

ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology: Action Plan to increase Civic Learning, Political Engagement, and Voting Rates for the 2022 Elections

2022 is the Chicago School of Professional Psychology's second time partaking in the Democracy Challenge. We received our NSLVE report for 2020. Our goals to have 67% of our student body participate in the 2022 election.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPP) is a not-for-profit, accredited institution with more than 6,000 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, Nursing, 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 will be made up of representatives from each of our campuses including students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

LEADERSHIP

Leader: Jill Glenn, LCSW – Executive Director, Community Partnerships
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Leader: Michael Crawford – Associate Campus Dean, Chicago
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Coalition

Dr. Sandy Siegel - Department Faculty Counseling Psychology, Chicago
Dr. Lance Garrison - Campus Dean, Dallas
Dr. Nadia Rojas Jones - Department Chair Marriage & Family Therapy, Associate Director
Community Partnerships, Los Angeles
Dr. Alisha DeWalt - Associate Campus Dean, online
Matthew Le Brasseur - Director of Campus Life & Student Support Services, DC
TBN - Associate Campus Dean, Los Angeles
Charles Kelley - Director Career Services, National
Aimee Hein – Senior Student Support Counselor, Chicago
Student from Chicago, Dallas, Southern California, DC, New Orleans (recruiting)
Faculty and/or staff from Dallas, Southern California, DC, New Orleans (recruiting)

Coalition Meetings

Our Campus Group will meet once monthly. Representatives from each campus will meet quarterly starting in March 2022.

Community Partners

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

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.

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 2020-21 school year over 260 students participated in 3,900+ hours of service through service-learning courses. In addition, over 135 students engaged in approximately 32,680 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. While much of this work was altered during the height of COVID with the school building being closed, students, faculty, and staff still found a way to give back to their communities through a variety of virtual opportunities.

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, as well as engage in discussions related to civic engagement and civic learning. Fourteen students completed the SJLA in 2020-21 academic school year.

In addition to the volunteer service through the Community Partnerships Department, over 600,000 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.

2020 Efforts

The 2020 All in Democracy Challenge committee consisted of faculty, staff, students, and administrators from the Chicago campus. The Group met monthly. A focus was placed on voter registration, voter education, and voter access. A baseline of voter participation was established by connecting with NSLVE. Student voting increased from 45.4% in 2018 to 64.5% in 2020. We increased voter registration through encouragement from administration, faculty, and staff. 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, as well as through the November election. Recognizing that some of our students were choosing to vote in their home state rather than Illinois, we also put out information for key areas where our students previously resided.

Our two student team members provided a great deal of support. One member was responsible for creating weekly emails that went out each week, six weeks prior to the election. These emails included information on non-partisan ballot information, early voting sites, how and when to register, and ways to become involved in working at a polling site. In addition, the students created the information that went out on social media. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, much of our efforts were contained to a virtual format. We did post flyers around the school with a photo link for voter registration for those individuals who were on campus.

Faculty and staff combined efforts to provide discussions on student voting apathy and reasons why to vote. They also offered post-debate conversations. These events were not well attended, and we will look at inviting classes to events like these in the future.

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology joined NSLVE report in 2020. Our 2020 results showed a significant increase in voting rates from 45.4% to 64.5%. However, a better indicator is from the 2016 voting rate of 55.9% to 64.5%, as these two years are from Presidential elections, which tend to show increased voter turnout. This results in an 8.6% increase. We recognize that this is still below the national average of 66%. We have a goal of reaching 67% for the 2022 election.

Our voter registration rate increased by 9.5% from 2016 to 2020. Our voting rate for registered voters increased by 9% from 2016 to 2020. Unfortunately, this did not lead to a higher voter rate for 2020. The focus for the All in Democracy Challenge was led by the Chicago Campus of TCSP and had limited reach. This coming election, the "campus" wide working group will include all campuses and we are hopeful that this will expand our impact on voting rates.

Goals

Short Term (2022 Election)

- Increase student attendance with on-campus or virtual voting events (post-debate discussions, conversations about ambivalence and apathy regarding voting, voter registrations, etc.) to 200 students at all campuses.
- Ensure diverse participation across racial/ethnic lines within the national working committee
- Increase our 2022 voting rate from 64.5% to 67%.
- Increase our 2022 voter registration rate from 82.4% to 84%.
- Increase our 2022 voting rate of registered students from 78.4% to 80%.

Strategy

- Establish a national working group that will meet quarterly. Plan for campus working groups to meet monthly. Recruit members from diverse backgrounds.
- Provide voter registration information at orientation.
- 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 2022 election.
- Encouraging students to engage in supporting voter registration and turnout in their own communities as well as communities that historically have had lower turnout

- Put link for voter registration on flat screens.
- 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.
- Identify three early voting sites near the school where students can vote, including dates/times.
- Collaborate with Rock the Vote, League of Women Voters, and CEEP to provide non-partisan voter guides and voting information.

Long Term

TCSP'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:

- Share NSLVE data with entire campus.
- Have our civic engagement plan and work be more student led through engaging the Chicago School Student Association and student groups in providing information regarding voter registration, absentee ballots, early voting sites, post-debate discussions, etc.
- Increase campus connections to community non-partisan voting organizations.
- Increase voter registration and voter rates over the next five years.

Reporting

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

Evaluation

The Chicago School of Professional Psychology will use the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report to help guide our goals for increased student voter registration, voting rates for registered students, and actual voting rates. In addition, we will track the number of students on each campus that attend civic engagement activities including, but not limited to, voter registration events, post-debate discussions, conversations regarding voter participation, and non-partisan information conversations. This information will be shared with the larger TCSPP community.