

All In Campus Challenge 2022 Voter Engagement Plan

Pitzer College

Executive Summary

This plan was developed by Alaina Neuburger, Program Assistant for the college's civic engagement program, The People's Pitzer, with help from Tricia Morgan, Managing Director of the Pitzer College Community Engagement Center and Jessica Chairez, Assistant Director of the Community Engagement Center.

This action plan seeks to increase voter registration, education, and turnout within the Pitzer and Claremont Colleges communities (Pitzer is part of a consortium of colleges termed the "5Cs"). This plan also seeks to institutionalize civic engagement at Pitzer over the long term in order to act on our core values of social responsibility, intercultural understanding, interdisciplinary learning, and student engagement.

This plan begins during the 2022 election cycle and details long-term goals through 2028, though it will be updated every two years and resubmitted to the All In Campus Challenge.

Currently, The People's Pitzer (TPP), an initiative of the Center for Community Engagement, facilitates this effort. This plan was based on equitable values and aims to center the empowerment of marginalized communities.

Leadership

Voter engagement work at Pitzer is primarily conducted by The People's Pitzer (TPP). TPP is a student-focused initiative started in Fall of 2020 within the Pitzer College Center for Community Engagement. The goal of the program is to facilitate growth in the Pitzer community's areas of civic engagement by focusing on education and empowerment, the application of civic action, and the development of strategies for student involvement in policy, legislation, voting, and engaging elected officials.

In 2020, TPP conducted education on voting rights, policy issues, and the 2020 Census. The 2021-22 academic year focused on community organizing as a political tool and the role students can play in affecting change within their communities by tracing connections between civic activism, popular movements, and widespread political change. TPP focuses particularly on uplifting marginalized communities. Our current projects include ongoing efforts to connect students to community groups enacting change in the greater L.A. area, hosting activists and scholars at the front lines of civic engagement as guest speakers and workshop leaders,

continuing Pitzer College's involvement in Project Pericles Letters to an Elected Official Competition, partnering with student groups to host educational and action-oriented events, and supporting the development of legislative responses on a wide-range of issues in local CA communities and beyond.

TPP, in collaboration with the Pomona Valley chapter of the NAACP, plans to spend 2022 identifying faculty, staff, and community partners working on voter engagement across the Claremont Colleges to create a structured working group and a more cohesive voter engagement effort. Our goal is to recruit faculty members, students, administrative staff, representatives from student and community organizations, and election officials to participate. Part of this effort will focus on ensuring diversity is reflected in the working group.

A substantial portion of our long-term strategy focuses on increasing collaboration between Pitzer, the other 5Cs, and our local election office, as well as developing a structured framework to increase sustainable opportunities for student involvement in voter engagement programming. Part of this effort will include determining accountability procedures, compensation, working group member responsibilities, outreach efforts, diversity practices, communication, and turnover strategies.

Commitment

Pitzer was founded in 1963 in the midst of social and political unrest and, as a result, has always focused on activism for social justice. This commitment is mirrored in the five core values that guide our academic and co-curricular programming: social responsibility, intercultural understanding, interdisciplinary learning, student engagement, and environmental sustainability. We are excited to improve civic engagement heading into 2022 by developing our voter engagement strategies and submitting an action plan for the first time.

Pitzer's senior leadership displays explicit, visible commitment to improving voter engagement. In Fall 2021, Pitzer President Melvin Oliver began a tradition of the President sending a letter via email to students, faculty, and staff each semester communicating the importance of civic engagement and providing resources for voter education and registration. President Oliver has also signed All In's Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Commitment to civic engagement is included in Pitzer's general curriculum, which is informed by the following core values, educational objectives, and community values:

- **Core values:** social responsibility, intercultural understanding, interdisciplinary learning, student engagement and environmental sustainability.
- **Educational objectives:** breadth of knowledge, understanding in depth, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and effective expression, interdisciplinary perspective, intercultural understanding, social justice, social responsibility and the ethical implications of knowledge and action
- **Community values:** community, diversity, dialogue, inquiry, and action

Curriculum, informed by these existing statements, often involves civic learning and democratic engagement. A few examples of spring 2022 courses centering this mission include: U.S. Politics: Resistance & Transformation, Politics & Arts of Resistance, Power and Social Change, Rural & Urban Social Movements, Social Justice in the U.S., Racial Politics of Teaching, Critical Community Studies, Latina Activism Work & Protest, Environmental Justice, Social Justice in the U.S., Sound, Art, and Power, Media Arts for Social Justice, Psychology of Prejudice Towards Immigrants, Justice, Inclusion and Liberatory Learning, and Socially Engaged Photography. These courses are not only open to, but required for, all students in every major.

Pitzer's mission statement reads, "Pitzer College produces engaged, socially responsible citizens of the world through an academically rigorous, interdisciplinary liberal arts education emphasizing social justice, intercultural understanding and environmental sensitivity." Outside of the CEC, Pitzer's cultural focus on social justice makes educating for civic learning and democratic engagement a pervasive part of our institutional culture. Social justice education is conducted in every academic department, social responsibility praxis courses are a graduation requirement, many student organizations focus on social justice, and many faculty are actively involved in (and engage their students in) social movements through civic engagement.

Civic engagement is also present in co-curricular programming. One example of this is the Critical Action & Social Advocacy (CASA) Pitzer program. CASA Pitzer pairs students and faculty with local residents, organizers, activists, artists, and nonprofits to "advance critical analysis and community partnerships around the most pressing issues in the Inland Empire." The program aims to build community and enact change by "facilitat[ing] student internships and community-based participatory research on issues of regional equity and justice pertaining to incarceration, immigration, education, environment, labor, art, culture, and health."

Our commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement as a pathway to change is demonstrated through our Community Engagement Center (CEC). The CEC combines Pitzer's resources, including institutional power, community partners, faculty expertise, and student engagement to advance social justice causes. In the fall of 2020, the CEC identified an opportunity to specifically increase participation in the political process and created TPP, the college's flagship civic engagement program. TPP aims to facilitate growth in the Pitzer community's civic engagement by focusing on education and empowerment, the application of civic action, and the development of strategies for student involvement in policy, legislation, voting, and engagement of elected officials.

The CEC and TPP conduct programming to communicate and increase Pitzer's commitment to voter engagement. In 2020, TPP conducted education on voting rights, policy issues, and the 2020 Census. This year we are focusing on community organizing as a political tool and the role students can play in affecting change within their communities by tracing connections between civic activism, popular movements, and widespread political change. Our current projects include ongoing efforts to connect students to community groups enacting change in the greater L.A. area, hosting activists and scholars at the front lines of civic engagement as guest

speakers and workshop leaders, continuing Pitzer College's involvement in Project Pericles Letters to an Elected Official Competition, partnering with student groups to host educational and action-oriented events, and supporting the development of legislative responses on a wide-range of issues in local CA communities and beyond. We communicate our commitment to voter engagement outside of the institution through our community partnerships by co-hosting events and working collaboratively to advance social change. As part of our commitment to social change, the CEC and TPP focus on supporting marginalized communities, with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in all possible areas.

Finally, many student organizations directly and indirectly focus on civic engagement. Examples of student organizations with a social justice/voter engagement focus (many of which are 5C-wide organizations) include: Young Democratic Socialists of America at the Claremont Colleges, 5C Refugee Advocacy Network, Claremont Jewish Voice for Peace, Claremont Journal of Law & Public Policy, Claremont Progressive Israel Alliance, Claremont Student Worker Alliance, Claremont Students for Justice in Palestine, Divest Claremont Colleges, Indigenous Student Alliance, Medicine, Education, & Development for Low Income Families Everywhere, Prison Abolition Group, Solar & Social Justice, and Sunrise Claremont Colleges. These student organizations lead meetings, events, and other engagement activities on campus.

Landscape

Presidential communication, stated values, curriculum, co-curriculum, and student organizations display that civic learning and democratic engagement are an important component of Pitzer's campus culture. Assessment data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) shows the political climate and democratic engagement on campus. Pitzer's voter registration rate was 89.0% and the voting rate of registered students was 89.6%. Civic engagement is significantly increasing: we saw a 22.8% increase in voting rates from 2016 to 2020. Pitzer's registration and turnout rate was above the national average for public and private institutions.

Institutional demographics and assessment data also reveal areas for improvement. Pitzer College is a private, undergraduate, liberal arts college, in Claremont, California. Pitzer is a member of The Claremont Colleges, a consortium of schools including Pomona, Harvey Mudd, Scripps, and Claremont McKenna Colleges. Pitzer has approximately 1,060 students enrolled, with approximately 40% coming from in state and 60% from out of state. Around 36% of those enrolled are students of color, and 15% are first generation college students.

NLSVE data shows participation gaps in voter engagement based on race. Turnout rates for Hispanic students were 10% lower than for White students, turnout rates for Black students were 18% lower, and turnout rates for Asian students were a substantial 37% lower. This data reveals that engaging these demographics must be a top priority for voter engagement efforts heading into the 2022-2023 academic year. We address this goal in our strategy by detailing steps to build relationships with the college's affinity groups.

Past voter engagement efforts reveal more about Pitzer's current landscape. As discussed above, the CEC and TPP conduct the vast majority of programming focused exclusively on voter engagement. These efforts have included projects focusing on community organizing, hosting guest speakers and workshop leaders, partnering with student groups, and supporting the development of legislative responses on local issues. The biggest challenge the CEC has faced in these efforts is recruiting student participation in events due to lack of awareness. We plan to mitigate this problem through a greater focus on branding and advertising via TPP's social media channels. The CEC also has resources set aside each academic year to sponsor community engagement projects. Increased advertisement of these resources by TPP could mobilize faculty and staff to use this funding for other voter engagement initiatives.

Other internal challenges TPP has faced in the past are limited funding and lack of personnel. We plan to mitigate these two problems by periodically hosting fundraising events and hiring more students to work on the initiative. In spring 2022, we acted on these goals by hosting a fundraising event that raised \$1,976 for TPP and hiring another student to work for TPP.

The most recent voter engagement effort outside of TPP was community organizing work around saving farmland from warehouse development in nearby Ontario. Pitzer Professor of Environmental Analysis Susan Phillips, Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability Administrative Assistant Claudia Prats, and Community Engagement Center Assistant Director, Jessica Chairez, led the effort at Pitzer to acquire signatures, canvassers, and supporters at city council meetings. The focus on a specific cause was effective in mobilizing Pitzer students and community members. Taking the lesson learned from these events into account, our strategy going forward will focus more on promoting voter engagement around specific issues and legislation.

Because 60% of Pitzer students are from out of state, another challenge we face in voter mobilization efforts is connecting with students registered outside of California. Our current efforts focus primarily on legislation specific to southern California, which does not apply to a large proportion of Pitzer's student body. We plan to address this issue by increasing the scope of our legislative research to include issues around the country and include that information in our programming.

Overall, landscape research shows that our top priority going forward must be to address racial gaps in voter engagement by working with Pitzer's affinity groups. We have also identified internal areas for improvement, such as increasing awareness of the TPP initiative through a greater focus on branding, raising more funds, hiring more students, and focusing on specific issues and legislation both in state and out of state.

NLSVE As a Resource for Colleges and Universities

Overall

- Pitzer's voting rate in 2020 was 79.7%, a 22.8% increase from 2016.

- The registration rate was 89.0%, a 6.7% increase from 2016.
- The voting rate of registered students was 89.6%, a 20.4% increase from 2016.
- Pitzer's turnout rate was above the national average for public and private institutions.

Race

- 47% of Asian students voted, a 19% increase from 2018.
- 66% of Black students voted, a 39% increase from 2018.
- 74% of Hispanic students voted, a 31% increase from 2018.
- 78% of students with two or more races voted, a 29% increase from 2018.
- 84% of White students voted, a 28% increase from 2018.

Voting Method

- Approximately 76% of students voted not in-person, compared to approximately 68% in 2016.

The NLSVE report also provides information on where best to direct voter engagement efforts heading into 2022. Areas for improvement include:

- Ensuring turnout among registered voters. 10.4% of registered voters did not vote.
- Closing the turnout gap between white and non-white students. 47%, 66%, and 74% of Asian, Black, and Hispanic (race categories from NLSVE report) students voted, a lower turnout than the 84% of eligible white students who voted.
- Encouraging early voting. An increased 8% of students voted early in 2020, suggesting that early voting is correlated with an increase in overall voter turnout.

Goals

The following goals are informed by our campus landscape research, NSLVE data, and other observed areas for improvement in voter engagement.

Long Term Goals

- By 2024, increase student voting rates by 15.3% over 2020 turnout levels to reach a 95% voter turnout rate.
- By 2024, close the turnout gap between white and non-white voters
- By 2024, implement electoral engagement as a learning objective in 10% of Pitzer's courses.
- By 2024, increase TPP's presence on campus by:
 - Continuing supporting organizing and policy work with community partners
 - Continuing hosting inspirational and informative speakers
 - Facilitating workshops for students interested in running for public office
 - Funding travel, meals, lodging, and materials for students, faculty, and partners to engage elected officials
 - Funding fees and test prep for civil service applicants
 - Funding (non-partisan) student campaigns in and around the Pitzer community

- In conjunction with the NAACP, by May 2022, identify faculty, staff, and community partners working on voter engagement across the Claremont Colleges and create a structured working group.
- By 2024, establish a relationship with the local election official and invite them to join our working group.
- By 2024, involve the working group and a diverse group of community stakeholders in creating the All In plan.

Short Term Goals

- [COMPLETED] By May 2022, sign the Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.
- [COMPLETED] By May 2022, raise \$5,000 for TPP through Pitzer's spring fundraiser.
- [COMPLETED] By May 2022, hire an additional student to work for TPP.
- Continue our relationship with the Pomona Valley chapter of NAACP and participate in their efforts to engage student voters in the local area.
- By fall 2022, ensure that 95% of eligible students are registered to vote (a 6% increase from 2020).
- By fall 2022, ensure that 95% of students pledge to vote in the upcoming election.
- By fall 2022, ensure 90% turnout among registered voters (a 10.4% increase from 2020).
- By fall 2022, increase voter turnout by 20 percentage points for each non-white racial group over 2020 turnout levels.
- Throughout 2022, continue and expand voter education programming hosted by TPP.

Strategy

Short Term Strategy

- **Institutionalize Pitzer's Commitment to Voter Engagement**
 - Urge our president to sign the All In Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.
 - Aim to begin a tradition of the president sending a letter to all students every semester about the importance of being civically engaged and participating in elections.
 - Develop and disperse a pledge to vote in Fall 2022.
- **Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
 - Meet with affinity group leaders from Latinx Student Union, Black Student Union, Asian Pacific American Coalition, First-Gen Club, Middle Eastern Student Association, Mixed Identity Exchange, We Are Living History, and South Asian Student Association to discuss strategies for voter registration/education/turnout.
- **Develop the People's Pitzer Program**
 - Hire more students to work for the initiative.

- Increase the scope of legislative research to focus on more specific issues both in state and out of state.
- Increase awareness of the program's existence by developing its branding and social media presence.
- Raise funds for TPP through periodic fundraisers.
- **Increase Student Voter Registration**
 - Add voting registration into mandatory orientation week programming.
 - Include registration deadlines in Pitzer's campus event calendar.
 - Add voting registration and education into residential advisor programming.
 - Host voter registration tables in the courtyard outside of academic buildings centered around civic holidays (National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day).
- **Increase Student Voter Education**
 - Host voter education modules in first-year seminar classes.
 - Supporting and uplifting policy work with community partners.
 - Hosting informative speakers.
 - Conduct policy education through TPP social media channels.
 - Conduct policy education through TPP weekly newsletters.
 - Host watch parties for televised debates.
 - Host educational workshops aimed at voter education.
 - Create a digital space for students to discuss legislative issues.
- **Increase Student Voter Turnout**
 - Include primary and general election dates, early voting timelines, and absentee ballot deadlines in Pitzer's campus events calendar.
 - Sponsor rides to the polls on election day through Pitzer's van program.

Long Term Strategy

- **Develop the People's Pitzer**
 - Hire a full-time staff member to head The People's Pitzer.
 - Increase available funds through fundraising efforts.
 - Expand volunteer and internship opportunities for students wanting to get involved in TPP.
 - Facilitate workshops for students interested in running for public office.
 - Fund travel, meals, lodging, and materials for students, faculty, and partners to engage elected officials.
 - Fund fees and test prep for civil service applicants.
 - Fund (non-partisan) student campaigns in and around the Pitzer community.
- **Collaborate Across the Claremont Colleges**

- In conjunction with the NAACP, identify faculty, staff, and community partners working on voter engagement across the Claremont Colleges and create a structured working group.
 - Establish a relationship with the local election official and invite them to join our working group.
 - Involve the working group and a diverse group of community stakeholders in creating the All In plan.
 - Create a structure for volunteer and internship opportunities for students wanting to get involved in 5C voter engagement efforts.
 - Host 5C voter registration, education, and turnout events.
- **Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
 - TPP create long-lasting relationships with student affinity groups and work collaboratively to develop voter engagement strategies.
- **Institutionalize Pitzer's Commitment to Voter Engagement**
 - Create a full- or half-credit academic course each semester covering policy in the upcoming election that culminates in a project that empowers other students to vote.
- **Create a Sustainable Framework**
 - Develop working group accountability procedures, compensation, member responsibilities, outreach efforts, diversity practices, communication, and turnover strategies.

Reporting

This plan and the 2020 NLSVE Report will be shared on the All In and TPP websites and promoted on TPP social media and weekly newsletters, which are publicly available and shared with the Pitzer community and community partners.

Evaluation

This action plan will be evaluated by All In. Goals will be continually reviewed and progress will be evaluated by TPP as part of Program Assistant responsibilities. Data will be collected from the 2022 NLSVE Report, TPP's programming reports, and the Community Engagement Center's internal reports. We will attempt to reach out to student affairs and the institutional research office for data as well. Important data collected will include voter registration and turnout rates, demographic information, voting accessibility, perspectives from campus affinity groups, and voter education information.

Data will be analyzed and inform improvement in the creation and implementation of the 2024 action plan. Evaluation of voter engagement strategies is crucial in measuring progress and

revising our strategies and will be carried out and published by TPP on our website for the Pitzer community and community partners. The evaluation will be carried out after 2022 data is available.