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Embedding Engagement in a Political Science Course: Community College and University Students and the Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program

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Abstract

Many scholars have recently emphasized the relationship between higher education and civic engagement and they have noted that colleges and universities can and should play a crucial role in fostering a sense of citizenship among their students. Two groups of students (one made up of community college students and the other from a public university) participated in a Help America Vote College Poll Worker (HAVCP) Program designed to develop the civic agency of students and to provide them with the skills to act effectively as citizens in a democracy. As part of the program, the students enrolled in a one-credit Civic Engagement and U.S. Elections course. The students also participated in pre- and post-tests of their attitudes toward political, civic, and social engagement and their likelihood of future engagement activities. The results of the student surveys and their qualitative responses indicated that, for both groups, their attitudes toward political and social engagement were positively affected by their poll worker experiences. These results seemed to indicate that political service coupled with an academic course that focused on the history and nature of civic engagement could be used to effectively increase the students' sense of efficacy and their willingness to participate in certain engagement activities.

Civic Engagement: An Introduction and Literature Review

Many social scientists have previously researched and written about the gradual but persistent erosion and potential collapse of U.S. civil society. Notable intellectuals such as Robert Bellah, Paul Loeb, Harry Boyte, and others have theorized about the social causes and consequences of the decline in community participation. Robert Putnam, in *Bowling Alone* (2000), documented the decreased stock of social capital and increased social disconnection evidenced in the contemporary United States. Putnam concluded that Americans suffered from a “civic malaise” that was particularly acute among undergraduate college students (Putnam, 2000: 15). More recently, Charles Quigley (2011) described the problem confronting the nation as a “civic recession” (p. 4).

Since Putnam’s work was first published, numerous other scholars have examined the legitimacy of that claim. These researchers argue that Putnam did not adequately distinguish between distinct categories of civic behavior. For example, Zukin et al. (2006:189) challenged Putnam’s findings in regards to younger population groups and argued that the youth of the U.S. demonstrate greater levels of involvement in charitable activities and higher levels of voluntarism than older Americans. Further research has uncovered a broad range of areas in which civic engagement among youths has been underestimated or neglected altogether.

Russell Dalton (2008) confronted this issue in *The Good Citizen*. He found that the 1980s generation and Generation X were more likely to demonstrate engaged citizenship than the duty-based citizenship that was more commonly found in the Pre-World War II and Baby Boom generations (p. 38). The difference, he explained, was that duty-based citizenship included the traditional forms of political participation such as voting, paying taxes, and obeying laws. He noted that, “these norms reflect the formal obligations, responsibilities, and rights of citizenship” (Ibid). Engaged citizenship, on the other hand, related to one’s concern for others and the community and having the capacity to “understand the opinion of others” and “a moral or empathetic element of citizenship” (p. 28). Thus, he found the younger age groups displayed a greater “concern for social rights and the protection of the disadvantaged” (p. 91). Dalton concluded that “these orientations should promote tolerance” (Ibid and 226). These generational differences may affect how both groups respond to each other as they interact in community settings. Those opportunities to interact are increasing as the 2011 Higher Education Research Institute Report (hereafter cited as HERI) found that, contrary to Putnam’s pessimistic view of student engagement, student involvement in service learning and volunteering increased for the college entering class of 2011.

Moreover, Putnam’s conclusion regarding the overall decline of social capital ignored the complexity of the “language of civic engagement” that includes “a diverse assortment of goals” including, but not limited to, citizenship, community engagement, democratic engagement, and public work (Saltmarsh and Hartley, 2011: 8; see also Jacoby et al., 2009). Given the diversity of concepts within the field of engagement, it is important for any study to clarify the specific areas of interest within the broad field of engagement. The particular focus of this study is the attitudes of college students toward political, civic, and social engagement.¹

In the last decade, the renewed emphasis on engagement in all its forms has led to a “growing ferment” among colleges and universities to address civic engagement and public work (Boyte and Kari, 2000: 50). Additional strategies for encouraging civic engagement at institutions of higher education have been widely debated by Ehrlich (2000) and others. These advocates believe it is possible to cultivate a sense of civic engagement among specific populations, including college students, and that the collegiate environment offers a powerful potential source for encouraging community engagement and inculcating students with a sense of civic responsibility (e.g., Colby et al., 2007: 286-287).

The authors of the recent *Crucible Moment Report* (2012) agreed with that assessment; colleges and universities must do more to impart a sense of civic responsibility in their students. The renewed emphasis on civic engagement in higher education would include: the promotion of a “civic ethos” across the campus, a requirement of “civic literacy” for every student, the integration of “civic inquiry” in every major and program of study, and the

encouragement of “civic action” during the college years and beyond (p. 15). The authors also called upon colleges and universities to undertake five “essential actions” that include “reclaim[ing] and reinvest[ing] in the fundamental civic and democratic mission of schools and of all sectors within higher education” and “expand[ing] the number of robust, generative civic partnerships and alliances, locally, nationally, and globally to address common problems...” (p. vi). However, the report failed to indicate exactly how colleges and universities ought to accomplish these goals. At two Connecticut community colleges in 2004 and one state university in 2010, I attempted to create a program that would infuse a course with a civic engagement component in the hope that the students might also develop a sense of civic agency and a commitment to civic action. The results were surprising.

The Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program: An Overview

In the fall of 2004, Asnuntuck Community College (ACC) and Middlesex Community College (MXCC) were awarded a federal grant from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission’s “Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program” with the purpose of enlisting college students as poll worker volunteers in the 2004 presidential election. While that was the primary goal, a secondary research objective (specific to the grant proposal) was to determine the effects of participation in the Help America Vote College Program on the likelihood of college students’ future political, civic, and social engagement.

Approximately 64 student participants were recruited from the two community colleges and were required to register for a one-credit “U.S. Elections and Civic Engagement” course that required them to study the concept of civic engagement through readings, discussions, and written work. The students were also required to attend training sessions held by the surrounding communities and to serve as poll workers on Election Day. Finally, prior to their work on Election Day, participants were required to complete a survey that asked a number of demographic and political, civic, and social engagement questions.

Following the town orientations and weekly classroom seminar sessions, the student participants served as poll workers for the 2004 presidential election.

Two weeks after the election, participants took a post-participation survey. Again, the goal of the survey was to try to determine if participation in the Help America Vote College Program had any effect on the students’ political, civic and social participation in the future. These early surveys contained questions adapted from and modeled after the Roper Social and Political Trends survey and the General Social Survey (GSS). Questions were selected specifically for their utility in measuring past engagement and the likelihood of future engagement.

In the fall of 2010, Central Connecticut State University (CCSU)—a four-year university—was also awarded a HAVCP grant. Approximately 40 students from CCSU were recruited to participate in a similar program to that of the community college students.² These students were enrolled in a one-credit course entitled “U.S. Elections and Civic Engagement.” The syllabus for this course included content similar to that utilized in 2004 at the community colleges and required students to read numerous articles related to civic and electoral engagement. The CCSU students were also required to serve as poll workers on Election Day as part of the HAVCP grant, and took both pre-participation and post-participation” closed-ended survey questionnaires. As in 2004, the pre-participation survey asked a series of questions to gauge the extent of students’ prior: 1) community-based political and civic participation; 2) online political and civic participation; and 3) social and leisure participation.³ After their experience serving as poll workers, and upon completion of the accompanying course, students were administered a post-participation survey consisting of questions designed to measure the likelihood of students’ future participation across those same three measures.

In addition, the 2010 CCSU students were required to submit answers to a pre-participation open-ended questionnaire asking them to identify their expectations of the impending poll worker experience. Then, shortly after the election, they were required to submit their answers to another open-ended questionnaire asking them to

recount and reflect upon their experiences as poll workers. Finally, the students wrote a lengthy reflection paper about their experiences as poll workers at the conclusion of the semester. Through the use of these varied methodological techniques, it is possible to construct a more holistic picture of students' experiences as poll workers and the change in their attitudes toward civic and political engagement as a result of their participation in the Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program.

The Findings

Quantitative Survey Results

The pre-tests indicated that the four-year college students roughly mirrored the community college students in their prior levels of political, civic and social engagement. For example, both groups displayed a marked lack of involvement with their local communities and civic organizations and a general lack of interest in democratic processes, including voting. Additionally, both groups demonstrated similar levels of social engagement, particularly in regards to eating at a restaurant and attending a sporting event. Thus, the pre-tests showed the two groups to be roughly equivalent in their civic attitudes and level of political, civic, and social engagement.⁴

Political engagement measures. The post-tests of the community college students demonstrated that students who participated in the Help America Vote College Program were more likely to express an intention to engage in select political activities in the future. For example, the HAVCP participants were 50% more likely to work for a political party in the next year, attend a political rally, and vote in a local and a national election than they had been before participating. In some cases, however, the gains were more modest. The community college students were only 33% more likely after the HAVCP to sign a petition. On a host of other political issues, however, there was no significant difference between the participants' pre- and post-tests. The community college students showed no measureable difference in their likelihood to run for political office or to discuss politics with friends or family members after their participation in the program.

The results from the 2010 cohort of the CCSU Help America Vote College Poll Worker participants' surveys indicate that across multiple measures, the college student participants also showed a greater likelihood to engage in certain political activities after their participation in the semester-long program. For example, the college students mirrored the results of the community college students in that they were also 50% more likely to vote in a local election and vote in a national campaign and 33% more likely to sign a petition. However, the university students indicated that they were only 33% more likely to engage in some of the political activities supported by the community college students.

These activities included their likelihood to work for a political party and to attend a political rally, speech, or organized protest.

On some measures, however, the university students did display a much greater likelihood to engage in certain political activities than their community college counterparts. The university students were 50% more likely to write to Congress and to write to a local newspaper than they were before participating in the program, while the community college students' attitudes towards such behaviors were relatively unchanged between their pre-tests and post-tests. The difference between the two groups may have been a function of the difference academically between the two groups. The community college students represented many different programs on campus. In some cases, they were students who had no intention of pursuing a four-year degree because their programs were largely vocational tracks. Many of the students in the university group, on the other hand, had majors in the social sciences, including political science, criminal justice, sociology, and economics. Thus, the university students may have been more predisposed to political engagement even if they had been so engaged in the past. Regardless of their

academic differences, there were positive results for the participants of the HAVCP at both the community colleges and the university.

There may also be additional avenues of political engagement that will be of greater interest to younger age groups. In order to determine if the college students might be politically engaged through alternative venues, a lengthy series of questions related to online political and civic participation activities were added to the survey instrument in 2010.⁵ On those measures, the university students' responses revealed the importance of these new avenues of engagement. After serving as poll workers, the university students noted that they were 33% more likely to seek political information on a social networking site, write about political or social issues in their own or someone else's blog, start or join a political group or cause on a social networking site, and post political news on a social networking site. Moreover, they were 50% more likely to post pictures online about a political or social issue, post video online about a political or social issue, contact a national, state, or local government official about an issue, sign an online petition, and to make a political contribution online.

Given all of these positive results, there were still a few items on which the university students showed no or only an insignificant amount of change in the likelihood of their future engagement in the cyber world. The online political items on which the university students' likelihood did not significantly increase were participating in an "e-chat room" or online discussion forum focused on a community issue, social cause, or political cause; completing an online survey/opinion poll related to a community issue, a social cause, or a political cause; posting comments about a political or social issue; and "friending" a candidate on a social networking site.

Finally, the survey findings suggest that the HAVCP program may have more than a passing effect on voting behaviors. For example, while only 47% of the university students eligible to vote in the last local election did so, in the post- participation surveys, 83% of those students said that they were "very likely" to participate in their next local election. Moreover, only 33% of the CCSU student participants eligible to vote in the last national election did so, but in the post- participation surveys, 75% of those students indicated that they were "very likely" to vote in the next national election. These results mirror those found in 2004. Only 20% of those eligible to vote in the previous local election had done so in 2004 but 61% of those students said they were "very likely" to vote in the next local election. Likewise, only 17% of those students eligible to vote in the 2002 election cast a ballot, but 63% of those community college HAVCP participants indicated that they were "very likely" to vote in the next national election. Since low voter turnout amongst young voters has been a consistent concern of political scientists for some time, one solution may be to encourage youth participation in election processes as a way of encouraging their subsequent electoral involvement.

Civic Engagement Measures. The community college HAVCP participants also indicated a greater propensity to engage in certain civic activities within their own communities. For example, after participating in HAVCP, the community college students were 50% more likely to attend a public meeting on town or school affairs, serve as an officer of a club or organization, attend a meeting of a club or organization, to volunteer their time for a local public or private organization, and to donate blood than they were before participating.

Interestingly, the 2010 cohort of university participants' results on those same five civic measures were not as encouraging. The university students displayed no greater likelihood to engage in any of those activities except for in their willingness to serve as an officer for a local club or organization and to donate blood. But, in the case of the former activity, the university students were only 33% more likely to serve as an officer for a club or organization. Only on the measure of blood donation did the university student responses reflect those of the community college students. In regards to the three other measures mentioned above, the university students showed little to no change in the likelihood of their future involvement in such activities. One possible explanation for the large divergence in civic participation may be that the university students do not yet feel rooted in a community. Many of these students, though not all, live on campus and thus they may not see themselves as members of the larger community outside of the campus setting and cannot envision involving themselves in local matters or public affairs.

In contrast, the community college students are all commuters who already reside in a neighborhood, and, therefore, more readily view themselves as important actors in the civic life of their community.⁶

Social Engagement Measures. While the results from the civic measures were only partially encouraging, on social measures, the results for both groups were very revealing. The ACC/MXCC students displayed a 50% increased likelihood to attend a religious service and to visit an art museum or gallery.⁷ The ACC/MXCC students were also 33% more likely to attend a social function at a house of worship, a sporting event, and to attend a bar or nightclub.

However, the community college students demonstrated no significantly increased likelihood to visit friends for dinner or an evening of activities, to have friends in for dinner or an evening of activities, to go to the movies, or to attend a live concert or theater production.⁸

Similarly, the CCSU participants were also 50% more likely to visit an art museum or gallery. They were also 33% more likely to go to the movies, to attend a live concert or theater production, and to attend a social function at a house of worship. Unlike their community college counterparts, the university students expressed no significantly greater interest in attending a bar or nightclub, a sporting event, having friends in for dinner or an evening of activities, or visiting friends for dinner or an evening of activities. Why would students be more likely to engage in some of these social activities after participating in the program? The qualitative statements made by both groups of participants bolster and help to explain some of the quantitative results provided above.

Qualitative Responses of Participants

Both student populations expressed anxiety prior to their service on Election Day. In some cases, this nervousness was related to their concern about their ability to change the communities' perceptions of younger poll workers.

Some students believed that they would be viewed differently at the polling station than the other poll workers and they saw their role as one of defying or changing the public's perceptions about themselves and their peers. One CCSU student commented that:

I am also a little nervous that people, instead of being receptive to why I am there, may be judgmental and feel that I am out of place or do not belong; that if I didn't have to be there, I would not, or that if I was not there to do this, then maybe I also would not be voting. If that is the perceived image of me and my generation, I hope to attempt to remedy it slightly throughout the course of the day.

Another student, who heard demeaning comments at a town training session, wrote:

I want to make a good impression at my site, because during the training there were a lot of cheap shots taken at "the youth." I did not appreciate the comments, as they were generalizations and did not directly apply to me. So, the best way to change people's opinions is to show them something different from what they've seen in the past.

Many of the students at both institutions, in class discussions and assignments, appeared very aware that they were responsible for improving the image of their generation and these students wanted to successfully portray their age cohort as one that was not indifferent to politics or disengaged from the community. In short, they wanted to demonstrate, as Dalton phrased it, that they were "good citizens" too.

A content analysis of students' post-participation qualitative comments, however, revealed several consequences as a result of their participation in the program. For example, one of the themes that emerged was that of a renewed

sense of community—or the creation of a new one. For example, a student noted that her experience as a poll worker had brought her closer to her community:

Most voters were surprised that a college student was devoting time to working the election because most college students are not involved in their community. After working with these people from the community at the polls and seeing who they are, I most definitely felt connected to my own community...

Many others echoed this sentiment. They were excited about the people they had just met or those they had not seen for quite some time. As one of the 2004 community college students noted, "I met a lot of people I haven't seen in years...." A university student commented that she was "interacting with people that I normally wouldn't interact with". That CCSU student found the day's interactions enjoyable, recalling, "I was sitting with older women at the voting table and I enjoyed hearing their stories". These comments from the 2010 participants are quite similar to comments made by the 2004 community college students. One 2004 student poll worker said that she had a positive experience listening to the "senior citizens' opinions on college age people working in politics." A 2010 student summarized the experiences of many students:

Some of the other poll workers looked down upon me at the beginning because I overheard them talking about how teenagers never listen, but as the day progressed we warmed up to each other and everything went smoothly. I really enjoyed talking to the [older] workers and I had a really great experience. I will definitely be working at the polls next November.

The student's comment about returning to work at the polls is particularly important because it is one thing to say that you enjoyed your experiences with the elderly well enough but it is much more significant to say that the experience was so enjoyable that you would do it again. The vast majority of students from both groups indicated a willingness to serve again. The willingness to serve again may also be a function of the new relationships the students developed at the polling stations. Benson and Brown have shown that co-worker support is important for perseverance with younger age workers (Benson and Brown, 2011, p.1858). Clearly, there was an important social aspect to the students' Election Day service. They had to work with the same group of people for more than 14 hours. During that time, they developed social connections that may have affected their likelihood to engage in subsequent social activities. One university student noted, "In between rush hours, I would talk to the elderly woman sitting next to me, and now my grandparents owe her thanks because this weekend I am going to visit them."

The second major theme identified in the post-participation qualitative comments was the importance of voting—both on a personal level (for the participants) and on a more general level for all Americans. In other words, they viewed their service as promoting electoral participation. One 2010 student said, "Voting became much less scary, and I see myself voting in the future".

Watching young people vote was also a highlight that many students stressed. Moreover, both groups of students took pride in assisting new voters. A community college student noted that one positive event of the day was when he got to witness "an elderly woman from India vote for her first time here in America. She was very happy." A CCSU student considered the potential long-term benefits of the program:

Most young adults at this age that I know aren't very fond of voting or getting involved with their community... it put college students out there and that helps bring awareness about voting. Since teenagers and young adults are very self-conscious on what their peers think about them and are very social beings, when they see their friends getting involved they may want to get involved as well.

Thus, the students saw their participation in the program as not only facilitating their own participation but also potentially generating electoral participation amongst their peers. A 2004 participant said that the highlight of the day was seeing "all of the younger aged people coming in and voting." Most of the students in both groups saw their

actions as raising awareness among their peers, increasing the comfort level of other young voters, and improving the perception of their own generation—even if there was no immediate impact.

More importantly, the students saw their work as serving a larger purpose beyond that of a poll worker. They believed that their service had not only helped them to serve their community, but had also created and strengthened their own bonds to the community. An ACC/MXCC student's comments reflected that sentiment best: "I have a new appreciation for the workers at the town hall, those at the polls, and what is involved in a successful election process."

There were negative comments by the students as well. Most of these comments related to rude voters, bureaucratic barriers to voting, and intransigent polling station administrators. One ACC/MXCC student contended that "people [were] getting very rude and pushy for every inch closer to the machine." A CCSU student noted that "one old man had a really hard time figuring out how to read the ballot. He spoiled at least three. We tried to explain in depth to him how to mark it correctly, but he got infuriated and stormed out screaming at us." Another student referred to an elderly gentleman who behaved rudely after he experienced difficulties voting as an "old man with problems." Additionally, the students witnessed voters who were seemingly disenfranchised and disenchanted with the election process. The bureaucratic barriers experienced by both student populations included altered polling station sites that forced voters to hunt for their polling station and incomplete voter registration lists that omitted voters' names. For example, one ACC/MXCC student recollected that some of the voters had difficulty determining where to go to vote. "They weren't happy with having to go somewhere else." Another community college student argued that "it is a hard process for some people to vote: their name was removed from [the] list of people living in town; all of a sudden, their information vanished." Finally, the students also had difficulties collaborating with some of their fellow poll workers. A CCSU student claimed that her fellow poll workers were rude and demeaning to her and actually asked her to sit separately from them. Additionally, individual participants from both groups thought that the moderators and elderly poll workers needed to "loosen up" a bit. Thus, not all of the students' experiences were positive or promoted the value of tolerance as Dalton hypothesized.

Some Final Comments and Conclusions

In reviewing the quantitative and qualitative results of the Help America Vote College Poll Worker Program and its effects on civic engagement among college students, it appears that these results reflect assertions made by Colby et al. (2007: 230-231) that effective service learning projects are those that encourage compassion and humility while simultaneously increasing students' academic knowledge and sense of political and social self-efficacy. The HAVCP program discussed above initially sought to build students' cognition of U.S. elections and to expose them to the process of an U.S. election. The outcome of this project not only achieved those two initial goals but a myriad of others, including encouraging the political and social engagement of the participants. And while many of the positive outcomes have been highlighted even though clearly some of the students' experiences would be classified as negative, these are the difficulties faculty face when they want to draw closer links between academic work and service learning or engagement opportunities (Colby, 2007: 247-248).

For example, a very small number of the students in both 2004 and 2010, rather than drawing positive lessons from the experience, concluded that elections were fraught with problems created by both the voters and by the poll workers. They experienced such things as deceit, bureaucracy, incompetence, and intergenerational warfare. In these cases, the students' sense of efficacy was limited and their compassion for voters, town officials, and fellow poll workers was non-existent. As one CCSU student described it,

At the end, the old people could not count their numbers and no one thought to bring a calculator but me. It might have been one of the longest days of my life. I hope, in the future, younger people will be completely running the polls.

These experiences, while representing only a small fraction of all experiences in the program, sound a “cautionary warning” about the use of combined academic and service learning projects. Faculty attempting to implement such programs must provide time to thoroughly debrief the students and find ways to regenerate student interest and enthusiasm in civic endeavors after negative experiences.

Nonetheless, the model presented here may be a very useful tool for increasing the political and social engagement of the participants. A CCSU student described the practical effect the program had on her.

I had very little education about voting prior to this experience. First of all, in order to work for the polls, I had to fill it out a voter registration form and had to bring all of my documentation... Thanks to my US elections and civil engagement class, I am all set for when I do want to vote in the future. I am already registered. Had I not taken this class, God only knows when I would have registered or even voted.

A community college student wrote that the whole program was a “very positive experience... I learned a lot. I also learned how much I didn’t know about politics.” A fellow student noted, “I already told my town that in the future I would be interested in volunteering.” In short, these comments demonstrate that there may be a myriad of benefits for participants of a program like the one developed at Asnuntuck Community College, Middlesex Community College, and Central Connecticut State University. After participating in this program, the students may seek greater opportunities to involve themselves in community or online affairs, they may undertake a variety of new political tasks, and they may vote in different types of elections. Likewise, the impact of their service on the community is hard to measure but the participants in both groups were

optimistic. One student summarized well the inherent difficulty in measuring the implications of a program such as that undertaken here.

Well, I have to say, it is difficult to measure the level of our impact as of Election Day because we really wouldn’t know if our presence at the polls made any sort of change in attitude for the younger individuals thinking about voting until their next opportunity to actually turn out and vote. Obviously, they might not have been aware that there were going to be college students working THAT DAY. But our point was to raise the awareness that we ARE there now and we ARE taking part in politics and elections, so when their parents and friends and professors come home from the polls, they can say, “You know, there were plenty of college kids there, even working, so you should feel comfortable going and taking part in the election too!” Now that we have stood our ground and made our participation known, in the FUTURE, we can hope that our efforts in raising participation will have an impact on new, young voters.

In sum, while the 2004 and 2010 quantitative and qualitative results do not create a definitive picture of the effects of the HAVCP program, they do suggest attitudinal change as a result of participation and provide a good basis for a discussion about the utility of such a program in generating, as the authors of the Crucible Moment Report (2012) described it, a “civic ethos” in the college student population across a range of engagement fields that will hopefully lead to subsequent “civic action.”

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Footnotes

¹ See the "Introduction" of Saltmarsh and Hartley (2011) for a discussion of the varied strands of engagement.

² Forty students enrolled in the program but only 36 completed all of the training and served as poll worker on Election Day.

³ The surveys used in 2004 were almost identical to the 2010 survey. However, the 2004 surveys did not include the online political and civic participation items. At the time, online political participation had just emerged as a potentially potent political force and it was not clear what avenues of online engagement would be widely utilized.

⁴ Likewise, the basic demographics of both groups were similar. Two-thirds of the students in both groups were between 18-21 years of age. For both groups, 26% of the participants were minorities. And in both groups, women were overrepresented (70% of the community college participants and 61% of the university students).

⁵ The community college students did not have the opportunity to answer these questions because in 2004, the concept of an online political universe was a nascent one.

⁶ There were only two online measures in which the university students did display an interest in civic engagement. However, this engagement is clearly not based in any one community. For example, after serving as poll workers, the university students noted that they were 33% more likely to email an editor of a magazine/newspaper and to make an online charitable contribution.

⁷ The results for the item related to attending a religious service may be distorted given that the post-test was administered in early December just a few weeks prior to many religious holidays to both student groups. However, the university students only exhibited a slight increase in their likelihood to attend a religious service, whereas the community college students' surveys showed a large jump.

⁸ In some cases, the students' responses on the pre-test in regards to their previous activities were so positive that no increase was possible on the post-test. This was true for eating at a restaurant.

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