



**FALL 2018**

# **ENGAGE THE VOTE**

**A CAMPUS VOTING ACTION PLAN, FALL 2018-FALL 2020**

**COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS**





*Good citizens do things: they speak out, they vote, they volunteer, they organize. But to do those things well, citizens need to know things. Civic action requires civic knowledge.*

Russell Muirhead  
*Resuscitating Civic Education (2012)*  
Hoover Institute, Stanford University

## **Introduction**

Increasing rates of civic illiteracy and disinterest in civic engagement plague our nation's colleges. However, research shows that the earlier individuals embrace civic knowledge, as well as experience community service firsthand, the more likely they will become civically aware and engaged in voting and volunteerism throughout their lifetimes (Hollander and Burack, 2008). *Engage the Vote: A Campus Voting Action Plan, Fall 2018-Fall 2019* provides a first-time effort of College of the Canyons (COC) to create a long-term and sustainable campus wide plan to increase political engagement.

The objective of this plan is to engage the entire campus community in greater civic awareness, especially regarding voter education, registration, and participation. Civic engagement is a concept which describes those philosophies and activities which bridge thought with action and provide meaningful service to communities. As Thomas Ehrlich (2000), former Carnegie Foundation Senior Scholar suggests, civic engagement means:

*“working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes”* (Ehrlich, 2000:vi).

The decline in political engagement has been well documented over the past three decades and is evidenced by plummeting rates of civic proficiency and increasing lack of participation in voluntary associations, electoral politics, religious congregations, and community-based organizations (Carnegie and CIRCLE, 2003 and National Taskforce on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012:6). The civic health of America has reached “anemic” levels;

and, when controlling for issues of race, ethnicity, and class, these rates are significantly worse than the rest of the population (Campus Compact, 2010).

### **America's Call to Action**

In response to this escalating problem of “civic unawareness,” the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), published *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future (2012)*. This work was written as a response, in part, to the increasing disengagement of our nation's citizenry from American Democracy. *A Crucible Moment (2012)* reflects its title, as it encourages transformative change within postsecondary education by emphasizing the need for civic learning and engagement. It has become the manifesto of a movement dedicated to increasing civic knowledge and community participation among our nation's college students. To make democracy and civic responsibility “central, not peripheral” within our colleges and universities is the desired outcome proposed by those scholars and organizations working in the field (Scobey, 2012). It is no longer the sole responsibility of disciplines like political science and history to serve as the primary conduits of civic knowledge and civic engagement. It is now the responsibility of *all* disciplines to transmit civic and political awareness (Smith, et al., 2010).

A “civic engagement movement” designed to redefine, revise, and recapture the interest of America's citizenry, especially among its young, is gaining momentum throughout the country (Saltmarsh and Hartley, 2011). This is especially true of the nation's community colleges, including College of the Canyons. Following the lead of The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012:15), by emphasizing the concepts of civic ethos, civic literacy, civic inquiry, and civic action, COC is working to excel as a “civic-minded” campus. We recognize that it is time for our nation's young people to understand their place in the “collective whole,” as well as to “serve a larger purpose” (Boyer, 1996:22).

*A Crucible Moment (2012)* is considered a seminal work in education which examines the need for America to “reclaim” its civic mission and to make civic learning at the postsecondary level expected, not voluntary. Its authors argue that such learning should be infused across the curriculum, as well as incorporated across the campus environment. By creating a campus “culture” of civic engagement, which supports the proliferation of civic literacy, inquiry, action, and a civic ethos, it will transcend institutional boundaries to include all venues of college life. This work has guided the vision of College of the Canyons' Civic and Community Engagement Initiative. At no other time in American history has it been as crucial for students--no matter their academic goals--to secure civic knowledge and skills in order to protect American Democracy. *A Call to Action: A Campus Voting Action Plan, Fall 2018-Fall 2020* recognizes the role COC will play in shaping the engaged mindset of a new generation.

## **College of the Canyons**

College of the Canyons (COC), founded in 1969, is a California Community College and Hispanic Servicing Institution located in Santa Clarita, California in northern Los Angeles County. COC is one of 115 community colleges operating throughout the state of California. The College served 32,000 students between 2016 and 2017 and offers 80 certificate and 89 AA/AS Degree programs in a variety of vocational, technical, and academic disciplines. The College's programs articulate with programs at the University of California, California State University, and several private institutions. The student population has grown 128% in the past 10 years. Since 2000, COC has enjoyed striking increases in diversity with the non-white population nearly tripling to over 50 percent of the student body, and Latino students nearly quadrupled to 45.2 percent of the student body. White students total 34.5 percent; 5.4 percent are African American, 5.9 percent Asian, 4.3 percent Filipino, with the balance including people of multiple or unknown race/ethnicity. The student body is 44 percent female, 55 percent male (COC Annual Report, 2016-2017:3). The great success of the College is a result of the vision of Chancellor Dianne Van Hook, who has served College of the Canyons for 30 years. Dr. Van Hook is the longest serving Chancellor in the history of the California Community College System, and her commitment to civic engagement is great, as is evidenced by the College's support of its Civic and Community Engagement Initiative. The development of this initiative, along with the establishment of a Center for Civic Engagement provides the foundation of a voter engagement action plan.

## **COC's Civic and Community Engagement Initiative**

Applying the concept of civic engagement defined by Ehrlich (2000), especially with regard to community engagement, the need to increase electoral knowledge and participation among the campus community reinforces the goals of COC's Center for Civic Engagement's Civic and its Civic and Community Engagement Initiative (2016), which was influenced by *A Crucible Moment* (2012).

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COC's Civic and Community Engagement Initiative originated from a 2013-2014 AAC&U *Bringing Theory to Practice Grant*. As a result of this award, a day-long workshop was conducted to examine the concept of civic engagement at the College, as well as to discuss how

to create a civic engagement action plan. A campus Civic Engagement Gap Analysis was performed, as well as a Civic Engagement S.W.O.T. Analysis. Participants included students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The overall results rendered valuable information, which was shared with Dr. Van Hook. As a result, she determined it was important for the College to pursue the idea of establishing a Center for Civic Engagement. A campus team visited De Anza College in Northern California during spring 2015 to review its work, since the institution has an accomplished history of addressing civic and community engagement. By August, the position of Faculty Director, Civic and Community Engagement Initiatives was created, as well as space secured for a Center for Civic Engagement. A strategic plan, entitled, *A Call to Action: An Initiative for Civic Engagement, Self, and Society*, was written and a Civic Engagement Steering Committee formed.

The initiative seeks to create a civic-minded campus culture among students, faculty, and staff while emphasizing their place in a global context. “If civic engagement is to gain real traction in today’s higher education,” suggests Barbara Jacoby, “it must be clearly defined, and civic learning outcomes must be established.” In other words, “Opportunities to learn about and practice civic engagement must be embedded throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum” (Jacoby, 2009:2). COC is doing just that. As stated in *A Crucible Moment (2012:15)*, a civic-minded campus will incorporate the following areas:

### **Civic Ethos Governing Campus Life**

The infusion of democratic values into the customs and habits of everyday practices, structures, and interactions; the defining character of the institution and those in it that emphasizes open-mindedness, civility, the worth of each person, ethical behaviors, and concern for the well-being of others; a spirit of public-mindedness that influences the goals of the institution and its engagement with local and global communities.

### **Civic Literacy as a Goal for Every Student**

The cultivation of foundational knowledge about fundamental principles and debates about democracy expressed over time, both within the United States and in other countries; familiarity with several key historical struggles, campaigns, and social movements undertaken to achieve the full promise of democracy; the ability to think critically about complex issues and to seek and evaluate information about issues that have public consequences.

### **Civic Inquiry Integrated Within the Majors and General Education**

The practice of inquiring about the civic dimensions and public consequences of a subject of study; the exploration of the impact of choices on different constituencies and entities,

including the planet; the deliberate consideration of differing points of views; the ability to describe and analyze civic intellectual debates within one's major or areas of study.

### **Civic Action as Lifelong Practice**

The capacity and commitment both to participate constructively with diverse others and to work collectively to address common problems; the practice of working in a pluralistic society and world to improve the quality of people's lives and the sustainability of the planet; the ability to analyze systems in order to plan and engage in public action; the moral and political courage to take risks to achieve a greater public good.

Guided by these four areas, the Civic Engagement Steering Committee is moving the discussion of civic and community engagement at College of the Canyons from margin to center. The Civic Engagement Initiative is working to breakdown campus silos and to offer a foundational framework for the entire campus to follow. Its basic principles include:

#### **Mission Statement**

Democratic engagement fosters knowledge, responsibility, civility, and respect by encouraging greater awareness of the social, cultural, and political concerns affecting the public good. Through campus and community partnerships, social issues are addressed from a local, national, and global perspective while creating a citizenry of change agents. Civic transformation is achieved through critical thinking, reflection, and participation in "deep learning" experiences made available through curricular, co-curricular, and professional development opportunities.

#### **Vision Statement**

Democratic engagement bridges theory with practice (e.g., praxis) to create a "civic-minded" culture which fosters representative thought and action to enhance the public good. Through collaboration, service, and reciprocity, students, faculty, staff, and community serve as civic leaders and help to inform others of social issues. Through civic awareness, a concerned citizenry can confront problems facing person, thing, and environment and create social change.

#### **Philosophy Statement**

Democratic engagement exercises a philosophy of social action and personal responsibility through individual reflection to increase awareness and confront community, state, national, and global social problems to ensure greater well-being of the public good.

#### **Core Values**

**Equity:** working to provide fair access and opportunity to all members of society by employing ways to eliminate the "civic opportunity gap."

**Activism:** speaking on behalf of a person, place or thing for the purpose of bringing attention to a social issue affecting the larger collective whole and suggesting social change.

**Sustainability:** increasing awareness of environmental concerns and encouraging personal action in helping to protect the environment and the world's natural resources.

**Dignity:** understanding various cultural, social, political, and religious perspectives within the larger global context and respecting differences.

**Engagement:** creating opportunities to work with community members and organizations to achieve positive social change.

**Leadership:** guiding and inspiring others to contribute to the public good.

**Collaboration:** cultivating internal and external partnerships to address civic concerns through collaboration and shared responsibility.

**Integrity:** setting high standards and addressing issues with strong ethics while displaying consistency, honesty, and transparency of thought and action.

### **Creating a Voter Engagement Action Plan**

The overall mission of the College's Civic and Community Engagement Initiative fits perfectly with the need to create and implement a voter engagement action plan. Although College of the Canyons is supportive of voter awareness and participation among its student body, the campus has neither created nor facilitated an organized voter engagement action plan in its history. In other words, a formal plan has never been institutionalized for the College or plans evaluated on a regular basis. Although students are provided a "register to vote" link when enrolling in classes, as well as encouraged to stop by voter registration tables, this is the first full-scale effort to create a year-round focus on Engage the Election. In addition, the campus has primarily focused on voter registration only, while charging Student Services with this task. Associated Student Government (ASG), for example, has also supported debates between local Board of Trustee candidates. Although voter registration is extremely important, this is only one part of political engagement. When placing voter registration under the larger umbrella of civic engagement, it is imperative for the College to address voter awareness, education, and participation as well.

Working with Engage the Vote through Campus Compact's Democracy Commitment Initiative for Community Colleges, along with Tufts University's National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Initiative, Civic Nation, #VoteTogether, and All-In Campus Democracy Challenge, COC has done much this semester to create a "civic mind-set" focused on political engagement. In fact, when realizing that of 12,944 of COC's eligible student voters, only 1,636 actually voted; or, stated differently, only 12.6 percent of students cast a ballot during the 2014 midterm election—much work is needed. Interestingly, 6,935 students at COC registered for the first time in 2014 while 53.6 percent voted. However, of those who voted, only 23.6 percent

were between the ages of 18-24, the age group whose voice is most lacking at the polls. NSLVE data clearly show that COC's action plan must also attend to voter education and participation year round, not solely during voter registration cycles (NSLVE, 2018).

COC currently holds a bronze seal in comparison with 844 colleges and universities nationwide that are involved in Civic Nation's All-In Campus Democracy Challenge (see All-In Challenge Homepage). Through the efforts of many campus members this semester, we hope to increase COC student voter registration for the 2018 midterm election by 10 percent (e.g., 691 students) and voter participation by 10 percent (e.g. 164 students). In addition, overall campus political engagement goals for the next two years include:

- 1) Provide greater student outreach, participation, and mobilization of voter registration. In addition, think in terms of how to reach families, especially those of first-generation students. Many parents of our students are not registered; and to assist with this process, provide voter information in English and Spanish.
- 2) Work with existing partnerships established for the 2014 midterm elections, including Campus Compact, Civic Nation, All-In Challenge, NSLVE, as well as with those partners who have helped Get Out the Vote (e.g., NextGen America, Young Invincibles, #VoteTogether, Voices for Change, Band of Voters, etc.). There is discussion, for example, of how to secure funding to send several students to the 2019 Feminist Majority Foundation Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. In addition, continue to build an ongoing partnership with the Office of the Los Angeles County Register-Recorder/County Clerk.
- 3) Engage political engagement activities throughout the year and provide ways to connect to Community-Based Learning (CBL). The formation of an Engage the Election Social Action Team will create an ongoing group of students who will address issues of voter registration and participation throughout the year. And while working in tandem with the Civic Engagement Steering Committee, CBL, Honors, and ASG, as well as with academic departments, the campus will keep the subject of political engagement highly visible.
- 4) Connect issues of voting to the various events, presentations, and workshops organized by the Center for Civic Engagement, Community-Based Learning, and the Civic Engagement Steering Committee. When topics of homelessness, food insecurity, sexual assault, gun violence, mass incarceration, mental health, etc., are discussed, include an aspect of how important it is for students to have their voices heard by getting involved in their communities, as well as by taking part in political engagement through participatory democracy.



As the Center for Civic Engagement creates a COC Campus Vote Action Plan, which will include political engagement as an ongoing focus of its overall efforts, it will work closely with Academic Affairs, Student Development, and the Associated Student Government to promote voter education throughout the academic year, not several weeks out before an election. This is especially important as the 2020 election is close at hand with 90 million Millennial eligible voters, it is predicted that this group will represent 36 percent of all votes cast (Esaili, 2017). Young people must realize that their votes do matter.

## **Leadership**

Civic engagement and its related topics, including the College's new campus voting action plan is a result of the work of the Center for Civic Engagement and its faculty director. The faculty director also oversees the Community-Based Learning program and works hand-in-hand with COC's Civic Engagement Steering Committee, which represents a diverse group of campus stakeholders. Members include students, faculty, staff, and administrators from the following areas:

- **Academic Affairs**
  - Dean, Experiential Learning
  
- **Academic Departments**
  - Anthropology
  - Business
  - Chemistry
  - Communication Students
  - English
  - English as a Second Language
  - Graphic Media Arts
  - History
  - Political Science
  - Psychology
  - Sociology
  
- **Academy of the Canyons**
- **Student Development**
- **Associated Student Government**
- **Community Members**
- **CBL Community Partners**

The creation, facilitation, and implementation of a campus wide Civic and Community Engagement Initiative over the past three years has provided COC with the opportunity to

experience its own “crucible moment.” Currently, faculty members infuse issues of political awareness throughout their classes while the campus offers many courses that examine social, cultural and political diversity. Some of the work accomplished by the Center for Civic Engagement is listed below.

### **Select History of Civic Engagement Work at College of the Canyons from Fall 2015 to the Present**

- Joined The Democracy Commitment.
- Agreed upon use of Thomas Ehrlich’s (2000) definition of civic engagement.
- Established Civic Engagement Steering Committee.
- Attended 5<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Celebration of The Democracy Commitment.
- Formed regional, state, and national partnerships and networks.
- Developed COC civic engagement strategic plan (e.g., *A Call to Action: An Initiative for Civic Engagement, Self, and Society*).
- Awarded three AAC&U *Bringing Theory to Practice Grants*.
- Re-branded Service-Learning program to Community-Based Learning.
- Organized deliberative dialogue trainings and dialogues based on support from The Democracy Commitment and Kettering Foundation.
- Presented at state and national conferences, including AAC&U Annual Conference, California Community College League of California, and Association of California Community College Administrators.
- Joined Imagining America—Southern California Cluster.
- Organized the statewide *California Community Colleges Civic Engagement Summit*, as well as *California Community Colleges Civic and Community Engagement Student Summit*.
- Supported three COC Foundation annual student scholarships related to civic engagement.
- Created Civic and Community Engagement 15-unit Certificate along with the new courses of Introduction to Civic and Community Engagement and Introduction to Community-Based Learning.
- Awarded Zonta Grant.
- Hosted 2016 Candidate “Meet and Greet” of Assembly and Senate Candidates, as well as COC Board of Trustees Candidate “Meet and Greet.”
- Received Foundation for California Community College *Civic Impact Grant*.
- Awarded seven *COC Foundation Mini-Grants* and four *COC Associated Student Government Grants*.
- Nominated four COC students who served as Civic Impact Scholars with the Foundation for California Community Colleges *Civic Impact Project*.
- Formed the League of Women Voters of the Santa Clarita Valley (LWVSCV), which includes several members of the CE Steering Committee.
- Organized 2016 Presidential “Debate Watch.”
- Established “*Making the Invisible Visible: Telling Their Stories*” theme to guide Civic Engagement.

- Collaborated with classified staff to create opportunities for professional development opportunities related to civic and community engagement.
- Constructed and administered COC's own *Civic Engagement and Mutual Respect Survey (2016)*. In addition, Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) data have been collected.
- Commitment by Chancellor Dianne Van Hook to dedicated space (e.g., 1500 sq. fee) for a permanent Center for Civic Engagement.
- Connection to California Community College System groups (e.g., 3CSN) and statewide initiatives like Guided Pathways, "Doing What Matters," Student Equity, and "Vision for Success."
- Presented at LINKS 2018 Conference for 3CSN (California Community Colleges' Success Network), which has proposed a statewide 3CSN Community of Practice for Community-Based Learning.
- Participated on the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) 2018 Annual Conference planning team, including faculty director and student intern.
- Organized presentation by League of Women Voters of the United States National President, Chris Carson, in collaboration with the LWVSCV.
- Planned multiple events with the LWVSCV, including "Cookie and Conversation—Understanding the Propositions" and "Sips and Civility"—A Community Dialogue on the "America We Want to Be."
- Administered Civic Engagement/Mutual Respect Surveys: Fall 2016. Results published in Civic Engagement/Mutual Respect Report #313.
- Joined California Campus Compact.
- Awarded AAC&U *Civic Learning in the Major by Design Grant*.
- Awarded funding to assist with voter registration and election awareness, including support from Campus Compact and The Democracy Commitment Initiative, #VoteTogether, and Young Invincibles.
- Joined Tufts University's *National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)* initiative.
- Joined All-IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
- Invited to participate in Campus Compact National Community College Planning Team convening.
- Participated in third-year discussion of the Kettering Foundation and The Democracy Commitment community college deliberative dialogue project.

***In addition, the Center for Civic Engagement is working to:***

- Administer The Democracy Commitment Higher Education Civic Outcomes Survey during fall 2018.
- Create several non-credit certificates, including a focus on social entrepreneurship, community organizing, leadership, and Street Law.
- Develop Civic Engagement and Community-Based Learning (CBL) 9-unit hybrid course module as part of COC's Teaching and Learning Certificate program.

- Work with representatives from California Community College and California State University systems to develop a CCC-CSU Civic Engagement and Community-Based Learning pathway.
- Organize Social Action Teams (e.g., “Cougars for Change”). Collaborating with Community-Based Learning, Honors, Phi Theta Kappa, Gamma Beta Phi, and Associated Student Government, student-driven teams are being formed to create action plans to examine a number of issues concerning, for example, homelessness, food insecurity, sexual harassment and assault, biodiversity, and engage the election. Topics will also complement several ASG advocacy subcommittees.

### ***Get Out the Vote 2018***

Specifically, with regard to Engage the Election efforts for fall 2018, the Center for Civic Engagement has created its own events, as well as partnered with the newly formed League of Women Voters of the Santa Clarita Valley (LWVSCV). These activities have included:

- Voter Registration Tables (Available weekly from August 27 to October 22 and staffed by various groups, including NextGen America. As of September 25, close to 600 COC students were registered.)
- Constitution Day (September 17, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., **Cafeteria**)
- National Voter Registration Day (September 25, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., **Flagpole**)
- Rock the Polls Community Concert (October 21, 5:00-9:00 p.m., **Newhall Theatre**)
- Patio Talks- “*Why We Need Civic Engagement More than Ever*” (October 4, 12:00-1:00 p.m., **CCC**)
- Deliberative Dialogue Student Training (October 5, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., **MENH-242**)
- Santa Clarita City Council Candidates Forum (October 8, 7:00-9:00 p.m., **UCEN 258**)
- Campus Deliberative Dialogue Training (October 9, 3:00-5:00 p.m., **BONH-10**)
- “*Understanding the Propositions*” presented by Political Science Department and ASG Officers (October 15, 12:00-2:00 p.m., **STCN- 128**)
- “*Cookies and Conversation: Let’s Talk About the Ballot with the League of Women Voters of the Santa Clarita Valley*” (October 18, 6:30-9:00 p.m., **UNCEN 258**)
- “*Understanding the Propositions*” presented by Political Science Department and ASG Officers (October 22, 2:00-4:00 p.m., **HSLH-205**)
- Voter Registration at Canyon Country Campus with the HUB Club, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., **Cougar Way**)
- Campus Dialogue: “*The America We Want to Be*” (October 23, 3:00-5:00 p.m., **BONH-310**)
- Afternoons With the Professors: “*Understanding the Propositions*” presented by Political Science Department (October 24, 4:00-6:00 p.m., **Belcaro Retirement Community**)
- Campus Dialogue: “*To Vote or Not to Vote?*” (October 25, 2:00-4:00 p.m., **BONH-10**)
- Afternoons With the Professors: “*Understanding the Propositions*” presented by Political Science Department (October 26, 1:00-3:00 p.m., **Friendly Valley Retirement Community**)
- “*Understanding the Propositions*” presented by the League of Women Voters of the Santa Clarita Valley and Center for Civic Engagement (October 29, 12:00-2:00 p.m., **ALLH-108**)
- Ballot Box Party Pre-Election Day (October 30, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., **Flagpole**)
- Campus Dialogue: “*United or Divided?*” (November 1, 2:00-4:00 p.m., **HSLH-234**)
- Ballot Box Party Day of Election and Voices for Change Concert (November 6, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., **Flagpole**)
- Election Watch Party (November 6, 6:00-9:00 p.m., **Cafeteria**)

- Local media interview with the faculty director and co-founder of the LWVSCV (November 6, 9:45-10:10 p.m., **Newhall**)
- Cougar News (COC Broadcasting students) covering many of the above events.

Many other activities have also taken place this semester to help Engage the Election. Although these activities occurred this fall, many will remain ongoing throughout the year. This especially holds true for the campus dialogues. COC employed a variety of different strategies to Get Out the Vote this fall. Examples include:

- An interdisciplinary team of faculty developed the *Youth Wave* campus wide initiative to encourage students to register to vote and to cast their ballots. Students who provide proof of registration and voting receive extra credit points.
- A faculty member from Political Science, along with a team of students created a Quick Response (QR) Code linked to the California Secretary of State's Office, which provided online voter registration. The QR code was emailed to the entire campus community, as well as printed on bookmarks distributed throughout the campus.
- Several faculty presentations addressed issues or topics concerned with current affairs, political engagement, and issues related to self and society, including the departments of History, Humanities, Sociology, and the Institute of Ethics, Law, and Public Policy.

*In addition, the Center for Civic Engagement has facilitated (and will continue to facilitate) the following:*

- Worked with the Office of the Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to place a Vote-by-Mail ballot box on the COC campus. Students registering for the first time were encouraged to Vote-by-Mail to take advantage of not having to cast their ballots at a polling location. The setting of the Drop-Off Ballot Box is clearly identified by large signs posted at two individual entrances.
- Created a variety of marketing materials, including banners, flyers, bookmarks, and announcements posted on campus wide digital monitors. Assistance provided by the Public Information Office.
- Constructed an Engage the Election letter, as well as Engage the Election handout which was sent to almost 2,700 individuals who are listed on the coc-all distribution list. These items provided important links to COC's NSLVE data, as well as to voter registration and voter education information and deadlines. In many cases, faculty not only verbally announced this material but also posted it on their Canvas course shells.
- Provided additional information to coc-all concerning election-related topics (e.g., taking photos at the ballot box, registering after October 22, as well as ballot guides, proposition descriptions, county registrar video clips on "how to mark a ballot," etc.).
- Emailed a series of "Voting and Election Fun Facts" sent daily to coc-all from October 30 to November 6.

- Created a campus hashtag of #COCVotes to promote efforts via social media.
- Developed the tag line of “Democracy. Everyone’s Responsibility” to reflect the Engage the Vote campus wide campaign.

***Future plans:***

While these items are not categorized by calendar dates at this time; however, once the Engage the Election Social Action Team meets after the November 6<sup>th</sup> Election Day, a formal timeline will be created. Tentative goals include the following:

- Work with students in Graphic Media Arts to create a visual image to complement the Engage the Election Vote effort for 2020. Display image throughout the campus community.
- Incorporate some aspect of voter education into COC’s First Year Promise program.
- Increase voter registration tabling during “off seasons” to include important days of recognition like Martin Luther King Day, Presidents’ Day, Cesar Chavez Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Patriot Day, Citizenship Day, and Veterans Day, as well as Heritage Month themes.
- Organize a Social Action Team Rush to recruit students to work on various social issues, including Engage the Election.
- Contact Andrew Goodman Foundation and discuss possibility of creating an Andrew Goodman scholar position at COC.
- Encourage COC students to apply for the Ronald Reagan Leadership Foundation Scholarship.
- Involve COC with additional Get Out the Vote Organizations like Campus Vote Project (CVP) and Rock the Vote.
- Administer Campus Election Engagement Project Campus Electoral Engagement Assessment.
- Distribute information (as done in fall) regarding important registration and voter dates and deadlines, as well as helpful voting tips. Send via coc-all, as well as work directly with the Public Information Office to expand the College’s outreach into the local community.
- Provide faculty with examples of how to engage students in the upcoming election by including examples of assignments and projects. Encourage faculty to infuse some aspect of political engagement into their course.
- Advertise websites (as done in fall) of organizations dedicated to increasing the vote among college students.
- Infuse some aspect of Engage the Election in Community-Based Learning courses and projects.
- Organize a “Department Challenge” Campaign. Departments will work to create ideas of how to politically engage students in their areas
- Encourage students to participate in campus wide dialogues by using issue guides available by the National Issues Forum Institute (NIFI) and Living Room Conversations.

- Create a repository of Get Out the Vote resources for faculty, clubs, and ASG.
- Organize “Meet and Greet” sessions throughout the year with local elected officials.
- Develop Civic Engagement/Engage the Election mini workshops to address a variety of topics related to American history and government.
- Work to establish COC as a “mega” polling site. The College has traditionally been a polling site; however, California will move to large, “mega” polling sites in 2020. The campus gymnasium would provide a good location.
- Work to hold a naturalization ceremony in COC’s Performing Arts Center, while encouraging student observation and participation.
- Connect efforts of campus civic engagement movement to WE Day.
- Send a “Message from the Chancellor” regarding the importance of registering to vote, as well as voting.
- Create large display board to highlight photos of COC campus community members with a short response to the question, “I will vote because...”
- Instruct greater number of students, especially from ASG and student clubs in the techniques of dialogue. Encourage students to lead dialogues on various topics related to political engagement.
- Increase number of students participating in the annual Reagan Foundation Leadership Conference.
- Work with campus (e.g., *The Monday Report*) and local media sources (e.g., radio, newspaper, television) to publicize events.
- Develop a marketing and advertising campaign with the Public Information Office.
- Include voter information in college catalogue.
- Create a “Fact Bits” weekly email blast providing information on historical and political voting and election facts.
- Train students who work registration tables on how to effectively engage students.
- Work with Academic Senate to create a campus resolution committed to fostering civic engagement and electoral awareness among our campus community.
- Increase overall student participation in Community-Based Learning.
- Send reminder texts (e.g., voter registration deadline, Election Day) to students from Admissions and Records.
- Organize an Engage the Vote film series.
- Work with the Office of the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/Clerk to provide on-campus education and instruction on the mechanics of voting (e.g., how to read a ballot, etc.).
- Connect early to statewide challenges for colleges, especially as developed by the Office of the California Secretary of State and California Community Colleges Office of the Chancellor.
- Organize a campus wide student “I Am a Voter” pledge card campaign.
- Continue efforts to organize *Making the Invisible Visible* themed civic engagement events while connecting to social and political concerns.
- Create a series of short one minute “Telling Their Stories” video clips highlighting COC students and staff discussing “Why they Vote,” “My First Time to Vote,” etc.
- Train peer advisors seated at information desks to assist with voter registration.

- Include more information on COC Homepage, as well as include QR code to assist with voter registration.

Besides the endless hours of support provided by COC's Associated Student Government officers, the campus was also fortunate to partner with several local, regional, and national groups this fall, including the League of Women Voters of the Santa Clarita Valley, Canyon Country Advisory Committee, NextGen America, Feminist Majority Foundation, #VoteTogether, All-In Campus Democracy Challenge, Young Invincibles, Band of Voters, NextUp, 25 Up, Voices for Change. A local artist also joined several events and donated beautiful hand-stamped tee-shirts with the simple word of "Voter." In addition, many academic departments worked hard to increase political engagement among students.

## **Reporting**

Updates and revisions to this plan will be made by the Faculty Director, Civic and Community Engagement Initiatives. Working directly with members of the Civic Engagement Steering Committee, as well as with ASG and the Engage the Vote Social Action Team, she will guide participants in ongoing reflection of successes and challenges. Review will occur every six months while strategies to meet the above goals will remain fluid, as ideas will shift. Once 2018 NSLVE data are received, results will be shared with the campus community. Findings will help shape future voter registration, education, and participation strategies for the upcoming 2020 election cycle. In addition, using outcomes derived from evaluation, new strategies will be created and old ones revised, changed or discarded. Progress reports will be made available to the Chancellor, Board of Trustees, and Executive Cabinet. In addition, members of the Civic Engagement Steering Committee will disseminate updates to the entire campus community.

## **Evaluation**

While COC continues to create an evaluation process which will accurately measure the impact of civic engagement and its related activities on participants, we will continue to monitor headcounts of participants or attendees. The Center is currently reviewing a variety of publications that discuss evaluation measures for civic engagement, as well as AAC&U's Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric (see [aacu.org](http://aacu.org)). However, comparisons between past and current NSLVE data will assist greatly with evaluation of the Center's overall action plan.

## **Conclusion**

As an institution of higher education, College of the Canyons can no longer allow its students to observe as spectators nor to watch as bystanders, especially as local, national, and global problems escalate. To address social issues collectively is a basic tenet of democracy, as John Stuart Mill proclaimed in 1859, since the sovereignty of a nation resides in its people or, more precisely, its citizenry (Mill, 2002). In fact, "A morally and civilly responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric," suggests Ehrlich and "considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own." (Ehrlich, 2000:xxvi). Therefore, to take action, especially through political engagement, is paramount to ensure the continued wellbeing of society (Bowen, 2010). The Center for Civic Engagement and the Civic Engagement Steering Committee has done much to bring attention of social concerns to the



campus community by organizing presentations, events, workshops, summits, and dialogues. Each of which has been framed, as previously mentioned, around the ongoing theme of *Making the Invisible Visible*. It is time that political engagement becomes visible. With the help of *Engage the Election: A Campus Voting Action Plan, Fall 2018-Fall2019*, we are confident that an increased number of student voices will be heard in 2020.

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