

Report to: All in Campus Vote Challenge  
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**Executive Summary:**

The Vasconcellos Institute for Democracy in Action (VIDA) was founded in 2006. Its mission is to:

empower students to become agents of change in their communities and beyond; to foster education that meets the needs of the communities we serve; and to help develop pathways to meaningful participation in local, state, and federal government decision making processes.

In addition to myself as director, we have a half-time program coordinator, a half-time director of our undocumented students resource and advocacy center, three ten hour student staff members, and 10 paid student interns.

Our core programs are as follows:

- An 18 quarter unit certificate program in Leadership and Social Change, which prepares students for careers in social change non-profits
- A Public Policy School, where 8-10 students a year receive training and practice in policy advocacy
- A program called Latino Empowerment at De Anza (LEAD), which is a cluster of courses that use critical pedagogy, civic engagement, and mentors to create *familia* in the classroom
- Higher Education for AB540/Undocumented Students (HEFAS), a resource and advocacy center for undocumented students
- A program for paid interns who advocate around a variety of issues of concern to students, such as improved public transportation, housing justice, voter registration and mobilization, and police accountability
- A service learning program, where we enroll approximately 1,000 students per year in service learning classes
- Advocacy for campus wide institutional initiatives such as a campus wide requirement in Environmental Sustainability and Global Citizenship as well as integrating civic capacity into the college's mission and core competencies

Our office has received a number of grants to do voter registration. We have generally done that work under the name *My Vote Our Future*. In 2011 we receive a \$110,000 grant to register and engage voters. That year we worked with students to make videos in 8 languages that encouraged people to vote. Generally we hire interns to work with volunteers to register students and community members to vote, and to educate them on why they should vote. Presently, we have a \$10,000 grant that runs between September 2017 and March 2018 to register 1,000 people to vote.

**Leadership:**

VIDA is the lead site for civic engagement work on our campus. Our Political Science department is also very engaged in registering voters, and we work closely with them. Our office of Institutional Research is very interested in voter engagement and civic engagement more broadly, and it does national level work on evaluating civic engagement. Brian Murphy, our college President co-founded The Democracy Commitment, a national network of Community Colleges doing civic engagement work.

We consider all of the campus' faculty and staff and students to be stakeholders. We also work with many community partners all year around.

**Commitment:**

We have worked hard to build civic engagement deeply into the structure of the college. Our college's mission states:

De Anza College provides an academically rich, multicultural learning environment that challenges students of every background to develop their intellect, character and abilities; to realize their goals; and to be socially responsible leaders in their communities, the nation and the world. The college engages students in creative work that demonstrates the knowledge, skills and attitudes contained within the college's

Institutional Core Competencies:

- Communication and expression
- Information literacy
- Physical/mental wellness and personal responsibility
- Civic capacity for global, cultural, social and environmental justice
- Critical thinking

One of the college's institutional metrics is to have "Six percent of students with a goal of transfer or degree will have enrolled in at least one course having a community/civic engagement component each Fall." We are on target to meet that goal by the next time it is assessed in 2020.

We also have a graduation requirement in Global Citizenship and Environmental Sustainability.

**Landscape:**

Our intuitional researcher does an annual survey of civic engagement which we analyze to assess our progress. We also look at the report we get from NSOLV and use that to guide our work.

The data show that our student are quite engaged and learn a lot about working with others across social differences, the importance of civil dialogue, how power operates at social and political levels. Our level of voting remains very low, even after much serious work trying to increase voter engagement.

In the past our student government was not very effective leadership and we found from NSOLV that student government involvement really matters.

We are in California where the election laws are very favorable for student voting. One issue we have is that most of the elections for office holders are not hotly contested in our area, and the differences between them rarely are exciting to students. Ballot initiatives are more interesting, but students seem to find the process if sorting through the information to decide how to vote intimidating. We have held several very successful events where students learn about the ballot initiatives and teach each other about them.

We have received several different grants in the past to hire interns to run our voter registration program.

Most of our Political Science faculty engage students by ask them to register other students to vote. Our LEAD program (see above) also asks students to register others to vote.

We have civic engagement happening in many departments including: Child development, Environmental Studies/ Environmental Science, Intercultural studies, English, Spanish, Philosophy, and Economics.