core skills, and perceptions of the civic world and their place in it. We offer little in the way of guidance on this point, but hope that future conference participants will take up questions related to this task.

Reinforcing vs. Contradictory Challenges

In our discussion we came to realize that perhaps the most effective way to meet the challenge of engaging students in core curriculum classes was to fundamental change our view of that challenge. We entered our sessions seeing conflict between teaching both non-majors and majors in the same classroom, between teaching breadth and depth, between teaching substantive knowledge and important skills, and between institutional requirements and classroom environment. As we discussed the innovative teaching methods our presenters offered, we realized that these challenges do not have be seen as inhibitors. Teaching non-majors does not have to prevent teaching majors, teaching a depth of knowledge about some topics does not have to take a backseat to covering a breadth of topics, substantive knowledge and skill building do not have to be separate, and institutional imperatives and classroom goals do not have to collide. Instead of seeing these dichotomies as contradictory, we came to realize that we are better served viewing them as harmonious. For instance we can utilize classroom presentation methods to meet both the institutional imperative of teaching more students with fewer resources while at the same time creating an inviting and interesting classroom environment. We can use skill-building exercises to impart substantive knowledge. We can teach a breadth of subjects while allowing students to pursue out-of-class activities that allow a depth of knowledge on particular topics. We can hold the attention of non-majors while simultaneously giving our majors a fulfilling experience. Rather than seeing our goals as inhibitors to one another, we realized that they are better approaches as catalysts.

Reference

Boomgard, Michelle C., Molly Varnadore Campbell, Richard N. Engstrom, and Daniel E. Smith. 2007. "Track Two: Teaching and Learning the Core Curriculum: Political Science and General Education." 2007 APSA Teaching and Learning Conference Track Summaries. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40 (July): 576–7.

Track Eight: Civic Engagement I

—**Timothy S. Meinke,**
Lynchburg College

Helping Undergraduates Become Engaged Citizens

Political science has always pondered questions of civic engagement. Socrates described and defended his intimate engagement with Athens in the *Apology* and Aristotle argued in the *Politics* that it was only through engagement with the polis that humans could set forth and discuss notions of justice. Stephen Leonard (1999) and Hindy Schachter (1998) pointed out in earlier volumes of this journal that at the end of the nineteenth century the "founding fathers" of modern academic political science were motivated by ideas of improving citizens through civic education. And this has continued to be a focus for the American Political Science Association (APSA) through collaborative efforts such as the 1996 Task Force on Civic Education for the Next Century or, more recently, tracks during the association's Teaching and Learning Conference.

The Civic Engagement I track at the fifth annual conference combined the thoughts and experiences of over 30 political scientists, at different stages of their careers and from a variety of institutions around the world. This group introduced themselves by answering the fundamental and elusive question: what is civic engagement? As would be expected, they provided a variety of rich responses but a few general themes emerged. Engaged citizens in a democracy are those who actively participate in governance; therefore, it would be best if they had an understanding of the public good and were willing to act to preserve that good. These citizens recognize their responsibilities and realize their potential contributions to the multiple communities in which they are members. To be engaged in this way a citizen needs to be aware of the complex political systems they participate in and have a clear understanding of the problems they face.

After this introduction the group moved on to consider in greater depth the skills that undergraduates need to develop if they are to become engaged citizens. Four of the papers presented focused on developing courses and teaching practices that help students develop these skills. Daniel Shea's survey of 343 professors teaching introduction to American government courses revealed that these classes can be powerful vehicles for helping students overcome the apathy that often overwhelms citizens in a modern republic because over 800,000 undergraduates take such courses a year. Patrick McKinlay presented a class developed for freshmen that employs an interesting mix of normative readings on citizenship and ethics with a simulation on poverty "to ennoble rather than enable … students to consider what they value and why." In the same session Dari Sylvester studied an upper-level class designed to help students synthesize theoretical understandings of policymaking with experiences from a service learning project with the Community Partnership for Families of San Joaquin County. This design allows students to experience the complexity of the political system after they are given a theoretical foundation to understand those experiences. Edward and Marie Yager highlighted the need for collaboration across disciplines by describing the benefits of using a model of coaching to help students move beyond a sense of volunteerism.

During the second session presenters discussed the importance of promoting student engagement with the broader international community. Allison Rios Millett McCartney presented a case study of a civic engagement research internship course in which students learn about the UN and international issues and then use that knowledge to run a model UN program for a local high school. Shoichiro Ishibashi and Chieko Kitagawa Otsuru discussed the results of a similar seminar facilitated by undergraduates with the goal of promoting civic engagement among Japanese junior high school students. They found that the seminar developed positive attitudes towards engagement among the junior high students by involving them in a public policy issue that was important in their lives, the unlawful parking of bicycles in Japanese cities. Concluding the session Ketevan Geguchadze found that the use of simulations was effective in teaching democratic values and citizenship skills to students at Batuni State University in Georgia.

A strong group of papers highlighted the value of using election activities to promote not just voting but broader civic engagement among undergraduates. Both the studies by Kara Lindaman and Ruth Charles and by Terri Susan Fine and Aubrey Jewett found that classes requiring students to participate as poll workers on Election Day are effective in developing a sense of engagement among all types of students. Arthur Sanders reported on using internships with campaigns during the recent Iowa

https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909650829089X Published online by Cambridge University Press

caucuses and found that such experiences do much more than just encourage voting. He presented evidence that such experiences can help students develop a continuing interest, at least in the short term, in their communities and the problems facing those communities.

There were multiple papers that went beyond the classroom and examined college programs designed to promote civic engagement. The most developed of these programs was the Community Legal Information Center developed by the California State University at Chico. Mahalley Allen, Teodora Delorenzo, and Sally Parker studied this 30-year-old program and discovered that the center serves important needs of low-income Californians while also motivating students to engage their communities. Katy Harriger and Jill McMillian studied an innovative program at Wake Forest University. Thirty first-year students were selected as Democracy Fellows in 2001 and through both classroom and experiential activities that stressed the importance of deliberation they learned to "speak politics." By comparing, over four years, these students to a class cohort not in the program they found that the Democracy Fellows were not only more likely to participate in traditional venues such as the voting booth but were also more analytical in their approach to the political process and more communal in their outlooks. Finally, Clair Haeg and Matthew Lindstrom studied a summer internship program in Washington, D.C., and found that internships embedded in learning communities are more effective at developing engaged citizens than internships experienced by students on their own.

Based on these presentations and three days of discussion on the topic, the group concluded with a number of recommendations. First, the group would like to see APSA create a web site highlighting the best practices for promoting civic engagement among undergraduates. The group recommended that such a web site should also have a section devoted to innovative practices for introduction to American government courses. Second, APSA should develop an annual award for innovative pedagogical methods that successfully promote civic engagement among undergraduate students. These award-winning ideas could be highlighted on the same web site. Third, we felt that more needed to be done to develop participation among graduate students in this discussion of civic engagement. We recommend that APSA develop a program offering matching grants for graduate students who receive institutional support to attend the Teaching and Learning Conference. Fourth, the group recommends that scholarship on civic engagement be promoted because political science does not fully understand how and why citizens become engaged or the results of that engagement. Finally the group realizes that efforts to develop engaged citizens will never be successful without cooperation from multiple disciplines beyond political science.

References

Leonard, Stephen T. 1999. " 'Pure Futility and Waste': Academic Political Science and Civic Education." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 32 (December): 749–54.

Schachter, Hindy Lauer. 1998. "Civic Education: Three Early American Political Science Association Committees and Their Relevance for Our Times." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31 (September): 631–5.

Track Nine: Civic Engagement II

—Robin Datta,
Edmonds Community College
—Serena Laws,
University of Minnesota Twin Cities
—Steven Williamson,
University of Rhode Island
—Russell Mayer,
Merrimack College

The participants in the Civic Engagement II track focused our attention on what we termed "the trifecta of civic engagement," namely engaging students, contributing to the community, and changing institutional commitments of the university.

One of our responsibilities as educators of the next generation of engaged citizens must be to examine how students think and learn about politics. Responding to the limitations of info-centric and formulaic courses in building the citizenship skills of individuals, we focused attention on expanding our notions of what it means to be an informed citizen capable of meaningful participation in the political system. Our expanded definition of what should be taught in order to increase civic engagement included greater emphasis on current events essential to the education of modern global citizens and more attention to promoting sophisticated organizing and processing of political information among students.

In focusing on civic engagement in the community, our group explored a variety of approaches including case studies, community-based learning, and service-learning models designed to encourage and increase citizen efficacy by linking institutions of higher learning to their surrounding communities. These projects have the potential to provide authentic, hands-on, theoretically driven learning experiences that bring students into contact with the community. Though not always successful in the narrow sense of the term, failure and frustration are useful learning experiences for students, their professors, the academy, and the community. In exploring linkages between the academy, the community, and student civic engagement the working group identified three elements that are critical to using these approaches to promote civic engagement. First, listening to the needs of community partners rather than dictating solutions as "experts" is critical to the success of community-based or service-learning efforts. Second, efforts need to be made to create long-term and sustainable relationships between the school the community. The specific actors may change but the mechanisms of interaction need to remain intact. Finally projects in courses that address local community needs can be especially meaningful for students and can help them apply their skills as political scientists, thus cementing course learning by providing avenues of practice, building social capital, and (ultimately) encouraging civic engagement. In the end meaningfully linking politics to the classroom to foster student civic engagement requires a commitment of both faculty and academic institutions to themselves be genuinely civically engaged.

Out of this discussion of community-based learning, a third issue emerged that track members felt was crucial to the success and development of civic engagement programs—the institutional role of the college or university in encouraging and rewarding such activities. In general track members viewed civic engagement not merely an important goal for our students and potentially helpful to the community, but also as fulfilling the institutional responsibility of the college or university as an agent of society. Many participants expressed the desire to move beyond the ivory tower idea of the college as a separate entity from its surroundings, and instead think about the responsibility of the institution to promote and even model what it means to be civically engaged. Yet all of these efforts at promoting civic engagement are extremely labor intensive and so a significant challenge to building civic engagement elements into what our colleges and universities do is the lack of institutional incentives and rewards for doing so. Despite all of the benefits of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S104909650829089X Published online by Cambridge University Press