ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Action Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan was developed by the Voter Engagement Task Force of Hudson County Community College (HCCC) to strategically accomplish increased voter registration and engagement of Hudson County Community College students. The plan is intended as a provisional map for HCCC's election engagement efforts for 2020 and beyond. The plan includes both firm intentions and initial suggestions for how various departments might engage in this work, and as such it represents a starting point for conversations and collaborations with stakeholders that will take place throughout 2020. Outcomes from 2020, as well as evolving campus needs and resources, will be incorporated into future iterations of this plan as HCCC continues to participate in the ALL IN challenge.

LEADERSHIP

This ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan was developed by a planning group representing staff, faculty, and the student body led by Nicholas Chiaravalloti, Vice President for External Affairs and David Clark, Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

COMMITMENT

The college Statement of Rights and Responsibilities states: "(HCCC) is a community of scholars in which the ideals of freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of individual are sustain. The college is committed to preserving the exercise of any right guarantee by the constitution." In this spirit, voting is right and responsibility guarantee by our constitution that the College will continue to promote and engage our students. Additionally, at the behest of the College President, Christopher Reber, the college was recently re-organize creating an External Affairs Office, where the College seeks to develop and manage relationships with elected government officials and agencies as well as community based organizations. Civic learning and democratic engagement is at the heart of the college's mission; the college is ideally situated to join this challenge and more actively promote student participation in civic duties. Furthermore, the college recently decided to become members of The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), and will be receiving reports on our students' voter registration and voting rates every two years.

The end result of the action plan outcome is democratic participation; how many students vote. To inform its election engagement effort, and join the national conversation around this issue, in 2020 HCCC will begin measuring democratic participation by joining the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). NLSVE data comparing both voter registration and turnout among eligible HCCC students in future years will show if our efforts in civic learning and democratic engagement have were significant. We are optimistic that if we invite stakeholders to contribute their ideas and respond to the ideas in this plan, most departments will be open to contributing to the effort in whatever way is appropriate to their particular knowledge, skills and capacity.

LANDSCAPE

In the past, HCCC has supported voter registration drives and Get out the Vote efforts as well as organized activities that recognized Constitution Day, based on the federal mandate.

HCCC also has a robust service learning pedagogy. The following courses offered service learning components:

Intro to Political Science, Constitutional Rights and Liberties, Women in American History, Principles of Sociology, Education (Early childhood and mid-level), American Government, State and Local Government.

GOALS

1. Develop a collaborative, campus-wide campaign that will provide a consistent, programmatic approach to fostering the following outcomes among HCCC students who are eligible to vote:

    a) Lower affective barriers to voting;
    b) Promote students' beliefs that voting is important, intellectually approachable, and convenient.

2. Educate students on the issues and candidates that will appear on the ballot, as well as related topics such as polling, electoral reform proposals, and basic civics.

3. Register students to vote.

4. Increase students' voter turnout and participation.

Strategy

Below is a rough chronology of the tasks that comprise this plan. The list includes efforts that may require only HCCC staff and volunteer support to execute. Following the list is a table of additional ideas that would require cooperation from other departments, and we will explore these possibilities in early 2020.

Winter
- Convene meetings with campus stakeholders to invite input and share proposed plans.

Spring & Summer
- Map out components of *HCCC Votes* student-facing campaign
- Create website (and/or Canvas module and/or team site) for students to easily find election resources (i.e. registration, issues/candidates, volunteering with campaigns).
- Explore websites/services such as TurboVote and review how we advertise and support its use.

- Compile calendar of Student Life activities married with campus events (i.e. speakers, student activities programs and academic programs) and state voting deadlines.
- Logistical reservations for events (i.e. space, a/v, dining, guests).
- Begin recruiting volunteers to help with tabling, event organization, etc.
- Draft survey(s) to gather feedback from students.
- Develop methods for assessing Hudson Votes, possibly launch pre-survey to gather baseline data on student attitudes and election engagement.

Fall Semester
- Use social media platforms, bulletin boards, and email to reach students electronically with reminders and updates.
- Recruit and train volunteers to help with tabling and social media output.
- Table at high turnout events (i.e. speakers) and other strategic
- Distribute nonpartisan materials prepared by national organizations.
- Co-organize debate watching parties and topical debates with campaign representatives and/or faculty experts; aim to cover every statewide question on the New Jersey ballot.
- Encourage leaders of various clubs to personally urge their participants to register and vote.
  After registration push, turnout campaigns:
- To motivate, create peer photo posts with #whyivote message; also myth debunking posts.
- Offer stickers for students who submit 'voting selfies' at mail room (absentee) or polling place.
- Host campus-wide election results viewing party
- Send out campus-wide HCCC Votes program survey on election day or soon thereafter
- Debrief with staff, and individually with collaborators (email, meeting, and/or survey) to get their feedback
- Analyze feedback, summarize findings, and make recommendations for 2021 and 2022.

Proposed collaborations

Activity	Possible partner(s)
Add module to Canvas with links for registration, education, survey, etc.	IT
Send every student registration & voting info, and reminders, for both State and Local elections (electronic)	Communications
Establish Election Engagement liaisons in each Campus	Campus Directors
Register students during orientation (several possible approaches)	Dean of Student Affairs
Incorporate registration question into required online Enrollment Form and/or registration hold	Registrar

In the student newspaper, highlight issues relevant to young voters, including voting-themed newspaper column with rotating authors	Student Activities Clubs/Organizations
Recruit campus celebrity(s) to 'send' some voting reminder emails to all students	Student Government/Peer Leaders
Political dialogue event(s) for students to engage community members	Student Activities Clubs/Organizations
Investigate using HCCC's Text Messaging service for reminder(s)	IT, Communications

REPORTING & EVALUATION

Evaluation of this plan's efforts will allow stakeholders to understand the effectiveness of our efforts, understand students' needs and preferences, and make informed adjustments to the plan's goals and strategies. We will measure not only the degree of democratic participation in 2020 (through NSLVE), but also investigate the degree to which success is influenced by factors such as student attitudes, the amount of resources devoted to the effort, or simple competition for students' attention, time and energy. Assessing outcomes from the 2020 cycle will 1) measure the efficacy of work, 2) deepen our insight into constraints on election engagement, and 3) suggest possible demographic areas and modes of engagement where there is room for greater reach.

Given that our efforts are aimed at all HCCC students who are eligible to vote, it would be ideal to survey the entire student body for feedback on the program. An imperfect, but more accessible approach, would be to post a survey link on our web and social media sites and invite supporters to opt in. We may take a 'pre' and 'post' approach to help measure impact, first surveying students shortly after classes have started and then again on Election Day or soon thereafter.

We will ask students, anonymously, about outcomes related to our goals and about their impressions of the quality of particular efforts. We will also invite ideas for what could be done differently to reach and motivate students.

We will use quantitative and qualitative data to analyze response patterns, demographic trends, and students own narrative comments about their sense of engagement. Relevant portions will be shared with collaborating departments as we re-tool for the next iteration of this plan in 2021. Finally, some results will be shared in future iterations of our ALL IN plans.