

ALL IN Challenge Action Plan 2020

Chapman University



**Department of
Student Engagement**
Civic Engagement Initiatives

Executive Summary

Chapman University's mission is to provide personalized education of distinction that leads to inquiring, ethical, and productive lives as global citizens. One important component of being a global citizen is to maintain civic engagement. Civic Engagement Initiatives (CEI), housed within the Department of Student Engagement in the student affairs division, inspires students to see themselves as part of the larger social fabric and to be informed and active citizens in our local, national, and global communities.

This campus voter engagement action plan was developed by CEI to improve on our current voter engagement efforts and enhance the current voter engagement coalition. This plan was developed as required for our participation in the All IN Campus Democracy Challenge. The intended duration of the plan is from June 2020 to June 2021, the plan will be reviewed and evaluated after the November 2020 election. The plan will be implemented by CEI professional staff and student assistants in collaboration with various campus partners and external partners.

Leadership

Professional Staff

Shishei Tsang, Program Coordinator for Student Engagement

Justin Koppelman, Ph.D., Associate Director of Student Engagement

Voter Engagement Coalition

Currently, Civic Engagement Initiatives works with a coalition of student organizations, academic departments and external civic engagement organizations to promote civic learning and democratic engagement work. Student organizations include Chapman Democrats, Chapman Republicans, Alternatives in Democracy, the University Programming Board, and Student Government Association. The Program Coordinator and Associate Director of Student Engagement work with academic departments such as the political science department, the Office of Residence Life and First Year Experience, the Center for Global Education, the Center for Freedom of Expression and Media Integrity, Alumni Engagement, and faculty and staff throughout campus. Civic Engagement Initiatives also offers TurboVote as a resource and works with the Orange County Registrar of Voters (OCROV) and the US Census Bureau to ensure Chapman students are have multiple opportunities to be represented and registered for elections. The staff who oversee Civic Engagement Initiatives are also responsible for Chapman's Cross-Cultural Center and advising diversity/cultural student organizations, which helps

to ensure voter engagement efforts consider and engage a diverse community of interested students and include efforts that position marginalized communities as a central focus.

Commitment & Landscape

CEI is Chapman University's main resource to support students with voter education, voter registration, voting, and civic learning more broadly. CEI actively collaborates with campus partners, academic departments, student organizations and external non-partisan and non-profit civic organization, which makes CEI's work possible at Chapman University.

CEI is committed to improving democratic engagement. For example, in 2016, Chapman's voting rate increased from 47% in 2012 to 57% as a result of the voter engagement efforts led by CEI in partnership with other campus groups. Likewise, Chapman University's midterm election voting rates also increased above the national average. Chapman University has been designated a Voter Friendly Campus in the last two recognition cycles and received the ALL IN Gold Campus designation for the 2018 midterm election. In addition, CEI professional staff represent Chapman University as a Lead Advisory Institution for NASPA's Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Initiative. Recognitions such as these are promoted directly to students and through institutional communication venues such as websites, social media platforms, and faculty/staff newsletters. CEI also put attention to collecting student evaluations to assess CEI area goals:

1. Increase students' disposition to be action in public issues.
2. Increase students' civic literacy about problems of/in democracy.
3. Increase the number of students voting in presidential elections.
4. Increase students' capacity for perspective-taking.

Senior leadership at Chapman University also treats civic learning and democratic engagement efforts as a priority. In March, 2020, President Struppa signed the Presidents' Commitment To Full Student Voter Participation as part of our involvement in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, and also signed on as a supporter of the Engage 2020 effort led by Wesleyan University. These commitments are communicated to administrators in both student affairs and academic affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students also emphasizes voter engagement regularly in weekly email announcements to all students.

The university's academic program is centered around global citizenship, which leads our academic experience to naturally emphasize civic learning and democratic engagement. For example, two of the four focus areas of our general education

program require enrollment in courses built with a civic orientation and framing. Within the liberal arts and sciences focus area, students are required to complete courses focused on inquiry into the natural sciences, social sciences, and ethics. The global focus area engages students in deeper learning about the diversity inherent in our social and natural environments, meaningful dialogue and action around the topics of citizenship and service, and a requirement to attain a basic intermediate fluency in a language other than English.

With full-time professional and part-time student staff dedicated to voter engagement efforts, and an institutional budget to support that work, primary barriers have to do with understandable limits to institutional resources, the balance of multiple important priorities, and a continuing challenge of increasing voting literacy. While civic learning and democratic engagement efforts are widespread throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum, there is always more that could be done and more resources that could be allocated to enhancing how that work is done. The decentralized nature of University environments also requires relationships and buy-in in order to make voter engagement a pervasive element of our broader civic learning priorities. Developing and sustaining relationships that secure such buy-in often come at the expense of time and energy that would otherwise be dedicated to other valuable academic endeavors that might not operate with a salient civic or voter engagement framing. As a microcosm of the larger society and an institution inevitably influenced by it, institutions of higher education, including Chapman University, are faced with capturing students' attention and intention amidst a socio-political landscape that can make civic engagement difficult, at times seemingly fruitless, and make voter literacy and engagement confusing. We do our best and take on the challenge earnestly, while also recognizing a continuous cycle of new students brings a continuous cycle of striving to hold students' attention and foster their commitment to civic engagement in light of ever-evolving national socio-political climates.

NSLVE Summary

As indicated in the 2014 & 2018 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) reports, Chapman University's midterm election voting rate increased from 14.7% in 2014 to 44.2% in 2018; our student voter registration rate also increased. In both 2014 and 2018, vote-by-mail was the most preferred voting method. With COVID-19 presenting uncertainty on voting and California announcing its plan to provide vote-by-mail ballots to all who are registered to vote in the state, we anticipate a need to increase promotion about this method and support students who choose to vote-by-mail. In 2012, 2016, 2018, women's voting rate was higher than men's, which corresponds to a general trend in more women-identifying students participating in civic engagement-related campus events. CEI will work to further women's higher rate of engagement while leveraging that asset to attract the engagement of more men.

Our voting data will also guide CEI in identifying academic departments beyond political science that should be areas of focus for partnership. Since the data shows more voter engagement in fields of study such as education, legal professions and studies, and natural resources and conservation, we will dedicate additional effort to reach students in other fields of study in meaningful ways that lead to their registration and participation in the upcoming election.

Goals

2020 Focus Areas

- As college campuses experience a more polarized political climate, we plan to use educational programs to guide students in remaining curious, open-minded, and interested in a bipartisan political campus climate.
- We plan to expand our coalition to engage more faculty and staff in promoting voter engagement efforts and literacy within the context of their areas of responsibility.
- We plan to prioritize attention on overcoming ongoing barriers created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Long Term Goals:

- Increase students' disposition to be action in public issues.
- Increase students' civic literacy about problems of/in democracy.
- Increase the number of students voting in presidential elections.
- Increase students' capacity for perspective-taking.
- Increase students' empathy for individuals different from themselves.
- Increase students' connection to the Chapman community.
- Increase students' capacity for allyship.
- Reinvent reoccurring educational programs to increase bipartisan political climate on-campus.
- Sustain campus wide coalition with faculty, staff and students.
- Establish partnership with Residence Life & First Year Experience (RLFYE) and/or Office of the University Registrar to include voter registration as part of orientation or class registration process to increase voter registration rate.
- Continue to increase voter registration number and student voting rate.
- Continue to enhance on-campus vote center operation.
- Emphasize CEI's position and identity as the hub of civic engagement and voter engagement on campus.

Short Term Goals:

- Reconnect with faculty, staff, and students involved in the coalition before the Fall semester to secure their commitment to tangible goals that will be informed by *Ask Every Student* strategies and tactics.
- Increase student voting rate by 10 percent from 2016 to 2020 to receive a platinum seal of recognition from the All In Campus Democracy Challenge.
- Confirm the feasibility and functionality of incorporating voter registration into the process of course registration before the beginning of new student orientation.
- Launch a new @ChapmanCivic Instagram account in June and use the account weekly to engage students in ways that will motivate their participation in the November elections.
- Remain adaptive to unforeseeable challenges to voter registration and participation that might arise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategy

*All in-person elements of this strategy are contingent upon evolving state guidelines enacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. When an in-person effort is not possible, a virtual alternative will be implemented.

Voter Registration

Throughout each semester, Civic Engagement Initiatives coordinates various voter engagement opportunities for the Chapman community. Other than regular voter registration informational tabling during peak hours in the Argyros Forum Student Union and Attallah Piazza, tabling is also provided in conjunction with new student orientation/check-in, Constitution Day, our institutional homecoming celebration, and National Voter Registration Day. We also work with the local registrar of voters office to co-host informational tabling. Other efforts includes providing voter registration information, including an emphasis on TurboVote and our on-campus Vote Center, through campus digital signage, institutional social media platforms, our CU at the Booths webpage, our online student portal and mobile app, campus-wide departmental communication, and regular classroom visits/presentations. Specifically, TurboVote is integrated into our online student involvement platform (Engage), which pushes a pop-up window featuring TurboVote when students log into the platform for the first time, our student/staff/faculty portal, institutional websites, and our institutional mobile app.

Voter Education

Debate Screenings - We screened Democratic primary debates throughout Fall 2019 and will continue to screen presidential debates through the November election. During each screening, Civic Engagement Initiatives will table with coalition partners to provide voter registration information and educational flyers on the presidential candidates and ballot propositions.

Additional Political Event Screenings - We will partner with the Argyros Forum Student Union to screen any other political events that arise, such as CNN LGBTQ Town Halls and congressional hearings.

Life of the Parties - At the beginning of Fall semester, Civic Engagement Initiatives, Chapman Democrats and Chapman Republicans collaborate on this non-partisan event intended to provide students with an opportunity to learn about each political party's stance on current issues.

Global Citizens Wall - The Global Citizen Wall will continue to be updated weekly with a new question about an economic, environmental, social, or political current event to foster dialogue and civic learning. Topics in Fall 2019 included the Hong Kong anti-extradition bill protests, social media companies' responsibility for political advertising, President Trump's impeachment inquiry, and environmental protection.

Educational Programming - We will collaborate with academic departments to host educational programming on conservative and liberal ideologies as well as any current events that arise. For example, we hosted an *Implications of Impeachment* event with our political science department to capitalize on students' attention to the impeachment process.

Voter Engagement Lighting Talk – The Voter Engagement team will do short classroom visits with topics focusing on voter registration and voting related information to increase students' voter registration rate and to encourage students to vote.

Voter Turnout

Early Voting Day – In the week approaching Early Voting Day (October 24th, 2020), we will launch a marketing campaign to promote early voting as an option for students.

CU at the Booths Video and Campaign – Chapman University's strategic marketing and communications team will produce a video featuring faculty, staff, and students that will

be used across all digital platforms to ensure that students know the University is providing resources and support to ensure they will make it to the booths on election day. The CU at the Booths social media campaign will also encourage students to identify a voting buddy to integrating peer accountability into our efforts to increase our voting rate.

Orange County Registrar of Voters (OCROV) Vote Center – We will continue to work with our local registrar of voters to host an on-campus vote center to increase accessibility for Chapman students and the surrounding Orange community. The Vote Center will be open three days prior to and on election day; it will also be managed in accordance with social distancing considerations.

In Response to COVID-19

The stay-at-home order implemented in March, 2020 have led to many challenges and uncertainty for CEI efforts the future. However, CEI responded quickly and created new virtual efforts to continue democratic engagement work:

Civic Engagement Initiative Virtual Tabling Hours – CEI reserved time on the Student Engagement departmental Instagram account (@LifecatCU) to table virtually by posting civic engagement and voter engagement related content on Instagram story to inform and interact with students.

Virtual Global Citizens Wall – Since the physical Global Citizens Wall (GCW) in the Argyros Student Union is no longer accessible, the virtual Global Citizens Wall is posted as a “question” on @LifecatCU twice a week to allow students to respond to the GCW question of the week. Responses are posted on an online CEI news article every week.

@ChapmanCivic Instagram – Understanding that social media would be the main way to engage students virtually while we stay-at-home.

California Vote-by-Mail – Due to COVID-19, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-64-20 for general election to be conducted as an all-mail ballot election. CEI will update voter education materials and support vote-by-mail option for Chapman students and community who may not be comfortable with voting in-person.

COVID-19 Contingency Plans – CEI will follow direction from Chapman University’s administration in response to COVID-19. CEI is prepared to continue voter engagement whether future campus operation is virtual, hybrid or in-person. Social distancing rules will be applied to any in-person event to allow students to safely engage.

Reporting

This report will be shared with administrative and faculty colleagues as well as the general student population. This plan will be available publicly on the CEI website in addition to the websites of national partners, such as the ALL IN Challenge and Voter Friendly Campus. The plan and relevant voter-related data will also be shared via the institutional social media accounts to engage more students.

Evaluation

TurboVote – Professional staff will receive data from TurboVote to track the number of Chapman family members who utilize this resource.

Paper Voter Registration Forms – We will keep track of the number of voter registration forms provided to students at informational tables inform our understanding of our reach as well as our understanding of which days/times/locations work best for a new cohort of students.

Orange County Registrar of Voters (OCROV) – OCROV will report vote center usage data.

National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) –The NSLVE report will provide accurate data on the Chapman student voting rate.

Civic Engagement Initiatives Programming Evaluations – CEI student assistants will collect participant rosters and evaluations at each program hosted by the team. The evaluation assesses the degree to which the program fulfilled any of our civic learning and development area goal listed above.

Data from all of the above sources will be reviewed regularly by faculty, staff, and students to consider what works best within our own institutional context. While some data will not be received until long after election day, other data will be received as early as new student orientation and will guide us in ensuring our efforts adapt to new insights and opportunities. While in the initial phases, the University has also committed to a self-assessment of its co-curricular civic engagement efforts in the upcoming Western Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation review.