

The Local Motive

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Project Summary

The basic idea behind the Local Motive was to encourage a sense of local political participation among UCLA students via exposure to local politicians and discussion of local issues. There are different ways one could approach this: to invite said politicians to campus; to take students to City Hall or a similar venue; to take students to a meeting of the Westwood Neighborhood Council; and other options. I ultimately opted for the first of these, although I had various discussions on the second and third (which never got beyond the exploratory phase). The intended impact was as follows: to generate interest, enthusiasm, and attention among UCLA students for local politics and to instill the lesson that it is important to cultivate a sense of in-person engagement with local politics, and not only virtual engagement with national politics.

Impact

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This objective was, of course, not met, because the project was postponed at the last minute due to the political turmoil that arose mid-spring quarter, thereby deferring it to next year. UCLA learned some measure of lessons about local political engagement when this happened — primarily about

protesting and municipal policing, to be sure — but the temperature of the campus became too “hot” to successfully execute the program as designed or, really, to attempt to pivot to a scaled-down version of it. I was tempted to instead do something virtual, but I felt that kind of defeated the point of *in-person* political engagement.

As such I unfortunately had to pull the plug on the program for this year. I have been in talks with Center staff and hope to defer it to next year — I am wondering if now doing it *after* the presidential election rather than before may make students even more receptive to its message.