

Civic and Voter Empower Action Plan

Santa Monica College

9/30/2024

Leadership:

At Santa Monica College (SMC), our civic engagement efforts are led via committee comprised of Faculty, Staff, and Students from our District. Membership of the committee will vary depending on the year but foundational always includes members from the Office of Student Life, SMC's Web and Social Media team, SMC's Public Policy Institute, and SMC's Associated Students. The committee is chaired by the administrative manager who oversees Student Life at SMC.

Below you will find the contacts of those foundational committee members.

Campus Name:

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Paul Trautwein

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Introduction:

At Santa Monica College, we are intentional in our value of connecting SMC students to civic engagement. We seek to empower our community to understand and learn how to navigate the civic landscape of Santa Monica or wherever they call home. We believe civic engagement is essential for a vibrant, functioning society and a component of success for our students as they navigate their academic journey.

Below are values we uphold in this work:

1. **Empowerment:** We empower our community to get involved and understand the issues that face our communities. We teach our students how to identify their assets, utilize their voices, and advocate for change.
2. **Strengthening Democracy:** We understand engaging democracy looks different for everyone. Active participation helps ensure that democracy works effectively. Whether we are increasing voter registration or empowering their ability to engage in the political process.
3. **Informed Citizenship:** We provide our community opportunities to engage with civic issues to educate themselves about policies, social issues, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

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Lessons Learned:

As we continue our efforts, we have seen the amazing work that can come from grassroots organizing led by our students and their voices. Every year our committee strives to bring together meaningful programs and opportunities that center the request and experiences of SMC students. In the last few years, we have seen steady to increasing numbers of students engaging with our planned activities. As we continue with our efforts and plans, our goal for this next cycle is to formalize and centralize the data collection for our civic related events.

Civic Engagement Plan Goals and Action Steps:

Identify the specific goals your plan is trying to address, and what are the concrete steps your institution is taking to get there.

Current Civic Engagement Goals:

1. Increase student engagement within civic resources offered to students at Santa Monica College each year
2. Collect and analyze data to better understand the effectiveness of SMC's civic engagement efforts

What strategies are you using to educate and engage your students?

- Campus Communication Efforts
 - Campus Bulletins
 - Social Media Outreach (Facebook and Instagram)
 - Canvas messages to students
 - Classroom announcements from faculty
- Events and Workshops
 - Constitution day Speaker
 - Speaker series for National Voter Education Week
 - Civic related events throughout the year
- Voter Registration
 - Associated Students led voter registration every Fall
- Voting Center on campus

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What events are planned to educate and engage your students? What are the specific dates you would like to highlight?

Some upcoming events include:

Tuesday, October 8 –

SMC Democracy Day

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. (activity hour) | HSS 165

Panel of experts on democracy and the importance of civic engagement. Panelist will share their civic experience and speak to the various influence in today's U.S. Democracy.

Panelists include Trustee Quinones-Perez, Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein, A.S. President David Duncan, Dean Ashanti Blaize-Hopkins, Vice President League of Women Voters of Santa Monica Maria E. Rodriguez, and Student Leader Martin Orea

Panel is moderated by Shari Davis

Thursday, October 10 –

Owning Your Future: Demystifying Civics” Workshop

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | Student Equity Center Multipurpose Room

Student Workshop facilitated by Dr. Nina Flores

What Is Government For? (And how the heck is it supposed to do all that?)

7:00PM - 8:30 PM | SSC 183/Orientation Hall

Featuring SMC PPI Founder Sheila Kuehl with former elected officials Martha Escutia and Mike Feuer as well as Metro Board Vice Chair Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker,

Tuesday, October 24 –

Owning Your Future: How to take action in your community

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM | Student Equity Center Multipurpose Room

Student Workshop facilitated by Dr. Nina Flores

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Community Partnerships:

To successfully activate your student body, it would be beneficial to create partnerships with on-campus and off-campus organizations that serve your students, or organizations your students are already involved in.

Current Partnerships we have include the following both on campus and off campus partners:

- Associated Students
- **Santa Monica League of Women Voters**
- Santa Monica College Public Policy Institute
- SMC Basic Needs
- SMC Center for Environmental and Urban Studies
- **Santa Monica Human Relations Council**
- SMC Special Programs (i.e. Black Collegians, Adelante, EOPS, etc.)
- SMC Student Equity Center
- **Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office**

***Community Partners are in bold**

Evaluation and Reporting:

What is your institution's plan for a follow-up evaluation and report, and who will oversee this?

After the creation of your engagement plan and the completion of the election, someone from your institution should be ready to provide a written update to the Secretary of State's Office about the election that includes lessons learned by your institution, and any other helpful information learned. Usually, the Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator oversees submission of the action plan and report.

Response: This is an area that we are still working to formalize. This next cycle we will be concentrating on evaluating what type of data we should collect as a district to improve our civic engagement efforts at Santa Monica College. Currently we are decentralized in how we are collecting this data and there is a need to centralize these efforts to align with our values above. Our Associate Dean of Student Life will oversee this plan and lead the efforts to implement it at Santa Monica College.