

# I Want You to Vote: A Voter Education Presentation

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**KAITLIN**

Hello and welcome. Thank you for coming today to Cougs Vote, a voter education

**HENNESSY:**

presentation. We're ready to get started. And my name is Caitlin Hennessy. I'm the program coordinator for the Global Connections programming. If you're interested in future programming, please take a look at connections at [connections.wsu.edu](http://connections.wsu.edu).

And now I'm going to turn it over to Cassie. She's from the CCE, and she'll be discussing voter requirements, voter deadlines, and why you should vote and the importance of the election process. Thank you so much.

**CASSIE**

Great. Hi, everyone. My name is Cassie Rowland, and I am the student engagement

**ROWLAND:**

coordinator at the WSU Center for Civic Engagement, also known as the CCE. And thanks for being here tonight.

So to get started, I want to take a pretty general approach to voting and just talk a little bit about democratic engagement. So democratic engagement is fundamentally a practice of shared responsibility for a common future. It is the always-unfinished task of making social choices and working toward public goals that shapes our lives and the lives of others. And that is from the *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement*, a lovely book.

And really, to think a little bit more specifically about what some examples of democratic engagement are, there is really a wide variety of things that you could do. One thing is advocating for a cause. And this could include protests, writing to a senator, being part of a political organization, and encouraging others to be informed and participate in democracy, or even participating in Coug Day at the capital. So those are all part of advocacy.

Also, understanding the issues, that's a really important part of democratic engagement as well. So reading about events and issues, understanding democratic processes in general, and being involved politically-- so that could be running for office, supporting candidates or causes through canvassing, voting, writing, or submitting bills.

And then one of my favorite parts of the democratic engagement is civil discourse, which is really having conversation with other people and approaching it with a respectful approach-- so maybe sometimes agreeing to disagree and really trying to have that dialogue with others about why they have the opinions that they do and really approaching that conversation and

not backing away from it. So to just reiterate, advocating for causes, understanding issues, being involved politically, and then also participating in some civil discourse-- those are all examples of democratic engagement.

And really, the reason why this CCE is talking about democratic engagement is because it's a presidential election year, if you didn't know that. I try to be funny, but this is a webinar, so I don't know if it's going to work. But I'll try. Anyway, it's a presidential election year, and elections take place on November 8.

But even though it's a presidential election year, it's a big year for any political organizations across the state. So a really great example of this is in Washington alone, 88% of our Congress is up for re-election in November. So in Washington alone, we have our governor, our lieutenant governor, our Secretary of State, treasurer, auditor, attorney general, and more all up for re-election this year. We have a US senator open for re-election and also 10 US Congress seats open for election.

So just to paint a picture for you, we have two senators in our state and 10 representatives. So one of our two senators is up for re-election, and all of our 10 representatives are up for re-election. And then there's countless local candidates and state measures that involve guns, labor standards, lobbying, taxes, and more that are all part of this year's ballot. So it's really important to be informed and to vote.

Emily, I see that you joined us. And I wonder if you have any ideas as to why it's important for students to get involved in the elections from your perspective. And if you do want to share, you can use the chat box. Maybe, maybe not. I don't know. But while you are thinking about that, I can share some reasons why it would be important to be involved in the elections.

One of the many reasons why it's important to be involved is that you can provide political capital and shape political agendas. So politicians don't really care about what you want if they don't know what you want. And so if you don't vote, then they don't know what you want.

You can really determine the election results. It can impact your future directly or indirectly. You can increase your knowledge and engagement. You can feel empowered. It's your right and responsibility as a citizen to vote. It's really not all about you. It's about thinking about the collective whole. And it's just a really important way to be an active citizen. So those are some reasons why it's important to be involved in the elections as a student.

So moving on, I have some information to share with you about the WSU system and how we stand on the voting platform system. So this slide here is looking at the 2012 presidential election. And on the left-hand side of this slide, it looks at the registration rate and then the actual voting rate. So we have a 72.1% registration rate of WSU students system-wide. So this includes the Global Campus. 72.3% is the rate of registered students who have voted, so that's really good. But our overall voting rate as a system is only 52.1%.

And then you can see how this compares on the right-hand side. The WSU system, which is your institution here, we are at 52.1%, which compared to other universities, it is a bit higher, which is really good. So we're-- I can't do math very well, but eight points higher, eight percentage points higher than all other institutions. And that's really good, but we really would like to have 100% voting rate through the WSU system.

Looking at WSU in comparison to the whole United States, this is broken down by age. So 46.5% of 18 to 21-year-olds voted, which is actually pretty comparable when you look at the right-hand graph, which is the whole United States, to the 45% of all 18 to 29-year-olds who voted. So this is just another breakdown of that data. And the total US voting rate is 53.6%. So as a WSU system, we are actually voting below the whole US voting rate.

Let's talk a little bit more about the US voting rate. This is the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. And this is our worldwide election rates based on the most highly developed and democratic states in the world. So out of 35 of these countries, the United States ranks 31st.

So as a country, we're really doing a poor job of having all of those that are eligible to vote to vote. And the reason why this is such a big problem is that there could be an entire shift of the outcomes of elections if 100% of people voted versus the 52% of our system or 53% of our whole country. If 100% of people voted, candidates with low support might actually get a higher percentage of votes. And also, maybe 53% of the people that are voting are voting for people that our whole country may not like or support.

A really good example of this in our state is in 2004, the Washington governor race, Christine Gregoire beat out Dino Rossi by only 133 votes. So when people say, oh, my vote doesn't matter, or I just really don't care that much, so I'm not going to vote-- your vote does matter. Because if those 133 people didn't vote for Christine Gregoire, maybe Dino Rossi would have won, and politically, our state could be in a different place right now. So that was just an

example of what could happen or why it's so important to vote. Voting matters. Cool. Moving on. Maybe.

So Emily, it looks like you're from Washington. And I'm just going to talk about some Washington voter deadlines and some resources that are available now. And for those of you that are watching this, maybe after Wednesday, October 5th, which is today, on our website, [cce.wsu.edu/cougsvote](http://cce.wsu.edu/cougsvote), we have information for the top five states for Washington State University students. And those states are Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, and Hawaii. So if you are from any of those states, you can definitely look to our website for information. And we also have links to information to vote in your state if you are not from those five states as well on our website.

So if you are not registered to vote and you want to vote, which I hope that you are a little bit motivated to do so after all the information I just gave you, the deadline is October 10th, and that's for our online and/or mail-in voter registration deadline. And you can register online by going to [sos.law.gov/elections](http://sos.law.gov/elections). And this is the Secretary of State website.

And if you're going to mail in a form, you want to make sure that you send it by probably Friday, because Monday the 10th, the deadline, is Columbus Day, so banks and the post office are not going to be open. So if you want to make sure that it gets there on time, you should mail it by 10/8.

Washington is strictly an absentee ballot state. You can go to your county election office and vote if you like, but the majority of all of our voting happens via absentee ballot. So you can expect to receive your ballot after October 21st. And you can have them for a few weeks, and you need to make sure that you return them by election day, which is November 8th.

If for some reason you miss the deadline for online or mail-in voter registration, you can register to vote in person at your county election office. And the deadline for that is Halloween, October 31st. And the day that we're all looking forward to is November 8, which is election day, so you need to make sure that if you are mailing it and you are using a stamp, that it's postmarked by November 8. But really, it's best to get it in the mail a few days before then and make sure that you do put postage on that.

Depending on where you live, you might also have access to a ballot box, which these are really great. We have one on the WSU campus right outside our union building. And you don't have to put postage on your ballot if you use a ballot box, and it needs to be submitted by 8:00

PM on election day. And any ballots can be submitted to a ballot box. So even if you're in King County but you're turning it into the Whitman County ballot box, that is totally OK, and you don't need to put postage on it, either. And if any questions come up, please feel free to put them in the chat box, and I can address them.

The basics of voting in Washington-- you need to be a US citizen. You need to be a Washington resident for 30 days, and you have to be at least 18 years old by election day. For your address, you can vote using your home address or a Pullman address, including a dorm room or apartment room, et cetera. It's really important to be mindful of the issues that you want to vote on.

So this could be something that comes up more regularly on the Pullman campus when we have students from all across the state, whether or not they want to vote in Whitman County or if they want to vote in, say, Pierce County or King County. You just need to be mindful of what local issues you value the most and where you consider yourself your home.

So that's the county that you would want to be registered in and the address that you'd want to be registered under. You're required to have a Washington driver's license or a social security number to vote. And you don't have to have that ID to vote. You just need to have the driver's license or a social security number.

And just remembering that Washington is a vote by mail state, so your ballot cannot-- sorry. Your ballot will be delivered to your address on file. So if you are using your home address and you can't get home to pick it up, it's best to have someone mail it to you wherever you live. But what's really nice is that you can always print a replacement copy at the Secretary of State website. Yes. So there you go.

So lastly, I'll just go over some resources for everyone. Our website is incredibly full of content and really anything you could think of. If you go to [cce.wsu/cougsvote](http://cce.wsu/cougsvote), you can find a full list of events that are happening system-wide. So this is Pullman-specific, tri-cities, Global Campus, et cetera. We have those instructions for states outside of Washington, for the top five states that WSU students live in.

We have links to student voting guides and also quizzes and apps to help you learn more about candidates and issues. So as a state institution, we do need to make sure that we're providing content in a nonpartisan way, which is why we aren't really talking specifically about any of the candidates or any of the issues too heavily. But what we do care about is helping

you know where to look to make those decisions on your own and being informed.

So if maybe you're in a spot where you're like, I really don't know much about the candidates, there are quizzes and apps that you can use to help you learn more about the issues and/or the platforms that the candidates have. And I can show you. I'm actually going to step away from the PowerPoint and share my website with you. So just a second here.

So I'm on our Cougs Vote website right now. And if you wanted to maybe take some of these quizzes to help you learn more about the candidates and the issues, you can click on Understanding Issues. There's more information here about why you should vote, maybe what issues matter to me. And so the I Side With quiz is a quiz that you can take to show you which candidates you align most with based on your political beliefs.

There's information on websites that you can use to compare the presidential candidates' stances on a variety of issues. So there's this website called procon.org and votesmart.org. And really, there's information here on local and state issues and candidates. So this is something that isn't talked about as much right now, because it is a presidential election year.

But maybe you do want to do your research-- and I hope you want to do your research-- on the local candidates. So the website is super informative, and there's information on what you'll be voting on in Washington. So I really encourage you to check out our website and click around and just be informed.

I'm going to go back to the PowerPoint, so just a second here. Great. Oh, great. I'm glad that you're on the website, Emily, and you got some information. That makes me happy. Yeah!

What's really-- oh my gosh. Sorry. It's late. I'm tired. I haven't had dinner yet. But I'm here. OK.

I want you to know that we are actively using Twitter during all of the debates. And we've had one of three presidential debates already, and last night was the vice presidential debate. But there's another presidential debate coming up this Sunday at 6:00 PM. It's the 9th. And it would be really great if you have a Twitter or you're active on social media to use the hashtag cougsvote16.

This is a really great way to engage with other Cougs system-wide and keep up to date with everything that the candidates are talking about or maybe understanding a little bit more of the issues. And we have a CC staff member that monitors the Twitter handle cougsvote16 during

the debate, and we'll be posing questions and maybe asking you to respond. And it's just a really fun, interactive way to be engaged during the debate. So check out hashtag cougsvote16. You can see things that were discussed during the last two debates.

Side note, I was managing the Twitter the last two debates. So I'll be there Sunday, too. So you'll be interacting with me if you use that hashtag. Cool.

So leading in to some of the events that you can purchase paid in, use hashtag cougsvote16 on Twitter. And this is system-wide, and it's really fun to see all of the tweets coming in. Again, this Sunday, we have our second presidential debate, and our last presidential debate is Wednesday, October 19th. And then we're also going to be having a watch party on election night, and that will be starting at 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time.

We will be live streaming the WSU student debate on Thursday, October 20th. So this would be a really great thing to tune into and participate in. And it's the Thursday after the last presidential debate, so there should be a lot of content to discuss. And this is going to be led by our WSU College Republicans and Young Democrats. So the two RSOs on the Pullman campus, our representatives from both organizations, will be coming together to discuss, debate some of the issues and some posed questions.

So that's from 7:00 to 8:00 Pacific Standard Time, and it will be live streamed on the WSU CCE YouTube. So that's the website that you can tune in to. And we'll have a chat feature to discuss online. So it would be really great if you could tune in and watch that. And if you aren't able to be active live, it will be on our YouTube channel for you to watch later on. And again, on our website, we have a list of all of our events that you can see what other campuses are doing. Cool.

That's all I have for now. If there are any questions, I'd love to answer them. And I also wanted to pose the question if there is anything that we discussed that surprised you. And if so, what was it?

**KAITLIN**

Thank you, Cassie. And if anyone does have questions, feel free to put them in the chat box.

**HENNESSY:**

One thing I was wondering is what are some other common reasons that you hear why people don't vote when you do these presentations and when you're tabling, encouraging students to vote. Is there anything else you hear besides that people think it doesn't matter?

**CASSIE** Yes. Unfortunately, some other responses are that they're lazy, or they don't have time, or they don't care. So those are some of the other reasons, too. Or they don't like the candidates, so they don't want to vote either.

**KAITLIN** What is the best way you feel to respond to people when they say they don't like any of the candidates, how to encourage him still to be involved in the election process?

**CASSIE** Well, I think it's really important to remember that while we have two main parties in our country, the Republicans and the Democrats, they aren't the only choices. And we're not bounded to only voting for those two candidates, so I think encouraging students to find answers and find other candidates.

There's actually a lot of information out there on other third party candidates. And if you just do a little bit of soft research, you can learn more about what other candidates are. There's always a write-in feature. And also, remembering if you don't really agree with or like any of the presidential candidates, you don't necessarily have to vote for that part of the ballot.

You are able to leave things blank on your ballot. So if you really didn't want to vote in any of the measures or specific positions that are open, you can leave that blank. But really using your ballot to vote for the things that you value the most and you do care about, but still making sure that you vote and use that right to the best of your ability. Does that make sense, Caitlin?

**KAITLIN** Yes, it does. Thank you.

**HENNESSY:**

One other item is what are the voter rates for WSU students on non-presidential election years.

**CASSIE** That is a great question. We are part of a national voter study through Tufts University. I don't know if we have any information on the non-presidential years. But I know that it's not as good as the presidential election year. So it's lower than the 52%, just because the presidential election is a hot topic, and people are more invested and motivated because of all of the press around it.

But I can follow up. I would need to do a little bit of research for that. But I do know that it's less than during presidential election years. Good questions.

**KAITLIN**

Excellent. Thank you. If there are any more questions, please put them in the chat box.

**HENNESSY:**

Otherwise, we will start to wrap our voter education presentation. And thank you, Cassie, for coming out today and sharing all this information with us. And once again, we will be-- sorry.

The CCE will be live streaming that student election debate, which should be very interesting, because it is student groups of Democrats and student groups of Republicans at the debate, to hear their perspective on the election from a student perspective. And you can ask them questions or participate in the conversation also during the live stream through the chat feature. And we'll be putting information on our website about that to you in case you need the link.

And our next live event for Global Connections will be the Train Smart Live Stream. And that will be on Tuesday, October 11th at 6:30 PM. And we will be live streaming that. And it's a fitness course to show you how to train properly so you can integrate new moves into your fitness routine and also stay safe while you're doing it.

So thank you all so much for coming out today, and I hope you have a good evening.

**CASSIE**

Yes. Thank you.

**ROWLAND:**