

increased dramatically during this election cycle, especially among voters who historically are underrepresented (e.g., African American students). Maintaining this momentum will require continued coalition work to sustain institution-wide efforts that were introduced in 2020 in future election cycles.

and right-wing challenges to academic freedom need an effective counterpunch from higher education (Association of American Colleges and Universities 2021a, 2021b; Brennan Center 2021).

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (2017) elevated civic engagement as a desired core learning outcome of

We encourage fellow political science faculty to become involved in building a coalition that can mobilize student voters on their own campus. Although our data had limitations, it was clear that the efforts to promote student voting on the Wingate University campus were extremely effective in 2020.

On other campuses, the actors involved may be different: perhaps student government will be more active than student athletes; perhaps there is no office of community engagement (or equivalent) but faculty can connect with colleagues who incorporate community-engaged learning; or perhaps there is little support to integrate voter education into key components of the general-education curriculum. However, faculty can begin to incorporate civic engagement into their own courses when applicable. Whatever the case may be, we hope that our examples demonstrate the necessity of being involved on campus to promote voter-mobilization efforts and that these examples can be adapted to any campus context. ■

NOTES

1. Wingate University does not have a precinct that technically is “on campus.” However, the precinct in which residential Wingate students vote is a 15-minute walk or 5-minute bike ride from campus. References to on-campus voting refers to this precinct, which is located in the Wingate Community Center and is part of the town’s parks and recreation department.
2. See <https://youtu.be/dlus1PZuTC0>.

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LET’S GET POLITICAL: CO-CREATING AND ASSESSING CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

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The insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021; ongoing threats to democracy evidenced by the unproven and baseless claims made by a then-sitting president that an election was stolen; a relentless yet failed attempt to reverse results by badgering election officials in key battleground states; the passage of new laws across the country to make it more difficult for people to vote;

the undergraduate experience. Our institution created campus-wide Civic Engagement Learning Outcomes under the auspices of the James Madison Center for Civic Engagement (JMU Civic 2018) and the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) (Pastor, Schaefer, and Perkins 2021). Our approach acknowledges the need for a foundational grasp of democratic principles, awareness of pressing public issues, and an understanding of how to engage political decision making across levels of government while also recognizing that meaningful engagement requires critical analytical and communication skills. Given the divisive and abrasive state of our democracy, we also emphasize dispositions such as empathy and open-mindedness and developing confidence in the ability to address public issues. Finally, we embrace the notion that students learn by doing and therefore incorporate civic behaviors into our learning objectives.

There are several means by which students across all majors should encounter the opportunity to develop civic skills, knowledge, and dispositions both in and out of the classroom and to develop a deeper understanding of how to address public problems through political participation. To increase internal and external efficacy, JMU Civic co-creates and co-implements with students, faculty, staff, and community partners programming that meets our civic and political learning outcomes. Students learn about political participation opportunities and programming through a robust communications strategy, including campus-wide emails, global alerts on our campus course-instructional tool, and social media.

Elections are one point of entry for students to learn more and participate in the political process (Thomas et al. 2019). Traveling town halls in partnership with JMU’s Office of Residence Life is one of our most novel programs, in which political candidates physically travel to the common areas of three residence halls in one evening (Schwartz 2019). JMU Civic undergraduate democracy fellows facilitate the town halls and provide voter-registration opportunities for attendees. Students and community residents interact with candidates, ask unscripted questions, and learn about competing visions for addressing public issues. We also facilitated separate candidate town halls in 2020 with JMU Athletics and reached more than 250 student athletes, 100% of whom registered to vote. Trainings for resident advisors on how to facilitate difficult election conversations with hall residents is another partnership with our Office of Residence Life (Ong Whaley 2020).

Faculty, students, and community members also collaborate to create nonpartisan voter-education guides on candidates running

for office at every level—from the school board to the presidency. The guide includes candidate responses to student questions about public issues as well as information translated into three languages about how to register and vote. It is distributed across campus and in the community in partnership with a local civic news media outlet.

Our approach acknowledges the need for a foundational grasp of democratic principles, awareness of pressing public issues, and an understanding of how to engage political decision making across levels of government while also recognizing that meaningful engagement requires critical analytical and communication skills.

To measure participation in civic engagement activities during the previous semester, JMU Civic created the Civic Engagement Index, which was administered by CARS during Spring Assessment Days (Pastor et al. 2019). Responses collected from 897 students in Spring 2021 suggest that the efforts of JMU Civic to promote political participation in Fall 2020 were effective. The majority of students reported engaging in discussion on and off campus about political and social issues or the election; 65% reported receiving communications; and slightly less than half self-reported registering to vote, updating their voter registration, or asking JMU Civic questions about voting.

To understand how engagement in JMU Civic activities may have affected change over time in student political learning and civic engagement, we analyzed student engagement in activities. We categorized activities in two ways: (1) those that involved discussing political or social issues or being aware of political information; and (2) more participatory acts (e.g., attending town halls). Although most of the programming was offered only virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we found discuss/aware activities more common than participation activities: 55% of students participated in four or five discuss/aware activities compared to 68% who took part in none or one of the participation activities.

Although we cannot claim that student engagement in discuss/aware or participation activities has a causal effect,¹ we found that student engagement in activities was associated with positive change over time in many aspects of political learning and civic engagement.² Specifically, statistically significant results were obtained for 15 of the 29 subscales.³ Analysis of survey results support that student engagement in *either* type of activity may positively affect the following indicators on our subscale: politically engaged identity, internal political efficacy, political interest, expectations for future political activities, perceptions of their competence with respect to the skills of political influence/action, and perceptions of their own foundational political-knowledge levels.

We also found that involvement in discuss/aware activities but not participation activities may affect the following indicators on our subscales: students' moral identity, civic knowledge, and perception of how effective they perceive the political strategy of informing and collaborating with others to be. In addition, we found that student involvement in participation activities but not discuss/aware activities may increase both the extent to which students stay informed about political issues at the local level and

how effective they perceive the political strategy of bringing public or institutional attention to issues to be.

As higher education contemplates its role in strengthening democracy as part of its long-standing public mission, robust institutionalized approaches to curricular and co-curricular programming focused on educating and equipping students with

political knowledge, skills, capacity, and agency to address pressing public problems have the potential to benefit students' civic learning and democratic engagement. Our work shows that campuses can effectively build and implement programs to strengthen political learning and engagement as a means to strengthen our democracy, even as it is being overtly threatened across several critical fronts. ■

NOTES

1. Because students were not randomly assigned to participate in activities, we cannot claim that participation *caused* changes in political learning and civic engagement. When participation is associated with differences in change over time, participation *may have* caused the change, but we cannot state with certainty that participation caused the change.
2. Students twice completed 29 different subscales of political learning and civic engagement: as incoming first-year students in August 2019 and after they had completed 45 to 70 credit hours in February 2021. Two mixed-effects ANOVAs, one using discuss/aware activities as a factor and the other using participation activities as a factor, were conducted for each subscale. For all ANOVAs, the subscale served as the dependent variable and time, activity type, and their interaction served as factors. The majority of effect sizes were medium to large in size according to rules of thumb.
3. The subscales examined included those on the Political Engagement Project Survey (Beaumont et al. 2006) and others created specifically to address our campus-wide Civic Engagement Learning Outcomes. Sample sizes for these analyses ranged from 314 to 641.

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INTEGRATING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INTO SCHOLARLY REWARD SYSTEMS

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According to the American Democracy Project (2021), the definition of "civic engagement" is "working together to make a difference in the civic life of our communities." This includes nonpolitical activities (e.g., volunteerism) and political engagement (e.g., voting and activism). Both are important to a healthy government and civil society.

Because political scientists extensively study democracies worldwide, we know what productive citizen engagement looks like. Yet, many scholars are concerned about the state of American democracy. Too often, the decades-long emphasis on math and science education has forced out civics from the K–12 curriculum (Shapiro and Brown 2018; Winthrop 2020), with frightening results. According to the Annenberg Public Policy (2020) survey, most Americans have significant gaps in their civic knowledge. Moreover, too many Americans are duped by false information that spreads online and through social media (Wineberg et al. 2016). The lack of civic knowledge and the attractiveness of false conspiracy theories contributed to the widespread, erroneous belief that the 2020 presidential election was fraudulent as well as the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Clearly, promoting constructive civic engagement among our students is especially germane for political scientists. It is ironic, therefore, that in too many cases, this work is sidelined or trivialized—categorized as academic "service" rather than the more "serious" work of teaching and/or research.

Boyer's typology is an excellent vehicle that political science departments can use to fully integrate civic engagement into their faculty-evaluation standards.

Three decades ago, Boyer (1990) challenged the academy to expand its definition of research to incorporate a wider definition that allows for different types of scholarly contributions to the public good. Boyer's typology is an excellent vehicle that political science departments can use to fully integrate civic engagement into their faculty-evaluation standards.

Boyer's (1990) typology has four definitions of academic scholarship. The first definition, the scholarship of discovery, is what academics usually mean by "research." This is the creation of new

knowledge, pursuing knowledge for its own sake. Many political scientists already conduct research on civic engagement through their studies of political behavior. They can use their civic engagement work on campus to determine what motivates college students to become civically active and to write about their findings. In addition, the University of Michigan's Civic Leads project has a repository of datasets and publications that focus on young people, available for analysis and publication.

The second definition, the scholarship of integration, weaves together the insights and findings from the scholarship of discovery to develop new insights and interpretations. This work often is multidisciplinary, bringing together the work of academics in many fields to forge new understanding. Political scientists can synthesize civic engagement literature from multiple disciplines, including sociology, journalism, education, communication, and psychology. This integration surpasses the conventional literature review to develop new insights through analysis and synthesis, which can be the basis of standalone peer-reviewed publications, research-based best practices, and training modules.

The third definition, the scholarship of application (also known as the scholarship of engagement), asks how scholarly knowledge and insight can be used to solve "consequential problems" (Boyer 1990, 21). Faculty at land-grant universities award this type of work as part of the institutions' "extension" mission: that is, to translate scholarly knowledge for the public good. These activities may appear to be community or university service—for example, giving a speech to the local Rotary Club. However, to reach the level of Boyer's scholarship of application, these activities must be "serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research activities" (Boyer 1990, 22). How does the scholarship of application appear in practice? Think of civic engagement activities that are known to be efficacious, such as peer-to-peer voter outreach and student-led deliberative-democracy sessions. External validation is possible through national grant applications, peer reviews of action plans undertaken by various civic engagement nonprofits, assessment, and participation in professional-development conferences.

Boyer's (1990) fourth definition is the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), which is the application of research techniques to pedagogy to determine their impact on students and then sharing the results with other scholars. Scholars may integrate civic engagement exercises into existing courses and evaluate the impact using targeted assessments to determine their effectiveness. In addition, several other institution-wide tools exist to

measure changes in civic engagement, including the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement and the National Survey of Student Engagement. Moreover, we—as the academy—should understand that much of teaching and learning happens outside of the classroom. There are peer-reviewed outlets for the scholarship of teaching and learning, including *Journal of Political Science Education* and *College Teaching*, to name only two.

It is obvious that, nationwide, political scientists promote civic engagement on their campus, even without the extrinsic rewards of