

Civic Values and the College Student

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Introduction

The world of COVID-19 has presented us with challenges we knew existed but now as hurtling toward us at a speed that is unprecedented. Stable housing, food on the table, keeping the lights on and other critical facets of surviving in America are being challenged.

The issue boils down to the people we have in charge and the ways in which they fail to protect our special interests. As young people we are primed to influence the ways in which we can play a more active role in our society and making sure we retire the politicians who only seek to line their own pockets and the infrastructure within colleges itself that prevent transformative change from happening in order to meet student needs.



Civic Engagement

1. Really underwhelming emphasis on this for those entering college.
2. More people need to go beyond voting for institutional change.
3. Filling out the Census, attending elected official town halls, joining your local community board and watching legislative hearings on land use, higher education, voting, immigration, etc are crucial. Civic Engagement means paying attention to the whole picture of government processes.
4. Generating change requires ALL of us.
5. America is a society in which we can raise challenging questions in order to ask deeper questions about what our country prioritizes and finds necessary to move forward.
6. [The New York City Commission on Civic Engagement](#) and Vote.org have excellent resources on getting more involved in upcoming elections.

Why is voting so important?



“The only reason why someone would work hard to take away your vote, is because they know what it can do for you”



Legislative, Non-Profit and Political Campaigns

1. Change happens when we go into arenas that aren't built for us. That is how we take back our power and create change that is lasting.
2. In the Legislative world, the staff an elected official has is just as crucial as the elected official themselves. If people of color join a legislative office, they bring the experience and the issues that can help an elected official do their job better.
3. In the nonprofit world, there's more of an emphasis on helping people in need. Each nonprofit has their own speciality and seek to provide aid to those who need it.
4. Political Campaigns is the stepping stone into helping power a candidate to victory and can serve as a career possibility.

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Spotting Misinformation

- President Trump has lied repeatedly about what his administration is doing.
- Contrary to what he says, Americans can get a felony if they vote twice. If you vote in-person but filled out an absentee ballot, your absentee ballot will be invalidated but your in-person vote counts.
- Q-Anon is a conspiracy group that spreads lies and deceives the American public.
- America is managing the COVID-19 situation worse than other countries.
- Dr. Fauci is a medical professional and has the authority to talk about the public health crisis and American response to it.
- Trusted news sources are NPR, CNN, MSNBC, NBC News, AMNY, etc. Distinguishing a blog (based off of personal opinions and viewpoints) is so important.

Student Activism

For the past ten years, CUNY has steadily become more and more expensive to attend due to systemic cuts in Higher Education.

Many students have issues with affording their education and living expenses that come with living in a city like New York. Your first connection should be with your local student government. Here are some movements on campus that contend with elevating the student voice in the issues.

University Student Senate

CUNY Rising

CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities

Free CUNY

Professional Staff Congress

New York Public Interest Research Group

CUNY Votes PSC CUNY CAP

CUNY Citizenship NOW! CUNY DREAMers CUNY Clear Project

Follow the City University of New York Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez

CUNY Struggle

HEALTHY CUNY TEDxCUNY

Priorities for 2020

- **The Census**- The Trump Administration has been intentionally sabotaging the count because they benefit when our communities don't get the resources and congressional representatives that would be in Congress fighting for us in Washington.
- **Voting**- Requesting your ballot as soon as possible is a critical priority once you fill it out, you can drop off the application at your local Board of Elections and when you receive your ballot, you can also drop it off at a polling site or your BOE. Follow NYC & CUNY Votes for the procedure and keep up to date on voting procedures and keeping track of deadlines.
- Redistricting is the process in which municipalities take into account the population and redraw legislative and congressional representation lines.:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BccbUg-2iN4>

Census

- The census is critical to ensuring we have a proper count of everyone in America, whether you have documented or undocumented.
- This helps allocate resources to make sure our infrastructure is properly funded, that we have the right amount of Congressional representatives and provide money for social services we all use.



For more information please visit 2020Census.gov to fill out the Census and learn more about what is at stake if there is a low count of the population.

Wrap Up

- Why is the Census so important to participate in?
- What are we voting for in the upcoming General Election?
- Have you ever worked in political campaigns?
- Do you know the consequences of not voting?
- Have you made a plan to vote?
- Are you aware of voting deadlines? Have you viewed your sample ballot?
- What does being a young person in today's world mean for you?
- What are some barriers you face that you wish the government would work on?
- How do you feel about taking on responsibility outside of your college to ensure that the world we moving toward is humane and equal for everyone?
- What will you do after this presentation to ensure that more students get involved to fight for a common future?