



**All In Challenge
Civic Engagement Action Plan
1900 Pico Blvd.
Santa Monica, Ca. 90405**

I. Executive Summary

Recognizing a critical need for civic education and involvement among college students to address our most pressing and often intractable local, state, and national concerns, a team of faculty, staff, and student leaders came together to develop the Santa Monica College Civic Engagement Action Plan. Our goal was simple—to develop a comprehensive program of activities and resources that make “civic engagement” relevant to students while providing opportunities to take meaningful civic actions. The plan builds upon the work already being accomplished by a variety of departments, programs, and constituencies across both our main campus as well as our satellite campuses. Our goal is to implement our new and improved plan Fall 2018 and to institutionalize much of the activities and events as part of the College’s overall commitment to develop students “to contribute to the local and global community as they develop an understanding of their relationship to diverse social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and natural environments.” (SMC Mission)

II. Leadership

Led by the Office of Student Life and Chaired by the Associate Dean of Student Life, Nancy Grass, SMC’s civic engagement effort is, in reality, a collaborative cross-campus effort to increase civic learning and democratic engagement. Other key programs and departments include:

- **The Associated Student Government:** Director of Student Advocacy, Vice President, Commissioners
- **Journalism and Media Studies Programs:** Faculty
- **The Public Policy Institute:** Co-Director and Faculty
- **Political Science Program:** Faculty
- **Student Leaders:** Student worker assigned to Civic Engagement, Student Volunteers, Club Leaders
- **Student Life:** Counselor and Associate Dean

The Civic Engagement Committee only recently began meeting to pull together the work that has been occurring across campus and to brainstorm innovative ways to further engage and inspire students into civic action. Although currently a small group of about 10 individuals, one of the first tasks of the group has been to identify potential team members to expand and execute our plan. Each constituency is



currently represented on the committee and has been tasked with identifying other individuals who would be willing, able, and enthusiastic about participating in this effort. Members of the group will be asked to not simply sit in meetings to discuss ideas, but to also help with the “heavy lifting,” such as, plan and supervise events, gather and coordinate volunteers, develop promotional materials, make classroom visits, speak on panels, and more.

In addition to our on campus team, we are also working with the Voter Friendly Campus program and have worked with the California Community College Foundation’s Civic Impact Program. Our goal is to expand our community partners. As we get up and running, we plan to have monthly meetings with our on-campus team and meetings with community partners as necessary.

III. Commitment

Santa Monica College has long been known for its commitment to civic involvement. As a close partner to the City of Santa Monica, the College participates in multiple projects, programs, and events with the City and its leaders. Indeed, our co-sponsored annual Celebrate America event brings the City, the College and Student Leaders together to provide a massive community picnic and fireworks spectacular to the residents of Santa Monica! This commitment to civic engagement at all levels of citizenry is also evidenced in the SMC vision and mission statements (bold added for emphasis):

Vision

Santa Monica College will be a leader and innovator in learning and achievement. As a community committed to open dialog and the free exchange of ideas, Santa Monica College will foster its core values: knowledge, intellectual inquiry, research-based planning and evaluation, academic integrity, ethical behavior, **democratic processes**, communication and collegiality, **global awareness**, and sustainability.

Mission

Santa Monica College provides a safe, inclusive, and dynamic learning environment that encourages personal and intellectual exploration – one that challenges and supports students in achieving their educational goals. **Students learn to contribute to the local and global community as they develop an understanding of their relationship to diverse social, cultural, political, economic, technological, and natural environments.** The College recognizes that each individual makes a critical contribution to the achievement of this mission.

Santa Monica College's academic programs and support services are intended to serve diverse individuals from local, national, and global communities who are seeking high-quality, affordable undergraduate education. The College offers certificates, Associate degrees, a baccalaureate



degree, and streamlined pathways for transfer to university and for career training. The College promotes a **commitment to lifelong learning among students and the communities it serves.**

Additionally, in 2016, the President/Superintendent of Santa Monica College, Dr. Kathryn Jeffery, signed an MOU with the Secretary of State of California, Alex Padilla, committing to “expanding access and opportunity for democratic engagement to youth attending institutions of higher education.” This commitment specified the College’s commitment to institutionalize voter engagement through outreach, technology, policies and procedures, and campus resources.

Our Public Policy Institute is one of our most visible commitments to civic engagement. Started in 2010, The Institute “empowers a diverse student body with the academic grounding and hands-on experience they need to become agents of change – whether they choose a career in public policy or simply want to improve their community and the world we share” (Public Policy Institute webpage, Santa Monica College). The Institute provides both degree and certificate programs as well as offers many events and forums for the larger campus and City communities, such as an annual symposium, public forums with civic leaders, lectures, and civic engagement activities.

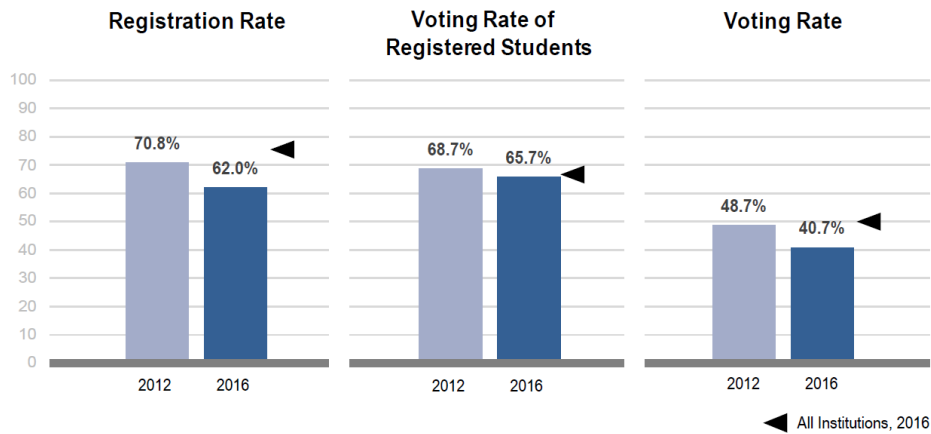
Finally, no discussion of SMC’s commitment to all things civic would be complete without mentioning our Global Citizenship Initiative started in 2007. This initiative has grown into a deeply held value that permeates all aspects of life at Santa Monica College, from an annual theme and book to in-class assignments throughout every department to our award winning international education programs, global citizenship takes civic responsibility from the local to the global and back home again.

IV. Landscape

Although currently, none of Santa Monica College’s Institutional Learning Outcomes specifically name civic learning and democratic engagement, they are alluded to in two of them:

- Respect the inter-relatedness of the global human environment, engage with diverse peoples, acknowledge the significance of their daily actions relative to broader issues and events;
- Demonstrate a level of engagement in the subject matter that enables and motivates the integration of acquired knowledge and skills beyond the classroom.

Data from our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Report (Aug. 2017) shows that both our college registration rate and voting rates were down in 2016 compared to 2012. This defies the national averages. To say this was surprising to us is a grand understatement. However, several factors may explain this downward movement in the face of a national upward swing.



We have large, and at the time growing, immigrant, international, and undocumented student populations that may account for some of this change. Additionally, we are in a strongly Blue state in an even more strongly Blue city. The 2016 election split many of these voters between the two “Blue” candidates. On campus, a large group of “Bernie” supporters stated that they were protesting the nomination of Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton by vowing not to vote at all. Despite our efforts to address and counteract voter apathy toward the election, many students expressed a belief that the election, at least in California, was already decided so there was no need to vote. Of course, all of this is largely conjecture based on anecdotal evidence. A more comprehensive survey of students might have given us a more accurate picture of the whys behind these results. Going forward, more attention needs to be focused on understanding our own students’ voting motivations.

Civic learning and democratic engagement are reflected in either the curriculum or co-curriculum in several ways. Departments and programs such as History, Political Science, and the heretofore mentioned, Public Policy Institute offer obvious examples of curricular efforts to educate and engage civic action among students. Similarly, our Social Science programs, such as Psychology, Sociology, Women Studies and Philosophy also have strong political overtones. A few specific courses that engage political and civic action, global citizenship, and voter engagement include:

- Anthro 14: Sex, Gender and Culture
- Biol 9: Environmental Biology
- Com St 37: Intercultural Communication
- ECE 11: Child, Family and Community
- Econ 5/Global Studies 5: International Political Economy: Introduction to Global Studies
- Envrn 7: Introduction to Environmental Studies
- Envrn 20: Environmental Ethics



- Envrn 22: Environmental Politics and Policies
- GS 10: Global Issues
- Journ 2: Intermediate Newswriting and Reporting
- Media 10: Media, Gender, and Race
- Philos 20: Environmental Ethics
- Pol Sc 3: Introduction to Politics: Justice, Power and Agency
- Pol Sc 21: Race, Ethnicity, and the Politics of Difference
- Pol Sc 23: Sex, Gender, and Power
- Pol Sc 24: Introduction to Law
- Pol Sc 95: Public Policy Experiential Learning
- Pol Sc 930: Preparation for Citizenship

Also important to note, in order to obtain an Associate's Degree, students must take a Global Citizenship course of which there are many.

As noted earlier in this report, Civic Engagement is manifest in the co-curriculum at Santa Monica College most visibly through our Public Policy Institute and our Global Citizenship Initiative, but our civic engagement reaches beyond this. Civic engagement is also practiced in our students clubs, such as:

- Future Alumni Club
- Small Government Club
- Students Supporting Israel
- Young Democrats Club
- Young Republicans
- SMC Investment Club
- SMC Rotaract Club
- SMC Model United Nations
- Student Veterans Association
- Intersectional Feminist Alliance

Our success in fostering civic engagement, however, is still limited. Internally, a lack of a unified team and reliable funding to lead the effort seem to be key barriers. Joining the All in Challenge and the Voter Friendly Campus programs have provided the impetus for pulling a team and this plan together. We are hopeful that this will help further our efforts, but funding still remains an issue. Additionally, we are finding that many students, faculty and staff complain of political burn-out and concerns over jury duty as reasons for not engaging more actively and in avoiding registering to vote.



External factors include being a commuter campus that boasts large international and immigrant populations that are not eligible to vote. Additionally, we, like all community colleges in California, are now using the CCC Apply statewide enrollment system that does not provide us the flexibility to offer or track our own voter registration link. However, we do include a link on our admissions website.

V. Goals

Long-term: increase voter registration and voter turnout to pre-2016 levels in the 2020 election, increase student engagement through letter-writing, campaigning, organizing, and participation in civic-related events and activities. Specifically, this means a registration and voting rate increase of at least 8%. In terms of letter writing, we would like to have at least 200 notes to Congress written and mailed next year on a variety of student-identified issues. We hope to have our student leaders address at least one national and/or statewide issue per year through organizing, campaigning, developing resolutions, and coordinating with other student leaders across the country and state. Finally, we hope to increase the number and variety of civic-related speakers and events each year by at least one per semester that is fully attended.

In the more immediate, our plan is to increase our day-to-day voter registration through direct registration efforts. We will work with Senior Administration to institutionalize civic education and democratic engagement through more campus-wide initiatives, including Guided Pathways, Institutional Learning Outcomes, messaging to students, staff, and faculty, and developing a civic leader speaker series. Additionally, we intend to increase understanding and appreciation for the Constitution, in particular, the 1st Amendment through a variety of activities.

VI. Strategies

Our planned activities are still evolving, but the following chart outlines the work we have already committed to as well as activities, events and programs we are still developing.

Activity	Where	Responsible Party	Audience	Timeline	Goal
1 st Amendment Month	Multiple Locations	Journalism Faculty and 1 st Amendment Committee	Students, Faculty, Staff	May each year a variety of events and activities	To increase awareness and understanding of the 1 st Amendment, in particular as it relates to Freedom of Speech
Candidates'	Cayton	Student Leaders	Students,	One month prior to	Increase voter



Forums	Lounge	and Civic Engagement Committee	Faculty, Staff, Campus visitors	elections.	awareness and education
Civic Engagement Newsletter	Email	Civic Engagement Committee	Students, Faculty, Staff	A quarterly newsletter to begin fall 2018	To provide updated information on Civic Engagement happenings and efforts
Constitution Day Celebration	Campus Quad	Student Life Staff	Students, Faculty, Staff, Campus visitors	September 17+/- each year	Increase understanding of Constitution and civil rights
Establish a campus-wide Civic Engagement Committee	All campus	Student Life Staff	Students, Faculty, Staff	Steering committee already started, need to establish working committee by fall 2018	To have a true cross-representation of all constituencies and areas on campus to guide civic efforts
Find a more engaging name for this effort		Civic Engagement Committee	All	By fall 2018, choose a name that is more immediately understandable and engaging for students	To make this effort interesting and understandable to students
Implement the recommendations in the Voter Registration and Engagement MOU signed by President Jeffery	All Campus	Civic Engagement Committee	California Secretary of State	Have a comprehensive plan for meeting all outlined obligations by Spring 2019	Meet all obligations as outlined in MOU to ensure greater voter registration and engagement
Issue-Specific Activities (e.g. DACA Allies, PRIDE, etc.)	Various	Various	Students, Faculty, Staff	Ongoing efforts to address issues of politically marginalized groups	To increase civic knowledge of and engagement with current issues and provide direct action opportunities
Letter-Writing Campaign to Congressional Representatives	Campus Quad and Office of Student Life	Student Life Staff and Student Leaders	Students	In conjunction with Voter Registration Tabling and Persistent Voter Registration	Increase civic engagement through direct action
Pizza and Politics	Cayton	Student Leaders	Students	Debate watching	To increase civic



Events	Lounge			parties prior to major election in fall	knowledge of and engagement with current issues.
Public Policy Institute Fall Forum	Various	Public Policy Institute	All	Each fall a week long set of activities focused on public policy	To increase civic knowledge of and engagement with current issues.
Public Policy Institute Spring Symposium	Various	Public Policy Institute	All	Each spring a week long set of activities focused on public policy	To increase civic knowledge of and engagement with current issues.
Publicize Civic Events at other institutions	Various	Student Life Staff	Students, Faculty, Staff	Ongoing-provide information, flyers, announcements, emails about off campus events	To increase civic knowledge of and engagement with current issues.
Quad Games	Campus Quad	Student Leaders and Civic Engagement Committee	Students	Provide educational and fun games for students to voice their opinions on important issues	To increase civic knowledge of and engagement with current issues.
Self-Care and Civic Action Workshops	Various	Student and Faculty Leaders	Students, Faculty, Staff	One to two workshops/semester beginning fall 2018	To address voter and political burn-out that leads to apathy.
Trustee Meet and Greet Event	Cayton Lounge	Student Leaders and Civic Engagement Committee	Students	Fall and Spring event to connect current Board members to students to discuss the importance of civic engagement	To increase civic enthusiasm.
Voter Registration - Persistent	Office of Student Life Counter (OSL)	Student Life Staff	Students	Ongoing during open office hours M-F year round	Increase voter registration
Voter Registration - Tabling	Campus Quad	Student Leaders and Student Life Staff	Students, Faculty, Staff, Campus visitors	Four days per week during regular semesters	Increase voter registration and educate about upcoming elections
Voter Registration -Outreach	Various classrooms and events	Student Leaders and Civic Engagement Committee	Students	Students to visit at least five Political Science classes to encourage voter registration	Increase voter registration and educate about upcoming elections



Reporting

This plan will be reviewed by the Senior Administrative Staff and faculty leaders at Santa Monica College who will help the committee prioritize the activities and events, provide guidance on how, with whom, and where to share the report, and decide if the information should be made public.

Evaluation

Evaluation of Santa Monica College's Civic Engagement Plan will be as multifaceted as the activities planned. Each activity will be assessed in terms of overall attendance/participation, attendee feedback, surveys, and outcomes. Outcomes will be primarily assessed according to our rates of voter registration and turnout as reported in the NSLVE report and other measures made available to us through our participation in the Voter Friendly Campus, the All in Challenge and other student engagement programs. Additionally, the activities of the Civic Engagement Committee will be evaluated through the annual Office of Student Life Program Review and various components of the plan, such as the PPI Forum and Symposium and the 1st Amendment Month activities, will be assessed through the departments primarily responsible for those activities. All information will be shared among the various groups and individuals on campus engaged in Civic Engagement activities overall.