

ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology: Action Plan to increase Civic Learning, Political Engagement, and Voting Rates for the 2020 Presidential Election

2020 is the Chicago School of Professional Psychology's first year partaking in the Democracy Challenge. We anticipate setting benchmarks and tracking our goals to measure the impact on student engagement in the political process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPP) is a not-for-profit, accredited institution with more than 5,600 students at on ground and virtual campuses across the country (Chicago, New Orleans, Dallas, Southern California, and Washington, D.C.). TCSPP has been an innovator in the field of psychology and related behavioral science since 1979, offering more than twenty-degree programs and a wealth of opportunities for international experiences.

Central to our transformational impact on students, their communities, and the practice of psychology is The Engaged Professional Model of Education. This groundbreaking approach to training leverages the talents and experience of faculty practitioners, who work with our Community Partnership and Applied Professional Practice teams to provide students a rich spectrum of clinical training in a wide range of community settings. In fact, the school was the first of its kind to be named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for its leadership in service and civic engagement.

Our graduates emerge with unrivaled skills, ready to make much-needed changes in the communities they serve. They work around the world in hospitals, schools, community centers, agencies, NGOs, private practice, among others. Our graduates blend a sophisticated understanding of the human experience with high-quality practice in fields such as Child & Adolescent Psychology, Applied Behavior Analysis, Clinical Psychology, Forensic Psychology, International Psychology, and more.

The Chicago School educates professionals whose practices exemplify a commitment to understand and respect individual and cultural differences. The application of humane professional judgment is achieved through the integration of psychological theory, scientific research, and professional practice. The curriculum and training opportunities prepare graduates to deliver outstanding professional services, emphasizing the need to understand diversity, inclusivity and the importance of working with underserved populations. Reflecting the systemic integration of our mission, our logo symbolizes our values: Education, Innovation, Service, and Community.

Committee

The Civic Engagement Committee was made up of representatives from the Community Partnerships Department, Center for Multicultural & Diversity Studies, Center for Latino Mental Health and Student Affairs. We worked collaboratively with the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) and brought on a student to assist with voter registration and hosting debate watching parties.

2016-2019 Efforts

The Civic Engagement Committee's effort from 2016-2019 focused on increasing and encouraging voter registration and information on voting methods. Several emails were sent to students during 2016 that communicated information about voter registration, early voting sites, and absentee ballots, as some students were registered to vote in their home states. In April 2016, The Community Partnerships Department hosted a civic reflection discussion regarding how to discuss politics in the work/school space. A second reflection was hosted in June regarding mental health issues and the upcoming election. During July of 2016 students were encouraged to watch both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. The Student Support Department also hosted a presentation on how to call or write to local politicians regarding valued issues. During the fall, we hosted a voter registration table at the Job & Volunteer Fair and provided announcements during new student orientation about who to contact at the school regarding information about voter registration. In October of 2016 we dispersed the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP), a non-partisan candidate guide for the 2016 Illinois Senate Race. We also sent links to additional non-partisan voter guides via email to students. In addition, we hosted a Debate Watch party hosted by our student representative. From March of 2016 until the presidential election, banners with "Your Vote Matters" were posted at the student lounges, along with information about voter registration, absentee ballots, and voter guides. After the 2016 election, we hosted an event to allow students to share concerns and help them express how they could continue to be part of the democratic process.

Each year the school hosts a voter registration table on National Voter Registration Day in September to remind students to register. These are held in the student lounges and the Community Partnerships Department.

In February 2019, faculty in the Masters in Counseling Psychology Department, Career Services, and Community Partnerships hosted a presentation entitled, "Chicago's Mayoral Election: How to Know Who to Vote For". This provided students with an opportunity to learn about the numerous candidates, identify non-partisan sites to learn about their stance on the issues, the importance of voting, and how to register to vote.

2020 Action Plan

Since we did not track student voting in the 2016 election, we plan to track that information for 2020 and establish a baseline for future elections. Our goals for 2020 include:

- Establish a baseline of voter participation by implementing a student survey regarding both the 2016 and 2020 general elections.
- Determine if student voting increased in 2020 from 2016 based on survey results.
- Increase voter registration through encouragement from administration, faculty, and staff as a whole, versus primarily one department.

So far in 2020:

- We participated in the National Voter Registration Day.
- We sent emails to students, faculty and staff with voter registration information, absentee ballot, early voting sites, and non-partisan voter information for the March Illinois Primary.

LEADERSHIP

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Coalition

Maureen Zigulich, Social Justice Leadership Academy (Student Leader)

Dr. Margie Martyn, Chicago Campus Dean

Dr. Sandra Siegel, Faculty
Masters of Counseling Psychology Department

Dr. Luke Mudd, Faculty
Masters of Counseling Psychology Department

Charles Kelley, Director
Career Services

Emily Hilleren, Student Support Counselor

Coalition Meetings

Our group meets once monthly. Our first meeting occurred in March 2020.

Community Partners

Illinois Campus Compact, Rock the Vote, ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Civic Nation, Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)

COMMITMENT

The Chicago School was founded in 1979 by a group of psychologists and educators committed to advancing the field and providing professional training in a nonprofit setting. President Michele Nealon of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology is committed to developing professionals for the fields of psychology and related health sciences. TCSPP strives to build an environment of mutual respect and inclusion where all individuals will be valued for who they are and what they can contribute, and in turn, are expected to be participatory members of an active learning community that promotes cultural awareness, competence, and understanding of diversity. The TCSPP Chicago campus builds upon these values with the goal of encouraging volunteer efforts and supporting students to be socially responsible citizens.

The Chicago School has held a place on the President's Honor Roll for Higher Education Community Service; a distinction it earned in part due to the more than 800,000 hours of low cost and pro bono service students and faculty perform each year in the community. The Chicago Campus was one of 115 colleges and universities in the U.S., and one of three in Illinois to receive the 2010 Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching based on our work in the community and globally. Community

service, engagement, and a commitment to diversity are foundational pillars of TCSPP's educational model.

In January of 2020, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching selected TCSPP to receive the 2020 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification endorsement. The endorsement demonstrates TCSPP's commitment to finding ways to engage with community partners, building on community assets, and addressing a wide array of community challenges. These efforts continue with our mentorship of students to be service and social justice minded. This advocacy begins with the understanding of personal responsibility to participate in the democratic systems in our country. It continues through many efforts to volunteer and participate in a variety of initiatives to help all members of our community.

Civic and community engagement continues to be a priority at TCSPP. Despite current challenges of the COVID19 pandemic, our students, faculty and staff continue to make a difference through volunteer efforts with tutoring, writing letters for the elderly, reading student essays, and through telehealth.

LANDSCAPE

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology's values are Community, Service, Innovation, and Education. We live out these values both in the classroom and through the programs and offerings that are made available to students. The Community Partnerships Department was established in November 2006. This Department provides opportunities for students to serve their community through volunteer experiences. During the 2018-19 school year over 230 students participated in 3,500+ hours of service through service-learning courses. In addition, over 100+ students engaged in approximately 32,500 hours of service to the community through our community assistantships. Our administration, faculty and staff also live out our values through participation in our October Service month on top of the pro-bono work many of our employees engage in with the community. Several of our faculty teach study abroad courses and include both service learning and/or community service days in the work that they do globally.

The TCSPP Chicago campus also created the Social Justice Leadership Academy (SJLA) in 2017. The SJLA provides opportunities for students to engage in social justice activities and earn points connected to the school's values. In addition, each SJLA member is assigned a mentor (faculty, staff, administrator, alum) who supports the student in the development and participation in a leadership project. SJLA members are encouraged to engage in civic activities hosted through the school. A current member of our Democracy Challenge Committee is part of the SJLA.

In addition to the volunteer service through the Community Partnerships Department, over 500,000 hours are provided to the community each year through practicum and internship. We serve a wide range of communities throughout Chicago and the local suburbs.

ASSESSMENT OF 2016-2019 WORK & OUTCOMES

This is our first year participating in the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge. We collaborated with CEEP for the 2016 election and utilized the opportunity to have our Community Partnerships, Center for Cultural & Diversity Studies, Latino Mental Health Center, and Student Affairs cooperate to focus on civic engagement. We found that very few students took advantage of the voter registration tables at the Job & Volunteer Fair and on the National Voter Registration Day. Some students checked to see if they were registered to vote and many were.

We had approximately 20 students either register to vote or request an absentee ballot at our open voter registration events. Our efforts this year will focus on New student orientation and making voter registration as part of the process. We also hosted debate watching parties and recognized that students would not stay on campus in the evenings to participate, so we coordinated watching these events via youtube, utilizing the open hour of 12-1 p.m. In addition, we recognized that we needed more collaboration from faculty to encourage students to vote and engage in events on campus regarding civic engagement, as turnout to these events was low.

Goals

Short Term (2020 Presidential Election)

- Host voter registration at new student orientation, track numbers who registered, confirmed they were registered, or requested absentee ballot.
- Create and email a survey to students after the election asking if they voted in the 2016 Presidential Election, 2020 Presidential Election, and include a comment box about how views have changed regarding civic engagement as a result of work from this committee.
- Educate on the importance of voting – flyer (created by MACP student)
- Social Media campaign regarding the importance of voting
- Provide students with voter registration information, absentee ballots, early voting sites, voting by mail, and voter guides for the 2020 Presidential and gubernatorial election.

Long Term

TCSPP's long term goal is to create fully engaged lifelong active citizens. To move towards that goal over the next five years, we plan to:

- Establish a voter registration participation baseline.
- Increase student participation for on-campus voter education events to 100 TCSPP students each year.
- Encourage student participation in community service opportunities during their first year at TCSPP.
- Increase voter registration and participation over the next four years.

Some of the steps we are taking for the 2020 election include:

Strategy

Voter Registration

- Coordinate a “table” for voter registration at Student Orientation. Table will be covered by students, who can assist new students with registration in Illinois or the student’s home state. Assistance with absentee ballot access will also be provided.
- Host tables in student lounges for National Voter Registration Day. Write on all classroom bulletin boards that day about Voter Registration in student lounges.
- Email with links to access voter registration – committee creates email(s) that Department Chairs send out to students in their Department. Chairs request faculty to send to Professional Development groups for first year students.
- Include “Rock the Vote” on Canvas landing page
- Flyer with link to voter registration and absentee ballot request placed in student lounges.
- Put link for voter registration on flat screens.

- Canvas page for voting – all Chicago campus enrolled
 - Marketing – using social media platform about voter registration, education, action.
- COVID-19 Pandemic may alter how these activities are carried out to our community.*

Voter Education

- Campus mass emails will be sent and included in weekly student announcements. The Student Support Services Department will include voter education updates beginning in the spring semester and continue through summer 2020 and fall 2020.
- Voter Information Flyers.
- Candidate Debate & Watch Parties.
- Access to non-partisan media platforms – email, canvas, social media
- Presentations by faculty, staff, students on importance of voting

Action

- Students will receive emails regarding mental health issues that they can support via the Mental Health Coalition
- Bulletin Boards in Student Lounges will provide voter registration information, voter guides, and announcements regarding civic engagement education events being hosted at TCSP and the larger community.
- Encouragement for early voting and mail in voting (if appropriate)
- Identify three early voting sites near the school where students can vote, including dates/times.
- After election reflection

Available Resources

- We will seek out grant opportunities to support our efforts towards Civic Engagement.
- Chicago VOTES geared towards young people voting – identify events they host
- Collaborate with Rock the Vote and CEEP to provide non-partisan voter guides and voting information.

Challenges

- The majority of our students are in masters and doctoral programs. We do not have on-campus housing and have limited time to engage students in opportunities due to students' work and family schedules. We will be using open hours, 12-1 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. to host democracy events.
- COVID-19 may cause work that was planned for face to face to be done virtually
- Some sensitivities related to politics cause avoidance of conversations. Efforts will be placed to discuss the importance of voting regardless of party lines.

Calendar of Events (subject to change)

- March 2, 2020 – Mass email to students about voter registration, primary voting date for Illinois, and early voting sites.
- March 10, 2020 – Mass email Non-Partisan Voter guide created by Dr. Bothne's class sent to students
- March 17, 2020 – Illinois Presidential Primary Voting
- August 2020 – New Student Orientation Voter Registration

- October 10, 2020 – Emails from Department Chairs about early voting and election day
- October 18, 2020 – last date to register on-line
- September 16, 2020 – Constitution Day Contest
- September 22, 2020 – National Voter Registration Day
- November 3, 2020 – Election Day
- November 4, 2020 – After Election Reflection

Events to be scheduled:

- Debate Watch Parties
- Non-Partisan Voter presentation lunch
- Additional Voter Registration Events
- Presentations regarding the importance of voting and understanding and identifying issues

Reporting

This report was created by the TCSPD Democracy Challenge Committee. We will post the final version of this report on the Community Partnerships webpage for TCSPD. We will also share survey results to the TCSPD Chicago campus community. A final report regarding the outcomes of this plan will be distributed to the TCSPD Chicago campus community.

Evaluation

The committee will oversee the evaluation process. Students will receive an email after the 2020 election inquiring if they voted in the 2016 election and the 2020 election. The survey will include a comment box regarding whether the Democracy Challenge activities had any impact on their decision to vote or increased their interest/involvement in civic activities. This data will be shared campus wide. In addition, we will track voter registration and requests for absentee ballots. We will also track attendance at democracy events held prior to the November 3rd election.

Our goal for this year is to create a baseline for voter registration, voter participation, and attendance at democracy activities. This baseline will help us to set goals for the coming years elections, as well as increase offerings on campus in a more steam line manner to increase overall participation in civic activities, including, but not limited to, participation in marches/community events and writing letters to elected officials. We will communicate the outcomes of our plan to TCSPD Administration and the TCSPD community.