

YOUR VOTE



YOUR VOICE

National Campus Voter Registration Project Organizing Handbook 2004



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Prepared by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

Acknowledgements

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The National Mail Voter Registration Form, which allows voters to register from anywhere in the U.S., is available for downloading and printing on the Federal Election Commission web site (www.fec.gov), as are state-specific instructions on registering to vote.



INTRODUCTION

The mission of America's more than 3,000 colleges and universities is the education of our nation's next generation of leaders, and the shaping of civic involvement in all graduates, no matter what their ultimate role in society.

As citizens in a democracy, one of our most basic responsibilities is to exercise our right to vote. As the vehicle carrying a large portion of our citizens into adulthood, it is a basic responsibility of our higher education institutions to encourage and facilitate widespread participation in the electoral process. This is a function that colleges and universities perform admirably — studies consistently have found that at every level of educational attainment above high school, voting rates increase significantly.

The 26th Amendment to the U.S. constitution, ratified in 1971, granted 18-year-olds the right to vote. This amendment made it possible for traditional college-age students to become full participants in the electoral process. The participation of 18- to 24-year-old voters in presidential elections, however, has declined since 1972 when 50 percent voted, reaching a plateau in 1996 and 2000 with only 32 percent of younger voters turning out at the polls for those presidential elections.

In congressional election years, between presidential elections, the low participation by 18- to 24-year-old voters is even more alarming. From a high of 24 percent voting in the congressional election of 1974, the voting rate for this group reached an all-time low in 1998 when only 17 percent of college-age voters cast ballots.

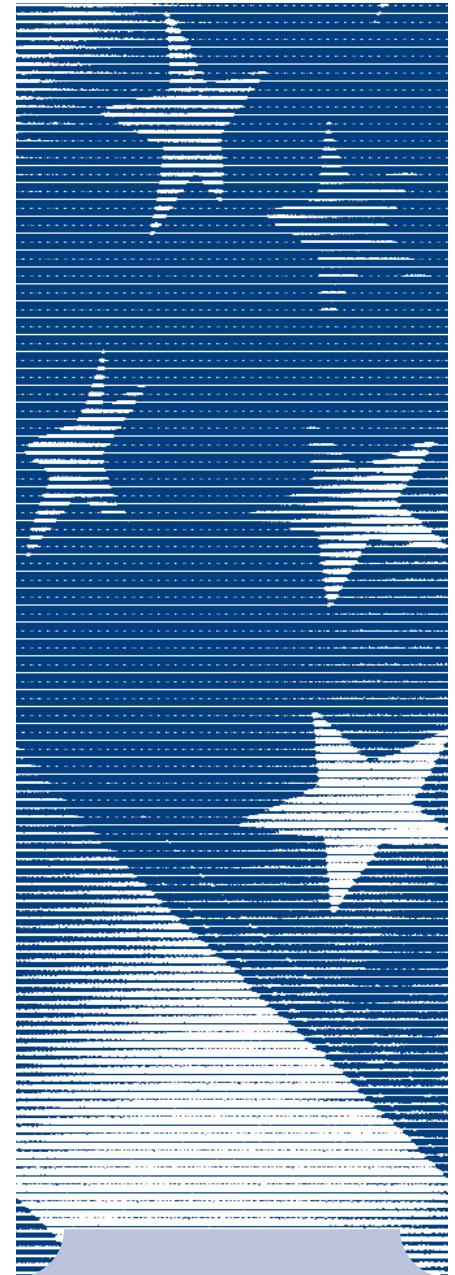
But low voter participation is not limited to younger voters. In 2002, only 40 percent of Americans eligible to vote actually voted, marking the eighth consecutive congressional election in which fewer than half of those eligible to vote participated.

To address this apathy nationally among young voters, and to enhance the citizenship training of the next generation of leaders, the Washington Higher Education Secretariat (WHES) organized the first National Campus Voter Registration Project in 1996. The effort gained heightened importance two years later, when Congress mandated as part of the 1998 Higher Education Act that all colleges and universities must make a good-faith effort to distribute voter registration forms to all degree- or certificate-seeking students who attend class on campus.

WHES has approached the 1998 mandate as an opportunity on two fronts. First, the requirement to distribute voter registration forms can be viewed as an opportunity to assure that every member of the campus community — faculty, staff, and administrators as well as students — is encouraged to register and vote. Under the National Voter Registration Act, they can register on campus, where they work or study. Resident students can even use the federal form in registering to vote back home in most states.

Second, WHES believes that, beyond the voter registration requirement, colleges and universities have an important role to play in bringing the campus community and the candidates for office together to examine and discuss the issues that will shape our nation in the years to come. As part of the National Campus Voter Registration Project, each institution is encouraged to adopt a nonpartisan League of Women Voters model for voter education, under which they might share information, foster discussion, and explore the implications of public policy positions.

Campus voter registration and education programs are powerful and proven tools for building voter participation. Young people who go to college are far more likely to vote than their peers who do not. U.S. Census Bureau data on the 2000 general election show that those with bachelor's degrees were twice as likely to vote (75 percent) as were those who had not completed high school (38 percent). And a 2003 study by Harvard University's Institute of Politics found that, while just 32 percent of all 18- to 24-year-olds vote, 86 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds attending college say they definitely or probably will vote. The Harvard study also notes that, with 9.5 million 18- to 24-year-olds attending college, this group represents a potentially influential voting bloc.



“Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people.”

—HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK



Every member of the campus community can become a part of the voter registration project. We suggest that presidents work with their registrar, dean of students, student leaders, and employee groups in developing creative and effective ways to both encourage voter registration and increase voter education. The project can serve as a focal point for common discourse, promote the vital responsibility of citizenship, and enhance the role of the campus as a setting where ideas and issues are openly and vigorously debated.

In this presidential election year, we urge you to become an active participant in the National Campus Voter Registration Project.

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***“The only sure bulwark
of continuing liberty is
a government strong
enough to protect the
interests of the people,
and a people strong
enough and well enough
informed to maintain
its sovereign control
over the government.”***

—FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT



COALITION BUILDING

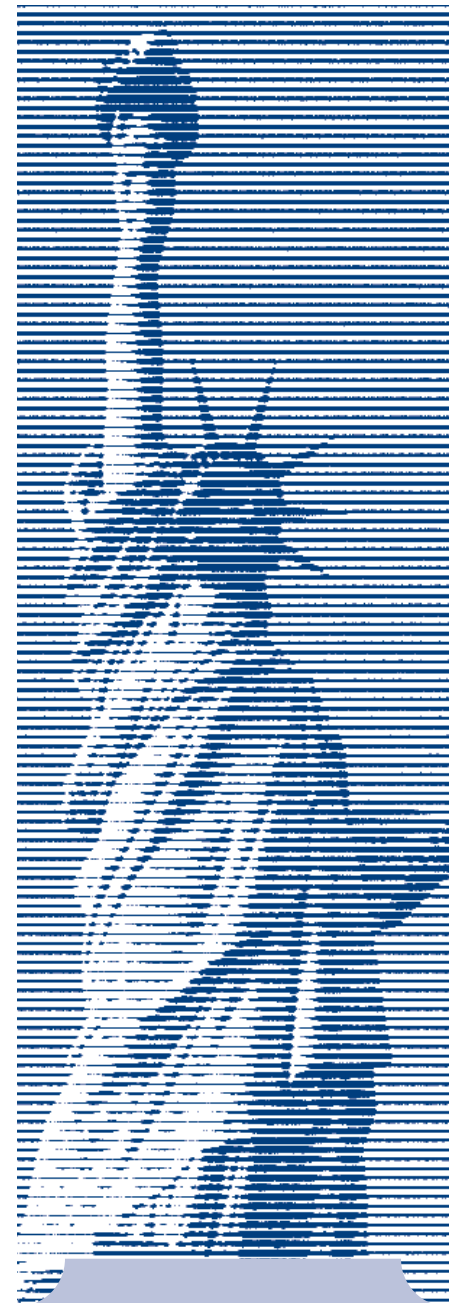
All successful voter registration campaigns have one thing in common: they are run by a coalition of people on campus or in the local community. Before you undertake a registration drive on your campus, it is critical that you form a coalition to help you in this task. Look to all segments of the campus community: administrators, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and staff. Each group will bring different strengths, which will make a more successful campaign.

Be sure to look off-campus for community organizations that might be interested in assisting your nonpartisan voter registration campaign. When you form your coalition, be sure to include local businesses on and off your campus—the bookstore and food service vendors on campus; pizza restaurants, bookstores, and grocery stores off campus. As sponsors of your coalition, these businesses can provide funding or other in-kind services (photocopies, postage, food for volunteers, etc.) in exchange for acknowledgement of their sponsorship. Think of everyone with whom you can possibly work and make a concerted effort to reach them. Don't just ask them to attend your meeting—attend their meetings to pitch your voter registration plan.

Once you have formed the basis of your coalition, set up an organizing meeting. Here's how to get the meeting off the ground.

- 1. Schedule it.** Find a room on campus or in the community in which to hold the meeting. Make sure it is convenient, or few people will attend.
- 2. Prepare a contact list** of all the organizations you think should be there, including all segments of your campus. The list should include the name, phone number, and e-mail address of a contact person for each group.
- 3. Network**, by asking those you've contacted to suggest other organizations or individuals that might be interested in participating.
- 4. Invite each contact person** to attend the meeting.
- 5. The day before** the meeting:
 - Send a reminder e-mail message to all the people you invited.
 - Set an agenda.
 - Arrange for refreshments.
- 6. Begin the meeting** with a round of introductions, including a brief description of each group represented at the meeting and the strengths it has to offer to the project.
- 7. Talk about tactics** you can use to increase the voter registration numbers on your campus. Use as examples some of the programs outlined here. Don't limit yourself to this book, however. Use your imagination, be creative!
- 8. Learn from what others have done in the past.** Find which groups have done voter registration before. Ask them to explain what worked, and what didn't. There is no sense in reinventing the wheel.
- 9. Agree on a game plan** for voter registration. How many people do you hope to register and when to you want to register them?
- 10. Assign tasks and set a timetable** to make sure it happens. Each person in the room should leave with a specific assignment and a deadline for reporting back to the group.
- 11. Set a time for your next meeting**, and thank everyone for their participation.

Throughout this and all of your coalition meetings, encourage the attendees to brainstorm for new ideas. Be inventive, and have fun. Just remember that your objective is to run a nonpartisan campaign, and to register as many people as possible on your campus and in the community.



“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.”

—THOMAS JEFFERSON



Coalition Work

Coalition work is very important, but it's not easy! It should be handled carefully and strategically. Here are some principles to keep in mind.

Common Development of Goals

Coalitions come together around common goals. These goals must be developed by more than one individual or organization. Don't decide on the issue and the strategy and then "invite others to join you." This doesn't work, because other groups won't feel invested in the project.

Sensitivity

Understand and respect differences between organizations. Each organization has its own particular focus, values, history, and agenda. Find out as much as you can about other organizations, and about the history of their interactions on campus and in the community.

Self-Interest

Understand and respect organizational self-interest. People join the coalition to build up their own organizations as well as to work on a common agenda. Your organization will have to ask itself whether it makes sense to join coalitions initiated by other groups. Are they sensitive to your organization's needs and priorities? Are your goals complementary? Do they want to be involved?

Give and Take

Build on existing connections between organizations. Ask a member of your organization who is familiar with another organization to approach them on behalf of the coalition. Ongoing relationships are built by supporting each other's agendas and projects. If you want to ask an organization to support you, consider asking first what its major concerns are and how your organization might support them.

Common Strategy

The strength of a coalition is in its unity. Work with organizations to develop a strategy that makes sense for everyone. The tactics your coalition chooses should be supported by all members of the coalition.

Be Strategic

Don't assume the coalition will come together "naturally." Whom you ask, how you ask them, and the order in which you ask them are all important. Some organizations won't join if others have been asked first. Some organizations won't work together, and you won't be able to get both on board. Take into account your own goals and organizational considerations.

Different Contributions

Each organization will have something different and important to offer, whether it's volunteers, meeting space, publicity, passing resolutions, funding, refreshments, or other resources.

Formalize Your Coalition

Draw up explicit agreements. Make sure all participants understand what their responsibilities and powers are—this prevents misunderstandings. Be sure to designate a coalition leader.

—ADAPTED FROM THE UNITED STATES STUDENT ASSOCIATION

It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.

— WINSTON CHURCHILL



THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF VOTER REGISTRATION

If there is a significant voter turnout, elected officials will take the concerns of the college community and young voters more seriously. But you have to get voters on the rolls before you can turn them out at the polls. This section outlines the steps of a nonpartisan voter registration campaign on campus. Before starting your registration campaign, you must know:

- ★ How can the 1993 National Voter Registration Act make your voter registration activities easier?
- ★ What must your institution do under the federal requirement for a “good faith” effort to distribute voter registration forms to students?
- ★ What are the voter registration laws in your state?
- ★ What are the various deadlines in the voter registration process?
- ★ How can you develop a good working relationship with the local election officials?

What is National Voter Registration?

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), which took effect in most states in 1995, requires each state to:

- ★ Enable individuals to register to vote in local, state, and federal elections using a postcard voter registration form.*
- ★ Offer voter registration when people apply for a driver’s license, renew a driver’s license, or change their address with their state’s motor vehicle agency (hence the nickname “motor voter”); or apply for public assistance, defined as Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Women Infants and Children (WIC), Medicare, or payments from state-funded agencies serving the disabled.
- ★ Make voter registration available by mail, without requiring a witness or notary.
- ★ Mail a follow-up notice to new voter registration applicants informing them of the status of their application (registered, rejected, or requiring additional information).
- ★ Stop “purging” from the registration lists people who do not vote.

*There are some exceptions to the law. New Hampshire and Wisconsin town, village, and city clerks will accept the form only as a request for their own mail-in absentee voter registration form. North Dakota does not have voter registration. Wyoming cannot accept this form under state law. **States that accept the national form now will accept copies of the application printed from the computer image on regular paper stock, signed by the applicant, and mailed in an envelope with first class postage.** Some relatively minor modifications were made to the form under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). Visit www.fec.gov for details.

The law requires the federal government to:

- ★ Require the Federal Election Commission to develop a form that will be accepted in all states that do not offer Election Day registration (available on-line at www.fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm).
- ★ Offer voter registration at military recruitment offices.

The most advantageous part of the law is the requirement that each state provide mail-in voter registration cards. In the past, some states required you to go to a central location—usually the county courthouse—to register. Nearly every state now has mail-in registration.

Each state sets its own registration deadline (*see page 22*). Most are around 30 days before the election, although some are closer to Election Day. It’s a good idea to double-check the election laws with your state or local elections office before you start.

Throughout your voter registration activities, arrange to have both federal and state voter registration forms on hand. Some people may register to vote locally—that is, where your campus is located—while others may prefer using their home address. There are advantages

What Others Have Done

Center College (Danville, Ky.), which hosted the vice presidential debate in 2000, held a media briefing that drew attention to the nation’s low rate of voter turnout, then conducted an ongoing voter registration drive. They sponsored registration activities on campus and at local shopping malls, and distributed registration forms to all first-year students at faculty sponsored picnics during orientation week.

Faculty and students offered “teach-ins” on political issues, and students melded community service projects with voter awareness efforts. For example, students building a Habitat for Humanity house invited political candidates to hammer a nail into the structure. As an outreach effort to high school students, Center undergraduates helped create a Web site devoted to the vice presidency.

The Statutory Language on the 1998 Higher Education Act Mandatory Good Faith Effort

(From 1998 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act)

Title IV-Student Assistance, Part G-General Provisions §489. Program Participation Agreements

(b) Provision of Voter Registration Forms

(1) Program Participating Requirement: Section 487(a) (20 U.S.C. 1094(a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

(23)

(A) The institution, if located in a State to which section 4(b) of the National Voter Registration Act (42 U.S.C. 1973gg-2(b)) does not apply*, will make good faith effort to distribute a mail voter registration form, requested and received from the State, to each student enrolled in a degree or certificate program and physically in attendance at the institution, and to make such forms widely available to students at the institution.

(B) The institution shall request the forms from the State 120 days prior to the deadline for registering to vote within the State. If an institution has not received a sufficient quantity of forms to fulfill this section from the State within 60 days prior to the deadline for registering to vote in the State, the institution shall not be held liable for not meeting the requirements of this section during that election year.

(C) This paragraph shall apply to elections as defined in section 301(1) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 431(1)), and includes the election for Governor or other chief executive within such State.

(2) *Regulation Prohibited:* No officer of the executive branch is authorized to instruct the institution in the manner in which the amendment made by this subsection is carried out.

**Under section 4(b), Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Wyoming are exempt from this provision because they have same-day registration. North Dakota is exempt because it has no voter registration.*



and disadvantages for both, such as establishing legal residency, qualifying for jury duty, personal property taxes, etc.

The important thing is that those on your campus vote. If they register to vote at home, be sure to give them information on how to obtain an absentee ballot. (*For more on absentee ballots, see page 18.*) Use the federal form to register people at their home address in another state. You can download and print the federal form at www.fec.gov.

The Help America Vote Act—A New Factor in the 2004 Election

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which became law in 2002, grew out of the voting irregularities that clouded the outcome of the 2000 presidential election. The new law calls for nearly \$4 billion to be allocated to states for improvement of elections and voting procedures. The bill requires that states play a more central role in elections, makes them more accountable for future problems, and requires an audit trail for new voting systems—a requirement that has provoked considerable debate across the country.

Most importantly, for your voter registration efforts, HAVA requires new procedures to verify voters' identities, and to assure that no voters are turned away at the polls:

- ★ When they register to vote, citizens must provide a driver's license number or, if they don't have a driver's license, the last 4 digits of their Social Security number. Those who don't have a Social Security number will be assigned a unique identifier.
- ★ First-time voters who register by mail will have to provide identification at the polling place when they cast their ballots.
- ★ Voters whose eligibility is in doubt on Election Day—voters whose names are not on the registration rolls or whose eligibility has been questioned—will be allowed to cast a provisional ballot that will be counted once election officials determine the voter is eligible.

Public interest groups are working to ensure that ID requirements under HAVA are fair and nondiscriminatory. Common Cause has taken the position that if voters must show ID, state law should comply with federal requirements and allow a range of acceptable IDs, including student IDs, paychecks, utility bills, and other government documents.

The group also wants to (1) assure that voters are notified of their registration status in time for them to correct errors; (2) require a statewide training guide for election officials and poll workers to ensure uniform and nondiscriminatory treatment of voters in carrying out ID requirements; and (3) set up a state complaint procedure for alleged violations of election laws, including those on election day.

For Colleges, Distributing Voter Registration Forms Is Now the Law

The 1998 Higher Education Act requires all postsecondary institutions to make a good-faith effort to distribute voter registration forms to each degree- or certificate-seeking student who attends classes on campus. The forms, which are supplied by the state, must be distributed before the registration cut-off date for every federal and gubernatorial election, as well as special elections for federal office.

Postsecondary institutions must request registration forms from the state at least 120 days prior to the deadline for registering to vote. The state must deliver the forms to you 60 days prior to the registration cut-off date. (If they don't, you no longer have to fulfill the mandate.) Once you receive the forms, distribution is up to you.



A short list of proven techniques would include delivering voter registration cards to students when they register for classes; mailing them with tuition bills; and combining voter registration with orientation activities. You will find more good ideas in the chapters on “Institutionalizing Voter Registration,” page 9.

Here are examples of ways different colleges are successfully handling their voter registration obligations under the Higher Education Act requirements. In each of these cases, the schools are going beyond the letter of the law, by adding such additional features as access to out-of-state voter registration forms and advertising in campus publications.

Model 1: Schools with Campus-wide E-mail Systems

Every student at the institution is assigned an e-mail account. During registration, they are given a survey asking whether they are registered to vote, where they prefer to be registered (at home or on campus), and if they would like an absentee ballot. Students are informed that the survey is part of a campus-wide effort to register all students and is required under the Higher Education Act. They are also told that the survey will be mailed several more times to those who have not registered, although students can opt out of later mailings.

As a follow-up, the survey is sent to students via e-mail. Students who want absentee ballots are asked to have their state elections office fax the request forms to the school’s communications office. The communications office faxes the completed forms back to the states for the students.

Model 2: Small College Campuses

A smaller campus reaches students directly during pre-registration and registration. Students are directed to a voter registration table when they pick up their financial aid packages or pay their tuition. Additionally, voter registration forms are placed in the mailboxes of students who are late registrants.

As an extra measure, out-of-state students who prefer to vote in their home states fill out forms requesting absentee ballots, and their requests are forwarded to the proper state election office.

Model 3: Electronic Registration and Get Out the Vote

In Massachusetts and Michigan, among other states, the secretaries of state make voter registration forms available via the Web for downloading and printing. Schools send an e-mail message to all students telling them that they can register to vote through the university’s Web page, which has a link to the secretary of state’s Web site.

The schools’ communications offices provide news releases and place stories to support and promote the voter registration efforts. The student newspaper and other campus-wide periodicals also carry information on how to register to vote.

The involvement of the secretary of state has freed up many of these schools to focus their election efforts on additional voter education and “get out the vote” activities.

SAMPLE FILE:

Pledge Post Card

Dear (Candidate or Elected Official):

As a citizen of the United States, and one of your constituents, I have exercised one of the most fundamental principles in our Constitution—I registered to vote! Today I am making a pledge to vote in the next election. I am concerned about these issues:

I am a member of the (your college or university name) community. I look forward to following your candidacy and voting on Election Day.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

SIGNATURE:

This right to vote is the basic right without which all others are meaningless. It gives people—people as individuals—control over their own destinies.

—LYNDON B. JOHNSON



Working with Election Officials

Your local election official can be quite helpful in providing you with a large number of voter registration cards, obtaining the federal form, answering questions, and even making suggestions on how best to operate your registration drive. Once you have developed a working relationship, you may be able to persuade them to open a polling place on your campus, which will make it easier for people there to vote. When you meet with them, keep these points in mind:

- ★ Be professional and polite. The election official is there to help you.
- ★ Be prepared. Walk into the office with a well-thought-out plan of how many people you plan to register, and how you intend to reach them.
- ★ Follow through. If you make a commitment to the election official, be sure you keep it. This will build respect and foster better cooperation in the future.

If for some reason you find the election officials uncooperative, or you suspect they are discriminating against anyone, enlist the support of local elected officials, or contact your state's chief election officer. Remember, every U.S. citizen has a constitutional right to vote.

What Others Have Done

The University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown (Pa.) students who enrolled in "History 1414: Vote! American Suffrage Movements 1776-1976" didn't just read about, write about, and discuss the various campaigns for voting rights in American history. They also developed a campus and community voter participation project called "UPJ Voice Your Vote." Through a Web site and other forms of outreach, the group provided opportunities for students and community members to learn about the candidates and issues, and encouraged them to vote. Students conducted campus and community voter registration and awareness efforts, and developed a get-out-the-vote drive.



INSTITUTIONALIZING VOTER REGISTRATION

Registering to vote should be an ongoing part of civic life on your campus—not a one-time event. If you have built a broad-based coalition, then this will be easier to achieve. All segments of the community can work together to provide regular reminders and opportunities to register quickly and easily. When the mechanics of voter registration become a permanent fixture in campus life, you can devote more time to educating people about the issues of national, state, and local importance, and developing plans to get people out to vote.

Here are some suggestions for integrating voter registration into campus life. Of course, your choices aren't limited to these. Be creative! Assess the needs of your campus and decide what will work best for you.

Course Registration. Attach a voter registration form to each course registration form. This ensures that every student will have an opportunity to register to vote at least once a semester. If your institution has telephone registration, add a message encouraging all students to register and informing them where they can obtain a form. Be sure to coordinate with the registrar.

Course Catalog. Insert a voter registration card in each course catalog. Contact your local election office to obtain enough voter registration cards, or obtain camera-ready art and bind the voter registration form into the catalog. Coordinate with the registrar and campus publications office.

Mass Mailings. Include a voter registration card in a special mailing to students around the start of the academic year, or to keep costs down, make the voter registration card part of another mailing going to students.

Paychecks. It's important to register all segments of the campus, including teaching assistants, faculty, administrators, and other staff. Include the registration card in the envelope with paychecks, giving every employee an opportunity to register. Coordinate with the business office.

Department and Staff Meetings. Have someone from your coalition attend departmental meetings to explain the voter registration campaign. Distribute forms to those who are not registered, answer questions about filling out the forms, and collect them.

Incorporate into the Curriculum. Encourage each professor or teaching assistant to spend a few minutes at the beginning of each semester distributing voter registration cards, helping people fill them in, and collecting the completed forms. Coordinate with the provost's office, the faculty senate, teaching assistant organizations, and each department chair.

Campus Mail Boxes. Draft a letter from your coalition explaining the voter registration project, and attach a registration form. Distribute these letters to all the mailboxes on campus. Be sure to explain the deadlines and drop-off points for the completed registration forms.

Orientation. Work with the student affairs office or the person who organizes orientation sessions. Get permission to make a presentation to the students, where you then distribute voter registration cards and help them complete the forms. Be sure to have the federal form on hand for those who wish to register at their home address in another state.

Central Drop-Off Points. Even if you have made voter registration forms available to every student and staff member on your campus, your work isn't done. You need to establish a system to collect all the completed forms. Set up drop boxes in front of key buildings on campus, especially in areas with high pedestrian traffic.

Community Service Projects. This could provide a unique opportunity to reach out to the community and generate media coverage of your voter registration campaign. Have a group of people from your campus go door-to-door in parts of the community that have

Rock the Vote

In the earlier years of Rock the Vote's 14-year history, the primary goal was to increase the presence of young people (age 18-24) at the polls. Rock the Vote coordinated voter registration drives, get-out-the-vote events, and voter information publications—all with the intention of ensuring that young people took advantage of their right to vote.

Today, in 2004, these activities persist. But Rock the Vote now speaks of voting as being just one of a set of actions that young people can take to create positive social and political change in their lives and in their communities. Regardless of whether they are signing a petition, volunteering in their community, or running for political office, they are all "rocking the vote."

For further information, visit the Rock the Vote Web site at www.rockthevote.org.

***Bad officials are elected
by good citizens who do
not vote.***

— GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



traditionally had low voter participation rates. Or encourage existing community service programs to adopt voter registration efforts as part of their ongoing activities.

Electronic Communications. Use your campus e-mail system to reach every student on campus with a message from the coalition promoting your campaign. Be sure to tell the people when and where voter registration materials will be available, and include a link to the Web version of the National Mail Voter Registration Form (at www.fec.gov).

If your campus also has a voice mail system that reaches every phone on campus, arrange to have the college president or the leader of your coalition record a message, delivered to every voice mail box, encouraging people to register and vote.

Check with the webmaster for the campus Web site about posting voter registration information on the site, and linking to the Federal Election Commission site (www.fec.gov), where potential voters can download and print the National Mail Voter Registration Form.

Tables in High Traffic Areas. Set up voter registration tables in such places as the student union, dining halls, the library, financial aid offices, and outside sporting events. Stock the tables with lots of registration forms (both state and federal), and other promotional material. This is an opportunity to educate new voters on issues of national, state, and local importance, and how they will affect your campus.

Door-to-Door Registration. Organize a group of volunteers to go door-to-door in the dorms to register students. Take clipboards loaded with voter registration cards and start walking the halls.

Alumni Voter Registration Opportunities. Homecoming week, class reunions, fall sports events, and the alumni magazine all provide opportunities to encourage your alumni to register and vote. Coordinate with the alumni office, and ask them to write articles for the newsletter, or send voter registration cards to alumni who live in your community.

A Collection of Idea Starters

Colleges participating in the National Campus Voter Registration Project over the course of the 2000 presidential election year came up with a number of innovative ways to encourage their campus communities to register, vote, and get involved:

- ★ One college whetted students appetites for politics by arranging discounts at local restaurants with proof of voting. Free lattes and discounted milkshakes were offered at on-campus cafes.
- ★ Students seemed to respond best to student-led activities. On one campus, for example, representatives of the student Democrat, Republican, and Green Party organizations conducted a joint voter registration drive, and also providing absentee ballot request forms at each meal in the cafeteria for a week.
- ★ Students volunteered at the Democratic and Republican Party headquarters, with a particular focus on turning out the student vote.
- ★ Some colleges conducted voter registration drives at their football games and festivals.
- ★ Some political science departments offered a course in which students were required to organize a voter registration drive, while others had students study candidates and state ballot issues, then share their findings with the class.
- ★ Several colleges and universities held mock elections in concert with their voter registration drives.
- ★ A number of campuses invited the League of Women Voters, and others invited county elections officials to assist in their registration efforts.
- ★ One vice president for student affairs organized a “march to the polls,” where t-shirts, flyers, and sample ballots were handed out. Over 300 students then walked through town to the polls with a police escort.

***“The mandate of
November’s election
must be by vote of the
people—not by default
of the people.”***

—LYNDON B. JOHNSON



VOTER REGISTRATION KICKOFF

Now that you have the registration forms, know the election laws, and have planned your voter registration activities, it's time for the kickoff. But just setting up a table in the corner of the student union won't do it—you have to get people excited about the campaign. Whether your campus has institutionalized voter registration, or you will be registering people yourself, you should have a campaign kickoff event.

Working with your coalition, plan a week of activities to raise awareness on campus about the upcoming election. Alert the media, post signs around campus, ask professors to make announcements in class, ask the faculty senate, student government, and graduate student associations to adopt resolutions supporting voter registration. Below is a sample checklist to get ready for your registration campaign.

Campaign Kickoff Checklist

- ★ Pick a week to hold your voter registration campaign—the first or second week of class is usually a good time. Try to avoid a schedule conflict with other major campus events.
- ★ Set a goal to register a certain percentage of the students and employees on campus, and then publicize it. Setting a goal provides additional focus and urgency to the registration drive. This goal should be based on the level of political activism at your institution, the number of people in the coalition, and the number of people on campus already registered to vote. The ultimate goal is 100 percent, but that's not realistic. However, some campuses have registered more than half of their students and faculty.
- ★ Begin arranging media coverage and visibility. Produce and distribute “Register to Vote” posters, handbills, and table tents. Write news releases, and submit editorials to the local and college papers. Put ads in the newspapers. Make sure all materials include the name of your coalition and other sponsors. Contact high-profile people in your community and ask them to join you on campus to register people to vote. This will provide a hook for the media to cover your event. *(Read the following section for detailed advice on working with the media.)*
- ★ Once people have completed the registration form, ask them to sign post cards informing their legislators that they just registered and intend to vote in the next election, and listing the issues they are concerned about. A good source for determining names and addresses of your congressional delegation is www.vote-smart.org; enter your nine-digit ZIP code for state and federal information, including district office addresses.

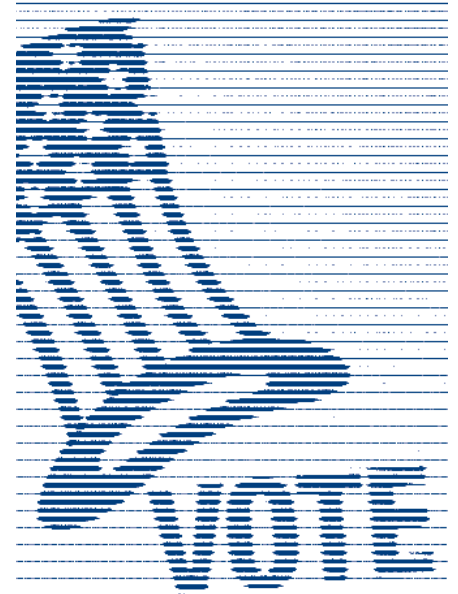
WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THOSE COMPLETED FORMS?

Count them

Since your coalition set a goal to register a specific number of people on campus, you'll want to find out if you accomplished that goal. If your campus has institutionalized voter registration, it's important that you set up a system to collect the completed forms, so you can find out how many people have registered. You can publicize the total with the media and use it in future promotional material for voter registration or education efforts.

Copy them

Before you mail the completed voter registration forms to the elections office, photocopy them. **This is very important.** It will save you time and money as Election Day nears. These are the people you want to encourage to vote. If you have reminded them to put in their phone number when they fill out the form, you will be able to contact them on Election Day and make sure they voted. These people could also be a potential pool of volunteers.



The stakes... are too high for government to be a spectator sport.

—BARBARA JORDAN



Send them in

This is the most important step of all. Mail in the completed forms. If you forget this step, all your work will be for naught. To save time and postage, just bundle up all the cards, put them in a box, and mail it to the elections office in your state or local jurisdiction. Or better yet, hand-deliver all the cards to the elections office yourself.

Publicize your results

Notify the media on how successful your campaign was, and offer them a “photo op” (photo opportunity) when you deliver that big box of voter registrations to your elections office. Stress with the media your plans to turn out all those people, and more, on Election Day!

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

There are many sources you can contact to find where the candidates stand on the issues.

THE MAJOR PARTIES

The political parties in your state should be able to help you gather information about the candidates for local, state, and federal office. Check your telephone directory for a local number, or contact the Washington offices:

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE

(202) 863-8000.
www.democrats.org

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

(202) 863-8500.
www.rnc.org

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Most state chapters of the League publish a voter's guide before each election, based on questionnaires answered by candidates seeking state and federal office. Consult your telephone directory to find a chapter in your area, or contact the national office at: (202) 429-1965 or (800) 249-VOTE.
www.lwv.org/about/state.html

PROJECT VOTE SMART

This nonpartisan organization maintains a database on all presidential, congressional, gubernatorial, and state legislative candidates that includes their responses to questionnaires, and the incumbents' voting records. The database also includes information on how to register to vote in each state, and the addresses of the county or city elections offices.

(888) VOTE-SMART
www.vote-smart.org

THOMAS

The Library of Congress Web site contains a searchable electronic version of the *Congressional Record*, as well as information on congressional schedules and the budget and appropriations process. Thomas also provides links to the Web sites for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, the White House, and other government agencies.

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

What Others Have Done

San Francisco State University's president and the school's student government led a push to register student voters in the fall of 2000. Officials from the San Francisco City and County Department of Elections were invited to campus to demonstrate how to use new election machines to cast ballots. In addition various SFSU student organizations set up voter registration areas to coordinate with the demonstration. The university also created a voter registration Web site that linked from the SFSU homepage.



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

If you hold an event on campus to raise awareness or encourage action, but you don't invite the media, then the event didn't happen as far as most people are concerned. Media coverage helps you inform your community about issues. It also sends a message to both candidates and incumbents: "This community is vitally involved in the issues that affect us."

Even candidates for national office will closely follow local and regional as well as national news stories. For example, stories on issues of interest are clipped by staff in the district offices of representatives, and then faxed to the Washington, D.C., office to be read by your member of Congress—usually the same day.

How do you interest the media in your voter registration effort? Be creative!

Remember that it is out-of-the-ordinary activities and research that draw news coverage. It is also important to think visually, to give photographers and television news crews the best shot at covering your event. A kickoff rally, including campus and community leaders as speakers, is one way to draw coverage. Busy voter registration tables, with volunteers handing out flyers, could also provide a good photo opportunity. Encourage a local celebrity to endorse your voter registration campaign, and publicize that endorsement. Try to link your events and activities to national news stories or events.

It is very important that you develop a media strategy to use throughout your voter registration campaign, because you want every member of the community to know about the success of your efforts.

Designate someone in your coalition as the media contact

This person will be the main contact listed on media advisories, responsible for following up with the media and keeping track of the stories that are published. Recruit someone who is willing to be "on call" via phone or e-mail, and not just during the weekday but evenings and weekends.

Compile media information

Work with your institution's public relations office to coordinate your media activities. You may be able to use their media mailing and contact lists. This information can also be found in the local phone book, or in reference books that are likely to be in your institution's library. You'll also find a comprehensive list of media by state and type at www.newslink.org. Don't neglect campus news organizations, such as the student newspaper or radio station, and the growing list of on-line media outlets.

Here is the information you'll need for your media list:

Newspapers

- ★ Names of the editor, publisher, political reporter, education reporter
- ★ Deadlines and days of publication
- ★ Address, phone, fax, e-mail address

Radio Stations

- ★ Names of the news director, talk show host(s) and producers
- ★ Deadlines
- ★ Address, phone, fax, e-mail address

SAMPLE FILE:

Letter to the Editor

EDITOR:

Our greatest duty as citizens in a democracy is exercising our right to vote. But too few of us make use of the right for which so many have fought and died. For example, only 40 percent of eligible Americans voted in the 2002 congressional election—and that was the eighth consecutive congressional election in which fewer than half of eligible voters participated.

To help reverse this abysmal trend of voter apathy, (your college/university) is participating in the National Campus Voter Registration Project. In the coming months, we intend to give every member of the community the opportunity to register and vote in the 2004 election.

(Add a brief overview of activities you are planning.)

We face a challenging national agenda in the 21st century, with pressing issues on local, national, and international fronts. Citizens have an important role to play in shaping our response to this agenda—and the way to do that is to vote. I hope everyone will get involved in this worthwhile project to register voters in our community. See you at the polls in November!

Sincerely,
John Doe, Campus Voter Coalition

Basic Rules for Working with Media

- ★ Be accurate, organized, and well prepared.
- ★ Provide plenty of advance notice for events.
- ★ Respect their deadlines.
- ★ Always be honest and straightforward.
- ★ Be available to answer questions.

SAMPLE FILE:

News Release

CONTACT: Jane Doe
(123) 555-1234
September 2, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Your Vote, Your Voice" Theme of
New Campaign Launched by the Your
University Voter Coalition

YOUR TOWN, September 2—Despite a vigorous public debate over local, national and international issues, the percentages of eligible voters who exercise their right is at record lows. In order to reverse that trend, the Campus Voter Coalition has announced a voter registration campaign, "Your Vote, Your Voice," that will seek to encourage all segments of the community to register and vote in this year's November election.

"Our nation faces a very difficult policy agenda in the next few years, with critical decisions to be faced by those in office—from the president to local leaders," said Your University President Mary Ann Smith. "We just can't afford to have citizens without a voice in this process. What better place is there than a college or university community to educate people about their rights and duties as citizens of a democracy? I think this campaign by the Campus Voter Coalition is a tremendous public service."

(Insert paragraph about the specific activities being planned.)

The Campus Voter Coalition is a group of students, faculty, staff, university administrators, and other community leaders committed to non-partisan voter registration. The Coalition hopes to register 50 percent of the campus community by Election Day, November 2.

For more information, call Jane Doe at (123) 555-1234.



Television Stations

- ★ Names of the news director, assignment editor, political reporter, education reporter
- ★ Deadlines for each newscast
- ★ Address, phone, fax, e-mail address

GETTING COVERAGE FOR AN EVENT

Tell the media

Draft a one-page media advisory giving details of the voter registration campaign—who, what, when, where, and why—and send it to your media list. This should be done about a week in advance to allow assignment editors and reporters to plan ahead. If you are holding an event, list the names of the speakers. Be specific about possible photo opportunities and visuals, such as students registering to vote or getting into a van that will take them to a polling place.

Whether or not you plan to hold a kickoff event, write a news release that concisely describes the campaign and the message—voting is an important civic duty, and college campuses should be a model for the nation. It should be no more than one or two double-spaced pages. Be sure your media contact's name and phone number are on the first page of all media advisories and news releases.

Follow up, follow up, follow up

Call the media the day before the event to remind them that you are holding a campaign kickoff the next day. Confirm the time and location, and tell them again why it is important and who will be attending. If possible, e-mail or fax the advisory to them.

Be ready to greet the media

At the event, the media contact should greet the reporters, give them a news release, and be available to answer questions or set up interviews with participants and speakers. Use a sign-in sheet to get the names of the reporters who attend and the organizations they represent, so you can follow up with them after the event, and call them before future events.

Send the news release to reporters who did not attend your event.

After the event, read the newspapers, and watch and listen to the TV and radio stations for coverage. Send copies to your national organization, and to the candidates. This is a valuable point of contact with the candidates—it will let them know that your campus is taking an active role in the election.

Talk shows

During off-air time, call the host or producer of a local radio talk show or television community affairs program and pitch your idea of doing a show on voter registration in your community. Suggest guests such as your institution's president, student leaders, and community leaders. When the show airs, be sure to have plenty of callers lined up to support your message.

Candidates and members of Congress are also frequent guests on talk shows. This provides an excellent opportunity to let them know about your voter registration efforts. When the show airs, get your coalition members to call and ask about voting as a civic duty. This will drive home the point that constituents are interested in the subject. It's also an excellent way to educate the general public.



Newspapers

Letters to the editor provide another useful way to educate the general public about voter registration. Following a few basic rules will improve your chances of getting published.

- ★ Keep the letter short and to the point (around 150 words). Do not try to make several points in the same letter—let someone else cover other topics.
- ★ Type the letter neatly and proofread it carefully.
- ★ Always sign your letter and provide your postal and e-mail address and phone number. Most newspapers will not accept a letter unless they can call to verify the author's identity.
- ★ Most newspapers will take letters to the editor via e-mail. Check the newspaper's Web site or call to learn the e-mail address to which letters should be sent.
- ★ Most papers will accept no more than one letter per month from the same person. Demonstrate the diversity of your coalition by having many people write.

Also consider putting together a group of influential people—business or community leaders, college presidents, and student leaders—to meet with the editorial board of your local newspaper. If you are well prepared and armed with facts about the importance of voting to American democracy, you may generate a positive editorial. Your members of Congress monitor the editorial page closely as a barometer of their constituents' opinions.

Many newspapers will accept opinion pieces submitted by members of the community. These pieces (often called “op-eds,” from their location opposite the editorial page) allow you to make several arguments in support of get-out-the-vote efforts in your community. Have the college president, student government officials, and community leaders submit op-eds to the newspaper. The ideal length for most op-eds is 750-800 words.

For professional help with your media relations activities, contact your campus public relations or communications office. The staff there can be a source of media lists, insights into reporters likely to be interested in your activities, and advice on how to prepare your materials. They also may find the potential visibility to the college or university valuable enough for them to become full partners in helping you with your media outreach.

SAMPLE FILE :

Media Advisory

CONTACT: Jane Doe (123) 555-1234
September 2, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY Campus Voter Coalition
Kickoff Slated for September 18

YOUR TOWN, September 2—The Your University Voter Coalition will kick off its first fall voter registration campaign on Wednesday, September 18, with a rally at the John J. Jones Student Union, 666 Main Street.

University President Mary Ann Smith will speak to students, faculty, and university staff from the front steps of the union at 2 p.m. about the importance of voter registration to the American political process.

Everyone in the community will have an opportunity to register to vote following the rally, from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at a table in the front lobby of the union. Thanks to the National Voter Registration Act, students can register to vote in either their home district or in Your Town.

The Your University Voter Coalition is a group of students, faculty, staff, university administrators, and other community leaders committed to non-partisan voter registration. The Coalition hopes to register 50 percent of the campus community by Election Day, November 2.

For more information, call Jane Doe at (123) 555-1234.

Public Service Announcement

The [Your Campus] voter registration coalition urges you to register and vote! There will be a registration table located in [location] from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. today and tomorrow, [days and dates]. The process only works if you participate. Other people in the world are dying for the right to vote—you just had to turn 18. The deadline for mail-in registration is [day and date in your state]. Register and vote! For more information, or if you want to get involved, call 555-6789.



VOTER EDUCATION

You can register 100 percent of the people on campus, but still have poor voter turnout if they are not motivated to vote on Election Day. The best way to motivate people is to educate them about the local, state, and federal issues that have an impact on their lives. By following the League of Women Voters model, you can conduct an effective non-partisan voter education campaign on your campus. This section will explain how to gather and distribute information about the candidates' stance on issues that are important to your community.

Candidate and Political Fairs

A candidate or political fair is similar to a job fair. Invite the candidates, political parties, groups supporting or opposing ballot measures, and other interested parties onto your campus to set up tables, distribute information, and meet people. If the candidates show up, it will give people a unique opportunity to talk with them in an informal atmosphere about the issues they are interested in.

A political fair requires advance planning. To get on the candidates' schedule, select the date for your fair early, doing preliminary planning before the end of the spring semester. October is usually a good time to hold the political fair, which gives you little time to organize the event when the fall semester begins. Send out invitations to all the groups you wish to invite. And be sure to invite all the candidates to participate.

Candidate fairs can also be used to raise money for your voter registration activities. A fee of \$25 to \$50 is a reasonable amount to charge the candidates and organizations for table space—but only you can judge what they are willing to pay on your campus. And don't forget to alert the media about your political fair. (*See page 13*)

Debates and Forums

Candidate debates and forums are a staple of American politics. Hosting a debate on your campus will help make people more aware of the upcoming election, and allow them to interact with the candidates.

Debates are a lot of work to organize, but worth the effort. Again, you need to start planning well in advance. Contact your local League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women, media outlets, Chamber of Commerce, or service clubs to see if they are interested in cosponsoring a debate on your campus. Many of these groups have hosted candidate debates in the past and can help ensure a successful event.

Pick several dates, then contact the candidates. Since you want them to attend, you will have to work around their schedules. Contacting them early in the process increases the probability of finding an open date agreeable to everyone involved.

The next step is to settle on the format of your debate. A standard format has a moderator (the college president, anchor of a local newscast, etc.) who will introduce the candidates, explain the rules of the debate, ask the questions of the candidates, and act as referee. The questions should be developed by a panel of people representing a broad range of views and interests in the community. Make sure the questions cover a variety of topics.

Don't give the questions to the candidates in advance!

Not every candidate will agree to take questions from the audience, but when they do, it can be very effective. It will allow the community to question the candidates about issues they care about that may not have been covered in the prepared questions.

Try to get your campus station, or a local radio or TV station to broadcast the debate so that you can reach a wider audience.

Be sure to alert the local media (*See page 13*).

Your every voter, as surely as your chief magistrate, exercises a public trust.

— GROVER CLEVELAND



Campus Visits by Candidates

If candidates for local, state, or federal office can't make it to campus for a debate or political fair, invite them to campus for a meeting with your voter registration coalition. Visiting with candidates on your campus will allow you to talk with them about the issues in a relaxed atmosphere. Be sure to make this opportunity available to all candidates.

Voting Records

You can obtain the voting records of federal elected officials from several sources. A number of Web sites offer voting records as well as election news and issues-oriented discussions on line. See "Other Sources of Information" in this book, or do a Google search for Congress voting records for more possibilities.

Congressional Quarterly, a weekly publication, provides voting records on all the key legislative votes held during the previous week. It explains the impact of each vote and analyzes the political implications of legislation. You should be able to find it in the reference section of your college library. Your library probably also has the *Congressional Record*, the official transcript of the U.S. Congress. Every statement, every amendment offered, and every vote taken on the House or Senate floor is recorded here.

It's important to be nonpartisan in presenting voting records to the public. Don't make judgments about the candidates or their voting records. Just provide the information and let the readers draw their own conclusions.

The National Mail Voter Registration Form, which allows voters to register from anywhere in the U.S., is available for downloading and printing on the Federal Election Commission Web site (www.fec.gov), as are state-specific instructions on registering to vote.

SAMPLE FILE:

Pre-Election Phone Script

Hello, is _____ home?

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling from [THE NAME OF YOUR EFFORT]. We just wanted to remind you that tomorrow is Election Day, and it's very important that you go to the polls. Are you planning to vote tomorrow?

[IF YES] Great! Thank you for your time.

[IF NO] Are you able to get to your polling place? Do you need a ride?

[IF YES] arrange for a ride to the polls]

[IF NO] I hope you will reconsider. We will have vans going from campus to the polling places at [GIVE SCHEDULE].

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me, and have a good day.

Election Day Phone Script

Hello, is _____ home? Hi, my name is _____ and I'm calling from [THE NAME OF YOUR EFFORT]. Let me take just a few seconds of your time to remind you that today is Election Day. Have you voted today?

[IF YES] Great! Thank you for your time.

[IF NO] There is still time to vote before the polls close. The polls will be open until [POLLS CLOSING TIME] this evening. It's very important that all the registered voters in the [NAME OF INSTITUTION OR TOWN] community vote in this election.

Do you need a ride, or directions to your polling place? [IF YES] arrange for a ride to the poll or give directions]

[IF NO] I hope you will reconsider. It's very important that our [COLLEGE/COMMUNITY] make a strong showing at the polls, so we can get the attention of the politicians.

Thanks for taking the time to talk with me, and have a good day.



GET OUT THE VOTE

Now that you have registered all these new voters, and have educated them on the candidates and the issues, it's important to get them to the polls on Election Day, or make sure they submit absentee ballots. Elected officials will be far more responsive to your campus's concerns if a high percentage of voters from your campus turn out and vote. By following up with these new voters, knocking on their doors or phoning the night before and the day of the election, offering rides or directions to the polls, you greatly increase the likelihood that they will actually vote.

An effective campaign requires a significant amount of preparation and volunteers to be successful, so start planning your get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts as you conduct your voter registration campaign. As with voter registration and education, there are many options for increasing voter participation on your campus. Outlined below are several standard GOTV tactics.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE ELECTION DAY

Open a polling place on campus

If you are interested in opening a polling place on campus, you will have to begin planning months in advance of Election Day. The involvement of the campus administration will enhance the success of this project. Contact the local elections office and see what is required to operate a polling place on your campus. College campuses are ideal polling places because they offer ample space, usually have plenty of parking, and are accessible to the handicapped. Opening a polling place will make it easier for people to vote between classes, and will probably increase voter participation.

Absentee ballots

As you conduct your voter registration campaign, you should also include a program to get people who will be away from home on Election Day to obtain an absentee ballot. If someone chooses to register to vote at their home address—either in another state, or in another part of your state—be sure to provide the address of the local election official so they can contact them to obtain an absentee ballot. You may want to create a form letter for people to use when requesting an application. Be sure they print their name, address, and phone number, and sign the letter. Each jurisdiction has different laws and regulations for absentee voting, so each person should contact their elections office to get further information on when the applications and ballots are due. (*See pages 22 for state election office contact information.*)

Keep a list of people who have registered to vote at their home address. Then your coalition can contact them about three weeks before the election to be sure they have requested their absentee ballot, and again about one week before the election to be sure they have mailed the ballot back to the appropriate elections office. Most states require the ballots to be received at the elections office by the time the polls close on Election Day—postmarks do not count!

You also might want to consider holding an absentee ballot event on campus about a week before the election. Bringing out-of-town voters together to cast their ballots will make them feel less isolated from the process. Make a notary public available, since some states and jurisdictions still require notarized absentee ballots. Ask the sponsors of your coalition to provide music, food, drinks, and promotional materials to draw the attention of students.

As people complete their absentee ballots, ask them to volunteer with your GOTV efforts on Election Day. Doing so will make them feel like they have been able to affect the election process in both their home and school communities.



Voter file

The voter file is a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and party registrations that is maintained by your local elections office. This list is public information and you can purchase it for a nominal fee to use in your GOTV efforts. The list can be sorted many ways—by precinct, street, last name, party, etc.

If you copy all the voter registration forms before you send them in to the elections office, you may not need to invest in the list. But the lists are fairly inexpensive, so if you have the money, it may be wise to purchase the most up-to-date list before Election Day. You need a voter file so you can focus your GOTV efforts on turning out registered voters from your campus and in the neighboring precincts). At this late point, there is little value in calling people who are not registered to vote, unless your state is one of the few with same-day voter registration.

Work with only one copy of the list for your coalition, distributing parts of the list to different volunteers. You don't want three different people calling the same person—it's a waste of time, and will probably irritate the person on the other end of the phone.

Phone banking

Phone banking is the easiest and fastest way to contact people and urge them to vote. You will need a list of names and phone numbers (from your voter file), a bank of phones, and clear directions to your local polling places.

Secure several phone lines to use at night from offices on campus, or real estate and insurance offices off campus. Check with your campus development office to learn if your college has a "phonathon" room for calling prospective donors; you may be able to get permission to use it on nights it's sitting unused. You should try to recruit as many volunteers as you have phone lines.

When do you start making your phone calls? That will depend upon how many names are in the voter file and how many volunteers have signed up. Typically one person can contact 20 to 25 people per hour. Ideally, you will want to call people the night before the election and remind them that the next day is Election Day. However, if there are too many names on the list to make that possible, start calling a few days earlier. Make sure everyone on the list receives one phone call before Election Day.

Canvassing

Canvassing is walking through the dorms or the neighboring precincts, and knocking on doors reminding people to vote in the election. Canvassing provides a cheap and effective way to distribute voter education materials.

Using your voter list, start walking through the neighborhoods and knocking on doors of registered voters. Unless your state has Election Day registration, skip the doors without registered voters—you will be wasting your time.

When you approach the door, identify yourself and tell them why you're there (to make sure they remember to vote). Leave material with them—including directions to the polling places, and the voting hours—and move on to the next house. If you are providing transportation to the polls, ask if they will need a ride, and give them the phone number to call on Election Day.

Never go out knocking on doors alone. Always travel with another person. Divide up the street—one person takes the even side, the other takes the odd side. This is for your own protection.

In general, canvassing should not be done on Election Day, since you can reach more people faster with a phone call than knocking on doors. Canvassing is a good activity for the weekend before the election as a last-minute voter education tool.

What Others Have Done

At Columbia College (Columbia, S.C.), a coalition of faculty, staff, students, and the League of Women Voters teamed up to build interest and participation in the election through guest speakers and student-written articles in the student newspaper on campaign issues. A voter registration rally with the theme "Use Your Voice, Vote Your Choice" included a cookout and live band to build excitement. A "Political Leadership Day" at the college featured a mock election and other activities.



Promotion

Ask your campus and local radio and TV stations to broadcast public service announcements (PSAs) in the days before the registration deadline, and the election, reminding people to vote. Put up table tents in the cafeteria, the library, and the student union urging people to vote. Make sure to list the date of the election, polling locations, and what time the polls open and close.

WHAT TO DO ON ELECTION DAY

Maximize your visibility

This could range from standing on the side of the street with signs saying “VOTE,” to leafleting the parking lots with flyers reminding people to vote before the polls close. Be creative! And make sure the name of your campus organization appears on the material.

Get the voters to the polls

If you decide to offer rides to polling places, you will need to begin planning well in advance.

- ★ Decide if you want to offer rides all day, or just part of the day.
- ★ Publicize the service on the campus and in the community using some of the media devices we’ve already discussed.
- ★ Arrange for the cars and vans to be used. Your campus may have vehicles available in the motor pool, or volunteers may be willing to use their own vehicles.
- ★ In using private vehicles, have volunteer drivers check to make sure their auto insurance will cover their transporting voters.
- ★ Set up a system to keep track of who needs a ride and to keep in touch with drivers by cell phone.
- ★ Find volunteers to drive the vans and work the phones.

Poll watching

Most states allow each candidate or party to designate poll watchers on Election Day. Some states also permit representatives of nonpartisan citizen organizations and supporters or opponents of ballot measures to observe polling places. Poll watchers are only permitted to watch Election Day proceedings and vote counting. They are not allowed to interfere with the actual election process. A certificate or identification badge is usually required. Contact your local elections officer to find out what requirements your organization must meet to serve as poll watchers.

If you qualify, go to the polling place in the early afternoon (this is usually a slow time at the polls) and check your lists against the polling book. Those who have voted will have signed the poll book, or the poll workers will have made some sort of notation by their names. Scratch from your list the people who have already voted. Then take the list to your phone bank, and have volunteers start making reminder calls to those who have not voted.

It is critical that poll watchers obey all election laws, which should have been provided to you by the local election officials. Be courteous, and let the poll workers do their job. If voters come along while you’re checking the poll book, stand aside so they can sign the book and get their ballots. Who knows, it may be someone on your list.

Checklist for Election Day

Procedures

Make sure you know:

- ★ Hours the polls are open
- ★ Method of voting (voting machine, punch card, or paper ballot)
- ★ Provisions for challenged ballots

Materials for Election Day

Make sure you have:

- ★ Up-to-date voter registration lists
- ★ Sample ballots
- ★ Displays of voting mechanism
- ★ Certificates or badges needed for poll watchers

At the Polls

Make sure that:

- ★ There are enough polling sites to accommodate the campus population
- ★ The polling place is accessible to people with disabilities
- ★ The voting site is appropriately marked, so voters can find it
- ★ Voters have been informed where the polling sites are

Voting Assistance

Make sure that:

- ★ Polling staff are prepared to help visually and hearing impaired people
- ★ At least one attorney is on call to assist students who encounter voting problems
- ★ If the polling site is not wheelchair accessible, ramps or individuals capable of lifting a wheelchair are available

— ADAPTED FROM THE UNITED STATES STUDENT ASSOCIATION



Be prepared to help

The Voting Rights Act mandates that people with disabilities be permitted to receive voting assistance from the person of their choice. Check to be sure that your state's rules do not conflict with this provision. It is also important to determine if the polling place itself is accessible to people with disabilities. If not, perhaps ramps or volunteers capable of lifting wheelchairs can be made available.

People's right to vote is sometimes questioned on Election Day if their current address differs from the address appearing on the registration list, or their name does not appear on the registration list at all. The official term for this practice is a "challenge." Challenged ballots can be handled in several ways—the conflict may be resolved on the spot, and the individual permitted to vote; the voter may be forced to cast a paper ballot, which is put in an enveloped marked "challenged"; or the person may be referred to the central elections office. Be sure you know the procedures that apply in your state, as well as the provisions of the 2004 "Help America Vote Act" (see page 6), and have someone on hand who can help challenged voters.

Celebrate!

Now that you have successfully registered, educated, and turned out the voters, you can sit back and relish the fact that the voice of your campus community is being heard in the halls of the White House, Capitol, State House, and City Hall. But don't rest on your laurels too long...

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE ELECTION

Follow up! This is very important!

Your coalition should thank the businesses, volunteers, elected officials, and others who helped, or participated in, your voter registration campaign. Send each of them a thank-you letter or a certificate of appreciation for their work. This will make them realize that they were an integral part of your coalition, and may make them willing to assist in future efforts.

After the election, go to the local elections office and determine what the voter turnout was in the precincts on and around your campus. Look at similar past elections (e.g., midterm congressional, primary, presidential, etc.) to determine how successful your GOTV efforts have been. If your coalition conducted an active GOTV campaign, you should see an increased turnout. Send the information you gather from the elections office to local political reporters. Perhaps they will run a story about the impact of your campus on the outcome of the election.

Make an appointment with the newly elected or re-elected officials to talk about the issues your campus is concerned about. Prepare information sheets on those issues, and make a packet of press clips, or statistics from the elections office to act as a gentle reminder of how the involvement of your campus affected the elections. They will remember this when they cast votes on issues important to your campus.

***Our pathway is straight
to the ballot box, with
no variableness nor
shadow of turning.***

— ELIZABETH CADY STANTON



2004 VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION BY STATE *(Note: Election Day for all states is November 2, 2004)*

The deadlines listed in the following chart have been calculated from preliminary information from each state. It is essential to contact the state election offices listed to confirm these dates, and also to check absentee ballot deadlines and requirements for those voting from out of state.

<i>State</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Office Name and Web Site</i>	<i>2004 Deadline to Request Voter Reg. Forms from State*</i>	<i>2004 Deadline for State to Provide Reg. Forms to Institution**</i>	<i>2004 Voter Registration Deadline</i>
Alabama	(800) 274-8683	Elections Division ★ www.sos.state.al.us	June 22	August 23	October 22
Alaska	(907) 465-4611	Division of Elections ★ ltgov.state.ak.us/elections	June 3	August 3	October 3
Arizona	(602) 542-8683	Elections Department ★ www.sos.state.az.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Arkansas	(501) 682-5070 (800) 482-1127	Elections Department ★ www.sosweb.state.ar.us	June 3	August 3	October 3
California	(800) 345-VOTE	Elections Division ★ www.ss.ca.gov	June 18	August 18	October 18
Colorado	(303) 894-2680	Elections ★ www.sos.state.co.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Connecticut	(860) 509-6100	Election Services Division ★ www.sots.state.ct.us	June 18	August 18	October 19
District of Columbia	(202) 727-2525	Elections & Ethics Board ★ www.dcboee.org	June 4	August 4	October 4
Delaware	(302) 739-4277 (800) 273-9500	Department of Elections www.state.de.us/election/index.htm	June 11	August 11	October 13
Florida	(850) 245-6200	Division of Elections ★ http://election.dos.state.fl.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Georgia	(404) 656-2871	Elections Division ★ www.sos.state.ga.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Hawaii	(808) 453-VOTE	Office of Elections ★ www.hawaii.gov/elections	June 4	August 4	October 4
Idaho ¹	(208) 334-2300	Election Division ★ www.idsos.state.id.us	--	--	October 8
Illinois	(217) 782-4141 (Springfield) (312) 814-6440 (Chicago)	Board of Elections www.elections.state.il.us	June 4	August 4	October 5
Indiana	(317) 232-3939 (800) 622-4941	Election Division ★ www.in.gov/sos	June 4	August 4	October 4
Iowa	(515) 281-5865 (888) 767-8683	Elections ★ http://www.sos.state.ia.us	June 22	August 23	October 22
Kansas	(800) 262-VOTE	Elections and Legislative Matters www.kssos.org/main.html	June 18	August 18	October 18
Kentucky	(502) 573-7100	State Board of Elections ★ www.kysos.com	June 4	August 4	October 5
Louisiana	(225) 922-0900	Department of Elections and Registration 2www.sos.louisiana.gov/elections/elections-index.htm	June 2	August 2	October
Maine ¹	(207) 624-7650	Division of Elections ★ www.state.me.us/sos	--	--	October 19
Maryland	(800) 222-VOTE	State Board of Elections ★ www.elections.state.md.us	June 11	August 11	October 12
Massachusetts	(617) 727-2828	Election Division ★ www.state.ma.us/sec	June 11	August 11	October 13
Michigan	(517) 373-2540	Bureau of Elections ★ www.michigan.gov/sos	June 4	August 4	October 4
Minnesota ¹	(877) 600-8683	Election Division ★ www.state.mn.us/ebranch/sos	--	--	October 12
Mississippi	(601) 576-2550 (800) 829-6786	Elections ★ www.sos.state.ms.us	June 1	August 2	October 1
Missouri	(573) 751-2301	Elections ★ www.sos.mo.gov	June 4	August 4	October 6
Montana	(888) 884-VOTE	Elections Bureau ★ sos.state.mt.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Nebraska	(402) 471-3229	Election Administration ★ www.sos.state.ne.us	June 15	August 16	October 15
Nevada	(775) 684-5705	Election Division ★ sos.state.nv.us	June 11	August 11	October 12
New Hampshire ¹	(603) 271-3242	Election Division ★ www.state.nh.us/sos	--	--	October 23
New Jersey	(609) 292-3760	Dept. of Law, Elections Division www.state.nj.us/lps/elections/electionshome.html	June 4	August 4	October 4



<i>State</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Office Name and Web Site</i>	<i>2004 Deadline to Request Voter Reg. Forms from State*</i>	<i>2004 Deadline for State to Provide Reg. Forms to Institution**</i>	<i>2004 Voter Registration Deadline</i>
New Mexico	(800) 477-3632	Bureau of Elections ★ www.sos.state.nm.us	June 4	August 4	October 5
New York	(800) FOR-VOTE	Board of Elections ★ www.elections.state.ny.us	June 8	August 9	October 8
North Carolina	(919) 733-7173	State Board of Elections www.app.sboe.state.nc.us	June 8	August 9	October 8
North Dakota ²	(701) 328-4146 (800) 352-0867 ext. 8-4146	Elections Division www.state.nd.us/sec	--	--	N/A
Ohio	(877) 767-3453	Elections ★ http://serform2.sos.state.oh.us/sos	June 4	August 4	October 4
Oklahoma	(405) 521-2391	Election Board ★ www.elections.state.ok.us	June 8	August 9	October 8
Oregon	(503) 986-1518	Elections ★ www.sos.state.or.us	June 11	August 11	October 12
Pennsylvania	(717) 787-5280	Dept of State ★ www.dos.state.pa.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Rhode Island	(401) 222-2345	Elections Division www.elections.state.ri.us	June 2	August 2	October 2
South Carolina	(803) 734-9060	Election www.state.sc.us/scsec	June 2	August 2	October 2
South Dakota	(605) 773-3537	Elections www.sdsos.gov	June 18	August 18	October 18
Tennessee	(615) 741-7956	Election Division ★ www.state.tn.us/sos	June 3	August 3	October 3
Texas	(800) 252-VOTE	Elections Division ★ www.sos.state.tx.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Utah	(801) 538-1041	Elections and Voting www.elections.utah.gov/voterinformation.html	June 11	August 11	October 13
Vermont	(802) 828-2464	Elections http://vermont-elections.org/sos/home.htm#elections	June 25	August 25	October 25
Virginia	(804) 786-6551	Secretary of Commonwealth, Elections www.sbe.state.va.us	June 4	August 4	October 4
Washington	(800) 448-4881	Elections ★ www.secstate.wa.gov/elections	June 2	August 2	October 2
West Virginia	(304) 558-6000	Election Division www.wvsos.com	June 11	August 11	October 13
Wisconsin ¹	608-266-8005	Elections Board ★ http://elections.state.wi.us	--	--	October 20
Wyoming ¹	307-777-7378	Election Administration http://soswy.state.wy.us/election/04elect.htm	--	--	October 4

* 120 days prior to voter registration deadline.

** 60 days prior to voter registration deadline. Institutions will not be held liable for failure to meet the requirement if the state fails to provide them with a sufficient supply of forms by this date.

¹ In states with Election Day registration available at the polling place, institutions are not required to distribute forms to students. However, students wishing to vote in those states must individually request voter registration forms and return them to the state elections office by the date indicated under "Voter Registration Deadline."

² North Dakota has no voter registration; institutions are not required to distribute forms to students.



THE WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION SECRETARIAT

The National Campus Voter Registration Project has been endorsed by the Washington Higher Education Secretariat (WHES) in conjunction with every presidential and congressional election since 1996. WHES is composed of 48 associations based in Washington, D.C., and representing all segments of the higher education community. Member associations are:

ACT

American Association for Higher Education
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers
American Association of Community Colleges
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
American Association of University Professors
American College Personnel Association
American Council on Education
American Dental Education Association
American Society for Engineering Education
APPA: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Law Schools
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Association of Community College Trustees
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
Career College Association
College and University Professional Association for Human Resources
The College Board
Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Council for Christian Colleges & Universities
Council for Higher Education Accreditation
Council for Opportunity in Education
Council of Graduate Schools
Council of Independent Colleges
Council on Governmental Relations
Educational Testing Service

EDUCAUSE

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
NAFSA: Association of International Educators
National Association for College Admissions Counseling
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association of College and University Business Officers
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
National Collegiate Athletic Association
National Council of University Research Administrators
United Negro College Fund
University Continuing Education Association
Women's College Coalition



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