

# Get Out The VOTE

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## 2019 Federal Election Student Engagement Toolkit



CASA | ACAE

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations  
Alliance canadienne des associations étudiantes

[getoutthevote.ca](http://getoutthevote.ca) | [sortonsvoter.ca](http://sortonsvoter.ca) #IWillVote | #JeVote



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# Introduction

The [Canadian Alliance of Student Associations](#) or CASA is running a Get out the Vote (GOTV) campaign on their member campuses to increase voter mobilization and get more students to vote.

In addition, we are working with Elections Canada to ensure that students have all the information on when, where and the ways to vote including getting students engaged in the Elections Canada Vote on Campus program, as well as to promote job opportunities at the next federal election.

Even if you are not member of CASA, this information may be useful to engage students on your campus about the upcoming federal election.

CASA's GOTV campaign is specifically geared at helping students vote. Students are one of the groups of voters who face barriers to the electoral process, and many of them are first-time voters. That is why CASA is committed to providing information on how to vote, how to work at the election and tips and tricks for mobilizing students to get out and vote. The primary element of the campaign is collecting pledge to vote.

## What is a Pledge to Vote?

A promise that someone makes to go and vote. When someone pledges to vote it is shown to increase their likelihood to actually go and vote.

## Why is this important?

It helps to engage students in the electoral process. It also gives student leaders on campus an opportunity to talk to individuals about why voting is important. Through one to one interactions, participants of the GOTV campaign can share information on how to vote, how to register to vote and the places they can do this on their campus or in their community. This ensures that all students are equipped with the right information to vote in the upcoming election.

By actively participating in the electoral process and by sharing information about elections, your student communities can be better represented. For more information on how community organizers can help inform their members on registering and voting at the next federal election, visit the [Inspire Democracy](#) site.

We are pretty excited about engagement and we want to share some tips and tricks about how you can engage students on your campus. In this day and age of so much information, we want to make sure that students engaging in voter mobilization get accurate information. That is why we are creating this toolkit in collaboration with Elections Canada - the official source of information on the upcoming federal election. In this toolkit, you will find information on registering and voting, on how to recruit folks to work at a Vote on Campus program, general mobilization strategies and the importance of running a non-partisan campaign.

## **Who can use this kit?**

Any student organization, club, team or individual that is interested in engaging students in the upcoming federal election. Some of the information is specific to collecting pledges - even if you are not collecting pledges you can still use these tips to engage and have conversations with students on your campus.

For more information about us or our campaign, check out [getoutthevote.ca](https://getoutthevote.ca)

# Information on Voting and using the Vote on Campus Offices for Students



One of the best ways to mobilize students on your campus is to get them to vote! How can you vote? What do you need to vote? Check out this important information on what you need to vote in the upcoming federal election.

## Overview

Canadians aged 18 to 24, many of whom are students, may face barriers to the electoral process in Canada. Students are often unaware of the different registering and voting options that are available to them. They experience difficulties voting at regular and advance polls because of limited transportation and being away from their riding while at school or travelling. To address some of these barriers, Elections Canada will be providing additional services to students at the next federal election like Vote on Campus offices on select post-secondary campuses.

## What is Vote on Campus?

Vote on Campus was a pilot program, launched at the 2015 federal election, that provided voting services on 39 campuses. For the next federal election, there will be over 115 Vote on Campus offices across the country.

Elections Canada's Vote on Campus offices will be open for five days before election day. They are primarily for students, but any elector can register and vote at these locations. This is an important way that Elections Canada is making sure that students have access to voting.

[Check out if your campus has a vote on campus program and where it is located here](#)

## **How is Vote on Campus different from other voting options?**

Voting at a Vote on Campus office is a little different from voting on election day or advance polling days. This is because the Vote on Campus program uses the special ballot voting process. This process allows students who might be living away from home the opportunity to vote, using the appropriate ID, in their home riding (where they grew up or where they live) or in the riding where they live while at school. You will need ID proving your address on campus, and to be assigned to that polling place. You can visit the Elections Canada [website](#) for further information.

If your campus doesn't have a Vote on Campus office, you can still encourage students to use the special ballot voting process by voting at any Elections Canada office across Canada. If you choose to vote on advanced polling days or on Election Day, you can only vote at an assigned polling station and for candidates in that riding.

## **Confirming your place of residence**

It is important that student electors think about their place of residence. If you are using the Vote on Campus offices, you have the choice of voting for your home riding or the one where you are living temporarily. You will need ID proving your address on campus, and to be assigned to that polling place.

Your place of residence or home address is the place where you normally live, where you think of as home or have adopted as home.

If you leave your home temporarily (for school, work or any other reason) but intend to return to it, that address can remain your place of residence. Once you've decided on your place of residence, bring ID with that address when you go to register and [vote](#).

## **What if I miss Vote on Campus, can I still vote?**

You sure can. The vote on campus is just one of the ways you can vote. You can still vote at advance polls or on election day at your assigned polling station. You can also vote in person, by special ballot, at any of the over 500 Elections Canada offices across the country. Every riding in Canada has an Elections Canada office. Visit [elections.ca](#) to find the office nearest you.

# Recruitment for Vote on Campus Program



## Why work at an election?

Working at the polls is a great way to get involved in the next federal election! Plus, when you work at a federal election, you have the chance to make voting more welcoming and accessible to your community. By being a friendly face at the polling station or Elections Canada office, you help other people feel comfortable and confident when they vote. It is very rewarding to be able to witness and help facilitate this experience.

It's also a great way to make some money, interact with a large number of students and get involved in the election in a non-partisan capacity.

Don't have any experience? No problem! You do not need any experience to work at a federal election. Training is provided. And you get paid for it. It's a great experience for your resume as well. Plus, the day is pretty good too.

Having young people and particularly students work the polls has the potential to completely transform the experience at the vote on campus offices. Not only will voters be greeted with bright, cheerful and friendly faces (their peers), they may also feel more comfortable to ask for clarification on questions if the majority of people working at the polls are students.

A great way to get more information about Vote on Campus or Elections Canada is to get in touch with your Returning Officer (RO).

## Promoting Work Opportunities at the Vote on Campus Polls

How to talk to a fellow student about working at a Vote on Campus office? (Script)

Volunteer (V): Hi. Those books look heavy. Did you pay a small fortune for them at the bookstore?

Student (S): Yeah. I just spent \$350 on new books. All the editions were revised so I couldn't buy used ones. I guess it's ramen for the rest of the semester.

V: Yes! I totally get it. Wouldn't it be great if you could do a short term job, that wouldn't

interfere with school, get awesome work experience and get paid?

S: Yeah I wish!

V: Well you can. Elections Canada is hiring for the Vote on Campus program. It is short term work on campus. And you get to help students learn more about the voting process. Its an awesome way to get involved.

S: Ah no. I don't have that kind of experience.

V: You don't need any experience. Paid training is provided. Plus you get to engage in democracy. It's pretty awesome.

S: Cool! Let's do it.

## **What positions could you work?**

For the on-campus voting offices there are two different roles. The roles include:

- 1.** service agent; and
- 2.** information officer.

### **1. Service Agent:**

#### **Role description:**

Provides revision and special ballot voting services to electors.

May also perform targeted revision and special ballot voting in an isolated areas and do home visits as required.

#### **Main tasks include:**

Receives, completes, verifies and processes revision and special ballot voting applications.

Conducts targeted revision or other outreach related services such as special ballot voting in

isolated areas or home visits.

Ensures documents, ballot boxes, ballots and material are securely stored at the end of each day.

Issues ballots to electors requesting a special ballot.

## **2. Information Officer:**

### **Role description:**

Provides information services at the service center and work with other staff to ensure electors are able to cast their ballots effectively and safely.

### **Main tasks include:**

Directs electors to an available service agent for revision or special ballot services.

Performs other duties as requested.

Each job involves helping people to vote or register to vote. Most of the jobs last for the five days that the office is open, but some may start earlier to organize training and set up the office. The offices are usually open for 12.5 hours on weekdays and 5-6 hours on weekends (or longer).

Visit the Inspire Democracy site [link](#) for a comprehensive guide on all the available positions to work during an election.

## **How can someone apply for these positions?**

[Complete the online application to apply for these campus jobs.](#)

## **Where should these positions be advertised?**

In order to attract students to work at the Vote on Campus, office it is advisable to advertise the positions on the student union careers website and through commonly visited social media platforms including the student association Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Moreover it is helpful to expand the advertising to networks within the campus including residence staff, student service officers, student career offices and libraries.

Student leaders engaged in voter mobilization efforts ahead of the election may also use their leadership platforms to promote opportunities to work at the on-campus voting locations. This can be done through promotions on all social media platforms including facebook, twitter, snapchat and Instagram. Keep in mind that the official hashtag for the 2019 federal election is #ItsOurVote and #CestNotreVote. Moreover the positions can also be promoted through word of mouth and other network channels such as email listservs.

## Instagram Video Scripts

CASA encourages you to promote the positions through Instagram. This is a great way for students to see how and why they might want to work an election. Here are a couple of examples of things you could say:

**Example #1:** “Hey (enter student body name) did you know there is a federal election coming up? And did you know you could actually work the election? Click on the link in my bio to learn more about working at the on campus voting polls here at (enter institution name)”

**Example #2:** “Do you remember your first time? Or maybe it is your first time... voting! Well there are plenty of opportunities to get involved ahead of the general election and help all first time voters feel comfortable and excited about the next general election. Click the link in my bio to learn more about the different opportunities to get involved”

**Example #3:** (take a video with a Returning Officer or your Field Liaison Officer- obviously contact them first to see if they are up for this. Nothing like being in a video you didn't consent to being in.)

“Hey there my name is (name and position) and I am here with the Returning Officer/Field Liaison Officer for (enter voting on campus station). So tell me what cool things will I get to do if I work at the election? And why should students work at the on campus voting polls?”

CASA is focusing on getting students to pledge to vote. Research indicates that a person who pledges to vote is more likely to vote than someone who does not. As a result, our campaign is centered around two kinds of events - pledge driving events and mobilization events. Building on lessons learned from our 2015 GOTV Campaign, our offices have compiled a guide to take you through the steps of organizing and operationalizing events that are essential to a well-run campaign. We recognize that you know your campuses and students best, so there is no need to reinvent the wheel!

Pledges are something that we are using to mobilize students. It is not necessary for every campus. You can use these strategies more generally as a way to engage students on your campus to learn more about the election, voting and democracy.

# Pledge Tactics



## Canvassing 101:

Canvassing for student associations running a Get Out The Vote campaign combines face-to-face conversations, class-room visits, and strategically planned events that aim to drive up the number of students who will pledge to vote. At the heart of it, get out the vote is a canvassing campaign where students have conversations with potential voters about the importance of voting in the upcoming federal election.

## Canvassing Basics

- Talk to students: Face-to-face interactions will yield the highest success rate in getting students on campus to do something. In this case, pledge to vote! A face to face conversation can be an effective way to inspire people to action and build meaningful connections with your peers.
- Engage your grassroots: Getting students to pledge to vote is a great opportunity to engage the grassroots base of your student association
  - ▶ Be direct: When approaching people, it can be really tempting to be polite and say “Can I have a minute of your time to chat?” but don’t. Be direct. Try saying “I’d like to talk to you about voting in the election in October”.
  - ▶ Find a balance between good conversation and speed: Find a good balance between building a good rapport with students, but keep in mind the goal is to get a pledge. Don’t spend more than 3-4 minutes trying to get one.
- Clarity is important: The pledges will be collected one or two ways: either with an electronic device that will record the pledge on the website, or by paper. If it’s digital, make sure it’s accurate and inputted into your digital recording system correctly.

## Pledge Driving Events

### Orientation Week

Orientation Week is very likely going to be the biggest pledge driving opportunity you are going to have during your campaign. You have an opportunity to make sure students are talking about the election from the moment they first engage with your student association, so use this time strategically! **Book a meeting with your Orientation Chair to discuss how voter mobilization can be a part of official orientation events ASAP!** Should you have the ability to create a new event for orientation around mobilization, great! If not, simply incorporate mobilization into already existing events that are a part of the orientation schedule.

### Here are some ideas:

- Ask your Orientation Chair for an opportunity to talk to upper year students helping with Orientation about GOTV during their training. This is a great opportunity to engage those who may have already voted in previous elections, and they can act as supports for your GOTV team when you're collecting pledges throughout Orientation.
- Many orientations include scavenger hunts around campus to encourage new students to become familiar with their new surroundings. Book a table for your scavenger hunt event and prepare a game for your students. A good old fashioned "Match the Leader to the Party" paired with pledging to vote is a great option!
- Events where there are lineups to enter an event are a great time to use your street teams to move through the lineups, chat about the election, and get people to pledge! (What's a street team? A group of students that have been trained on voter mobilization that walk around and talk to students. These are students that come to you instead of those who are behind a booth or desk that you go to seek information.
- Work with leaders in each of your institution's residences to schedule a time to talk about the federal election. Pass pledges around at the end of your speech, provide an opportunity for students to ask questions, take your pledges and move onto the next residence!
- Are there events organized specifically for off-campus first year students? Coordinate a time to speak with these students about GOTV and pass out pledges.
- Engage students online! In your introductory email to students for the 2019-2020 academic year, plug GOTV and include the link to CASA's GOTV website.

## Food Events

- Free food for a pledge to vote! Set up a booth with GOTV suckers or host a barbecue in high traffic area.
  - ▶ If you're hosting a barbecue on your campus, ensure that you have contacted your institution's food provider to see if they can donate items. If you have the flexibility to serve food from off-campus, your local grocer may be able to provide food and condiments for a discounted rate. Be sure to include the cost for this event in your GOTV budget!

## Viewing Parties

- **During the Campaign:** Throughout the election period, there will be multiple leaders' debates hosted across the country in both official languages. These debates are generally live streamed online from CBC, CTV, or CPAC, so access to cable is not necessary! These debates will be well-advertised, but Home Office will be sure to include the dates of these debates in the Membership Updates.
  - ▶ Book space in your campus pub, a lounge, or classroom on campus. Pick up snacks for all attendees to share if you are not in a space that serves food, and hand out pledges and pens before the debate starts.
  - ▶ For our online friends, organize local meet ups to watch debates! Ask your council and GOTV team to help coordinate viewing parties in their hometowns. Are there other student associations participating in CASA's GOTV campaign in your councilors' vicinity? Work with their team to share space/resources!
- **Election Results Viewing Party, October 21:** Plan for this event to be the big finale for the campaign! You're going to want to set aside some money in your GOTV Budget to make this one a blast! This event should be hosted in a spot with cable (for up-to-date results), adequate sound, and space for as many students as possible to attend.
  - ▶ If you are hosting this event in your campus pub, work with staff to ensure that the event can be wet-dry for those under the legal drinking age. This should be an event that everyone can attend.
- Book your space of choice early. You don't want to be competing for space with other groups on campus, so the sooner you can lock this spot down the better.

- Reach out to the presidents of all political party groups on campus and ask them to spread the word about the event! You don't have to fill the space all on your own- the more the merrier!
- This event will be your last chance to get those pledges! We encourage you to have volunteers at the door to collect pledges from students who voted but did not have the chance to pledge to vote yet.

# Mobilization Events



## Mobilization tactics

The policy goal of mobilizing students to vote on campus stations: CASA had long advocated that voting stations be provided on post-secondary campuses. Students are a transient population group and often don't settle into a particular location until after their studies are completed. This makes getting them to vote at regular polling stations particularly challenging.

## Street Teams

Events are great, but you won't get every student possible to your events, so it is imperative that GOTV Campaigns at brick and mortar campuses have street teams! These teams should be comprised of volunteers that are comfortable approaching students on campus and being in large social settings. It will be useful for your street teams to have GOTV shirts or something that will help identify them as being a part of your GOTV campaign (buttons, hats). These volunteers can use paper pledges or use - tablets - depending on what you choose to do for your campaign.

- When to mobilize your street teams: After a busy class time in the quad, in busy spaces in your student union building or an academic building, at the campus cafe, during homecoming or any other sporting event, in the afternoon on a weekend.
- Door knocking: This is an essential part of any campaign! Whether you decide to do this in your residences on campus, or in student dense areas near your institution, this will not only serve as a chance to collect pledges but also as an opportunity for your volunteers to chat with students about upcoming events for the campaign. **Please ensure that safety is a number one priority for door knocking, and that no one is door knocking alone or in an area that they do not feel comfortable being in.**

## Leverage Networks

- Engage Clubs and Societies: The number of students who directly get involved with student unions is small, but the number of students who get involved through Clubs and Societies is much larger. Clubs and Societies often will have connections with students that the Student Union may not. Getting them to collect pledges for you will increase the network of students engaged with the campaign.
  - ▶ Tip: Get them to compete with each other. The society who gets the most pledges wins a prize.
- Engage Athletics: Athletic teams are another avenue that can be used to drive pledges and get public attention on the campaign. Try to get the entire team to pledge and get players to share that they did it. Much like previously organized campus events, getting students to pledge upon entry to varsity sports games will drive up pledges.

## Classroom Visits

Regardless of their academic background, everyone should have an interest in the upcoming election! During the first week of classes, start emailing professors asking if you would be able to speak with students at the beginning of their class about the GOTV campaign, when to vote, and upcoming events! You can either bring paper pledges to the class and collect them at the end, or simply put your website on the screen for students to visit on their own and pledge before class starts.

Classroom visits are a great way to engage senators on your council in the GOTV campaign. There is no harm in providing them with a pre-written email and asking if they would be willing to talk to the professors or teachers they work closely with. Another easy win is to ask your own professors or teachers for five minutes of time at the beginning of all of your own classes!

For online classes, reach out to professors or teachers and ask if they would mind forwarding along an email about the GOTV campaign to their class. Is the class conducted over a webinar? Perhaps there would be an opportunity for you to join in and chat with students over webcam!

## Voting on Campus

The majority of associations with brick and mortar campuses will have a Vote on Campus office on their campus for this election! This is huge! If you have polling stations, these are the dates you are going to be telling students to vote. It's easy! It's accessible! Skip waiting in line on October 21 and vote on campus from **October 5-9!** Home office will be in touch with you closer to the date to help you figure out where your vote on campus location will be.

During your Vote on Campus days, your street teams should be out in full force! You should also have a table outside of the space where voting is taking place with information on voting and pledges for people to fill out before they head in. You should also be using your association's social media and engage students either going into or coming out from voting. Think of pictures of students with their pledge to vote, boomerangs of people walking in to vote or dancing in front of the Elections Canada sign, or a quick video from someone who just voted saying how simple it was! **When people see their peers voting, they will be more likely to vote too.** We'll say it once more, social media is your friend!

Quick Note: Did you know you actually cannot take pictures inside a polling station? It's true. Not even selfies. This is to protect privacy and confidentiality in the voting process. (The only exception is for people with a visual impairment who may need their smartphones to increase accessibility!) But don't worry, save your clicks for outside. We still want pictures. Remember pics or it didn't happen!

## Phone Bank

On the weekend before the election day, get as many of your volunteers as possible together for an afternoon and join in calling everyone who has provided their number at GOTV events throughout the campaign. This phone bank will serve as a final push to encourage anyone who has not voted yet to get to the polls on October 21. Provide each of your volunteers with a list of numbers to call, and ensure they have polling information on hand to provide. Here are two examples of how these calls might go:

### Example 1

Volunteer: Hello! This is (your name) calling from the (insert SU/SA name here)'s Get Out the Vote Campaign! Could I please speak to Joe?

Joe: Hi there, yes this is Joe.

Volunteer: Awesome! Joe I just wanted to give you a call and thank you for pledging to vote in the 2019 election and see if you were able to make it to the on campus polling stations?

Joe: I sure was, (your name)! Thanks to your wonderfully ran campaign I knew where and when to vote and was the first in line at the polls on October 5th.

Volunteer: That is wonderful, Joe. Thank you for voting! If any of your friends haven't voted yet, feel free to let them know that they can still vote on October 21st at (insert polling station address). Have a great night!

### **Example 2:**

Volunteer: Hello! This is (your name) calling from the (insert SU/SA name here)'s Get Out the Vote Campaign! I'm looking to speak with Sam?

Sam: Hey there, (your name)! It's me, Sam!

Volunteer: Awesome! Sam I just wanted to give you a call and thank you for pledging to vote in the 2019 election. I also wanted to check in and see if you were able to make it to the on campus polling stations from October 5th-9th?

Sam: Ah, unfortunately I wasn't able to make it to the campus polling stations. I was in class from sunrise to midnight because I require no sleep and always put my academics first, but I can still vote on October 21st right?

Volunteer: No worries, Sam, you scholar! You can absolutely vote on October 21st. We will actually be leading walking parties to the polls and offering drives as well.

Sam: Hey, that rules. I will totally join a walking party to the polls because that is the one day a week that I don't have class and exercising my democratic right is also very important to me. Is there one leaving around 12pm that day?

Volunteer: There sure is! Leaving from the front entrance of the student union building.

Sam: Amazing, I'll see you then! Thanks for calling.

### Example #3

Volunteer: This is (your name) calling from the (insert SU/SA name here)'s Get Out the Vote Campaign! I'm looking to speak with Sarah?

Sarah: This is Sarah.

Volunteer: Awesome! Sarah I just wanted to give you a call and thank you for pledging to vote in the 2019 election. I also wanted to check in and see if you were able to make it to the on campus polling stations from October 5th-9th?

Sarah: How did you get this number?

Volunteer: It was on the Get Out the Vote pledge form that you filled out when you pledged to vote. And you opted into being contacted.

Sarah: No I didn't. Please don't call me.

Volunteer: I'm really sorry for the mix up. I will remove your name from the list right away. Thanks again for your pledge to vote.

## Election Day Driving/Walking Events

Voting is always fun but it's even more fun when you can do it with friends! Organizing walking parties to the polls or offering drives to your students are great ways to break down that last barrier on getting out that vote! A little effort goes a long way. You can schedule these for vote on campus, advance voting or general election day. Check out Elections Canada's website at [elections.ca](http://elections.ca) for more specific information on your poll locations.

- **Walking Parties:** Schedule willing volunteers to lead groups of students to the polls. Schedule these groups to leave every hour on the hour throughout the day, and then every half hour after 5pm. Post the schedule for the walking parties in your student union office, on your SU/SA website, and on your social media. Wear your GOTV gear on the way down and share your journey on Instagram as your group makes their way to the polls.
- **Driving to the polls:** Do you have a rideshare vehicle on campus? Volunteers with cars? Using either or both of these to drive students to the polls will be appreciated, even if it is just a one way drive. One option is to create a schedule for students to sign up, or have vehicles decked out in GOTV gear in a popular spot on campus and encourage people to hop on vote train!

# Stakeholder Groups involved in Voter mobilization



## Vote Pop Up

[Vote PopUp](#) is a voter simulation exercise designed by John Beebee at the Democratic Engagement Initiative at Ryerson University. Vote PopUp involves simulating the voting experience to help first time voters to familiarize themselves with the process of voting. The initiative is designed to demystify any confusion or fears that may be associated with voting especially for first time voters. While there is often a lot of promotion to go vote, sometimes that doesn't provide space for people to ask valid questions. By simulating voting, one can ask questions while learning about how to vote. Vote Pop Up stations which include ballot boxes, ballots and voter information can be run at a variety of spots on campus.

Some suggested locations for running Vote Po Up include:

- Residence halls
- Cafeteria's
- Libraries
- Campus club spaces or SU/SA buildings
- Popular lecture halls

Training on Vote Pop Up will be provided at the Get out the Vote conferences with a specific focus on voting by special ballot.

## Vote2019

The Vote 2019 Election Coalition is spearheaded by **Apathy is Boring** (a non-partisan organization devoted to the promotion of youth engagement in democracy) and the democratic engagement exchange. The initiative strives to bring together stakeholder groups, operating in a non-partisan capacity that are engaged in voter mobilization efforts in

advance of the next election. The coalition has three components: a bilingual newsletter that covers resources and best practices related to voter mobilization, a coordinated activation effort on September 15, 2019 (democracy day) to push voter mobilization in advance of the general election and promoting shared content through the use of the social media hashtag #vote2019 to showcase all the non-partisan voter mobilization efforts taking place across the country.

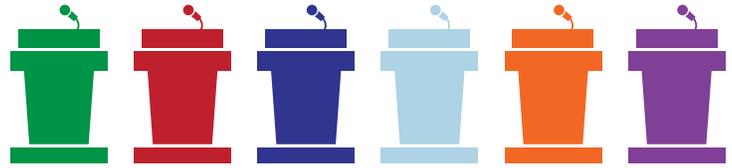
## **Samara Centre for Democracy**

The Samara Centre for Democracy is a non-partisan organization devoted to strengthening Canada's democracy. The organization strives to provide Canadians with the appropriate tools to engage with democracy. In advance of the next election they will be producing a series of materials focused on civic literacy and digital media literacy in particular. Their tools will be available for broader use and may be a helpful resource when promoting civic engagement amongst your student body.

## **CPAC and the Democracy Project**

The Canadian Public Affairs Channel is bringing stakeholders together to showcase content focused democracy initiatives in advance of the next election. They are a content producer that covers topics relevant to Canadian public affairs. Their content may be used in the promotion of GOTV.

# Running a Non-partisan Campaign



## What is non-partisanship?

Partisans are individuals who show preference or bias for a particular political party, cause, or person. To be non-partisan is to do the opposite and show no preference or bias for a particular political party, cause, or person.

## Why is it important?

CASA is a national voice for Canada's post-secondary students. Due to this, independence and impartiality when it comes to engaging in political activities is fundamental to CASA's credibility and respect among its stakeholders, which includes various political parties. **Not only is it important that CASA engage in non-partisan behaviours, but that it also maintain the perception of being non-partisan.**

Canada has elections roughly every 4 years, and CASA maintaining a non-partisan perception is integral to the success of the organization delivering its mandate for students. Making statements that endorse or prop up one political party over another risks putting CASA in a situation where a political party feels wronged betrayed. This can impact our relationship with organizations in the future and yours as well. It is important that your actions cannot be perceived as partisan either. **It's important to ask yourself- Could this be perceived as unfairly supporting one party over another?** Students need CASA to be able to develop positive relationships to ensure student voices are heard, regardless of who's in government on Parliament Hill, and actively avoiding partisan activities is a proven way to have the maximum impact with all parties.

## Partisan Activities

A partisan activity is any activity that provides direct or indirect support, or opposition, to any political party at any time, whether during an election period or not, to a candidate for public office.

### Examples of partisan activity include:

- Seeking to become a candidate in a federal election;
- Publicly endorsing a federal candidate;
- Giving money or non-cash gifts to a candidate or political party, either directly or indirectly;
- Making public statements that support or oppose a candidate or political party;
- Suggesting that people should vote for a particular candidate or political party, either directly or indirectly;
- Using any website or social media account with GOTV branding to post a hyperlink to statements by a third party that supports or opposes a particular candidate or political party;
- Posting signs that support or oppose a particular candidate or political party;
- Allowing a candidate or political party to use GOTV equipment, volunteer time, or other resources;
- Distributing literature or voter guides that promote or oppose a candidate or political party, directly or indirectly.
- Posting or discussing partisan issues.

## Keeping the Campaign Non-Partisan

It's important to highlight the democratic legitimacy that student unions are provided by their students. Individuals participating in the GOTV campaign will not only be ambassadors of CASA and the campaign itself, but ambassadors for the student body as a whole on each campus. Recognizing that particular candidates or political parties may try to exploit this is key in developing effective non-partisan tactics. Additionally, political campaigns provide opportunities for partisan activities in abundance, and some of them will be really tempting to

fall into. For example, parties will definitely be making announcements that will have impacts on students and the post-secondary education system. **If one party promises everything your student union wants, it could be tempting to endorse them, but this would be a strategic mistake.** Why? Because it will jeopardize your relationship and will betray the spirit of non-partisanship. You are representing all students on your campus. And students are diverse!

## **Don't engage in partisan activities**

As a rule, don't engage in any partisan activities in the section listed above. If there is question about whether an activity could or could not be perceived as partisan, generally operate on the side of caution, and **call Home Office for a second opinion if necessary.**

## **Commenting on policy, not politics**

It's possible that during the course of the campaign, your student association may be asked by media, other stakeholder groups, or even students to comment on the policy positions being proposed during the election. A careful line must be walked here but it can be done effectively. When commenting on policy, those involved in the campaign should only discuss the merits of the policy itself and at no point make a connection to any particular candidate or party. **Contacting Home Office for assistance is an option in this situation.**

## **Volunteers**

**The rule of not engaging in partisan activities must extend to the volunteers working on this campaign.** Students who volunteer for the campaign should sign non-partisanship forms that demonstrate that they commit to acting in a non-partisan fashion and are committed to the goals of the campaign. Given that volunteers will have a lot of direct contact with students pledging in the campaign, it's important that volunteers behave in a way that would not be detrimental to CASA's reputation.

# Our Members



# About CASA

Established in 1995, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, national student organization composed of 23 student associations representing 280,000 post-secondary students from coast to coast. Through its partnership with the Quebec Student Union (QSU) and their 8 members representing an additional 79,000 students, CASA presents a national student voice to the federal government. CASA advocates for a Canadian post-secondary education system that is accessible, affordable, innovative, and of the highest quality.



Canadian Alliance of Student Associations  
Alliance canadienne des associations étudiantes

 130 Slater Street, Suite 410, Ottawa ON, K1P 6E2

 [casa-acae.com](http://casa-acae.com)

 613.236.3457

 [info@casa.ca](mailto:info@casa.ca)

 @CASAACAE

 /CASAACAE

 @CASAACAE



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