

They did so in community college classrooms, small churches, public libraries, and bars. At one campaign stop in a Manchester pub, one of my students even competed with Representative Tulsi Gabbard in a push-up contest! The event went viral, with more than 300,000 online views and articles in *The Washington Post*, *CNN*, and other outlets. The diverse range of campaign events provided numerous benefits for students. By hearing from citizens across the state, they became familiar with the concerns, interests, and perspectives of a wide range of prospective voters. In addition, students gained an intimate understanding of the dynamics of the New Hampshire primary—an important and distinctive electoral tradition. Moreover, by experiencing the spectacle in person, they were better able to weigh the normative implications of both retail politics and New Hampshire's oversized role in the nomination process.

Candidate events were not the only focus of the trip. In fact, students spent much of their time (5 or 6 hours per day) actively working for the candidate of their choice. This part of the course *did* require advance planning. Long before we departed for New Hampshire, I asked each student to choose a candidate who was actively campaigning in the state. (Actually, I asked for three

In the limited time when students were not attending events and campaigning, the class spent time (about 6 hours total) at Saint Anselm College in Manchester. I rented classroom space at the College months in advance, which allowed us to host local political scientists for guest lectures and to reflect on our experiences in the state. Ultimately, we were visited by Professors Dante Scala and Andrew Smith of the University of New Hampshire and Professor Chris Galdieri of Saint Anselm. Spending time at Saint A's also allowed students to tour the College's Institute of Politics, which includes displays of campaign memorabilia and priceless photographs.

For various reasons, the decision to stay in Manchester for the entirety of our trip was a wise one. Not only were students able to walk from our hotel to their respective campaign offices, but our central location also allowed us to efficiently travel throughout the state. In their free time, students could easily explore downtown Manchester, which offered a range of affordable dining options and shops. One night, we ate dinner at the famous Red Arrow Diner, where bar stools are marked with plaques noting where past presidential hopefuls once sat (by chance, I sat on the Barack Obama stool). Finally, our proximity to Saint Anselm was a major

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because the field inevitably winnows before the primary occurs.) I then coordinated with the respective campaigns to facilitate mini-internships for each student. Although there is no formula for securing these opportunities, I relied on personal political contacts, candidate webpages, and online trackers (there are several) to identify New Hampshire campaign field staffers. I then contacted those individuals, offering to provide their office with almost two weeks of volunteer labor. Not surprisingly, all four campaigns in 2020 and five in 2016 were eager to work with us. We developed a daily volunteer schedule with the understanding that students were expected to complete any reasonable tasks on behalf of the campaign while they were working. Students were informed that their supervisor would provide an evaluation of their performance, which would be factored into their final grade.

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asset. Staying in downtown Manchester during the peak of campaign season was expensive, but it allowed us to save on transportation costs and provided students with a richer experience. In 2016, it also allowed us to meet several candidates in the hotel lobby!

Although my Retail Politics course was a fun experience, students were still critically evaluated. Final grades were based on reviews from campaign supervisors as well as a short quiz, a daily journal, and a final paper. For their journal, students were asked to thoughtfully reflect on their experiences with campaigns and at candidate events. For their paper, I asked them to consider the following question: “Based on your readings and time on the ground, is the New Hampshire primary good for American democracy?” Because each student had distinct experiences in the state, they offered a wide range of perspectives in developing and defending their arguments. It was clear that exposure to a new environment complemented and enriched their classroom lessons, which (in my view) is the primary function of experiential learning. ■

CREATING “CIVIC SENSE”: IMPLEMENTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COURSES IN ALL DISCIPLINES

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In August 2020, Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC), a small community college in Charlottesville, Virginia, launched a five-year Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)¹ titled

“Civic Sense: Engaging Students in the Civic Life of Their Communities” (Piedmont Virginia Community College 2019). Our goal is to ensure that “because of their experiences at PVCC, graduates will be more likely to be civically engaged.” Choosing the QEP topic was a college-wide endeavor. We began by surveying students, faculty, and staff for topic suggestions. Shared-governance organizations were consulted and then the president’s staff reduced the list to 10 topics. Finally, when the college community voted, civic engagement emerged as the top vote-getter. This article introduces the QEP and focuses its highlight: civic engagement courses.

The QEP’s vision is that “PVCC’s civic engagement efforts [will] build student leaders who have a strong commitment to democracy and diversity, and who engage in the civic life of their communities through collaborative, creative, and critical problem-solving” (Piedmont Virginia Community College 2019).

Several new initiatives were introduced in the QEP, including a voter module in student-development courses, additional voter-registration and education efforts, a civic engagement conference, and increased emphasis on deliberative dialogue. The highlight of “Civic Sense” is the requirement that students must pass a civic engagement course to graduate.

Civic engagement courses are offered in every degree program, providing students a sustained engagement with a public problem or issue. Engaging with issues of public consequence in the context of their major or discipline provides both broader and more in-depth experiences for students. Additionally, teaching civic engagement across all disciplines offers powerful opportunities for students to become immersed in critical thinking while applying course curricula to a public issue (Stephenson 2010). At PVCC, we chose to not create separate civic engagement courses but instead integrated it into existing class structures. Additional credits are not required for graduation.

Each civic engagement course must include a project that constitutes at least 25% of the course grade. Students research the causes of a public problem related to their discipline and consider how it affects their community. They use critical inquiry, analysis, multiple perspectives, and reasoning to understand the problem and identify solutions. By focusing on their major, students understand that they have a personal stake in the issue. Exposing students to current and important issues within their discipline helps them to perceive themselves as part of a broader community. By considering diverse ideas, they identify strengths and weaknesses in potential solutions. By considering a plan to solve the problem, they see themselves as part of the solution. As

in addition to class time and homework. Faculty members are not prohibited from using this pedagogy, but it is not encouraged.

During the implementation process, some faculty members expressed concerns about integrating civic engagement into their courses. Issues ranged from “I don’t talk politics in my class” to “I have a very structured, content-heavy course and can’t add a thing” to “I don’t know how to teach civic engagement”—all valid issues.

In response, the college established a robust training program that faculty members are required to complete before teaching their first civic engagement class. The training begins with a discussion of the difference between politics and partisanship. Students engage in public issues that often are political but not partisan. Civic engagement classes provide an opportunity to debate different ideas, but the goal is not to indoctrinate students in one ideology. The faculty training clarifies program goals and civic engagement pedagogy and defines PVCC’s civic engagement course requirements, after which faculty members workshop ideas for their courses. Many realized that they already were doing civic engagement and did not need to include additional material; rewriting assignments was sufficient.

PVCC’s director of library services and the QEP director are available to faculty who need help, and the Betty Sue Jessup library creates LibGuides and research guides to help students with their projects. Faculty members also have the opportunity to embed a librarian in their course so that students have easy access to library assistance. In fact, PVCC’s library is a major reason for the success of our civic engagement courses.

Faculty members report that adding the civic engagement component to their courses enriches their teaching. For example, general biology is a highly standardized course across the Virginia Community College System and, more broadly, has similar content for the first semester of the college-level biology undergraduate curricula. Without compromising the required content, our faculty member structured the existing course around the public problem of antibiotic resistance and has since become one of our primary advocates.

Information technology students analyze conspiracy theories; political science students research and write a nonpartisan voter guide; introduction to psychology students research and write a paper on the psychology of race; and physics students use the principles of physics to evaluate automobile-safety issues.

At PVCC, math department faculty members are the main supporters of civic engagement courses. In fact, the department offers more civic engagement sections of math than any other discipline. Assignments include mathematical analysis of the

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they reflect on the assignment, students discuss their thoughts about and analysis of their research and experience. A reflection should be a critical analysis of the problem that enables students to envision possible alternative solutions.

At PVCC, civic engagement is not service learning. The college once had a service-learning program, but it was not successful. Our students are mostly first generation and have jobs (often full-time) and families. Many do not have time for service-learning projects

electoral college and redistricting and hypothesis testing to analyze statistics on racial profiling, family and city budgets, and automobile financing.

The college has at least one civic engagement course in each major, and multiple courses are offered in some majors. PVCC faculty continue to express interest in teaching civic engagement, and we expect the number of courses offered to increase quickly. Student comments show a high level of satisfaction with the

courses (Piedmont Virginia Community College 2020). The following representative comments indicate that after taking a civic engagement course, students see a more significant role for themselves in the world:

- I wish everyone could take this class and understand it should not be a “me or you” world but a “we” world.
- Biology means something to me now, in a way I can apply to my life and understand the world around me better.
- The projects got us to use statistics to ask questions about our society and community. In doing so, issues of social justice inherently emerged. Participating in the projects left us better informed and, yes, potentially likely to take that learning into the community.
- This project really got me considering how, as a responsible citizen, it is my duty to work toward finding solutions to issues and participating in a community organization.
- It helped me to look at a large-scale, nationwide issue on a more local scale. This really put into perspective things I can do now to help in getting this issue solved locally. Fixing an issue locally is a beneficial way to help get the issue solved across the nation as well as bringing more awareness to the topic.

The first year of civic engagement courses at PVCC was more successful than we had hoped. Anecdotal evidence indicates that faculty and students are enthusiastic about the program. Civic engagement courses build civic skills, knowledge, and experience; encourage deep and substantial participation in a discipline-specific issue; and encourage critical thinking. Therefore, civic engagement courses will help PVCC to meet the QEP goal of “[building] student leaders who have a strong commitment to democracy and diversity, and who engage in the civic life of their communities through collaborative, creative, and critical problem-solving” (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges 2020). The civic engagement course experience develops students’ confidence in their ability to make a difference in their community and to become more active citizens. ■

NOTE

1. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (2020) requires colleges to submit a five-year QEP during the reaffirmation of accreditation process. “It reflects and affirms a commitment to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue that the institution considers important to improving student learning outcomes and/or student success.

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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In Fall 2019, the California State Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law Assembly Bill (AB) 963, also known as the Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Act (SCVEA) (Petrie-Norris 2019). This Act built on prior state legislation in 2003, 2007, 2014, and 2016 that focused on student voter-registration efforts (Warden-Washington 2019). Moreover, this Act dovetails well with the California State Board of Education’s new State Seal for Civic Engagement established in 2020 (California Department of Education 2020), which was mandated by AB 24 in 2017 (Eggman 2017).

The Act establishes that the Student Civic and Voter Empowerment Program will be conducted by the Secretary of State in partnership with the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California.

Among the several requirements of the Act, it mandates that each campus of the California Community Colleges and the California State University and requests that each campus of the University of California:

- Distribute, in consultation with the Secretary of State, campus-wide emails to all students with specified voting- and election-related dates and information and include specified dates on all print and online academic calendars.
- Post on social media reminders to students of specified voter-related dates and information.
- Designate one person per campus as the Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator with specified responsibilities, including development of a Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan. The first version of the legislation specifically called for each campus to designate one faculty member, staff member, or administrator as the Civic Engagement and Voter Director; however, this requirement was removed in subsequent versions.

At Cuyamaca College, we formed a work group; recruited students, faculty, staff, and administrators; and launched a Civic Engagement Leadership Program in Spring 2021. The following sections describe the process for implementing the SCVEA at the local level at Cuyamaca.

About Cuyamaca College

Cuyamaca College is a two-year community college located in East San Diego County, California. The college is one of two campuses in the Grossmont–Cuyamaca Community College District. The district is governed by a board of five locally elected trustees. In Fall 2020, the college had more than 8,800 students enrolled. Table 1 lists the race and ethnicity of the student population.

Formation of a Work Group

After reading the Academic Calendar Committee’s Agenda and Minutes, on October 2, 2020, I contacted our Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Jessica Robinson, to inquire about AB 963 and the college’s designated coordinator. She connected me with Dr. Lauren Vaknin, the Dean of Student Affairs.