



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

A GUIDE FOR STUDENT BODY LEADERS
TO INCREASE CAMPUS VOTING RATES

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Photograph Tufts University

IN 2014, only 21% of young adults (ages 18-29) cast their votes. Local, state, and national races impact issues that affect our livelihoods. Our elected officials have the power to cut student loan debt, increase funding for higher education, create an inclusive society, and affect many more important issues. In fact, the policies determined by elected officials often have great influence on the success of your work as student body leaders fighting to improve mental health or prevent sexual assault on your college campuses. We must get more young people out to the polls when our future is at stake. As student body leaders, you can promote civic engagement and increase registration on your college campuses. Here are some preliminary tips on how you can do so.

1. Get the facts

- a. Do you know your campus voting rate? The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates. For interested campuses, a NSLV offers a closer examination of their campus climate for political learning and engagement as well as correlations between specific student learning experiences and voting. Visit the following website for more information: <http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/research/nslve/>.
- b. Identify registration deadlines in your state, along with where to register, ID requirements, and other information on voting through the Campus Vote Project: <http://campusvoteproject.org/studentguides/>

2. Communicate your “why”

- a. Find creative ways to inform your student body why they need to register to vote. Involve students from all aspects of campus — athletes, musicians, artists, etc.

3. Identify barriers on your campus that keeps students from voting

- a. Where are the polling places on your campus? Are there enough?
- b. Provide balanced information for students not only on presidential candidates but for candidates at the state and local levels.
- c. Do students know where and how to register?
 - i. MIT students developed a web-based platform to help their peers register to vote. Read more about “VoteMate” [here](#).
 - ii. HelloVote registers voters through text message and is receiving praise for its simple and intuitive interface. Read more [here](#).

4. Involve your university administration and faculty in your efforts

- a. The Student Government Association at Central Michigan University is pairing with political science professors to offer a mobile Secretary of State office in order to register students. Read more [here](#).
- b. Campus Vote Project created a list of Best Practices for university administrators to implement on their campuses. Share [this](#) with your university administration.
- c.

5. Community engagement

- a. Be intersectional: Involve student leaders from underrepresented communities to bring those populations into the conversation. Are there certain communities that are particularly disenfranchised?
- b. Conduct outreach among student groups: Greek life and large student organizations can serve as a resource to get information out to many people
- c. Host a competitive voter registration drive program with your rival school
 - i. UCLA and USC, two major rival schools in the southern California, are leveraging their rivalry to get thousands of students registered to vote on their respective campuses. Read more [here](#).

- d. Facilitate easy ways to get out to vote or register to vote through a campaign
 - i. [Walk2Vote](#) is a civic engagement model founded by the Student Government Association at the University of Houston that has a host of resources on how to plan your own civic engagement program including voter deputy training, marketing campaigns, voter registration campaigns, funding resources, civic research, registration/voter turnout contests and a celebratory event which includes musical performances, keynote speakers and concludes with everyone walking to vote en masse.
 - ii. Indiana University Bloomington is one of hundreds of schools to join the All In Campus Democracy Challenge, with the hopes of boosting student voting rates to at least 50 percent. Planned events include an Office of the Provost “hot topics” panel discussion on voting and elections and weekly “Walking Wednesdays” -- Oct. 12, 19 and 26 and Nov. 2 -- in which groups of students will walk to downtown Bloomington’s Election Central to cast ballots during Indiana’s early voting period. Read more [here](#).

Follow up:

If you need help, have questions, or want to offer additional resources, please reach out to us at policy@nationalcampusleaders.org or visit our website at www.nationalcampusleaders.org.





ABOUT NATIONAL CAMPUS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

NCLC provides a venue for student body presidents and their teams to come together and confront exigent issues facing our generation. We work with a broad network of current and former student body presidents to share best practices, identify innovative solutions, and generate greater expertise to ensure young leaders are effective stakeholders and spokespeople on campus and beyond.

Our mission is to foster a new era of young leadership by empowering student leaders to engage in the public discourse.