

Democracy Workshops: Promoting Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement in Advance of the November 2024 General Election

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Project Summary

The Democracy Workshop series is an ongoing educational and programmatic effort aimed at preparing UCLA students to be informed and engaged citizens, both during the 2024 election season and beyond. The inaugural series was successfully launched during the 2023-24 academic year and continued during the 2024-25 academic year thanks to the generous support of the UC National Center for Free Speech and Civic Engagement. Throughout the year, we hosted five (5) events, including *Boos and Ballots*, a Halloween-themed program that brought in community partners to provide voter education ahead of the 2024 Election; the *Election Night Watch Party*, a space for students to watch and process results together; *Civic Jeopardy*, a collaborative trivia event on civic institutions; *Your Vote, Your Voice: Campaign Media*, which analyzed persuasive messaging and political ads; and *Seeing is Not Believing: Outsmarting AI-driven Political Misinformation*, featuring Dr. Yi Ding (a Center Fellow!). These events reflected our continued commitment to informative and interactive programming, as well as our growing focus on emerging challenges to democracy—such as digital manipulation and declining trust in institutions. Democracy Workshops are now well established at UCLA, and various entities across campus are committed to continuing this impactful series.

Impact

The Democracy Workshops series had a significant impact on our campus community by providing relevant and unique civic programming in advance of the 2024 election, as well as by meeting the moment to provide opportunities for continued learning and engagement after the election. We hosted a total of five (5) events, successfully achieving the goal of providing structured, meaningful, and engaging opportunities for UCLA undergraduate and graduate/professional students to develop the knowledge and skills to be informed, engaged, and active citizens. Events ranged in attendance, with traditional workshops averaging around 30 students and more election-focused programming bringing in between 100-300 individuals. In addition to providing attendees with valuable knowledge and information, each event offered free food and drinks from local Westwood vendors, providing meals for our busy students and support

for our local businesses. Looking ahead, the BruinsVote student vote coalition is interested in continuing the Democracy Workshop series –albeit with some minor changes—with the support of UCLA Campus Life and ASUCLA (another VOICE awardee). They have applied for another VOICE award to carry on this project for a third time, and it is the hope that this series will continue to be regularly offered at UCLA in an attempt to provide *all* students with the exposure to this critical non-partisan civic education.