
There are bumps on the road to every successful event and it takes work to overcome them. When you encounter obstacles, it's important to improvise and adjust your strategies. CEEP is here to help you along the way. We've compiled a list of some of the common challenges faced by Fellows in the past and how they overcame them.

No One Shows up to Your Event.

- **How did you advertise?** Whether you are hosting a campus-wide meeting on civic engagement, a get-out-the-vote party or a voter registration drive, advertising is key. Use social media, email blasts and posters or flyers to increase publicity. Be intentional about posting advertisements where a variety of students can see them. Advertisements should be eye-catching and contain a clear and accurate time, date and location for the event. Post them early and share with other student organizations and even faculty members.
- **Was your event accessible?** College students are busy balancing both classes and work with their civic engagement. It's important to pick a location that's known by students and that they can easily get to. You should also think of times that work with students' class and social schedules.
- **Who's not involved?** Spend some time thinking about who is not attending your events. How can you encourage them to get involved? Think about students in STEM majors or in multicultural student organizations. Consider changing your events to suit their needs or attending other organizations' meetings to increase interest. You may need to offer invitations to specific people rather than target the campus at large.

Same Small Group of Students Attend Your Events.

- **How are you actively working to expand your audience?** First of all, it's great that you have a dedicated group of attendees. Encourage them to use their voice by getting more involved in civic engagement. It's also important to build a campus-wide coalition that reaches out to students across campus. Building up a strong coalition requires both **breadth** and **depth**. Examples of breadth include sending out campus-wide emails, speaking in front of large groups or social media campaigns. Depth is also important, though more difficult to quantify. Think about long one-on-one conversations and smaller discussions that can change students' mindsets.

CAMPUS ELECTION ENGAGEMENT PROJECT FELLOW

- **Do students seem generally uninterested?** Speak to students one-on-one to find out what issues they care about and explain how it's related to voting. Also, keep handouts brief and limited. A lot of information can overwhelm students. Brainstorm more creative events with your team and State Director to pique students' interests. Smaller, non-tabling events may take more initial planning but pay off in the long run.

You Don't Have Enough Volunteers.

- **Who are you recruiting?** Let all students who attend your events know that they are able to volunteer. Partner with other student groups to combine volunteers for large events.
- **How are you encouraging them to continue?** Include volunteers in the planning stages so that they can contribute their ideas. Create a list of volunteers and contact them regularly to update them about upcoming events. Also, try to spread out tasks and shifts evenly so that no one is overwhelmed.

Not Enough People Are Interacting With Social Media.

- **Are you creating opportunities for direct engagement?** Social media revolves around forming relationships. Interacting directly with your followers builds a community of people dedicated to getting involved. Increase the reach of your platform with livestreams, polls and other interactive features.
- **Are you reaching out directly?** DM your followers and mention the exciting opportunity on your account's feed, encouraging them to check it out. Connect with a club or office at your school with a strong following, asking them to interact with your campaign and encourage their members to do the same.
- **Still stuck?** Take time to review our Digital Organizing and Branding training. Then, reach out to Ellie Sullum from CEEP's Digital Engagement team at ellie@campuselect.org.

It's Difficult to Create a Coalition Among Administrators and Student Organizations.

- **Have you connected with individuals?** Meet with administrators as early as possible. Build relationships with individuals in many departments. Some may prefer email communication while others might want a phone call or going into the office to talk in person. Keep a list of contacts so that future CEEP Fellows have an idea of who to work with on future projects.
- **What role does your advisor play?** Your on-campus faculty advisor can help you reach out to other faculty and staff, increasing the amount of people involved.

Make sure to include your advisor in the planning and implementation process of your events.

- **Are you part of a recognized organization on campus?** Some campus activities, like tabling or reserving specific rooms, are limited to registered student organizations. You may need to create or partner with an organization to work within the system. You should also partner with student government to expand your reach and recognition.
- **How are you reaching out to student organizations?** Reach out to all student organizations by sending out campus-wide emails, speaking in front of large groups and social media campaigns. You should also personally reach out to student organizations. Try to send out individual emails and build relationships with leaders and members of student organizations, especially those that aren't initially involved. Be open to having one-on-one conversations and small discussions.

Tabling Is More Difficult Than You First Thought.

- **Can you set up a table on campus?** Some campuses have strict rules about who can set up tables and where they can be set up. You may need to create a registered student organization or partner with one just to start the paperwork. In any case, start looking into the process of tabling early.
- **Do people just walk by?** Create an attractive looking table with tablecloths, posters, signs, food or candy, and colorful handouts. Have volunteers step out from behind the table to talk directly to people. Also consider location. For example, a location by a dining hall may mean that you talk to lots of freshmen, but miss the commuter students. Try to mix up tabling locations if possible. Read CEEP's [Tabling Guide](#) for more information.

Your Event Feels Chaotic or Confusing.

- **What did your planning process look like?** Events require far more preparation than day-of implementation. Prepare for events early. Schedule and book a location prior to the event date. It can take a long time for campus administrators to approve forms, so give yourself time.
- **How did you prepare volunteers?** First, self-evaluate. Ask yourself if you understand campus and state rules around voting and event registration. Then think about how you explained voter registration and education to volunteers. Train volunteers in advance and give them time to ask questions and practice interacting with students.

People Seem to Lose Interest Fast.

- **Is your event interactive?** Students should be able to participate in the activities. Make sure to leave plenty of time for discussion at voter education seminars and informational sessions.
- **How long are your events?** Make sure to have a variety of events, some shorter and some longer. Students are busy and events that let them come and go as they please might be more appropriate.

Everyone Is Already Registered to Vote.

- **Are they registered at the right address?** Ask if students are registered at their current address so you can help them update their information. Students can register at their home or campus address.
- **Have you done enough voter education events?** There's so much work to be done with voter education, absentee/early voting, and getting out the vote (GOTV). You could also lead an institutional project working toward a polling place on campus or having Election Day be designated as a campus holiday.

It's Not a Presidential Election Year.

- **What other elections are happening?** Even though presidential elections only occur every four years, it's always an election year at the state or local level. State elections, local elections and primaries are very important and can be shaped by just a couple of votes. Get students excited about making a difference.
- **What are some other needs of your campus?** When it's not election season, you have time to work on institutional projects and voter education. Lead discussions with students and explain how they can communicate with their representatives.

Someone Gets Angry, Frustrated or Argumentative.

- **How do you leave an uncomfortable situation?** It's okay to end a conversation and walk away. You might say, "Thanks for your interest! Did you get a copy of everything here? Great, thanks for stopping by!" Then leave saying, "I'm going to take a count of resources/talk to another student/get a drink of water/etc."
- **How do you leave a hostile situation?** Your safety is our top priority. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable at your event, we encourage you to leave. It will not be counted against you in your fellowship requirements if you leave an event to ensure your safety. Report the incident to your State Director and the National Fellowship Director, Courtney Cochran, at 814-758-8881. Courtney can be reached in non-emergency situations at courtney@campuselect.org.