MDC Faculty Professional Development Workshop: Student Voter Engagement

Miami Dade College created and offered a Faculty Professional Development Workshop to prepare faculty to help students be “election-ready.” It was a 90-minute workshop, with 30 minutes of post-work, for a total of 2 hours professional development credit.

For more information contact Josh Young with MDC’s Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy at jyoung@mdc.edu.

Overview, Purpose, and Goals

We offered the workshop 13 times between mid-August to mid-October 2020. A total of 206 FT and PT faculty attended the workshop. The foundation of the workshop was to introduce faculty to the mdc.edu/vote and our student election guide and worksheet. The ultimate goal was that every MDC student is given the information and guidance he/she needs to register and be election ready, and exercises their right and duty to vote. It was a basic workshop appropriate for all faculty from all disciplines – including STEM, business, etc.

Fostering Voter Engagement Across All Disciplines

Description

A fundamental responsibility of Miami Dade College, and higher education in general, is to prepare students to become responsible, thoughtful, engaged citizens in our democracy. This includes, most importantly, our collective right and duty to register and to vote. Faculty from all disciplines will learn new information and easy-to-use strategies that will help every MDC student become election ready – including registering to vote and/or checking registration status, election deadlines, Vote by Mail directions, finding non-partisan information about candidates and ballot issues, making a plan to vote, and much more. The workshop will share activities to help students understand, in a non-partisan manner, why their vote is important and will address barriers that prevent them from voting. Participants will also learn the many ways students who aren’t eligible to vote can still be involved. As a result of this workshop, faculty will create an easy to implement plan to help their students be election ready.

Rationale

At MDC we know that education is the great equalizer, and we consider ourselves "Democracy's College" because of the vast opportunities we provide our diverse student body. We also know that an essential part of being "Democracy's College" is that we educate our students to be the next generation of civically engaged changemakers, starting with our right to vote. Unfortunately, the United States lags behind most of the world's democracies in voter turnout, and young people vote at disproportionately lower rates. We also know that no matter your beliefs or whom you support, the health of our democracy depends on an informed and engaged citizenry, and when young people opt out, their voices aren't heard and our community suffers. The most effective way to reach our diverse, often under prepared students is through the curriculum – with faculty connecting voter engagement to course competencies and MDC learning outcomes. There are many reasons MDC students, and young people in general, vote at disproportionately lower rates. Research shows that the best way to ensure a student votes is by educating them on the barriers to voting, helping them make a plan to vote, and creating a culture of voting through campus events, class assignments, and other initiatives. This workshop will prepare faculty with everything they need to know to help their students be election-ready, and ensure that they have an easy to implement plan to build voter engagement into their course(s). The workshop will also explore how students who aren't yet citizens can still be involved, even if they can't vote themselves.

Audience

All full time and part time faculty.

Requested Hours

- 1.5 hour workshop
- 30 minutes post-workshop homework
  2 total hours

Objectives

➔ Identify course competencies and/or MDC learning outcomes related to voter engagement

➔ Understand the importance of being non-partisan

➔ Explain the steps necessary for a student to be election-ready

➔ Explain the role of mdc.edu/vote and the MDC non-partisan election guide

➔ Explain how students who aren't eligible to vote can still be involved

➔ Design an "election-ready" module for your course

Plan of Evaluation/Where Submitted

Participants will prepare and submit an “election-ready” course integration plan that includes how they will prepare students to be informed, engaged voters, as well as identifying which MDC Learning Outcomes and/or course competencies the plan will address. Their plan will be submitted to a dedicated SharePoint site within two weeks of completing the workshop, and be reviewed and approved by the workshop facilitators*.

Time

This workshop will be offered multiple times via Blackboard Collaborate starting in July through late October, and then periodically after that.

The workshop was facilitated by staff from MDC’s Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy. For more information contact Josh Young at jyoung@mdc.edu.