



Class-Cancellation Toolkit

The Why, What, How:
Transforming Civic Engagement on Election Days

Youth Civic Impact Collective

ycicollective.org

I. PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT¹

Since 2021, Stanford University has celebrated a class-free Election Day. The academic holiday allows faculty, students, and community members to engage in day-long celebration of democracy and civic engagement. The holiday is held annually, even in years without presidential or congressional elections. Each year, Stanford's organizing committee ([Stanford Democracy Day](#)) schedules a full slate of activities from keynote addresses to professor-led workshops to interactive student panels.

Through conversations with YCIC partner schools and peer institutions broadly, we quickly realized that the process of implementing class-free Election Days looks very different on each campus. Some schools take months to implement such an initiative while others take years. Varying levels of existing engagement, available resources, student body population, faculty support, and institutional processes as a whole invite extensive nuances and caveats that can be challenging to balance. This demanding process inspired YCIC to create this toolkit with universal advice and general overviews that will make it easier for other student leaders to navigate this initiative on their own campus.

The toolkit is intended to be a reference guide that can be applied to diverse contexts—from high schools, community colleges, to public and private institutions. We recommend that you read through the entire manual but can also be effective to jump to sections that directly address a certain question or issue in the process. The “Appendix” section includes various materials that were actually used in processes and can be especially helpful to use as a foundation. Whether you're just getting started or need guidance in the final steps, feel free to use this guide in whatever way you wish!

Lastly, if you have any suggestions or comments for improving this toolkit, please let us know. It certainly is difficult to capture all the nitty gritty nuances out there but we want this toolkit to be as accessible, relevant, and helpful as possible!

“Election Day is one moment in which the ordinary roles of faculty, student, and staff should be shed in favor of our shared role of citizen.”

Josiah Ober

¹ Parts of the toolkit use modified content from the American Constitution Society.

II. GETTING STARTED

1. Optimize Timing

- Timing is everything. Begin your planning process by aligning your initiative with upcoming election cycles. This will help you start planning backwards with a specific election cycle in mind with concrete deadlines for certain action steps. This can begin to build momentum and give your team a sense of urgency. The earlier you nail down the timeline, the more thoroughly you can prepare and the more success you will likely have.
- Use a phased approach when it comes to conversations with administration. Strategically timing your outreach to campus leadership is crucial. If you prematurely contact administrators before establishing a solid framework/timeline, it will be harder to convince others and may diminish their interest.
- Ideally, your team should have a well-developed proposal to pitch to administrators. Show that you're serious about this! Figuring out initial logistics and laying the groundwork may not be the most exciting compared to actually implementing the initiative. But spending time to build foundations in these early stages will guide momentum in the right direction and most definitely pay dividends down the line.

2. Developing Your Pitch

- Developing your pitch is an iterative process. As you gauge interest levels on campus and have more conversations with faculty/mentors, your pitch will evolve as you tailor solutions that are most applicable to your school. Regardless, your pitch should tell a story: motivations, the value-add, tangible solutions, success metrics, etc. A pitch can be in the form of both a written proposal and/or informative presentation. Having both forms seems to have worked best for most schools as you can pitch your ideas in various contexts.

3. “The Numbers Don’t Lie.”

- Backing up your pitch/presentation with numbers can make your ideas tangible and demonstrate urgency around the issue. Consider compiling and adding data around voter turnout among youth in your state or campus itself if such information is available. Tackling civic engagement may entail several high-level, theoretical conversations and adding numbers is an effective way to put issues into digestible perspectives.

- Results on voting may not be as relevant for high schools given that the majority of students may not be eligible to vote. There are, however, other alternatives to convey urgency such as measuring civic literacy at your school through simple polls or highlighting civics education gaps in course offerings.
 - *See more details about this in the Appendix!*

4. Media Engagement

- Part of gaining momentum is tapping various platforms that can help spread the word about your initiative. This can be a podcast, local newspaper, blogs, online forums, social media, and more. Consider writing an op-ed for your school newspaper or reaching out to media hosts who might be interested in having you on their platform. Leverage your team's network!
- Don't underestimate the power of word of mouth! Get your friends involved, float your ideas over dinner, and start to build those initial sparks.

5. Value Add for All

- “What’s in it for me?” Community members you talk to may question where/why they fit into this bigger picture. The value will likely differ for every audience you talk to. Through programming ideas and events leading up to Election Day, focus on how you can bring everyone under the tent. Generate value in creative ways instead of locking yourself to one, single path. Contact all the diverse pockets of communities on campus. Civic engagement is a priority regardless of major/background and you will be surprised by the partnerships that can emerge from these crossovers.
- A common conversation that comes up, for instance, has to do with the international community. Many international students ask “I can’t even vote in this country, so why is all of this relevant to me?” It’s a fair question, and many of our partner schools have added specific programming events that look beyond American politics. At Stanford, the Bechtel International Center facilitates panels to encourage an exchange of what democracy and youth activism looks like across the world. Other schools have hosted similar events that have proved to be incredibly productive and engaging.

6. Anticipating Challenges

- The sooner you identify potential challenges, the more prepared you will be. Some hurdles that have come up in the past across schools:
 - Class requirements and scheduling challenges (ex. Class hours, etc.)
 - Existing calendar restrictions

- Registrar timelines for changing the academic calendar
 - Administrative disinterest or pushback
 - Lack of initial interest from student body
- Here are some responses to concerns that have surfaced in the past:

Concern: Wouldn't implementing class-free Election Days be seen as a partisan overreach that could backfire during our already sensitive political environment?

Response: Politicians and party members on both sides of the aisle widely support legislation to make Election Day a federal holiday. States controlled by both parties already recognize Election Day as a state holiday.

Concern: Wouldn't a class-free Election Day conflict with the academic schedule for the upcoming school year?

Response: While classes are important, we believe that participation in a class-free Election day provides as much academic value to students in recognizing the importance of civic engagement as we prepare to become leaders in the real world. Still, we recognize that certain logistical aspects may be difficult to work around. We will consult closely with the Office of the President, Academic Affairs, and Student Engagement to continue discussing the logistical aspects of a class-free Election Day.

Concern: Wouldn't a class-free Election Day be disruptive to faculty as they plan their courses?

Response: If this initiative is approved and noted on the academic calendar, faculty members will have sufficient time to adjust their syllabi accordingly.

Concern: Why should our college take a stance on this issue? Isn't it the role of an institution to encourage members of its community to take various stances, but not to do so as an institution?

Response: [College/University/High School XYZ]'s values and visions are as follows: continuous, cooperative learning, commitment to quality service, compassion, and curiosity. [College/University/High School XYZ] has an obligation to educate and encourage students to effectively participate in the democratic process. Class-free Election Days will encourage students to learn and grow from each other and for each other.

Concern: There are other ways to encourage civic participation on campus. Why are class-free Election Days so important to implement?

Response: No other initiative would send as strong a message to the entire campus community that administration and faculty are in full support of civic engagement as implementing class-free Election Days. Research and data also suggest that class-free

Election Days are one of the most effective ways to not only drive turnout and engagement but build lasting habits of civic participation.²

Concern: Will students and community members actually use this extra time productively?

Response: Our programming invites all corners of campus to engage with civics on Election Day through panel sessions, keynote speakers, open mic performances, interactive workshops, and more. Whether it's voting, volunteering, or simply listening in on conversations, students will have the flexibility, and most importantly, the ability to actually engage on Election Day as they wish.

² [The Effect of Making Election Day a Holiday An Original Survey and a Case Study of French Presidential Elections Applied to the U.S. Voting System](#) (Caitlyn Bradfield and Paul Johnson)

III. WORKING WITH OTHERS

1. Building Your Team

- Quality over quantity. Whether your team is a few individuals or a large steering committee, commitment of your members will determine how the initiative will get to the finish line. If you have an existing group or a campus club that wants to take on this initiative, great! If you're building from the ground up, bring together student leaders who actually care about the issue, who you can trust, and who are ready to work hard. Invite faculty members or mentors to join your initiative as thought partners and advisers. Your team will arguably be the most important puzzle piece.
 - Another important point: Don't fall for the expectation that everyone on your team has to have a political science or government background. Building a large-scale initiative will often work better with students representing diverse parts of the campus. YCIC, for instance, consists of computer science majors, pre-med students, historians, high school students who have no idea what they want to study, and more. Again, voting is something that everyone can/should do and civic engagement is relevant to all!

2. Collaborating with Stakeholders

- Another important step early in the process is to clearly identify and collaborate with different stakeholders. Stakeholders are those who will be affected by the change in the academic calendar as well as those who have the power to push this initiative forward. Stakeholders will include administrators, professors, students, and community partners.
 - Establish initial meetings as soon as your team is ready to start the conversation. Initial meetings can be very effective in conveying your overall goals, gauging interest levels, understanding primary concerns, and laying the foundations for future partnerships. To make the most out of these meetings, your team should have clear objectives/roadmap as well as where/how the contacted stakeholder plays a role in this initiative.
- **STUDENTS.** Build a connection with the students. Students are one of the groups that will benefit most from this initiative. Now, this does not mean you need a thumbs up from every single student on campus (and you probably won't in the first place). Showing that student leaders and different campus communities care about this initiative is vital in generating momentum. You can do this through activities such as collecting signatures, sending out school-wide

surveys, conducting 1-on-1 meetings with student leaders, etc. Creating this connection with students can take some time, so the earlier you start, the better.

- **COMMUNITY PARTNERS.** Another way to build credibility is to partner with public service centers on campus, student government, campus voting initiatives, existing student clubs, and other organizations with aligned interests. Identifying these opportunities should be straightforward and a crucial step to bringing together different campus groups.
- **FACULTY & ADMINISTRATION.** Faculty and administrators are partners who will directly be able to create institutional change and be important thought partners on how to best implement your ideas. Going straight to the Office of the President will likely not be the best first step. Carefully identify and connect with faculty and other decision makers who can offer advice, frequently check-in for feedback, brainstorm new ideas, point out potential obstacles, and recommend other useful contacts.
 - Having an administrator supporting your work and passionate about the movement early on can be a total game changer. No need to rush or force these relationships but keep this in mind as you go through the process. Getting the initiative approved and implementing class-free Election Days can take a few months. Approach the initiative as a marathon, not a sprint.

IV. EXECUTING YOUR PLAN

Class-free election days are often *one* of the end goals for our partner schools. But this is certainly not the only form of “success.” Your set of implementation strategies will be dependent on your overall timeline, resources available, and the speed at which your administration acts. Think of implementation as a process that happens in stages. Even if a class-free election day is not implemented right away, there are alternatives to consider that can have a lasting impact in transforming civics education on your campus. Perfect can be the enemy of good.

1. Successful cancellation of classes

- Administration on campus approves your proposal to cancel classes on Election Day. This will mean your team will have to follow up and ensure that the Office of Academic Affairs and any other relevant departments are aligned. This day could mean rescheduling classes on certain days, removing class hours for Election Day completely, shifting the start of exam periods, etc. Make sure everyone is on the same page to make sure that your initiative will actually take place. Logistics will obviously be different for each school.
- Beyond logistics, now it’s time to bring all those amazing ideas to life.
 - Create a spreadsheet or use organizational software to list each event of the day, where/when it’s happening, your point of contact for the event, and who on your team will be responsible for coordinating it. *See the appendix for a sample spreadsheet.*
- Get more hands on deck! Recruit volunteers on an event-specific basis and identify which events or areas will need more help leading up to Election Day.
- If you don’t have one already, now would be a good time to create a website and/or social media platform to share important updates, continue to build hype around Election Day, highlight key events, etc.

2. Alternative Programming

- Maybe it’s taking a while for administration to move things along or certain institutional restrictions are stalling your process. There are so many other ways other than class cancellation to make a difference and improve the civics culture at your school. We have seen many professors who individually offer to cancel their classes on Election Day or faculty who offer for-credit alternatives to students who participate in some type of civic service on Election Day instead of attending classes. Some professors decide not to take attendance or provide excused absences to give students the same flexibility one would have had with a class-free Election Day.

- Even going through the class-cancellation process regardless of the outcome is a great learning opportunity. In fact, your team will be better equipped to branch out and implement alternative ideas with new takeaways and lessons learned.

3. Coordinating General Civic Service Opportunities

- One of the main pillars at YCIC is “learning by doing” and practically engaging the communities around you. Your team can begin to establish connections with existing organizations offering nonpartisan, civic service engagement opportunities and directly plug students into those programs. These activities can include phone banking, volunteering at the polls, getting people to the polls, serving as an election judge, or providing general assistance to the election day administration. Your team can collaborate with official election administrators leading up to Election Day to come up with an easy way for students to get involved.
- A good practice for your team throughout the implementation phase is to collect data, feedback, pictures, and testimonials from students and community members who participate in programming. This will be especially useful when your team debriefs and brainstorms ways to improve class-free Election Days in future years. This can be done through campus-wide feedback surveys or more direct 1-on-1 conversations with participants at the events.

V. THANK YOU

First, thank you for all that you do to improve civic engagement. This is challenging work, and we're excited that you're interested in bringing class-free election days to your campus. The beauty of the civic and youth activism space generally is that we are not alone in our efforts. We are grateful to partner with diverse organizations and gain insights from campuses across the country. YCIC is not a solo mission, and our work is only possible because of our growing network, thought partners, and driven student leaders.

Please reach out to our team if you have any questions, need assistance in your efforts, want to provide feedback on our toolkit, or simply want to talk with fellow civics advocates. We are always excited to expand our partner schools and would love to connect! Best of luck!

VI. Appendix

Document A: Sample of Initial Proposal



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS
OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY



STANFORD
VOTES

Election Day as a Non-Instructional Holiday Proposal

and

I. Proposal

Designate Election Day (November 3rd) as a non-instructional holiday for all Stanford courses and ask instructors to refrain from having major assignments due the day after the election.

II. Summary

We believe this designation is a necessary and important step for the University because it would enable greater student participation in the upcoming election and send a powerful message that Stanford's administration has an expectation of civic engagement. Surveys and studies conducted at other Universities suggest the largest barrier to voting, civic participation, volunteering as a poll worker, and researching candidate positions is a lack of time. Excusing students from classes will remedy this. The drawbacks of the policy are minimal and easily mitigated in an already virtual environment, so we expect the upsides to far outweigh the downsides. As Stanford's own Michael McFaul and Adam Bonica write, "On this one day, instead of preparing for the future, students should be taking part in deciding it."¹

III. Context and Precedent

- A. The expectation that work and study activities should take place on Election Day is a relic of a less secular past.
 1. Historically, elections were held on days of work because lawmakers did not want constituents to travel to the polls (by difficult and dangerous roads) on a Sunday, a traditional day of worship and rest.
- B. Designating election day as a holiday is both broadly admired and widely adopted in universities, states, internationally, among surveys of the American public and college students², and through bi-partisan legislation submitted at the national level. (See appendix)

¹https://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/commentary/make-election-day-a-national-holiday/article_40cff750-ce49-11e8-ae90-13b3b50b47aa.html

² 80% of students surveyed at the University of California, Berkeley, supported a similar proposal: https://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/divco_on_asuc_election_day_proposal_w- encls. pdf

1. (We're planning to distribute a petition and survey to gather the opinions of the Stanford community on this question, and others)

IV. Arguments in Favor

A. Enables greater student participation in elections

1. Stanford students are incredibly busy during the work week; their schedules serve as a barrier to voting and taking time to inform themselves.
 - a) "The hidden driver of low youth turnout isn't a lack of political interest or motivation.... It's that the act of voting is 'costly.' Citizens have to expend time and effort familiarizing themselves with candidates and policies, decide which they prefer, and then overcome life's distractions long enough to find the right polling station on the right day (assuming they met the registration deadline, of course)."³
 - b) Less than half of Stanford students voted in 2016 and 2018 (48.5% and 42.7%, respectively⁴), well below comparable rates at peer institutions.
 - (1) Harvard, for instance, saw 57.8% and 48.6% turnout for the same elections⁵.
 - c) Many students point to academic commitments as a significant impediment to their ability to exercise the franchise.
 - (1) A Tufts University study in 2014 found that the most-cited reason that young people skip voting is because of schedule conflicts.
 - d) Making Election Day a non-instructional holiday would free up valuable time for students to prioritize their civic duty and learn about the issues/candidates on the ballot.
 - (1) Data about the American public in aggregate shows little knowledge about all but the most high profile races, particularly for our age group — less than 10% of Americans 18-24 met a standard of "informed engagement" in 2012.⁶
2. The public health context of fall quarter makes it necessary to accommodate obligations outside of students' academic lives.

³<https://www.the74million.org/article/americas-young-people-dont-vote-in-a-new-book-professor-john-holbein-considers-what-schools-can-do-to-produce-better-citizens-and-maybe-even-get-them-to-the-polls/>

⁴ Stanford Voting Rates 2012-2018

⁵ Why The Hell Don't Harvard Students Vote?

⁶<https://iop.harvard.edu/about/newsletter-press-release/groundbreaking-report-released-educating-america's-youth-civic>

- a) Stanford students are beset by work and family obligations as well as health concerns. Undergraduates, overwhelmed by these circumstances and detached from their teachers and peers, may not prioritize voting.⁷
 - b) If, however, Stanford is able to lessen their academic burden — just for a day — students will be more able and more willing to vote, serve as poll workers, inform themselves about the candidates and propositions on their ballots, and/or encourage their peers to exercise the franchise.
3. As the most logistically precarious election in modern history, students (as many other voters) likely will need more time to cast their ballots safely and effectively, especially if they plan to vote in person.

B. Sends the message that Stanford values and has an expectation of civic engagement

- 1. It is Stanford's duty as an institution of higher education to encourage the civic engagement of its students.
 - a) "[T]he principal goals for higher education ... are to bring to all people of the Nation... education for a fuller realization of democracy in every phase of living." — The Truman Commission on Higher Education, 1947.
 - b) "Your first homework assignment...if you are eligible to vote, we expect you to register, to inform yourself of the candidates and issues, and to cast a ballot." — President Lawrence S. Bacow of Harvard University.
 - (1) We believe Stanford can and should be better than Harvard on this issue ;)
 - c) "And [Stanford's] purposes, to promote the public welfare by exercising an influence in behalf of humanity and civilization, teaching ... and inculcating love and reverence for the great principles of government." — The Stanford University Founding Grant, 1885.
- 2. Now, more than ever, as trust in the democratic process reaches all time lows⁸, the current moment necessitates a reminder of the importance of civic engagement.
 - a) There is a perception within and without the university community that Stanford students are apathetic or politically disengaged. This is

⁷ <https://stanford.box.com/s/q8e4qybrefaynv55e3jdlz1zc7n83q39>

⁸ <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/trust/archive/winter-2020/how-americans-view-trust-facts-and-democracy-today>

particularly worrisome since data suggests that voting young is a key indicator of whether one will vote later in life⁹

3. Stanford could provide a set of robust opportunities for civic engagement and education during the non-instructional time on election day.
 - a) Election Day offerings might include unique, relevant educational content, such as an event with relevant guest speakers, workshops on researching down ballot candidates, or discussions examining deliberative democracy.

C. Benefits society at large

1. As mentioned above, a non-instructional holiday on Election Day also would allow Stanford students to help fill the massive shortage of poll workers on the horizon.
 - a) Poll workers are significantly older than the general population.
 - b) COVID-19 has created enormous risk among the demographics running our elections, and projections indicate that November will see a [massive shortfall](#) among poll workers.
 - c) Many organizations, including Professor Nate Persily's Healthy Elections Project, are actively encouraging students to help fill the deficit.
 - d) We are sending out a survey soon and expect many students to indicate that they would be willing to serve as poll workers if they have time to do so.

V. Appendix: Working Draft of Survey/Petition:

Rough draft

VI. Appendix: Precedent for an Election Day Holiday

Higher Education:

The NCAA encourages athletics programs to give college athletes the day off on Election Day¹⁰. Columbia and Princeton already recognize Election Day as a holiday for all academic activities (Columbia gives their students two days off!)¹¹

The University of Oklahoma will go on fall holiday for Election Day just for 2020¹².

⁹<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379412000212>

¹⁰ [NCAA encourages schools to give athletes Election Day off](#)

¹¹https://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/divco_on_asuc_election_day_proposal_w-encs.pdf

¹² [OU to designate Election Day as fall 2020 holiday](#)

States:

Montana, Hawaii, Louisiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island

(The California State Assembly saw similar legislation introduced in Assembly Bill 177. The bill is currently being considered.)

Other Countries:

Weekends: Albania, Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Columbia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macau, Macedonia, Malta, Malaysia, Mexico, Montenegro, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine,

Weekday Holidays: Israel, Italy, South Korea, Uruguay, Venezuela

Time off from work: Canada (Mandates workers get 3hrs off to vote)

No time off: USA, Netherlands, Norway, Puerto Rico, Philippines, United Kingdom

Congress: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/105th-congress/senate-bill/1922>,
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/house-bill/00063>,
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2918>,
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3498>,
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/1>,

Document B: Sample of Resolution to Fund Class-Free Election Day

RESOLUTION TO FUND DEMOCRACY DAY

AUTHOR: [REDACTED], Former ASSU Senator

CO-SPONSOR: [REDACTED], Stanford in Government, [REDACTED], Graduate Student Councillor, [REDACTED], Undergraduate Senator, and [REDACTED], Undergraduate Senator

DATE SUBMITTED: July 20, 2021

ACTION REQUESTED: a 2/3 approval of the ASSU Legislative Bodies

Unanimously Passed by Undergraduate Senate on July 22, 2021

Unanimously Passed by Graduate Student Council on August 4th, 2021

WHEREAS The ASSU Legislative Bodies both unanimously passed¹ a bill calling for Stanford to designate Election Day a holiday for Students, Faculty, and Staff in partnership with an advocacy group², and;

WHEREAS The Faculty Senate, after careful review³, passed a resolution⁴ designating the Tuesday after the first Monday in November as an annual academic holiday ("Democracy Day"), and;

WHEREAS On this annual Democracy Day, there will be events that encourage "valuable community learning, deliberation, reflection, engagement and cross-cultural exchange," and;

WHEREAS The planning for Democracy Day is a joint partnership between The Haas Center for Public Service, The Stanford University President's Office, Stanford in Government, and The ASSU (collectively the "Democracy Day Coordinating Committee"), and;

WHEREAS Article VIII Section 1 of the Joint By-Laws of the ASSU⁵ defines ASSU service organizations as organizations whose services are available to all members of the association and are funded by "General or Special fees," and;

WHEREAS Article VIII Section 1.D of the Joint By-Laws of the ASSU denotes two types of service organizations: Service Projects and Service Partnerships, where Service Partnerships are "intended to be agencies jointly run by students and non-students," and;

WHEREAS Article VIII Section 1.E of the Joint By-Laws of the ASSU specify that service "Service Organizations shall be created by a 2/3 vote of the relevant Association legislative bodies to fulfill a specific charge" and "Each Service Organization shall be vested with the specific authority of the relevant Association

¹ [ASSU ELECTION DAY ENDORSEMENT](#) with daily coverage [here](#) and [here](#)

² [Stanford: Make Election Day a day of civic service](#) and [The Push to Make Future Election Days Days of Civic Service](#)

³ [Faculty Senate Explores Making Election Day an Academic Holiday](#) and [Senate Hears Presentation on Proposed New School of Sustainability](#)

⁴ [Faculty Senate Approves Early Admissions Pilot for Student Athletes](#) and [Faculty Senate Votes to Implement Early Enrollment Student Athlete Pilot Program](#)

⁵ [Joint Bylaws](#)

legislative bodies to conduct, on behalf of the Association, all business within that Service Organization's proper charge," and;

WHEREAS Article VIII Section 1.D2, Article VIII Section 1.E2, Article VIII Section 1F, Article VIII Section 4B, Article VIII Section 4C the Joint By-Laws of the ASSU are confusingly written, out of date, refer to non-existent sections, are intended for ASSU-run agencies, and/or specify an overly specific complex bureaucracy, and;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSU Legislative Bodies:

THAT The ASSU Legislative Bodies do hereby enter into a partnership with the Democracy Day Coordinating Committee subject to all of the privileges that it entails, including granting the Democracy Day Coordinating Committee the ability to seek funding by "either General or Special Fees and/or some combination of Annual, Standard, and Quick Grants,"⁶ and;

THAT The ASSU recognizes that the Democracy Day Coordinating Committee is charged with organizing and coordinating the programming on Democracy Days, and;

THAT The ASSU Legislative bodies exempt the Democracy Day Coordinating Committee from Article VIII Section 1.D2 and Article VIII Section 1.E2, Article VIII Section 1F, Article VIII Section 4B, Article VIII Section 4C of the Joint By-Laws of the ASSU, and;

THAT To ensure oversight, the ASSU President, in consultation with the Legislative Bodies may appoint a member of the Democracy Day Coordinating Committee, and;

THAT The Democracy Day Coordinating Committee will present to the ASSU Legislative bodies a report of Democracy Day programming upon the request of the ASSU Legislative bodies, and;

THAT To provide autonomy to the Democracy Day Coordinating Committee, no further mechanisms of direct oversight shall be employed by the ASSU, and all bylaw mechanisms to shall be abrogated to that effect, and;

THAT The ASSU Legislative bodies congratulate the Democracy Day initiative organizers on all their hard work getting the day implemented in the school calendar and look forward to the development of compelling programming for the Day.

⁶ Joint By-Laws Article VIII Section 1B

Document C: Sample of High School Data Collection

The following is part of the class-free Election Day proposal and presentation at The Lawrenceville School (NJ).

Surveys and polls in the past have shown that there is room for improvement when it comes to Lawrenceville students' knowledge regarding elections, voting, and civic discourse. In 2013, The First Amendment (TFA), the leading political magazine on campus, conducted a 10-question survey to test the political literacy of students at Lawrenceville. The ten questions were as follows:

- Who is the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives?
- Who is the current Secretary State of the U.S.?
- Name a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- What is the difference between Obamacare and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act?
- Who is the current president of Syria?
- In what country is Hezbollah based in?
- What Cuban-American senator gave the Republican response to President Barack Obama's 2013 State of the Union address?
- Who is the leader of North Korea?
- What was the 2012 Obama presidential campaign slogan?
- In what country was an American diplomatic mission attacked on September 11, 2012, the 11th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks?

Out of the first 100 responses received, the average number of questions correct was merely four.³ 79 out of 100 students scored less than six correct answers, meaning that approximately 4/5 of the people who participated in the survey failed in the academic sense (<60%). Though all members of the community, regardless of age, should be fully prepared to engage in civic engagement, it is important to note that 47% of those who took the survey were V formers—students who are expected to relatively have greater knowledge and experience with politics.

TFA completed a similar research survey in 2019, conducting a seven-question multiple-choice quiz to understand Lawrentians' knowledge and understanding of primaries and elections in general. The seven questions were as follows:

- How can each candidate typically fund their campaign during the primaries/elections?
- How much of the voting percentage (in at least four national polls) does a Democratic candidate need to advance to the next (fourth) round of debates?
- How are the presidential candidates chosen after the primaries?
- Which state gives the electoral college the most votes?
- Which state/s are typically considered "swing states?" (That is, which state/s tend to flip between Republican and Democrat a lot during elections)
- By how many votes does a candidate need to beat his/her opponent to win the electoral college election?

³ [The First Amendment "Error" \(December 2013 Issue\)](#)

- What is the presidential line of succession?

Out of the 86 responses received, the average score out of 70 (10 points per question) was approximately 32 (31.86).⁴ 73% of participants scored less than 40 points, meaning that the great majority of quiz takers failed in the academic sense (<60%).

Moreover, in another 2019 poll conducted by TFA, students responded to a series of questions on Lawrentians' perspectives on political polarization. One of the questions asked, "How does L'ville prepare us to discuss polarizing topics?" The answers were as follows:

- Poorly: 11.3%
- Not well: 19%
- Neither well nor not well: 30.4%
- Well: 35.1%
- Very well: 4.2%

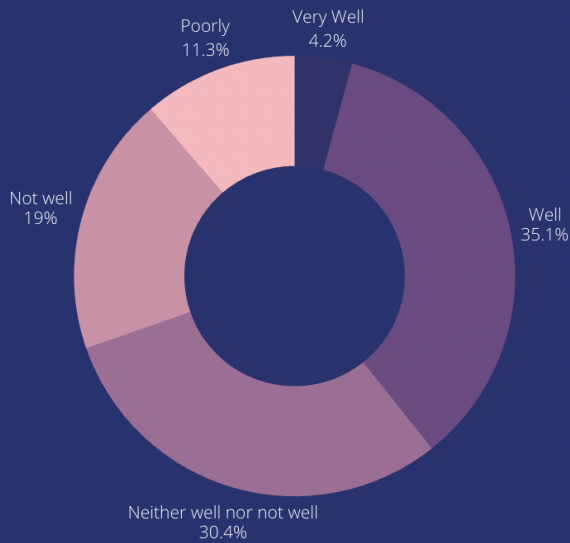
Though the response with the greatest number of answers was "Well," greater importance lies in addressing the 60.7% of community members who believed that Lawrenceville did not prepare students well enough to discuss polarizing topics.⁵

All three research polls and surveys indicate the isolating aspect of Lawrenceville's "bubble." These results show that there is much room for improving our knowledge about politics and civic engagement. Understanding current events and being knowledgeable about the political landscape are integral elements that enable Lawrentians to develop a complete understanding of our society and prepare them as global citizens—and, Lawrenceville has a responsibility to educate and encourage students to effectively participate in the democratic process.

⁴ [The First Amendment "Elections" \(November 2019 Issue\)](#)

⁵ [The First Amendment "Insurrection" \(June 2019 Issue\)](#)

“HOW DOES L’VILLE PREPARE US TO DISCUSS POLARIZING TOPICS?”



60.7%



of respondents believed that Lawrenceville did not prepare students well enough

100

STUDENTS SURVEYED

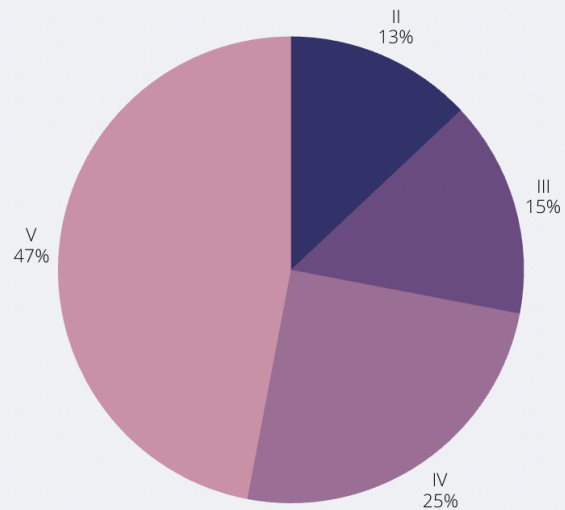
10

QUESTIONS

4

QUESTIONS CORRECT
ON AVERAGE

PARTICIPATION





PRECEDENT @ HS LEVEL



Bullis School
@BullisSchool

Today is [#ElectionDay](#) VOTE. VOTE. VOTE.
[#YourVoteMatters](#) [#2020Election](#)

Reminder: Bullis is closed today 11/3 and tomorrow 11/4.



THE BULLIS SCHOOL

"While we believe that many of our students are aware of the intricacies of our democracy and the Electoral College, we want to ensure that **all students** have at the very least a [solid] understanding."

"Faculty are organizing age-appropriate additional civics lessons for students in 4th grade and above. Two of our Upper School social studies teachers are running four workshops for faculty on facilitating **civil discourse** and **conflict resolution**."
- Head of School Christian G. Sullivan

Document D: Sample of Class-Free Election Day Programming

The following is a sample spreadsheet that can be used to track all planned events and programming.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1		Event Title	Day	Date	Start Time	End Time	Location	Address	Link(s)	Description (written nicely for the website)	Type	Partners	Student Lead(s)	Contact(s)	Contact Email(s)	Food?	Keywords
2	☑	Intercollegiate Gathering	Tuesday	10/29	1:00 PM	2:45 PM	Online / Zoom		RSVP	Join us for the first-ever "Intercollegiate Gathering for Civic Engagement"! Be part of a nationwide conversation with colleges and universities that have successfully advocated for class-free Election Days. Student leaders from across the country will share strategies and insights in mobilizing their peers and administration on campus, urging other institutions to follow suit. RSVP HERE	Event	Confirmed: Brown, Columbia, Rice, Wayne State, American, UNIV, CCP, Duval, UW Madison				No	"Public"
3	☑	Democracy's the Worst Form of Government Except for All the Others	Wednesday	10/30	12:00 PM	1:15 PM	ER Lounge, Encina Hall, Basement	616 Jane Stanford	sign up	As more people become disillusioned with democracy and turn to authoritarian strongmen, Dr. Kathryn Houser and Dr. Jennifer Pan discuss the authoritarian regimes in Russia and China to emphasize the importance of democracy and how despite its imperfections, it's a better form of government than the rest.	Speaker	CDREL					
4	☑	The Impact of Regional Conflict in MENA on Authoritarian Stability and Dissent	Thursday	10/31	4:00 PM	5:30 PM	Levinthal Hall	454 Santa Teresa	sign up	Join us for an International Relations Lounge in Encina Hall's basement for this important discussion and prize. The panel examines the impact of the ongoing wars in Gaza and Lebanon on regime stability in the region. How have ruling establishments managed popular sentiment and protest as Israel's military campaigns in Gaza and Lebanon have continued with no end in sight? How have opposition forces and protest movements responded to these developments? What challenges have they faced? What is the relationship between movements in solidarity with Palestine and Lebanon and domestic oppositional politics? The panelists will discuss the major trends and contextualize them in historical perspectives.	Panel	CDREL Program on Arab Reform and Democracy				No	
5	☑	FLICKS: "Election" Screening	Sunday	11/3	10:00 PM, Movie	10:00 PM	Cinema Auditorium	655 Knight Way, Stanford, CA		Lights, Camera, VOTE! Come watch Election (featuring Stanford alumna Reese Witherspoon) with Stanford FLICKS and give up for Democracy Day 14 with a free night of film and food!	Screening						No?
6	☑	Money in the Dark: Money Politics in Thailand	Monday	11/4	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	12 Ka Seng Building, Room 390	2931 Campus Dr	sign up	Ever wondered how political money really flows? Why some funds shape policies openly in the spotlight, while others work silently behind closed doors? This event reveals the contrasting worlds of money politics in Thailand, exposing hidden channels of influence and the stark differences in transparency. Discover how "dark money" in Thailand operates out of sight with Dr. Pich Pongswat.	Speaker	Thai Students Association					"International", "Speaker"
7	☑	Men's & Women's Basketball	Monday	11/4	1:00 PM (Men's game), 7:00 PM (Women's game)	3:30 PM (Men's game), 10:30 PM (Women's game)	Maple Pavilion			On election day eve, show out to men's and women's basketball games! Bring the energy, grab your free t-shirt, and get hyped for...Funding Fathers appreciation?	Themed event	Stanford Athletics, Stanford equipment, Men's/Women's basketball					"Athlete", "Social"
8	☑	ORSL Election Day Debate: Sanctuary for Brown and Struggles	Tuesday	11/5	7:30 AM	2:30 AM	The Circle Sanctuary			Throughout election day The Circle Sanctuary will be open to all who need a quiet space to ORSL.							
9	☑	Portal and Piazza: Organizing Community Change (Uganda, Rwanda)	Tuesday	11/5	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	Meyer Green Grove			In the wake of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda implemented a community building day to promote reconciliation. With the compulsory day known as Umuganda, Rwandans come together to clean their neighborhoods, build housing, help their neighbors, and improve their communities. Explore how the day of duty and community engagement has not only strengthened country bonds, but led to Kigali being the cleanest city in Africa, and one of the safest cities in the world.							
10	☑	Walk the Labyrinth in Memorial Church	Tuesday	11/5	9:00 AM	4:00 PM	MemChu			The labyrinth is an ancient pattern found in many cultures around the world. The rhythm and simplicity of following a single path can quiet the mind, restore balance, facilitate meditation, encourage prayer, insight and celebration.							
11	☑	America's Roll in the World	Tuesday	11/5	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	Hass Front Patio		RSVP	America's Roll in the World (formerly known as Donuts and Democracy) has been a cornerstone of Democracy Day's programming since its inception. Organized by students in COMS 191, Deliberative Democracy Practicum, this event brings together Stanford student of diverse backgrounds and viewpoints and engages them in deliberation about pressing social / political issues.	Event	Deliberative Democracy Lab					"Dialogue"
12	☑	Public Service Career Mixer	Tuesday	11/5	10:30 AM	12:30 PM	Fisher Conference Hall, Arellaga Alumni Center		RSVP/RSite	Mingle and enjoy networking with interesting alumni who have had fascinating, diverse careers in public service. Open to students across all academic careers and majors at Stanford. New to networking? Don't worry, we'll provide support, courtesy of Stanford CareerEd. Want to learn more about leading and fellowship opportunities for internships and beginning your career in public service? We'll have folks on hand to provide information on that as well.	Mixer	Stanford Alumni Association, CareerEd, Hass Center				Yes	"Career", "Civic Engagement", "STEM", "Alumni"

time	Thursday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
11:45 AM						Public Service Career Mixer	
12:00 PM							
12:15 PM		Democracy is the Worst Form of Government Except for All the Others				All Vote No Play	
12:30 PM							
12:45 PM						International Luncheon @ Bechtel	
1:00 PM						Across the Aisle Conversation	Russia's War on Ukraine, with former Ambassadors Michael McFaul and Steven Pifer
1:15 PM							Voting for Health: The Public's Role in Shaping Healthcare Policy in 2024
1:30 PM						Boba TEAch-In	The Promise and Peril of AI in Elections: A More Informed Electorate or New Paths to Deception?
1:45 PM							
2:00 PM						band setup/food setup/tables/games	
2:15 PM							
2:30 PM							
2:45 PM							
3:00 PM						Money in the Dark vs Money in Plain Sight: Money Politics in Thailand vs USA	
3:15 PM						Europe Center Event	Democracy Day: Electoral Politics - From the USA to Brazil and back again (Sao Vicente, Brazil)
3:30 PM							
3:45 PM						Faculty Reception: Dine & Dialogue	
4:00 PM							
4:15 PM							
4:30 PM							
4:45 PM							
5:00 PM							
5:15 PM							
5:30 PM							
5:45 PM							Black House Town Hall @ BCSC
6:00 PM							
6:15 PM							
6:30 PM							

Check out all programming events on Election Day at Stanford [here!](#)

Document D: Articles and Coverage

Examples of articles and general coverage.

- [“Lobbying for an Election Day Holiday”](#) (Cardinal Service)
- [“Election Day is now a holiday at Stanford. What does this mean for the University community?”](#) (The Stanford Daily)
- [“Making the most of Stanford’s new academic holiday, Democracy Day”](#) (Stanford Report)
- [“American University to cancel Election Day classes”](#) (The Washington Post)
- [“Lawrenceville Celebrates Inaugural Democracy Day”](#) (The Lawrenceville School)
- [“The Student Action Committee Takes the Lead”](#) (Georgetown Day School)
- [“Day on Democracy Empowers Student Voters at UMW”](#) (University of Mary Washington)
- [“Community College of Philadelphia cancels classes on Election Day to promote student voting”](#) (WHYY.org)
- [“After faculty vote, federal Election Days designated University holidays at Brown”](#) (Brown University)
- [“Drexel University Won’t Hold Classes on Election Day”](#) (Drexel News)
- [“UW student government urges canceled classes on Election Day”](#) (Cap Times)
- [“Student-led initiative petitions to cancel classes on Election Day”](#) (WKU Herald)
- [“Professors cancel class, encourage voting on Election Day”](#) (The Daily Princetonian)
- [“On-campus polling location celebrated, Election Day 2020 declared a university holiday”](#) (Wayne State University)