

The Voting Project - Final Report
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Objectives

Our project aims to increase civic engagement on our campus while collaborating with other student organizations doing similar work. Previous and current efforts include the creation of a Voter Education Guide, panels featuring local politicians, friendly civic engagement “competitions,” a civic engagement concert, and lots and lots of tabling efforts. This year, our specific focus is on both the institutionalization of voter registration as well as preparation for the primaries.

Outcomes

Created UC Berkeley’s first-ever, free, nonpartisan voter education course on Canvas: VOTE 101

VOTE 101 was a course that allowed UC Berkeley students to gain access to nonpartisan vote-related information in the same place that they accessed their own university courses, assignments, and deadlines. Each lesson contained important information including voter registration guidelines, out-of-state resources, a comprehensive Voter Education Guide (created by UC Berkeley’s ASUC Vote Coalition) and ways for students to stay civically engaged on campus.

Filmed, edited, and published the #WhyBearsVote video campaign

To encourage a sense of community and togetherness in the time of COVID, our team created a [short video](#) highlighting the reasons behind why people chose to vote and why it was important to vote in the then-upcoming elections. Team members collected video content from campus individuals, from students to UC Berkeley’s Chancellor Christ, and released the final product on multiple social media platforms such as the official UC Berkeley Instagram and Facebook accounts, and the Public Service Center Facebook page in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

A portion of VOICE grant funding was allocated to a raffle that served to increase participation in the VOTE 101 course and the #WhyBearsVote video challenge. Over 600 students had enrolled in the course by Election Day.

Secured two Accessible Voting Locations (AVLs) on campus

VOICE grant funding helped our team secure two accessible voting locations on campus for the November 2020 elections. In the future, we hope to secure an MOU with Alameda County and the City of Berkeley to ensure such a polling location can exist at Berkeley every election year.

Organized in-person and virtual voter registration events

Our team used VOICE funding to purchase vote-related t-shirts, stickers, and other items that would attract individuals to voter registration drives and events. At these events, we answered questions about voting, gave away voting gear (an excellent morale boost!), and helped individuals register to vote. These purchases also helped increase participation in the Voting Project, a new student-led group that our team founded in an effort to centralize civic engagement efforts on campus.

Conclusions

Our project's objectives were not only met, but also exceeded. Individuals from all parts of campus including undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty from multiple campus departments, staff members from UC Berkeley's Counseling and Psychological Services, the Public Service Center, the Registrar's Office, and even the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and UC Berkeley's Chancellor Christ played a role in helping our campus stay civically engaged and were vital to the success of our project over the past two years. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic bringing uncertainty and unpredictability, our team displayed great resilience and used their resources to ensure that civic engagement continued, albeit virtually. With these efforts, our team registered hundreds of new voters and campus and helped answer vote-related questions to hundreds more.

We thank each and every individual who has helped us encourage civic engagement at UC Berkeley, and we especially thank the Center for, not only the financial resources that allowed us to do accomplish our goals, but for the continued check-ins, feedback, and genuine community that helped keep our morale high, especially when we needed it the most.