

Civic Engagement Action Plan – UC Riverside

Overview

This action plan outlines the strategies for strengthening civic engagement on the UCR campus leading up to the November 2020 elections. This action plan will need to be revisited after the election so as to sustain and expand civic engagement on campus. For the purposes of this action plan, Civic Engagement is defined as *participation in both political and non-political activities, processes, and initiatives related to public problem solving*. Activities include filing out the census, voter engagement, community service, advocating for a cause, using one's political voice and supporting community organizations, among others. Civic Engagement is very broad and general, but we are focusing mainly on census and voter engagement through November 2020.

Leadership

The Civic Engagement Workgroup is a nonpartisan collaborative effort led by Student Life and consisting of representatives from Residential Life, ASUCR, Governmental and Community Relations, the Center for Social Innovation, the Civic Engagement Student Coalition, and CALPIRG. The workgroup will help to set goals and implement the strategies necessary to strengthen civic engagement on campus leading up to the November 2020 elections. As of this moment (Summer 2020), the workgroup still needs a faculty representative.

Alignment with VCSA Strategic Plan

Many of the initiatives and activities of the Civic Engagement Workgroup have a direct connection to the 2025 Strategic Plan for the Division of Student Affairs:

- Strategic Theme #1: Transform the Student Experience
 - Objective 1.1: Reduce/remove barrier that obstruct student development
 - Objective 1.3: New/reimagined events, campus traditions, and sources of campus pride
 - Objective 1.6: Implementation and assessment of high impact practices
- Strategic Theme #2: Creating Collaborative Partnerships
 - Objective 2.1: Establishing meaningful campus/community partnerships
 - Objective 2.2: Holistic approach to the student experience
 - Objective 2.3: Develop partnerships nationwide, and move from best practices to evidence-based work
 - Objective 2.6: Collaborate with Government Relations to advance student success
- Strategic Theme #4: Fostering and Advancing Social Justice
 - Objective 4.1: Enhance diversity, inclusion, and social justice on campus
 - Objective 4.2: Identify and implement best practices in social justice
 - Objective 4.3: Identify barriers to inclusion and equity
 - Objective 4.4: Develop a long-term diversity, inclusion, and social justice plan
 - Objective 4.5: Develop collaboratively across the division to identify core principles of diversity, inclusion, and equity

Landscape

UCR is a participating campus in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)—a national study by the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education at Tufts University. Our participation in this study gives UCR critical insight into its current level of voter engagement and shows how UCR stacks up against comparable universities.

Since 2012—the first year that data is currently available—UCR has performed below the national average in major categories including registration rate, voting rate of registered students, and overall voting rate. Many great strides have been made in the last two years with the development of the voter engagement workgroup. A look at the promising upward trend is available below:

Presidential				
2012		2016		Change
Registration Rate	68.60%	Registration Rate	69.40%	+2.2%
Voting Rate of Registered Students	56.70%	Voting Rate of Registered Students	59.20%	+2.5%
Voting Rate	38.90%	Voting Rate	41.10%	+2.2%
Midterm				
2014		2018		Change
Registration Rate	52.80%	Registration Rate	66.20%	+13.4%
Voting Rate of Registered Students	17.20%	Voting Rate of Registered Students	52.30%	+35.1%
Voting Rate	9.10%	Voting Rate	34.60%	+25.5%

As noted in the chart above—UCR achieved an increase of 13.4, 35.1, and 25.5 percentage points in registration rate, voting rate of registered students, and voting rate respectively from the 2014 midterm election to the 2018 midterm election. This swell in voter engagement at UCR is in part a result of the national political climate, but also a direct result of the initiatives and activities of the voter engagement workgroup to increase voter registration, education, and activation, and to limit barriers to voting.

Activities

Campus Wide Communication

- Chancellor’s email: Governmental and Community Relations has secured an email from the Chancellor to all students about registering to vote/vote-by-mail/early voting in the first week of Fall quarter
- ASUCR President’s Email: ASUCR President Luis Huerta sent out an email to all students on 9/10 about the census and voter engagement. Luis will send out another campus-wide email on 10/8 about voter engagement
- ASUCR Weekly emails: ASUCR sends out a weekly email to students on Wednesdays. These emails will include voter engagement information through 11/4

Programmatic Efforts

1. The Civics Hour: Weekly roundtable discussion about all things civic engagement. Every Wednesday at 11am we will host 3-4 guests (UCR students, staff, faculty, community leaders and local elected officials) in a conversation about civic engagement
 - September 30: The Importance of Representation
 - October 7: We the People!
 - October 14: Preparing to Make Your Vote Count
 - October 21: Public Service and the Importance of Voting in Elections
 - October 28: Civic Engagement Beyond the Election
 - November 4: Dealing with the Results of the Election

2. I Voted/Why You Should Vote (name TBD): Virtual campaign to challenge students to post on social media why they voted or why they think voting is important. Students are usually very proud to wear their “I voted” stickers—this is an attempt to get them to show off their engagement in the political process by posting it on social media
3. Debate Watch Parties: TBD

Civic Engagement Coalition

- Departmental coalition: Reaching out to departments across the campus and encouraging them to join our coalition and help disseminate accurate and important information to students about the voting process. This includes posting on their social media accounts, helping to market programs like the Civics Hour and the I Voted campaign.
- Student Org Coalition: Reaching out to student organizations and encouraging them to join the coalition and help disseminate accurate and important information to their members about the voting process. This includes posting on their social media accounts, helping to market programs like the Civics Hour and the I Voted campaign. This is a student led coalition that is also non-partisan. They send representatives to the Civic Engagement Workgroup meetings.

Marketing/Information Campaign

- Updates to vote.ucr.edu
- Working with SAMC to update vote-by-mail marketing
- Working with University communications to develop social media assets
- Working with ASPB to develop activities for their *Quarter for a Cause: Civic Engagement*
- Leveraging the social media power/reach of the workgroup by working closely with partners. This includes marketing through the social media accounts of the following groups:
 - Student Life
 - Residential Life
 - Governmental and Community Relations
 - Center for Social Innovation
 - Civic Engagement Student Coalition
 - ASUCR
 - ASPB
 - University Communications
 - Departments who join the Civic Engagement Coalition
- Including Civic Engagement/Voter Engagement information in programs around campus where it is possible and makes sense (e.g. orientation)