

Rollins

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2018-2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following outlines the 2018-2019 Civic Engagement Action Plan for Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. The report was produced by a working group of student leaders and staff from the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement. With midterm elections around the corner, the plan will be set in motion in August of 2018 and continue to inform the civic engagement efforts at Rollins throughout the 2018-2019 academic year.

We would like to thank the following organizations for their continued support of our work to actively engage college students in the democratic process: NASPA Lead Initiative, Civic Nation and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Campus Vote Project and the Voter Friendly Campus Program, the Campus Election Engagement Project, TurboVote, the Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office, the League of Women Voters, and the many students, faculty, and staff members at Rollins College who participate in and support these initiatives.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT

Rollins College educates students for global citizenship and responsible leadership, empowering graduates to pursue meaningful lives and productive careers. Rollins is committed to the liberal arts ethos and guided by its values and ideals. Within the Division of Student Affairs, the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement (CLCE) supports opportunities for Rollins students, faculty, and staff to get involved in the community and become leaders to create positive change. CLCE promotes civic engagement through the Rollins College Democracy Project (RCDP or Democracy Project). The Democracy Project is a nonpartisan, student organization that focuses on increasing and elevating the civic involvement of the Rollins community by preparing students with the knowledge and skills to impact social change, encourage civic interests, and find their voice within local and global democracies. In addition to monthly voter registration drives, the Democracy Project hosts events in partnership with faculty and other student organizations in order to promote democratic engagement. Since its inception, the RCDP has utilized a peer-to-peer leadership model in order to empower students' roles as active citizens.

The administration at Rollins College has continually shown its' support for civic engagement by dedicating concerted resources towards efforts such as the Democracy Project. Funding for the Democracy Project comes from the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement within the Division of Student Affairs. The Associate Director in CLCE, Bailey Clark, supervises a Graduate Assistant (GA) who serves as the direct staff advisor to the Democracy Project. The GA supervises a Student Coordinator (a work study position with a minimum of 8-10 hours/week) and the Student Coordinator leads the Student Leadership Team (SLT) comprised of 5-7 Student Ambassadors who apply for volunteer leadership positions and meet weekly to discuss civic engagement efforts on campus. Rollins' civic engagement efforts do not only happen through this one coalition. Community Partners are also crucial to this work. This past school year, the Orange County League of Women Voters and the Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office

partnered with the Democracy Project on multiple occasions to either register students to vote or provide educational sessions on local and national politics.

On Rollins' campus, support comes from a variety of levels of administration, faculty, staff, and students. President Grant Cornwell has been very supportive of this work. President Cornwell and Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Mamta Accapadi engage in this work on the campus level and on the national level. They attend campus forums, send emails in support of voter engagement, and use TurboVote. Dr. Cornwell is also a member of the board of directors for AAC&U and was asked to join the Florida Campus Compact Executive Committee. In conjunction with the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Conference, he signed the Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors. Dr. Accapadi sits on the Advisory Board for Civic Nation's ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, of which Rollins is a participating member. Rollins is a NASPA LEAD Advisory Institution, and staff have presented on these topics at NASPA's CLDE Meeting in 2013, 2015, and 2018 and also at the 2015 and 2018 NASPA Annual Conferences.

Faculty from across different disciplines provide programmatic and promotional support too. During the 2017-2018 academic year, in partnership with student leaders in the Democracy Project, faculty members from a variety of disciplines facilitated conversations on hot button politics issues. For example, Political science and philosophy professors led dialogues on immigration, free speech, and women in politics, while professors of biology and chemistry used the platform to discuss Big Pharma. The partnership allows students and faculty to interact monthly during a one-hour event known as 'Politics on Tap.' The informal atmosphere attracts a diverse student population and creates an opportunity for the campus community to reflect and debate some of the most significant issues facing the nation and the world.

The Office of Residential Life and Explorations has also been a great partner by supporting a monthly event known as 'Politics on the Porch.' Once a month during the lunch hour students gather on the porch of the Pinehurst residence hall to have a discussion related to local politics and enjoy lunch together. One of the most successful events of the year was a discussion on the State of Florida's Constitution Revision Commission held in partnership with the Orange County League of Women Voters.

Thanks to the leadership of Professor Don Davidson, this year, Rollins began offering a minor in civic engagement. This minor requires six courses and at least one of the courses must have a Community Engagement (CE) or serving-learning component with a related service assignment exceeding fifteen hours of work with a community partner. Courses offered as part of the minor in civic engagement include: introduction to American politics, public policy, civil rights law and policy, voting and election, the American presidency, and Constitutional Law among others.

LANDSCAPE

Through the RCDP, Rollins has been intentional about implementing a three-step approach to the voter engagement process – for any and all elections ranging from presidential and midterm

elections to local and municipal elections (which happen in March rather than November for Winter Park). Due to Rollins' participation in NSLVE, decisions regarding the RCDP are data-driven; being grant funded helps to ensure annual reports are prepared. Furthermore, the SLT meeting spaces are used to reflect and process in real-time so changes to programs and voter engagement efforts can be implemented as needed.

The education aspect of the RCDP's voter engagement work includes both education on the voting process but then also education on the candidates and issues on the ballot – both of which are outlined on the same RollinsVotes website. Being a residential campus that falls within one precinct allows the RCDP to focus programming on those ballot initiatives. Past efforts have included debate watch parties, candidate forums open to the community, and nonpartisan information sessions facilitated by the League of Women Voters. Using voter records from the Supervisor of Elections and data from TurboVote allows staff to send targeted emails to registered voters sharing pertinent information on both the voting process and the candidates/issues on the ballot. Ongoing programs like the Politics on the Porch (facilitated in partnership with the residential student organization, Pinehurst) and Politics on Tap (facilitated in partnership with faculty, most often from the Political Science department) create spaces for students to understand the connections voting can have on policy and the larger discourse.

GOALS

Although the Democracy Project has been very successful since its inception in 2012, civic engagement efforts across the Rollins campus can be strengthened to institutionalize best practices and ensure all students are engaging in the democratic process.

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

Benchmark: Achieve a student voter participation rate above 30% in the midterm elections

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

knowledge about civic engagement on campus, upcoming elections and issues on the ballot, and tools they can use to enhance student engagement.

- We need to incorporate voter registration and/or access to voter resources at events students already attend. This year we will try to partner more intentionally with Athletics and our Fraternity & Sorority Life departments.
- Many of the questions students have can be answered by visiting the RollinsVotes website; however, it is not a well-known resource across campus, yet. Through clearer and more visible signage, use of student media outlets, campus emails, and a prominent highlight on the Rollins homepage, we hope students come to learn about it and use it more widely.
- The school calendar will incorporate key electoral dates, including but not limited to, registration deadlines, election dates (including primaries), early voting timelines, and absentee ballot deadlines.
- Our campus has renewed our partnership with TurboVote to assist students in the registration process and keep them up-to-date on relevant election information. A link to TurboVote can be found on every students' FoxLink account and it is included in the new student checklist.
- Our campus will continue to publicize and host debate watch parties for televised debates in partnership with Rollins Entertainment Programs (REP).
- Nonpartisan candidate and issue guides are widely distributed and available for students.
- The Democracy Project will host educational forums on the issues on the midterm ballot in partnership with the Orange County League of Women Voters and the Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office.
- The Democracy Project will host 'Rally to the Polls' events to provide transportation to polling events for early voting and on election day.

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

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

- Strengthen the partnership between the RCDP and Pinehurst to host better attended Politics on the Porch.

- Continue to grow the Politics on Tap program to include faculty from a multitude of disciplines in order to reach a more diverse audience.
- Use social media, specifically Facebook to model the way on how to engage in purposeful digital discourse.
- Provide student leaders with training on how to facilitate deliberative dialogue in partnership with the Center for Inclusion and Campus Involvement.

STRATEGY

In order to ensure that all students are engaged in the democratic process, the Rollins College Democracy Project has planned the following events and initiatives for the 2018-2019 academic year.

R-Community Fair

August 30, 2018 (McKean Gym, 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM):

The RCDP participates in the R Community Fair on an annual basis. The campus-wide event bolsters interest in our events and helps recruit new students to serve on the SLT. The RCDP also advertises for upcoming events such as the open student panel with presidential historian Jon Meacham as well as voter registration drives for Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day.

Politics on the Porch

(Pinehurst Cottage; 2nd Thursday of every month; 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM). By beginning each month with a Politics on the Porch, the RCDP hopes to raise awareness about local politics and civic engagement opportunities outside of voting in national elections. Through this, the RCDP hopes to spark interest in democratic learning that will serve as the foundation for the rest of its monthly programs.

Voter Registration Drives

(Campus Center; 3rd Thursday of every month; 12 PM -2 PM). Now that Florida residents can register online directly, the RCDP hopes to create both a permanent voter booth where students can register online at any time and table monthly to personally assist students with the registration process while maintaining our partnerships with the League of Women Voters and Orange County Supervisor of Elections.

Politics on Tap

(Dave's Boathouse; last Thursday of every month; 5 PM – 6 PM). To wrap up the month, the RCDP will conclude with a Politics on Tap. To diversify our partnerships and engage students outside the social sciences, it is our goal to use Politics on Tap as an opportunity to explore topical interests related to the sciences and other fields with lower voter turnouts at Rollins College.

Open Forums for Local Political Candidates

Rollins College and the Democracy Project are currently in the process of formulating a plan to host political candidates for open forums in the fall. The Center for Leadership & Community Engagement is drafting an official policy on events involving candidates for public office.

September 17, 2018 (Cornell Campus Center, 12 PM – 2 PM): Constitution Day

Members of the RCDP will host voter registration and hand out pocket constitutions along with the League of Women Voters. We will also have students write down what the U.S. Constitution means to them on index cards. The League of Women Voters will also be bringing informative handbooks about the Florida Constitution Revision Commission. The RCDP will send out a campus-wide email notifying the campus community of Constitution Day.

September 25, 2018 (Cornell Campus Center, 12 PM – 2 PM): National Voter Registration Day (NVRD)

National Voter Registration Day will be a collaborative partnership between the RCDP, the League of Women Voters, and Ben & Jerry's. Outside the Campus Center, the League of Women Voters will provide students with the opportunity to register to vote and learn about the many amendments that will appear on the ballot in Florida this year. Inside the Campus Center, Ben & Jerry's will be serving free ice cream, while the RCDP will provide students with NVRD stickers and pocket constitutions. The RCDP will send out a campus-wide email notifying the campus community of NVRD.

Women in Politics Event

Date and location TBD. The RCDP has secured a partnership with the Winter Park Institute to host two panel discussions with former Florida politicians, all of whom are female and have agreed to talk about their unique experiences as women in politics. Participants include: Toni Jennings, the 16th Lieutenant Governor of Florida; Glenda Hood, the first woman to serve as Mayor of Orlando; Linda Chapin, the first Chair of the Orange County Commission; Pat Schroeder, Former U.S. Representative from Colorado; and U.S. Diplomat Harriet Elam-Thomas.

Digital Outreach

The Democracy Project will continue to coordinate efforts in regards to voter mobilization including absentee voting, early voting, and voting on Election Day. Social media, emails, and signage across campus are used to share information on these three methods of voting and

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

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

Facebook and Instagram Presence

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

Snapchat takeover with Rollins College Snapchat

RCDP plans on taking over the Rollins College snapchat during several events including: Rally to the Polls, After Polls Party, Debate Watches, and National Voter Registration Day. (Pictured to the left is an example of a photo for the Snapchat feed)

REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Rollins College Participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). NSLVE data is used by the campus to strengthen voter engagement and focus on the areas of campus that had the lowest participation in recent elections. For example, based on NSLVE information from the 2016 presidential election, the RCDP noticed that students majoring in computer science, biology, and chemistry had the lowest voter participation rates. As a result, the RCDP partnered with faculty from the Biology Department to host a Politics on Tap event on Big Pharma. Another event focused on Net Neutrality in partnership with Computer Science Faculty. Each of the events served as an introduction to the Democracy Project and encouraged students to get civically engaged.

Rollins College will continue to participate in NSLVE in the coming years and the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement is currently looking for ways to better assess learning outcomes based on the events and trainings put on by the Democracy Project. We will begin experimenting with the civic engagement rubric from the LEAP Learning Outcomes this academic year.