

## **Civic Engagement**

**11/21/2017**

Dear Colleague,

At the California Community Colleges, we pride ourselves on helping to build an educated, engaged California public. To that end, we must turn our attention to the problem of youth voter participation. Only 8 percent of eligible Californians aged 18-24 voted in the last non-presidential statewide election in 2014. Only 52 percent of eligible youth were even registered to vote, more than 20 points below any other age group.

Given the impact of local, state, and national policies on the lives of students, our system has an obligation to do more to create a culture that supports civic engagement amongst our students.

Throughout this year, our office has been partnering with the California Students Vote Project, a coalition that includes the California Secretary of State, the California Lieutenant Governor, and several non-partisan non-profit groups that work on improving civic engagement among young people. The goal of the project is to improve youth voter participation and build a new generation of civic leaders. To do this, the Project is seeking joint Memorandums of Understanding -- signed by district or campus administrators, student leaders, the Secretary of the State, and the Lieutenant Governor -- that commit districts to offering more and better voter registration opportunities to our students and commit the Secretary of State's office to supporting those efforts.

The commitments of the MOUs are simple, achievable, and effective. Signing a MOU with the Secretary of State and Lieutenant Governor would commit you to sending all-campus emails before key voter registration deadlines, sending all-campus emails before election dates, placing voter registration links on high-traffic and highly visible websites, and so on. A sample MOU is attached to this email.

Thus far the University of California system, the California State University system, Santa Monica College, Santa Barbara City College, and Pasadena City College have all signed MOUs.

We are writing to encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity as well. The first step for CEOs is to select one administrator that California Students Vote Project representatives can contact and work with. We suggest that administrator be located in the CEO's office and be a direct report. That person's contact information should be inputted at this [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SSevVuXghqNFKqQkg6\\_sPlnLu9-8iCstXLELEvqyrbU/prefill](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SSevVuXghqNFKqQkg6_sPlnLu9-8iCstXLELEvqyrbU/prefill)

Our democracy is healthiest when our students are engaged. We know your staffs work hard to ensure that this is the case, but together we can do more. As we near another election, let's make California's community colleges a model for creating the next generation of California voters and leaders.

Sincerely,

Eloy Ortiz Oakley