

Harvey Mudd College

Civic and Democratic Engagement Action Plan for 2024-25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Harvey Mudd College's civic and democratic engagement efforts are housed within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) with the oversight and leadership of the Office of Civic and Community Engagement (OCCE) staff; and the guidance, leadership and support of the Civic and Democratic Engagement (C&DE) working group which includes staff, faculty and students. This action plan was written by the director of civic and community engagement, with the support of the associate director of civic and community engagement and associate director of institutional research and effectiveness.

The purpose of HMC's 2022 ALL-In Challenge Action Plan was to institutionalize civic and democratic engagement for its long term sustainability by strategically integrating this work into 1) the mission, vision and learning outcomes of the Office of Civic and Community Engagement (formerly the Office of Community Engagement); 2) the foci and mission of the division of student affairs (short-term); and 3) the mission, strategic vision, and values of Harvey Mudd College (long-term). The short-term goals were achieved and the long-term goal (point #3) is a work in progress as there are multiple aspects to work on within the upcoming years. A specific action we worked on is integrating civic learning and engagement duties on both the associate director and director of civic and community engagement's job descriptions. The revised associate director position was reviewed and approved already.

With civic learning and engagement institutionalized and having specific staff roles assigned to these efforts, HMC has the infrastructure to guarantee that established initiatives and partnerships will continue despite changes in leadership and or staff/student turn-over. This foundation within HMC will help with efforts that increase and or maintain student civic engagement participation and voting rates in the near- and long-term.

From NSLVE data since 2016, there is a noticeable difference between ethnic/racial groups' voting rates; therefore a goal for academic year 2024-25 is to work towards having a 80%+ voting rate for all students. We will continue to work closely with the Office of Institutional Diversity (OID), student leaders from affinity groups, and with external community partners such as colleagues and organizations from the Claremont Colleges, other local colleges/universities, NAACP Pomona Valley Branch, Mt. Baldy League of Women Voters, and California LEAD to create joint collaborative, interactive programming and collaborate in increasing the number of programs and modes of delivery to increase access points for all within the HMC community.

LEADERSHIP

HMC's Office of Civic and Community Engagement (OCCE), housed within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA), will continue to chair and oversee the Civic and Democratic Engagement Working Group. Overall, OCCE co-facilitates campus-wide efforts and partnerships to increase civic and democratic engagement and learning, thus OCCE's staff as co-chairs to this working group is a natural fit and supported by both HMC's President and Vice President of Student Affairs. The working group includes members from across our institution (faculty, staff and students).

Members of the Civic & Democratic Engagement Working Group:

- Veronica Clairmont, Associate Dean of Institutional Diversity, Student Affairs.
- Gabriela Gamiz, Director of the Office of Civic Community Engagement, Student Affairs (co-chair)
- Aye Htut-Rosales, Associate Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Academic Affairs
- Danny Ledezma, Associate Director of the Office of Community Engagement, Student Affairs (co-chair)
- Arran McNabb '06, Associate Director of Alumni and Parent Relations
- Kristen McVaugh, Assistant Director of Institutional Diversity, Student Affairs.
- Vanessa Vallejo, Program Coordinator for Residential Life and Orientation Programming, Student Affairs
- Student members and or leaders from the Living Learning Community (LLC); Sustainability Club; Mudders Making a Difference (MMAD); and Every Vote Counts (ECV) - Claremont.

The co-chairs will be working with the Associate Dean of the Faculty to determine the best way to identify and ask a faculty member to serve in this working group for the 2024-25 academic year. Currently, Katherine Van Heuvelen, associate dean of the faculty, has assisted with planning and helping with civic learning initiatives.

Currently, all members of the Civic and Democratic Engagement (C&DE) working group serve for one year; and are invited to continue on the working group at the start of each academic year. For staff members, their respective supervisors are asked if it is okay to invite them to serve in this capacity. If a staff member cannot continue to serve, the co-chairs seek the recommendation of the respective department/unit for guidance regarding a temporary member who can represent their unit. For student members, we invite student leaders and or ask for a member representative to attend the monthly meetings. This invite is also done at the start of each academic year.

Members of the working group meet monthly for about 60-75 minutes. All meetings will be hybrid with the option to meet in person or join via a video conference platform. In between meetings, working group members might spend between 2-3 hours on their respective task/effort that will help achieve goals and programming efforts. In between meetings, working group members communicate via email and or shared google documents.

The working group will continue to strategically collaborate with various internal and external partners, such as, but not limited to:

- ALL In Democracy Challenge (external)
- LEAD California - formerly California Campus Compact (external)
- California Secretary of State, Students Vote Project (external)
- Institute for Citizens and Scholars (external)
- Motivote (external)
- NAACP Pomona Valley Branch (external)
- League of Women Voters (LWV) of Mount Baldy Area (external)
- Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibility (external)
- Voteology (external)
- Affinity groups (internal, student organizations)
- ASHMC (associated students at HMC, internal, student leaders)
- Dining Services (internal)
- Facilities and Maintenance (internal)

- Unify America’s College Bowl and Deeper Dive (external)
- The Hive (internal, Claremont Colleges resource center)
- Hixon Center for Climate and the Environment (formerly the Hixon Center for Sustainable Environmental Design, internal)
- Office of Communications and Marketing (internal)

COMMITMENT

In the last nine years, Harvey Mudd College (HMC) has demonstrated its commitment to integrating community engagement across campus (curricular and co-curricular) as critical to fulfilling our mission statement of “educating engineers, scientists and mathematicians well-versed in all of these areas and in the humanities and the social sciences so that they may assume leadership in their fields with a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society.” In the last two years, HMC approved the integration of civic learning and engagement into its Division of Student Affairs (DSA) under the leadership and guidance of the Office of Civic and Community Engagement (formerly Office of Community Engagement). Currently, both civic and community engagement are fully institutionalized (dedicated office space, staff, and internally funded); and integrated into both co-curricular activities and in curricular opportunities, such as courses, research, internships, and or capstone projects.

In the last two years, the Office of Civic and Community Engagement changed its mission and learning outcomes to integrate both civic and community engagement. The learning outcomes are reported upon via an annual OCCE Assessment Report, which is shared with our HMC community for information and also for accountability. Most importantly, this assessment report helps OCCE determine next steps based on areas of need and or identified gaps.

This academic year (2023-24), HMC welcomed its sixth president, Dr. Harriet Nembhard, who during her first year, joined the College Presidents for Civic Preparedness. “The priorities set by [College Presidents for Civic Preparedness](#) include preparing the next generation of well-informed, productively engaged, and committed citizens; defending free expression, civil discourse and critical inquiry as essential civic norms; and increasing thoughtful engagement and better understanding by students for the effective functioning of our democracy” (HMC [news](#) piece, April 23, 2024). Under this effort, HMC faculty will be invited to participate in the Faculty Institute. These three civic commitments “1. Educating for democracy is central to our mission; 2. We will prepare our students for a vibrant, diverse, and contentious society; and 3. We will protect and defend free inquiry,” provide the framework for this Faculty Institute.

Having the support from our President, Dr. Harriet Nembhard, our Interim VP for Student Affairs, and our Associate Dean of the Faculty has been instrumental in our commitment to civic and democratic engagement efforts at HMC.

LANDSCAPE

About Harvey Mudd College and Demographics: Harvey Mudd College (HMC) is a baccalaureate college, arts and sciences focused. HMC seeks to educate engineers, scientists, and mathematicians well versed in all of these areas and in the humanities and the social sciences so that students may assume leadership in their fields with a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society. Currently, HMC offers ten undergraduate majors in STEM fields, as well as options to design an individual program of study or declare an off-campus major. The program in Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts (HSA) is one of the distinctive

aspects of HMC. We regard a strong grounding in these areas to be an essential part of the education of engineers, scientists and mathematicians.

In fall of 2023, there were 915 undergraduate students enrolled at HMC. Included in that total are 224 entering first-year students. Nearly half (49.6%) of the student body is women (50% of the entering first-years). Students underrecognized in STEM currently make up 28.7% of the HMC student body (29% of the entering first years). 51% of our students are from out of state (49% of the entering first years). 97% of our students reside on-campus (100% of first year students).

Campus Climate and Culture: HMC is a very small institution. Our small size provides us with the opportunity to personally interact with each other in ways that are not always possible or sustainable on a larger campus. Many times things that necessitate policies or processes on other campuses are conversations on ours. We talk, reflect, debrief, plan and discuss ways to improve existing programs and ways to create new programs. This communication and partnership starts with a conversation and continues with direct contact throughout the process. This model and way of interacting and communicating allows us as a community to move forward with initiatives that are innovative and unique to the needs and demographics of our current campus constituents. As much as this is a benefit, changing times, like those we witnessed during the global pandemic, created challenges due to unestablished (in writing) policies and procedures. As we move forward, establishing procedures and policies to promote civic and democratic engagement would be of great benefit. Another challenge is limited time availability in our student's schedule. Given our campus climate and culture, it is important to strategically plan and integrate efforts and policies into our long-term goal of integrating civic learning and engagement into the fabric of our institution. Some of those efforts are highlighted below:

Civic and Democratic Engagement Efforts:

Educational Programming: The Office of Civic and Community Engagement (OCCE) in partnership with the Office of Institutional Diversity; Office of Alumni and Parent Relations; the International Students and Scholars Office; student organizations such as MMAD and LLC; faculty; and voter registration student liaisons have created various educational programming opportunities open to our HMC community (internal and external). These programming efforts have been part of our Power of Your Voice series which focuses on a different theme each semester - such as Why Policy Matters, Local Politics, Census, etc. Each semester, guest speakers share their experience with a topic within the semester's theme. Besides Power of your Voice, OCCE and members of the working group have facilitated a guilt-free civic learning book club each semester; and have read books like Why We Are Polarized by Ezra Klein and The Persuaders by Anand Giridharadas. OCCE has hosted stand alone educational programming, such as watch parties on topics like gerrymandering and (vice-)presidential debates. Other efforts include passive programming via infographics (posted around campus, shared via email, etc.).

Voter Registration: Since fall 2020, OCCE has partnered with external community partners, such as NAACP Pomona Valley Branch, Issue Voter, Motivote, TurboVote and other non-partisan organizations; and has also partnered with student led organizations such as our Living Learning Community, Every Vote Counts-Claremont, and Mudders Making a Difference to increase our voter registration efforts and the number of students who vote.

Voter registration efforts have included tabling; giveaways; why vote video featuring our President, faculty, staff, and student voices; Civic Social Hour during New Student Orientation; and specific programming for National Voter Registration Day (in September) and National Voter Registration Week (in October).

GOALS

Intentional civic and democratic engagement educational programming and voter registration efforts started in the fall of 2020 and have continued each semester since. As a result of engaging in these efforts, we learned that without a shared purpose/mission; and integration into our existing infrastructure and culture, these efforts are not sustainable long term. Therefore, this upcoming academic year, we will continue to grow our existing efforts; and we look forward to adding the following goals in response to making these efforts sustainable as well as help us address areas of need:

- Developing a new universal message about the importance and value of civic and democratic engagement (short-term goal); and aligning that message with our institution's strategic planning (long-term goal).
- Integrating civic and democratic engagement under the Office of Civic and Community Engagement with joint partnerships with academic affairs in regards to the 3 Civic Commitments (short-term goal with continuous work beyond academic year 2024-25).
- Increasing awareness about resources available to assist with voter registration and creating a plan to vote by hosting tabling events and information booths at least once every other week in the fall semester (short-term goal).
- Planning and implementing a pilot series on socio-political depolarization with the goal of offering once a month efforts under this series (short-term goal with continuous work beyond academic year 2024-25 pending program evaluation).
- Working collaboratively with our HMC community to create an activism tool kit.
- Having 80%+ voting rates across ethnic/racial groups.

STRATEGY

In order to make progress on and achieve these six goals, the following steps will be critical:

- Across Campus Communication: Creating a marketing action plan will help us with our goal of raising awareness of civic engagement efforts. In this marketing plan, it is important to have a universal message about the importance and value of being civically engaged. The following are areas we would like to work on in collaboration with our communications department, student leaders, and community partners:
 - Developing an informative, one-stop website with resources and important information about voter registration, upcoming elections, and learning about bills/policies.
 - Having a social media presence in different social media pages, such as residential life, institutional diversity, community engagement, alumni and parent relations, etc.
 - Creating a passive programming plan that highlights key components, deadlines and information to consider.
 - Having a presence in high student traffic areas, such as our dining commons, residential hall common areas, student services building, etc. Doing tabling in these areas would be helpful for providing information.

- Sharing our efforts and important information as “press release” material to hopefully get featured in student publications.
- Integrating civic engagement efforts into existing infrastructure: Many essential program events already take place on campus, such as orientation, summer institutes, residential life RA programming, impact leadership credential; and it would be helpful to imbed civic engagement activities into these existing events. As a working group, our goal is to plan collaboratively with respective colleagues and co-create ways to make civic engagement activities part of these essential student events.
- Voter Education: This summer, HMC will be working closely with Motivate to create a personalized access and registration website. Any member who registers via our personalized website will have access to personalized resources via a gamified platform. HMC students will have access to this information at any time; thus increasing accessibility to information. Another voter education effort is to continue with our year long Power of your Voice series with a focus on preparing for a midterm election and post election community circles; as well as continue with our guilt-free civic learning book club each semester.
- Continuing to centralize civic engagement: A few areas we will focus on as we continue to centralize civic learning and engagement efforts are 1) to rewrite job descriptions for the director and associate director to formally integrate civic learning and engagement efforts into their respective essential job duties; and 2) to add a graduate assistant at a part-time level to help with thinking strategically and researching best practices on setting a strong foundation for our civic learning and engagement efforts. In the future, some short-term goals are to strategically partner with faculty 1) to think about how to integrate civic engagement efforts into curriculum and if possible into our core; and 2) to have intentional conversations of civic engagement within HMC’s strategic planning.
- Three Civic Commitments: Presidents joining College Presidents for Civic Preparedness make the following civic commitments to their students, academic communities, and the democratic society: 1) Educating for democracy is central to our mission; 2) Preparing our students for a vibrant, diverse, and contentious society; and 3) Protecting and defending free inquiry. It would be critical for the working group to collaborate with members of our college community to design a program/project that align with these three commitments.

NSLVE as a Resource

HMC has participated in The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) since 2012. NSLVE offers our institution an opportunity to learn about our student registration and voting rates as well as a closer examination of our campus climate for political learning and engagement; and correlations between specific student learning experiences and voting. HMC’s NSLVE results are posted on our assessment website; and we use them in assessment activities across campus. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) manages the data, helps with data analysis, and reviews and provides input on the use of such data. Their support has been invaluable. OIRE also provides reports with other relevant and helpful data such as data reports with details of the values questions that have to do with civic, social and political issues.

A summary of HMC’s 2020 NSLVE results (Presidential Election year):

Our 2020 student voting rate was 81.4% (a 32.4% increase from the mid-election year voting rate in 2018, and 23.2% increase from the 2016 Presidential Election year). The preferred voting method was not-in-person with 79%; and only 2% voting in person. There were no significant differences in the voting rate by gender, class year or major; yet there were

differences to note in voter's ethnicity/race with significant lower percentage for Asian (75%) and Black (76%) compared to Hispanic (83%), two or more 2 races (84%), and White (86%). In 2020, HMC student voters surpassed the average voting rate for all institutions by 15.4% (66% all institutions voting rate).

As we move forward with growing our civic and democratic engagement efforts, we look forward to maintaining/increasing voting rates above 80% across racial/ethnic groups; and increasing our efforts on educational civic engagement programming year round such a Cultivating Connections Initiative which will include a series of events and activities from Community Conversations on various social-political topics to learning communities for faculty.

REPORTING

As part of our communication efforts (under our short-term goal strategies), we will use a wide variety of platforms to report on our civic and democratic engagement efforts. Our reports will include data from the NSLVE data for HMC, voter registration numbers, participation summary on our civic engagement programming, and any data as reported by our community partner, Motivate. The following are some platforms we can use to share infographics or other updates regarding our CL&E efforts, as well as this Action Plan report:

- Departmental and institutional social media platforms
- Summary article written for our HMC communication platforms and our student newspaper (Muddraker).
- Email message with our report summary with detailed report attached.
- Posting our reports and infographics on our civic engagement webpage.
- Include our infographics on our campus' monitors.
- Include results on our Board of Trustees data points reports.
- Presentations as appropriate to different campus constituents and leadership.
- Integrate our civic learning and engagement efforts into our annual OCCE Learning Outcomes Assessment Report.

EVALUATION

The Civic and Democratic Engagement working group will consult and work closely with our Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) to co-create or modify evaluation tools as needed to collect data regarding the impact of our efforts on participants and our institution. Another purpose for collecting data is to help us make informed decisions about what is working and areas we can continue to grow. All evaluation tools will align with our learning outcomes.

For academic year 2023-24, students who participated in civic related efforts were asked to complete a short survey that asked them to rank statements, using a likert scale. The question prompted them to think of their civic/community engagement experience/event and rank from strongly agree to strongly disagree with statements such as 1) I realized the importance of civic/community involvement & how it can positively impact society (93% agreed or strongly agreed); and 2) I am more aware of how my choices affect others (76% agreed or strongly agreed). As a working group, we will be analyzing the data collected and using information gathered to help us make informed decisions on programming for the upcoming academic year.

Besides using this evaluation tool, we also rely on other data instruments such as:

- Data from the NSLVE to inform future programming efforts and modify goals if necessary (students only).
- Data from Motivate that would allow us to identify at what point in the process we might be losing prospective voters (students only, external).
- Data use tracking for events (number of attendees or participants) or visits to passive programming sites, such as YouTube videos (students, faculty and staff).
- Data from the TFS (first years completing during the first few days of school) and CSS (seniors complete at the end of their senior year) surveys (students only).
- Data from our own pre-/post-surveys for learning communities and or train-the-trainer student programming (students, faculty and staff)
- Data from our Cultivating Connections Initiative's post-attendance short survey (students, faculty and staff).

Data will be collected and or managed by OIRE who will provide data reports at the end of each semester. The OIRE data reports will inform the C&DE working group if 1) programming goals are being met; and 2) changes should be made.