



Campus Action Plan

Submitted to for consideration as a All-In Democracy Challenge Campus

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its more than 100-year history, Whittier College has embraced and upheld the values of respect for the individual, fostering community and service, social justice, freedom of conscience, and respect for human differences as the foundation for its academic and social community. This All-In Democracy Challenge Action Plan serves as movement to bring campus partners together around the important issue of civic learning and voter engagement. While working has been done to honor the institution's mission and values in this area, we saw an opportunity in formalizing a coalition and engaging in a larger, national movement. With new staff and renewed energy from the students, now is the time to take action.

The coalition work began during the 2019-2020, propelled under the leadership of the Associated Students of Whittier College (ASWC) and was supported by other members of the coalition. The action plan will be implemented in early August with coalition building beginning in June. The action plan will continue through the duration of the 2020-2021 academic year and we anticipate this work to continue for years to come.

Planning for the 2020-2021 year began in late 2019. The coalition began meeting during the spring semester and engaged in professional development related to this topic. Due to COVID-19 stay-at-home restrictions and the College's shift to support students during the transition, inviting additional campus partners was paused for the remainder of the spring semester.

LEADERSHIP

The Whittier College working group members include:

- Christine Hernandez, Director, Office of Student Engagement
 - Coordinates working group and other coalition teams
 - Liaison to voter engagement programs such as Voter Friendly Campus, All-In Challenge
 - Advises student government
 - Previously worked for four years with a Voter Friendly/All-In Challenge Campus, supporting institution's efforts
- Amber Brost, Vice President, Associated Students of Whittier College (ASWC), 2020-2021
 - Student government representative
 - Liaison with students
 - Previously coordinated voter engagement activities with ASWC as Secretary during 2019-2020 academic year
- Fionna Tejada, POET Intern for Democratic Engagement & Social Change
 - Hired for paid student internship dedicated to voter engagement efforts.
 - Assists in coordinating coalition meetings
 - Designs and plans student programming and communication
- Gina DiPierro, Interim Director, Center for Engagement with Communities (CEC)
 - Point of contact for service learning initiatives
 - Liaison to local area community organizations

- Jenny Guerra, Director, Office of Equity & Inclusion
 - Conducts outreach, provides institutional knowledge, student advocacy
 - Liaison with equity-minded community organizations and faculty
 - Advises student efforts with student-run Social Justice Coalition
 - Previously collaborated with VotoLatino and has provided educational and awareness programming
- Ricardo Pitones, Interim Assistant Director, Office of Student Engagement
 - Advises student efforts with student groups including InterClub Council and Diversity Council
- Jordan Laffin, Assistant Director, Office of Student Engagement
 - Advises students efforts with InterSociety Council (similar to greek life community)
- Chris Greenwood, Technical Coordinator, Office of Student Engagement
 - Advises student efforts with Media Council, including student newspaper, student radio station, and student-run event production group.
 - Coordinates programming in Student Lounge
- Eva Covarrubias, Office Manager/Program Coordinator, Office of Student Engagement
 - Coordinates resources provided through the Office of Student Engagement related to coalition (tabling boxes, poster printing, space reservation system)

Departments from academic affairs involved currently include:

- Center for Engagement with Communities

The coalition plans to work with the following departments in academic affairs:

- Africana and Black Studies
- Business Administration
- Center for Advising and Academic Success
- Environmental Studies
- Faculty-in-Residence Houses
 - Garrett House
 - Hartley House
- First Year Experience
- History
- Library
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Student Disability Services
- Whittier Scholars Program

Departments from student affairs involved currently include:

- Dean of Students Office
- Housing and Residential Life

- Joe Melendez, Associate Director of Housing & Residential Life
- Office of Equity and Inclusion
 - (Staff shared above)
- Office of Student Engagement
 - (Staff shared above)
- Veterans Resource Center

The coalition has already worked with or intends to coordinate with the following additional departments/groups on campus:

- Admissions
- Advancement
- Alumni Affairs
- Athletics
- Campus Communication
 - Created the Whittier College Votes logo, will share updates on website and social media channels
- Career Center
- Institutional Research & Assessment
 - Provides data and assessment support
- Wellness Coalition

Student organizations involved:

- *Associated Students of Whittier College (ASWC)*
 - *Spearheaded student outreach programs and communication during the 2019-2020 year*
- *Orientation Staff*
 - *Incoming orientation student staff will receive training regarding the 2020 elections in order to serve as support for new students*

Additional student organizations involved that will be included:

- *Diversity Council (DC)*
 - *Identity based organizations*
- *First Year Class Council (FCC)*
 - *Elected in September*
 - *Can assist incoming new students with their (likely) first time voting*
- *InterClub Council (ICC)*
 - *Student organizations and clubs*
- *InterSociety Council (ISC)*
 - *Individual societies (similar to greek life chapters)*
- *Media Council*
 - *Student newspaper (QC), student radio station (KPOET), Event production (POET Entertainment)*
- *Social Justice Coalition (SJC)*
 - *Activists and service organizations*

Whittier College is also involved with the following community and national organizations:

- ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- California Campus Compact
- City of Whittier
- Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters
- National Voter Registration Day (signed on partner for 2020)
- Office of CA Secretary of State (Ballot Bowl Competition)
- Uptown Whittier Association

The working group intends to work in coordination with the local election office as well as stay in communication with surrounding counties. Because of the college's location and our commuter population, it is important to connect with at least 2 other counties – Orange County and Riverside County.

Christine Hernandez, Director for the Office of Student Engagement, will coordinate the Voter Friendly Campus and All-In Campus Democracy Challenge action plans. Knowing that we cannot do this work alone - we will be working closely with the working group. Three offices play an important role in this work - the Center for Engagement with Communities, the Office of Equity and Inclusion, and the Office of Student Engagement.

The working group and larger coalition members represent different parts of campus. Other members of the community have expressed interest in supporting democratic engagement efforts. The working group is able to build off previously set relationships across campus.

Dr. Bruce Smith, Vice President and Dean of Students, has been aware of the democratic engagement efforts and proposal process since the end of 2019. The Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communication, Ana Lilia Barraza, has helped to provide guidance in the marketing and communication of this initiative. With her guidance, naming and branding of Whittier College Votes has been created.

The Whittier College Votes team will communicate bi-weekly. Many members are already working together. This is an extension of the collaborative work and relationships.

COMMITMENT

The Religious Society of Friends established the town of Whittier in 1887 and the Whittier Academy the same year. Whittier College grew from the academy and was chartered by the State of California in 1901 with a student body of 25. Both the town and the College were named in honor of John Greenleaf Whittier, prominent Quaker, poet, and leader in the abolitionist movement. Although no longer affiliated with the Society of Friends, the College remains proud of its Quaker heritage and deeply committed to its enduring values. Students and faculty continue a long tradition of community service, echoing the Quaker conviction that helping others is a moral obligation.

Today, Whittier College is a residential four-year liberal arts institution that prepares students from diverse backgrounds to excel in a complex global society. Through challenging, interactive courses, taught by accomplished professors, students learn to make connections across disciplines, understand cultural perspectives, and integrate learning

with practical application. Inspired by a Quaker heritage, the Whittier education equips students to be active citizens and effective communicators who embrace diversity and act with integrity.

Part of the institution's mission is to develop active citizens while being successful in a global society. With this goal in mind students are to be actively engaged in the democratic process and learn what the implications of their votes and civic engagement mean for the larger community and country as a whole. In response to the College's recent Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification, President Linda Oubré said, "Whittier College has a proud tradition of graduating students who are committed global citizens, ready to enthusiastically serve their community and the world," said Whittier College President "

The institution has long dedicated its resources to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. This can be demonstrated by both the creation of the Center for Engagement with Communities and the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

Through the College's 26 service learning classes, we encourage students to engage in democratic procedures. Two classes have done direct work in the realm of voting elections. Dr. Sara Angevine's (Political Science) class, for example, is required to work with a woman-identified candidate's campaign. Additionally, Dr. Andrew Dzegze, Political Science, required students to do surveys and interviews with Whittier students on voting participation on campus. For 10 semesters, Dr. Joyce Kaufman (International Relations) led a class that worked with an immigration class at the adult school in Whittier. Twice a week, students in that course worked for two hours helping students prepare for the citizenship test. Historically, each service learning class has developed its own outcomes, including civic engagement focused outcomes.

The Center for Engagement with Communities has served on task forces coordinated by the City of Whittier. The most recent task force was related to the 2020 Census. The Center provided students with opportunities to go into high schools and nonprofit organizations to encourage people to take the census. Pre COVID-19, the Center had a plan in place where students would host Census "intakes," particularly for the Spanish-speaking residents.

Our goal is to continue to share our commitment with alumni, families, donors, community partners such as The Whittier Uptown Association and Hispanic Outreach Taskforce (HOT). We will be utilizing the college's social media platforms, newsletters, and website.

LANDSCAPE

Civic learning and democratic engagement is woven in with the College's undergraduate goals of:

- Encouraging students to become agents of social change
- Developing students moral character
- Encouraging respect for different beliefs
- Helping students develop personal values

Fortunately, the coalition has access to robust data collected from the institution's participation in national surveys. In the 2018 NSSE survey, we learned that 68% of graduating seniors chose "very much" or "quite a bit" when asked about their perceived gains in the area of being an informed and active citizen. From this survey, we learned that the campus can improve in quality interactions between students and faculty, student services offices, and other administrative offices. The Whittier College Votes initiative may help in creating meaningful experiences across the community.

The Whittier College Votes initiative also provides an opportunity for students to engage in active discussion. In the 2020 Campus Climate survey (HERI) for Staff, 86.49% of staff surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the institution encourages students to have a public voice and share their ideas openly. In the 2019 BCSSE report, we learned that 60% of incoming transfer students and 73% of incoming first year students expected to have discussions with people from different political viewpoints either often or very often.

In 2020, Whittier College announced its recent recognition of the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification. The College is one of only 52 private institutions among the 2020 recipients.

Further guiding our work is our past data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Between 2012 and 2016, our registration rates, voting rate of registered students, and voting rate increased by at least 5% each. Our rates for each category were close to the average for all institutions, with our voter registration rates slightly lower and our voting rate of registered students slightly higher.

Our vote-by-mail percentages grew between 2012 and 2016. This trend is important for us to know as we head into the 2020 November elections. California has made many changes to the voting process since the 2018 midterm elections. Polling places were replaced by vote centers in the 2020 primary election as a result of the Voter's Choice Act. In May of 2020, California's Governor issued an executive order requiring each county's election officials send vote-by-mail ballots for the November General Election to all registered voters. In-person voting opportunities will still be available but the expectation is that this order, in response to COVID-19 precautions, may change voting behaviors this year.

Indeed, COVID-19 may present a challenge to voter engagement efforts. Now, more than ever, it is important that we join in a national movement to share resources and ideas for promoting democratic engagement.

Internal barriers to the initiative include changes in funding or staff availability as a result of COVID-19 budget restraints. Fortunately, much of the work of the initiative is low cost or can be embedded in the work of many campus partners. In addition, the coalition applied for and was approved to hire a POET Intern specifically focused on Democratic Engagement and Social Change. That intern, hired in May, will begin work in late August. This position ensures that the initiative is co-driven by students and that work functions collaboratively. Christine Hernandez, coordinator for the Whittier College Votes initiative, will serve as the intern's direct supervisor.

External challenges include the previously shared changes to the voting process in California. While the changes help to break down barriers for voters, we anticipate a

learning curve in understanding new procedures. Additionally, out of state students may choose to register to vote in their home state. States may have changes to their voting process in response to public health concerns. We anticipate using additional resources to stay on top of changes nationally.

The College's relationship with community partners and commitment to civic engagement will play a key role this initiative's success. Continued and growing support across the campus community will aid in our further success.

GOALS

The long-term vision is to continue and expand on the College's civic engagement efforts. Engagement across populations, including students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community must be strengthened in order to ensure the longevity of the initiative.

Goal: Increase the number of undergraduate students who register and vote in upcoming elections.

For the 2020 general election, the goal is to increase voter registration rate by 5% from the 72.7% in 2018 election. Another goal is to increase the voting rate from 52.4% (2016 election) to 57.4% in 2020. In the next 10 years, we expect to see the number continue to increase. Through coordinated efforts and a commitment to the work, we aim to increase voter registration efforts to reach 90% and voting rates to 75%. In order to measure the success of this, the institutional will need to continue to participate in NSLVE.

Goal: Empower students to host voter engagement and educational post-election programming.

Our student members of the coalition are encouraged to be creative in their voter education and outreach efforts. Additional student populations will be invited to the table and provided the resources to conduct their own educational programs. This work began in the Spring 2020 semester. Through the Office of Student Engagement, student organizations were encouraged to conduct their own outreach programs and could borrow voter engagement tabling boxes. The boxes included red, white, and blue table cloths, table weights, American flags, printed voter registration forms, printed voter information for surrounding counties, pens, and contact information for the coalition. Also provided were resources on how to host non-partisan voter engagement programs.

We will measure our success based on the quantity and quality of the programs led by students. We will also take note of the level of collaboration across from student-led initiatives.

Goal: Ensure long-term sustainability and collaborative nature of the initiative.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the initiative, the work must be manageable but still impactful. In addition, we must document the work in a central location to ensure that the

efforts transition easily should a member of the team leave. While the working group is currently formed, recruitment for coalition members must be an ongoing process throughout the year and looking into the future. Success will be measured by the College's coalition work and shape in the next 5 to 10 years.

STRATEGY

There are three key areas of success for 2020-2021: voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout.

Voter Registration:

- We have previously partnered with the LA County Registrar of Voters to share voter registration information, including having in-person representatives at our Student Activities Fair. We will continue to support collaboration with our local registrar of voters to encourage voter registration.
- Incoming students will receive information on voter registration through orientation programs and the first-year seminar.
- Paper voter registration forms are available in the shared office of the Office for Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Student Engagement.
- In-person voter registration drives are anticipated to be limited during the Fall 2020 semester in response to COVID-19. However, we anticipate coordinated information to be shared through student social media channels. We also plan to create a directed communication strategy to out of state and out of area students to answer questions regarding voter registration.
- The College will participate in Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day.
- Online voter registration links will be placed on key locations.

Voter Education:

We will utilize a variety of methods and non-partisan materials to educate students on candidates and issues.

- The student government began these voter education efforts during the 2019-2020 academic year by holding voter education programming and sharing information directly on social media. The social media posts, especially in helping students understand the process, were especially effective. The coalition will continue to partner with student government to continue this work.
- Resources page on the Engage portal including voter information guides. Closer to the election, the Turbo Vote feature will be turned back on Engage. Some additional resources include:
 - CA Registrar of Voters: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/>
 - Online Registration: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/>
 - Voter Guide: <http://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/>
 - Easy Voter Guide: <http://www.easyvoterguide.org/>
 - Vote 411: <http://www.vote411.org/> (League of Women Voters)

- SmartVoter: <http://www.votersedge.org/ca/page/smartvoter>
- Project Vote Smart: <http://votesmart.org/>
- In-person programming (if permitted by public health guidelines from California, Los Angeles County, and/or the College). For example, Pizza and Politics will continue hosting debate watch parties. If unable to host in-person programs, the coalition is prepared to host remote programming through different channels with recordings available.
- Information shared with Media Council and student-run media groups.

Voter Turnout

- Campus-wide emails will be sent from key individuals on campus encouraging all members of the Whittier College community to participate in the upcoming election (important deadlines, voter registration, early voting, absentee ballots, polling sites, day before and day after emails, etc.).
- Various forms of print publicity will be used throughout both campuses to publicize election-related information, upcoming programs, and how to vote information.
- Information related to local voter centers will be made available.

Tentative Calendar

Date	Action
August	Student Leader Training Voter engagement training provided to student organization officers
September	New Student Orientation Information provided to incoming first-year and transfer students related to voter registration
September 17	Constitution Day In-person or remote activity recognizing Constitution Day. Trivia games related to the constitution, with special content on the history of constitutional rights to elections.
September 22	National Voter Registration Day In-person or remote activity recognizing National Voter Registration Day. Coordinated outreach to students regarding voter registration process.
Late September	First Year Seminar Session Information shared with first year students in first year seminar related to student voice and engagement. First-time voter information will be shared in conjunction with information for First Year Class Council election.
Late September	Student Council and Organization Presentations The Democratic Engagement and Social Change Intern will present at

	different student councils to remind them of the upcoming election and invite them to collaborate with Whittier College Votes
Late September	Student Activities Fair Table hosted by Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters
Late September & October	Voter Educational Programs Educational programs and information, sponsored by coalition members
October 24	Vote Early Day
November 3	2020 Election
November	Post-Election Programming Dialogues related to the 2020 Election, debriefing sessions
Spring 2021	Post-Election Programming Educational workshops on ways for students to get involved in their communities post-election.

Dates and methods for programs will be finalized later in the summer. The College is exploring making some changes to the academic calendar which may change initial plans. However, we are fully prepared to implement a democratic engagement initiative in the upcoming academic year regardless of changes to the calendar or public health guidelines.

Our confidence in short-term implementation is in part due to our long-term commitment. In our long-term strategy, we expect to continue the work on campus related to this topic. We will continue to share our vision for increased democratic engagement and civic learning with our colleagues and with the executive cabinet. This is in part to bring in others into the coalition as well as to build in levels of accountability.

The coalition sees equity and inclusion as deeply embedded in the work of civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation. We recognize the need to serve our specific student population, which includes a large number of first-generation students and serves 69% students of color. There is a long history of exclusion of our communities of color in the voting process and we must recognize the need to address issues related to specific populations. In addition, our messaging must be able to still feel welcoming to our undocumented students. For every program we plan, we must ensure that we are planning with an equity lens. Additionally, we must do the self-work in order to understand our competencies and areas for further understanding.

The purpose of this work is to inspire students to engage in the democratic process while they are enrolled at Whittier College and to continue engaging in the process for the rest of

their life. We hope to continue to build our relationship with the alumni community so that current students can see examples of engaged alumni.

REPORTING

The coalition will continue to discuss the engagement plan through the summer. We anticipate updating the plan monthly in order to accommodate changes to the academic calendar, public health guidelines, as well as new members of the coalition. The action plan will be presented to student groups in the summer and individually to interested departments. Community partners will receive an abbreviated version of the plan during our outreach efforts.

EVALUATION

The College will continue to review data from the NSLVE. We look forward to seeing data from the November 2020 election as a result of our participation in this study. Our relationship with NSLVE is conducted through the Institutional Research and Assessment. The campus is also involved with other initiatives including the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement.

Additional evaluations will include program outcome and student learning outcome assessment. Student leaders who help facilitate voter outreach programs will be assessed of their learning and competency development through qualitative assessment. Program outcome assessment will occur throughout the academic year.

Overall assessment efforts are done in partnership with Institutional Research and Assessment. Formative assessment will be reviewed soon after data collection. Review of summative assessment will be more intensive. Results from assessment efforts will be shared with coalition members and with necessary stakeholders. In addition, we anticipate presenting at future Division of Student Life meetings.