



Voter Engagement at Rollins College: A Three Step Approach



2016-2017

A cross-campus partnership involving Student Affairs and Academic Affairs

Context

Rollins College commits itself to the mission of educating students for *Global Citizenship and Responsible Leadership*. In congruence with the College's values, the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement (CLCE) inspires action and cultivates positive social change through leadership development and community engagement. Service-learning designated courses taught by distinguished faculty members; a Bonner Leaders program; an initiative dedicated to civic and electoral engagement efforts across campus; support of leadership and service-focused student organizations; a robust Immersion program; administrators who deeply support and practice the work; and community partners who are valued as co-educators – all are integral components to Rollins' current community engagement work.

In regards to the civic and electoral engagement efforts, the Rollins College Democracy Project (RCDP) was established within this context in the spring of 2012 as the College's response to AAC&U's call to action from their seminal text, *A Crucible Moment*. Supported within CLCE, the RCDP focuses on increasing and elevating the civic involvement of the Rollins community by preparing students with the knowledge and skills to impact social change, encourage civic interests, and find their voice within local and global democracies. Through programming and education, this nonpartisan, student-led initiative strives to empower students as the next generation of active citizens by fostering a civic ethos and advancing civic action. Since its inception, the RCDP has utilized a peer-to-peer leadership model in order to empower students' roles as active citizens.

In the summer and fall of 2012, the RCDP focused exclusively on engaging students in the voting process. The RCDP takes a three tiered approach to voter engagement efforts across campus: registration, education, and mobilization – all of which will be discussed in more detail throughout this planning document. After the November election, though, the team had to think creatively about what came next. Since the overall mission of the RCDP is to educate and engage students as active citizens, ideas came easily. The work evolved into helping students recognize that voting is an extremely important and necessary part of the democratic process, but it does not start and stop there.

As a result during non-election years, the RCDP began programming around three main themes, selected by the student body. A campus-wide email is distributed asking students what themes they are interested in learning more about. This list is generated from the Orange County League of Women Voters' committee topic areas to remain nonpartisan. Previous topics from the themed-programming have included transportation, immigration, and education. Student leaders worked with staff, faculty, and community partners to: explore the new



commuter rail, Sunrail, with their elected US Representative, Congressman John Mica; host a naturalization ceremony on campus in partnership with a service-learning course– a first for Rollins; and engage in dialogue on the value of a liberal arts education. In addition, through a civic incubator program, the RCDP supports students', faculty's, and staff's civic efforts and individual programs. Resulting programs have included an Immersion to Tallahassee to understand the Florida governmental system and a campus panel discussion on understanding the intersections between juries and potential

implicit biases and discrimination.

It is within this robust context that the RCDP is excited to participate in this planning process and apply for the Voter Friendly Campus Designation. The remaining sections of this document contain information on *Staffing & Support, Implementation & Assessment, Schedule of Events, Goals & Outcomes*, and finally, *Contact Information*.

Staffing & Support

Rollins is fortunate that these efforts are supported by local community partners and from all levels across the college. This work is seen as an important part of Rollins' mission. That support has allowed the College to dedicate concerted resources towards these efforts. Funding for the RCDP comes partially from CLCE's operational budget and from an anonymous 3-year grant, ending this academic year.



The Associate Director in CLCE supervises a Graduate Assistant (GA) who serves as the direct staff advisor to the RCDP. The GA supervises a Student Coordinator (a work study position with a minimum of 8-10 office hours and/or programs each week). The Student Coordinator leads the Student Leadership Team (SLT) comprised of 5-7 Student Ambassadors – volunteer leadership positions of which 1-2 are first year student positions. The SLT meets for one hour every week.

Rollins' civic engagement efforts do not only happen through this one coalition. First and foremost,

community partners are central to this work. The SLT has developed strong relationships with individuals from the Supervisor of Elections, the Office of the Mayor of Winter Park, the Orange County League of Women Voters, the Lou Frey Institute, and other local colleges and universities engaged in this work. Of notable recognition is the advisory relationship that has been established with Dick Batchelor. Mr. Batchelor, the founder and CEO of a very successful management organization in Orlando, serves as a political analyst for Central Florida News 13 and WMFE's Intersection. He is a former member of the Florida House of Representatives and exemplifies active citizenship through his numerous community engagement efforts across the Central Florida community. He has participated in previous RCDP events on campus ranging from candidate forums to student leader discussions. And at the beginning of each academic year, members from the SLT meet with Mr. Batchelor for insight, guidance, and connections.

Here on campus, support comes from a variety of levels of administration, faculty, staff, and students. President Grant Cornwell, and his predecessor before him, President Lewis Duncan, have both been very supportive of this work. President Cornwell and Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Mamta Accapadi engage in this work on the campus level and on the national level, as did our outgoing Provost. They attend campus forums, send emails in support of voter engagement, and use TurboVote. Dr. Cornwell is also a member of the board of directors for AAC&U and was just asked to join the Florida Campus Compact Executive Committee. This past winter in conjunction with the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Conference, he signed the Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors. Dr. Accapadi sits on the Advisory Board for Civic Nation's ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, of which Rollins is a participating member. Rollins is a NASPA LEAD Advisory Institution, and staff have presented on these

topics at NASPA's CLDE Meeting in 2013 and 2015, and then also this past year at the NASPA Annual Conference.

Faculty from across different disciplines provide programmatic and promotional support too, although Political Science, Communication Studies, and the Olin Library are the most directly engaged departments. In fact, the RCDP received the Florida Campus Compact's 2015 award for Student Affairs and Academic Affairs partnerships. Staff partnerships include the following offices: Marketing & Communications, Inclusion & Campus Involvement, Residential Life & Explorations, and Student Media. Student partnerships that have emerged include organizations such as EcoRollins, Pinehurst, and SGA.

As is obvious, this work is led by the SLT, but, in order to be successful, takes many different partnerships across both the Rollins and the Central Florida communities.

Implementation & Assessment

Rollins participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) coordinated by the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University. Overall, results thus far have been positive. The student voting rate was [57.7% for the 2012 Presidential Election](#) and [26.5% for the 2014 Midterm Election](#) (as compared to peer institutions' rates of 46.9% and 18.8%, respectively). Through the RCDP, Rollins has been intentional about implementing a three-step approach to the voter engagement process – for any and all elections ranging from presidential and midterm elections to local and municipal elections (which happen in March rather than November for Winter Park). Due to Rollins' participation in NSLVE, decisions regarding the RCDP are data-driven; being grant funded helps to ensure annual reports are prepared. Furthermore, the SLT meeting spaces are used to reflect and process in real-time so changes to programs and voter engagement efforts can be implemented as needed.

Rollins has institutionalized voter registration across the campus through a 4-year partnership with TurboVote. Access to TurboVote is included in the following digital spaces: internal intranet website, Foxlink; on the new student checklist; on the returning student data verification checklist (*new this year*); and on the external website in multiple places. The College even has a [special RollinsVotes website](#) with a vanity url so it's easily accessible. In addition to that, voter registration has been folded into large-scale campus activities starting from Move-In Day of Orientation through other opportunities like theater performances and programs in the residence halls. The Rollins College and local Winter Park leadership also help lead the way in this regard. Beginning last year and continuing again this year, the Mayor of Winter Park included a welcome letter to all new students encouraging them to become active citizens of their new community and included a special voter registration plug. For the past several years, Rollins President has issued a special email to students on National Voter Registration Day, encouraging democratic engagement by registering to vote. Leading up to National Voter Registration Day, the Provost or President also sends faculty an email, providing them the resources to share with students. Social media is also used to help this process as well, including an ["I vote because..." video](#) that featured



various students, staff, faculty, and administrators sharing their own personal reasons for voting. An overview of specific initiatives scheduled for this coming fall can be found in *Schedule of Events*.

The education aspect of the RCDP's voter engagement work includes both education on the voting process but then also education on the candidates and issues on the ballot – both of which are outlined on the same RollinsVotes website. Being a residential campus that falls within one precinct allows the RCDP to focus programming on those ballot initiatives. Past efforts have included debate watch parties, candidate forums open to the community, and nonpartisan information sessions facilitated by the League of Women Voters.



Using voter records from the Supervisor of Elections and data from TurboVote allows staff to send targeted emails to registered voters sharing pertinent information on both the voting process and the candidates/issues on the ballot. Ongoing programs like the News Round Up (facilitated in partnership with the residential student organization, Pinehurst) and Politics on Tap (facilitated in partnership with faculty, most often from the Political Science department) create spaces for students to understand the connections voting can have on policy and the larger discourse.

Finally, the RCDP also coordinates efforts in regards to voter mobilization including absentee voting, early voting, and voting on Election Day. Social media, emails, and signage across campus are used to share information on these three methods of voting and their deadlines. TurboVote also sends election reminders. Displays in the library and banners across campus signify when voting is coming up. #RollinsVotes is used to encourage excitement around voting on social media. Chalking is used on Election Day. For the past several years, the RCDP has coordinated a Rally to the Polls for every election from the general election to the mid-term election to local, municipal elections in conjunction with Eco-Rollins, the environmental, sustainability student organization on campus. Utilizing both the campus bike share program and the 15-person bus on campus, anyone who votes at the local polling place (which is only a half mile away) has access.

Schedule of Events

The RCDP is in the process of reaching out to faculty and staff across campus, so they are aware of programming and can share these opportunities with students, too. The RCDP has an especially strong partnership with the first year seminar program, Rollins College Conference (RCC), which is integral to these efforts, and will be working to increase the partnership with the general education (rFLA) and Honors programs. (Note: If the event title is in **red** that is because this program is new this year.)

AUGUST

August 29, 2016 (Galloway, 9a): Presentation to Student Affairs Staff

Will be giving a brief overview on the voting process, highlighting important reminders and deadlines. Goal is to prepare staff to navigate the current election cycle.

August 16, 2016 (Location & Time TBD): Voter Engagement Focused SLT Training

Training of the SLT has always been fairly broad since the work of the RCDP is so vast. This year though, based on models collected from other institutions, the RCDP Student Coordinator will facilitate a specific

training on voter registration focusing on the Florida context and preparing for a robust national election season.

August 17, 2016 (Bush Atrium, 8a-3p): Move-In Day Check-in and Registration

Since 2012, the RCDP has facilitated voter registration via TurboVote. In addition to that process, a 3PVRO (Third Party Voter Registration Organization) will be on-site to facilitate the voter registration process for anyone who wants to vote in Florida, using their Rollins address or local address. **New this year: We will also have a complete list of all new students' box numbers to expedite the process.**

August 20, 2016 (Campus Center, 12p-2:30p): SPARC Day Registration during New Student Orientation

Last year, Peer Mentors were trained to facilitate voter registration via TurboVote during the reflection portion of SPARC Day. Unfortunately, these efforts were not successful. This year, the RCDP will host 2 tables in the Campus Center where lunch is served after the service portion of SPARC Day. One for the RCDP to facilitate voter registration via TurboVote and another for a 3PVRO to facilitate in-person voter registration efforts.

August 22, 2016 (Library, Time TBD): Set up display, Continuing Rollins' Legacy of Political Engagement

Passive display at the library that uses artifacts from the archives to show history of civic engagement at Rollins and encourages people to vote.

August 23, 2016 (Mills Lawn, 12p-2p): Community Hour on the Lawn - Registration

The RCDP is attempting to build voter registration into events that are already happening across campus and will have larger student crowds.

August 25, 2016 (McKean Gym, Time TBD): R-Community Fair - Registration

The RCDP is attempting to build voter registration into events that are already happening across campus and will have larger student crowds.

August 27, 2016 (Galloway Room, Time TBD): CLCE Student Leadership Retreat

Leadership retreat for all student leaders who work within CLCE.

August 30, 2016 (Tars Plaza/Olin Library, 7a-7p): Rally to the Polls - Primary Election Day

Initiative partnering with EcoRollins to facilitate transportation to the polling place in order for students to vote. Utilize the JUMP Bus and bicycles from the Bike Share Program which are stationed at the library and can be checked out as needed. Timed journeys to the polling station on the bus, picking up at Tars Plaza at 8am, 10am, 12.30pm, 3pm, and 6pm; students can sign up ahead of time using WeJoinIn.

SEPTEMBER

September 13, 2016 (Mary Jean Plaza and Time TBD): Launching of the Refugee Relocation Program

This past year, a campus-wide committee worked with Catholic Charities of Central Florida, a refugee resettlement organization as designated by the State Department, to serve as a transitional housing site for refugees. In preparation for the start of the program and as a part of Constitution Day activities, Catholic Charities will host a program that helps students better understand the resettlement process, and build empathy for people across the world with refugee status.

September 16, 2016 (Campus Center & Tars Plaza, 12p-2p): Constitution Day

This year Constitution Day falls on a Friday, which is an inopportune day for programming at Rollins. As a result, the big event will occur earlier in the week on September 13th. On Friday, members of the SLT will host voter registration and hand out pocket constitutions.

September 22, 2016 (Dave's Boathouse, 5p-6p): Politics on Tap – Race & Gender in American Politics

An initiative launched last spring between the RCDP and the Political Science Department, Politics on Tap is a conversational hour in Dave's Boathouse which allows for a discussion of a topical political issue over bar food and drink.

September 26, 2016 (Dave's Boathouse, Time TBD): Presidential Debate Watch Party

RCDP will host a debate watch party in the new, bar/restaurant on campus. This newly renovated space is a perfect location for debate watches. Being a popular spot on campus, especially in the evenings, folks who stop by for food typically end up watching the debate while they're there. Each debate will have a person fact checking and facilitating registration via TurboVote.

September 27, 2016 (Campus Center & Tars Plaza, 12-2p; Bush Lawn, Time TBD): NVRD

Voter registration will occur during the high traffic times of 12-2p, and **also in the later afternoon to reach some of the students who participate in evening course (which is new this year)**. Activities will include "This is why I vote" buttons, use of a polling booth, and questions from some of the different "Literacy Tests" that were historically used to disenfranchise black voters. Emails will be sent from President Cornwell to faculty early in September in support of voter engagement and NRVD. Email will go campus-wide on NVRD from President Cornwell.

OCTOBER (*FL registration deadline is October 11th)

October 4, 2016 (Dave's Boathouse, Time TBD): Vice Presidential Debate Watch Party

RCDP will host a debate watch party in the new, bar/restaurant on campus. This newly renovated space is a perfect location for debate watches. Being a popular spot on campus, especially in the evenings, folks who stop by for food typically end up watching the debate while they're there. Each debate will have a person fact checking and facilitating registration via TurboVote.

October 6, 2016 (Time and Location TBD) - Senate Debate Hosted at Rollins College

Dr. Rick Foglesong, Professor of Political Science and Political Analyst for WFTV Channel 9, is working in conjunction with Channel 9 and Marketing & Communication to host a debate between the candidates running for the open US Senator seat. The RCDP would help support the efforts and has been a part of the conversation from the planning stages last semester. Will also work to have the League of Women Voters there to facilitate voter registration and give out voter guides.

October 9, 2016 (Dave's Boathouse, Time TBD): Presidential Debate Watch Party

RCDP will host a debate watch party in the new, bar/restaurant on campus. This newly renovated space is a perfect location for debate watches. Being a popular spot on campus, especially in the evenings, folks who stop by for food typically end up watching the debate while they're there. Each debate will have a person fact checking and facilitating registration via TurboVote.

October 19, 2016 (Dave's Boathouse, Time TBD): Presidential Debate Watch Party

RCDP will host a debate watch party in the new, bar/restaurant on campus. This newly renovated space is a perfect location for debate watches. Being a popular spot on campus, especially in the evenings, folks who stop by for food typically end up watching the debate while they're there. Each debate will have a person fact checking and facilitating registration via TurboVote.

October 20, 2016 (Dave’s Boathouse, 5p-6p): Politics on Tap – Economic Policies of Trump & Clinton

An initiative launched last spring between the RCDP and the Political Science Department, Politics on Tap is a conversational hour in Dave’s Boathouse which allows for a discussion of a topical political issue over bar food and drink.

NOVEMBER

November 4, 2016 (Location and Time TBD) Debate with Debate Team for Family Weekend

During family weekend, the nationally ranked Rollins Debate Team will host either a mock debate or a debate on a central issue that comes up during the presidential campaign. RCDP has been asked to help support.

November 8, 2016 (Tars Plaza/Olin Library, 7a-7p): Rally to the Polls – General Election

Initiative partnering with EcoRollins to facilitate transportation to the polling place in order for students to vote. Utilize the JUMP Bus and bicycles from the Bike Share Program which are stationed at the library and can be checked out as needed. Timed journeys to the polling station on the bus, picking up at Tars Plaza at 8am, 10am, 12.30pm, 3pm, and 6pm; students can sign up ahead of time using WeJoinIn.

November 8, 2016 (Dave’s Boathouse, Time TBD): After Poll Party

A partnership with the student-led programming board, REP, this will be an election watch party with a potential theme of “Celebrate the Vote!” Food, activities, and tank tops (for folks who have an “I voted sticker”) will be available.

November 10, 2016 (Dave’s Boathouse, 5p-6p): Politics on Tap – Election Recap & Moving Forward

An initiative launched last spring between the RCDP and the Political Science Department, Politics on Tap is a conversational hour in Dave’s Boathouse which allows for a discussion of a topical political issue over bar food and drink.

Late November – Email Students re: Themed Programming for Spring

Send out email to see what students want the DP to focus on for the upcoming spring semester.

SPRING

January 20, 2017 (Location, Time TBD): President Inauguration Partnership with MLK Week

A watch event and talk back will be coordinated so students can watch the inauguration. Will work on a possible partnership with iCitizen, as was done last year for the State of the Union Watch Party.

February 10-12, 2017 (University of Florida, Bob Graham Center): Future of Florida Summit

Conference opportunity that RCDP helps support for Rollins student attendees (room and food are covered by the Summit). Applications will open in the middle of November and close the first week of January.

ONGOING

Weekly Student Leadership Team Meetings (CLCE Conference Room, Day and Time TBD)

Weekly meeting space to check in, manage projects, and engage in leadership development activities. Led by the Student Coordinator.

Facebook Presence

Managed by a member of the SLT, share relevant information and engaging content via the FB page.

STILL IN THE PLANNING STAGES

- **Holt Orientation:** Facilitate voter registration at Holt Orientation. Date, time, location TBD.
- **RollinsVotes Signage:** This year the RCDP has been working with a Print Specialist and Graphic Designer to create a much more highly visible marketing campaign. Banners, lawn signs, and door tags (for residence hall rooms and faculty/staff offices) are being created that reinforces the “Get Out the Vote” messaging and directs folks to the new website.
 - This will also include “I Voted” stickers that the on-campus post office will keep handy for folks who vote via Absentee Ballot.
- **Tars Tailgate:** One of the soccer games is sponsored by the Fraternity and Sorority community. If it falls before the voter registration deadline, would like to facilitate registration there.
- **Partnerships with WPRK and the Sandspur:** Solidify times to go on air and have print media covering voting.
- **Voting Videos with President Cornwell:** Last year, President Cornwell released a series of popular videos in anticipation of a big annual tradition here at Rollins. Using that model, coupled with the example set forth by President Obama’s recent voter registration video, Dr. Cornwell has agreed to three videos – one on voter registration, one of getting informed, and one on actually getting out the vote. These will be released throughout the semester.
- **RCDP Email Timeline:** Finalize both campus-wide email and targeted email schedules (to registered voters here locally and also more generally to academic departments, using issues that are at stake to motivate them to engage in the democratic process).
- **Lunch & Learn with the League of Women Voters:** Solidify time for the League to facilitate an overview on any state or local amendments on the ballot.
- **Rally to the Polls – Early Voting Edition:** Utilizing the faculty-in-residence and residential life staff to rally students to walk to our nearby Early Voting Polling Location This could occur any time between October 23rd - November 5th but preference is for the first weekend it is open for the General Election.

Goals & Outcomes

This year, we have two larger, over-arching goals that can be broken down into more incremental steps.



Ensure that all eligible Rollins students have the tools and resources they need to be active participants in the electoral process.

Benchmark: Increase the voter participation rate from 57.7% to 60%.

- Through the focused Student Ambassador Training, we are planning to better equip the student leaders of the RCDP to engage in this work.
- Better integrate voter engagement knowledge into the curriculum. We will focus specifically on RCC, rFLA, and the Honors Program and have started outreach to the faculty members who coordinate these programs. In addition, we will ensure that President Cornwell emails faculty asking for their support earlier in the semester. And finally we will offer a Voter Overview facilitated by the SLT for any faculty member who wants to incorporate it into their course.
- We will engage more staff in this work and help them understand the process as well. The Student Affairs training is meant to meet this component, as well as providing staff with

more tangible resources.

- We need to incorporate voter registration and/or access to voter resources at events students already attend. This year we will try to partner more intentionally with Athletics and our Fraternity & Sorority Life departments.
- Many of the questions students have can be answered by visiting the RollinsVotes website; however it is not a well-known resource across campus, yet. Through clearer and more visible signage, use of student media outlets, campus emails, and a prominent highlight on the Rollins homepage, we hope students come to learn about it and use it more widely.



Create spaces for healthy, deliberative dialogues across campus, so that students understand how this type of discourse is integral to the democratic process and active citizenship.

Benchmark: Raise the participation in dialogue-centered programming from last year.

- Strengthen the partnership between the RCDP and Pinehurst to host better attended News Round Ups. (Numbers dipped from AY14-15 to 15-16).
- Continue to grow the Politics on Tap program with the Political Science department.
- Use social media, specifically Facebook to model the way on how to engage in purposeful digital discourse.
- Offer spaces, like the Senate Debate, where students can continue to engage in key local issues.
- Prepare and then facilitate the theme programming for the Spring semester.

Contact Information

Rollins Democracy Project within the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement:

Email: dproject@rollins.edu

Phone: 407-691-1250

[CLCE Website](#)

[Democracy Project Website](#)

[Democracy Project Facebook](#)

[RollinsVotes Website](#)

Destiny Reyes, Student Coordinator, Rollins Democracy Project

Email: DREYES@Rollins.edu

Phone: 407-691-1250

Stephanie Arredondo, Graduate Assistant and Staff Advisor, Rollins Democracy Project

Email: SARREDONDO@Rollins.edu

Phone: 407-691-1250

Marissa Corrente, Associate Director, Center for Leadership & Community Engagement

Email: MCORRENTE@Rollins.edu

Phone: 407-691-1232

