

How to Take Action for Civic and Political Engagement

An Action Agenda

1. Colleges and universities should educate for political participation.
2. The federal government should expand its funding for such civic engagement courses and programs at colleges and universities, rather than contracting funding.
3. High schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities should adopt teaching civic and political engagement as a goal in their mission statements.
4. Assessment at the campus level is needed to determine how well universities are complying with the federal mandate to offer students voter registration forms and how well educators are assisting students in getting registered to vote at their campus address as well as their home address.
5. Institutions of higher learning need to comply with the federal mandate for an education program pertaining to the US Constitution on September 17 of each year.
6. State and local governments should be encouraged to use students to assist in the administration of elections, especially as paid poll watchers and election judges.
7. Faculty should be encouraged to be politically engaged themselves, model that engagement in the classroom, and bring real-world knowledge of politics and government into the class.
8. APSA should adopt a code of ethics similar to that of social workers, which recognizes the benefits of faculty civic engagement.
9. Students should be encouraged to work with local governments, especially in smaller communities, to provide information on best practices.
10. It is the duty of political science faculty to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and tools to become informed advocates.

11. Civic and political engagement courses should be designed for cognitive and affective learning, along with effective service to the community.
12. Civic education should be encouraged at the high school level, especially those courses which already use simulations or service-learning components.
13. More opportunities like Model UN, Mock Trial, Congressional Debate, and National Issues Conventions should be developed.
14. Multiple courses should be created at the campus level with different goals to create distinctive learning opportunities and a ladder of experience in service-learning and civic and political engagement.
15. Reflection is more difficult than often recognized, but it is essential to teaching political engagement.
16. If civic and political engagement is to receive recognition in the profession, gain support on campuses and at various levels of government, and become widely adopted in a more complete and integrated program, such as a minor degree and certificate programs, then it must be rigorously assessed by both qualitative and quantitative methods.