myths Vs Facts
- Integrate voter registration and engagement information into signatures and key documents like syllabi for faculty, financial aid officers, and other wide-impact stakeholders. Michigan's Secretary of State already took our idea of promoting voting in faculty signatures to the National Association of Secretaries of State.
- Prioritize virtual approaches in student communications, championed by CEEP's student Fellows. These include virtual classroom visits, outreach to key campus influencers for social media reach, engaging campus organizations and institutions to do peer outreach, organizing virtual town halls and debate watch parties. Our Digital Director is training and consulting with our Fellows on these approaches.

- Distribute our candidate guides and key logistical information through all-campus email and social media, which already occurs. We just finished and are distributing our Presidential Guide, in English and Spanish versions.
- Enlist new and existing partners to get resources out beyond the campus gates. Ones who've signed on so far include Rock the Vote, Nonprofit Vote, Youth Service America, Do Something, HeadCount and When We All Vote. SONY/RCA is looking at promoting them through their network of artists, and we're talking with other organizations like Voto Latino. We're also talking with a couple top-rated publicity firms to help in this effort—though still raising funding.
- Encourage schools to distribute peer-to-peer texting tools so students can encourage friends, relatives, and fellow students to register and vote. We've worked with Democracy Labs to create a new VoteForce app that lets us send either general or school-specific messages.
- Create a digital pledge to vote campaign and a Twitter bot to encourage registration.
- Enlist campus influencers, like star athletes, to join our existing "I Vote Because" social media campaigns. Develop election-related social media resources that schools can distribute, and promote existing resources like our close elections video and our nonpartisan candidate guides, both of which schools are used to distributing via all-campus email and social media.
- Update all our other approaches to include virtual options.