

(i.e., four to eight contact hours). This is particularly achievable if students engage in awareness activities and conversations before beginning the partnership.

### *Effective Short Partnerships*

Instructors facilitate partnerships by selecting an appropriate partner organization, working with the organization's staff to determine their needs, and matching those needs with student capacity. Appropriate partner organizations are those that instructors know well and preferably have volunteered for or interacted with for some time. Instructors who are familiar with their partner organization can work to convey essential information about it during the course. Doing so limits the amount of oversight required by partner organizations, which may lack the capacity to onboard students—especially if they are involved in only short-term projects.

Effective short partnership projects are related to course content and have tangible, flexible outputs. Flexible outputs are key because students do not have time to re-do project work during short partnerships. Developing educational training, assisting with event planning, designing surveys, and creating how-to guides are examples of potential partnership projects. Krain and Nurse (2004) described a short partnership in a course on human rights in which students worked with residents at a juvenile detention facility to decorate theater masks and to build community. This project was effective in part because the mask-decorating activity had clear goals but flexible outputs.

As with any group project, it is best to provide students with opportunities to complete both group work and individual reflection assignments. Individual reflections are an excellent means for asking students to connect what they learned during the project to course themes and to assess specific learning outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

Instructors who are interested in integrating civic engagement into their courses can choose to implement a wide range of short activities applicable across subfields. I recommend starting by assessing students' civic engagement involvement and knowledge at the beginning of the course, asking them to complete one or more awareness activities, and collecting their reflections on the activities to ensure that they meet their stated goals. Instructors then can choose to include additional civic engagement components as they feel comfortable doing so, starting with awareness activities and adding conversations and partnerships.

In my experience, students state that civic engagement activities are high-impact course practices that are particularly good teaching tools and ultimately are fun and meaningful. As political science curricula evolve to emphasize career and skill development, civic engagement is an excellent way to help students apply political science to address local community problems. ■

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### **UNDERGRADUATES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE FOR THE FIRST-IN-THE-NATION PRIMARY**

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In 2016 and 2020, I led travel courses to Manchester, New Hampshire, where students participated in the state's first-in-the-nation presidential primary. For almost two weeks in January, 10 undergraduates (on each trip) attended campaign events, volunteered for candidates, and heard from local presidential-elections experts. Although extra hats and gloves were required, students benefited from a challenging, memorable, and fruitful experiential-learning course.

Eager to do well in early contests, presidential candidates flood New Hampshire months before the state's primary. Events are held in small venues such as school gymnasiums, fire halls, pubs, and coffee shops. In a small state like New Hampshire, every vote is magnified, meaning that candidates place great value on one-on-one meetings with voters to win their support. This "retail" politics is a distinct departure from the large rallies and television advertising seen in much of the country before national elections.

History suggests that performing well in the New Hampshire primary can be pivotal. Since 1972, five of 11 Democratic winners (in competitive contests) became the party's presidential nominee; on the Republican side, seven of nine winners did so. Even candidates who do not win the state (e.g., Bill Clinton in 1992) can generate momentum for their campaign by overperforming expectations.

Because the final weeks of campaigning align with Randolph–Macon College's January term, I designed a travel course whereby students would visit New Hampshire for almost two weeks to actively participate in the primary process. Students were responsible for the cost of the trip (about \$3,500), which covered flights, lodging, travel in New Hampshire, a food allowance, and other small expenses. Coordinating a travel course is always a formidable task; in this case, it also required some faith. Candidate events in New Hampshire typically are scheduled with little advance notice. As a result, I could not develop a detailed itinerary before the group departed by air from Virginia. In conversations with colleagues in New Hampshire, however, I was assured that such events would be ubiquitous on our arrival. To ensure that the group was prepared when candidates did schedule events, I found a day charter company that could transport us around the state on short notice. Because the course was limited to only 10 students, we had a wider range of transport options available (e.g., large vans).

As expected, candidate events were abundant. In 2016 and 2020, the group saw eight and six candidates, respectively. Students were not merely observers at these events; rather, they posed questions to candidates and often met them afterwards. Students challenged presidential hopefuls on student debt, the minimum wage, electability, the South China Sea, and healthcare policy.

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

*In 2020, students worked for Governor Bill Weld, Senator Elizabeth Warren, then-Mayor Pete Buttigieg, and then-Vice President Joe Biden. Their tasks included canvassing Manchester-area neighborhoods, making hundreds of phone calls, helping to organize field offices, assisting with events, and distributing literature throughout the state.*

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.

In 2020, students worked for Governor Bill Weld, Senator Elizabeth Warren, then-Mayor Pete Buttigieg, and then-Vice President Joe Biden. Their tasks included canvassing Manchester-area neighborhoods, making hundreds of phone calls, helping to organize field offices, assisting with events, and distributing literature throughout the state. Students working with Senator Warren were even asked to lead a volunteer training for the candidate—on just their fourth day on the job! In fact, in almost all cases, students became immersed in their work with the campaigns. In both 2016 and 2020, some students continued to work for their candidates after our return to Virginia, and several reported that they had identified electoral politics as a potential career path. Their experience with a presidential campaign—even for a short time—provided a boost to their political resumé and their expertise.

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)<sup>1</sup> titled