



Best Practices to Help Students Register and Vote

A Guide for Colleges and Universities

Student and youth turnout at elections is typically around 20% lower than average voter turnout. Legal and administrative barriers continue to inhibit students from participating in the political process. Students often have trouble with residency and identification or can be confused by the conflicting information available to them. They may even face hostility from local election officials.

Colleges and university administrations can take many actions to minimize these obstacles and help their students to register and vote. This guide outlines some of the actions colleges and universities should take to ensure students are able to fulfill this important civic duty.

Lay the Groundwork

JANUARY

Establish a College/University Voting Website

Develop a website that includes dates and deadlines (voter registration, early voting, Election Day); information (location of polls, ID requirements); and links to forms (voter registration forms, absentee ballot request forms).

Link to College/University Voting Website from Student Homepage and Facebook and Twitter Accounts

The link to the college/university voting website should be available on pages that are frequently visited by students, e.g. the students' homepage, the library website, email login. If the college/university has Facebook, Twitter or other new media accounts, then they should all be linked to the college/university voting website.

Provide the State Voter Registration Form and the National Form

Students often attend college/university a long way from home, so state *and* national registration forms should be available online, with paper copies of the forms made available around campus.

Establish a Polling Station on Campus

Contact local election officials well in advance of the primaries and/or Election Day to encourage them to put a polling place on campus. See if funds can be made available to facilitate this.

Plan a Student Poll Worker Program

Work with local election officials to start a student poll worker training program.

Provide Voting Information through Orientation and Curriculum

- Hold a freshman information session on registration and voting.
- Incorporate civics into courses.

Fund Voter Registration Efforts

Encourage student government to use some of its funds on student voter registration and education.

Rewards

Think creatively about what the college/university can offer to students as a reward for registering to vote, or participating in a voter registration drive.

AUGUST/
SEPTEMBER

www.campusvoteproject.com

A Project of the Fair Elections Legal Network

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Encourage Voter Registration from Day One

Offer Voter Registration Forms at Enrollment and Class Registration

Provide paper voter registration forms to those registering in person and provide prominent links to the State and National forms to those registering for classes online.

Provide Students with Photo Identification

In states with photo ID requirements that can be fulfilled by student ID cards, schools should provide photo ID cards to all students. If the state law requires a signature or address on the ID card, these should be added where possible.

Grant Access to Residence Halls

Grant student groups access to residence halls or dorms so they can send volunteers to knock on doors to inform students and register them to vote.

Provide Easy Access to College Events for Voter Registration

Ease the approval process for voter registration volunteers to set up stalls at big college/university events (e.g. sporting events, lectures, arts events, student conferences), so they can spend more time registering voters.

Inform Students of Their Street Address and Help Them Prove it at the Polls

- To register, students need a street address, not a P.O. Box. Often a dorm address is also not sufficient. Check with local registrars to find out what is needed and provide it to students living on campus.
- Schools can also provide students with documentation with their name and address that may be sufficient identification at the polls, e.g., zero balance utility bills. Check with registrars to see what is needed and provide it if possible.

Encourage Faculty to Invite Students Groups to Speak to Their Classes

Student groups can address classes to inform them about voter registration, and pass out and collect voter registration forms. Encourage faculty to set aside class time to facilitate this process.

Host Candidate Debates

Hold debates on campus between political candidates.

Hold a Campus Voter Registration Week

- Establish and promote a college/university sponsored campus voter registration week.
- Encourage student groups to set up tables around campus to register students.
- Give permission to student groups to dorm-knock in the evenings.
- Send an email to all students and staff reminding them to register to vote and explaining how and where they can do so.

Encourage Competition with Other Colleges

Engage in competitions like the 2008 Ultimate College Bowl, in which colleges across the country competed to get the highest percentage of their students registered to vote.

Get Out The Vote on Election Day

- Send emails reminding students to vote.
- Give students the day off to engage in GOTV campaigns and/or poll working.
- Allow students to miss class without penalty if they want to vote.
- Arrange for college buses to take students to polling locations.
- Advise students which public transport routes will get them to the polls.

**ELECTION
DAY**