

ASUCLA Union Town Hall Series

United in Democracy

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Project Summary

The purpose of this year's project is to continue our Union Town Hall programs, which began last year with a focus on reproductive health. Our goal is to create a space for meaningful conversations on sensitive topics—one that fosters genuine engagement, encourages free speech, promotes critical thinking, and supports open-mindedness. We aim to reimagine the ASUCLA community as the heart of campus life—a place that offers both knowledge and comfort in the exchange of ideas.

This year's three-part event series, *United in Democracy*, will launch in October 2024, leading up to the presidential election. Each event will focus on a relevant social or political issue, promoting discourse through activities, information-sharing, and civic engagement. The series is designed to explore how our community perceives these issues and what it means to exercise free speech thoughtfully while questioning widely held beliefs.

The *United in Democracy* series will take place over three consecutive weeks. The first event, *Voting: Making Your Voice Heard*, will be followed by *Investigating the Media*, and conclude with *Civic Engagement and the Aftermath of Voting*.

Impact

These events reached a segment of the student body, engaging approximately 15 to 20 students per event, totaling around 50 participants. Students connected with our speakers on a personal level, engaging in meaningful conversations about civic duty, the political impact of current policies, the power of voting, and the influence of social and traditional media on public opinion. Each of the three events brought together students, staff, and faculty in an open forum that emphasized the importance of political engagement, while fostering connection and the exchange of diverse perspectives.

I believe we successfully met our objectives. The purpose was to create a Town Hall environment where free speech is encouraged, and differing opinions can coexist without hostility. While I had hoped for a larger turnout, the smaller group proved effective in spreading the message to a broader audience through word-of-mouth and peer engagement. We also collaborated with several campus organizations, including

student government, Bruin Dems, Activism Through Policy, Common Ground Collective, Bruin Vote, and faculty from the Political Science Department.

This year's VOICE proposal focuses on civic participation within the school community and the broader responsibility we carry as citizens to remain engaged in our government—even after graduation—as we continue participating in this ongoing experiment called democracy.