

California College
of the Arts

2024–2026



**CIVIC AND VOTER
EMPOWERMENT
ACTION PLAN**

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Executive Summary

At California College of the Arts (CCA), we are dedicated to enhancing student voting accessibility through collaboration with faculty, staff, students, and election officials. Our strategic initiatives to bolster civic engagement focus on several key areas:

1. **First Year Program Collaboration:** We aim to strengthen partnerships with the First Year Program to effectively reach all incoming students, increasing their voter registration rate to 80%.
2. **Support for Out-of-State Students:** We will provide comprehensive resources for out-of-state students who wish to vote absentee, ensuring they understand the necessary processes.
3. **Engagement of International Students:** Our initiatives will include educating and actively involving international students in our democratic engagement efforts.
4. **Peer-to-Peer Engagement Opportunities:** We will create more platforms for peer interaction to foster a culture of voting and civic participation.
5. **Curricular Integration:** We plan to weave democratic engagement more thoroughly into both course curricula and co-curricular programs and events.

The CCA Voting Coalition is poised to leverage institutional knowledge and foster internal partnerships to drive these initiatives forward. Our goal is to achieve and sustain a 75.6% voting rate in 2024 and beyond, ensuring that our community is not only engaged but empowered to participate in the democratic process.

Commitment to Civic Engagement

Mission

California College of the Arts educates students to shape culture and society through the practice and critical study of art, architecture, design, and writing. Benefiting from its San Francisco Bay Area location, the college prepares students for lifelong creative work by cultivating innovation, community engagement, and social and environmental responsibility. While there is no explicit mention of civic learning and democratic engagement in CCA's mission statement, President Howse is embarking on a new strategic planning process in early 2025 that centers art and design education as a means to foster creative citizenship.

Values

As an educational and cultural institution, CCA believes in fostering the artistic and academic excellence of our students and faculty.

- We cultivate intellectual curiosity and risk-taking, collaboration and

2024–2026 Action Plan Goals

For our 2024–2026 Action Plan, we utilized NSLVE and survey data from the 2020–2022 U.S. election cycles as a benchmark to set the following high level goals:

To increase our voting rate by 10 points, from 65.6% to

75.6 %

To increase our voter registration rate for incoming students to

80%

innovation, compassion and integrity.

- As a global citizen and good neighbor, CCA believes in its role as a proponent of social justice and community engagement.
- We promote diversity on our campuses by improving access and opportunities for underrepresented groups, and we see this endeavor as vitally enriching for everyone.
- We value sustainability and believe that as a school of the arts we have a unique ability and an ethical responsibility to shape a culture that is more environmentally responsible.

We understand the importance of creative economies and the role of artists, designers, architects, and writers in solving social, cultural, environmental, and economic problems.

Creative Accord

CCA's Creative Accord is a cultural and ethical touchstone for all members of the CCA community. This collective agreement allows us to hold each other accountable and gives us something to aspire to as a creative community. Four principles comprise the Creative Accord. These principles unite the 2,500+ members of the CCA community by naming our shared values, helping us understand why we do what we do, discovering common goals in hard moments of misunderstanding, and creating opportunities for inclusion.

The four principles of the Creative Accord are:

- **Radical Responsibility:** We approach our craft with the understanding that we are interconnected and responsible creative citizens.
- **Think Beyond:** We examine and apply critical curiosity to ourselves, others, and our craft.
- **Cultivate Creative Action:** We utilize different tools to advocate for informed social change that impacts us, our making, and our community.
- **Become chimeraMADE*:** We actively contribute to being part of a creative community.

Actions in the world require awareness of shared community values to catalyze collective action. CCA's Creative Accord provides a personal and collective roadmap to becoming good neighbors and global creative citizens, and we commonly reference these principles in our conversations with students regarding democratic engagement and why it matters.

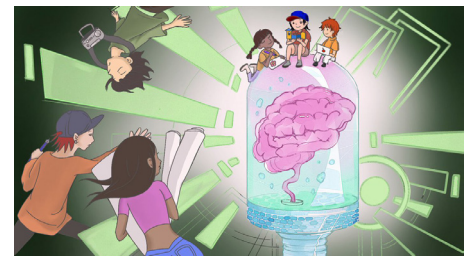
**Note: CCA's mascot is the Chimera, a mythical creature made up of lion, goat, and snake—three distinct identities that culminate in a single form and represent an apex of strength, knowledge, and skill.*

Creative Citizens in Action Initiative

Creative Citizens in Action (CCA@CCA) is a college-wide initiative that promotes creative activism and democratic engagement through public programs, exhibitions, and curriculum connections. Founded in 2018, CCA@CCA grew out of CCA's collaboration with alum Hank Willis Thomas, For Freedoms, and Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). In



Radical Responsibility



Think Beyond



Cultivate Creative Action



Become chimeraMADE*

Digital murals depicting the four principles of the Creative Accord by students in Senior Adjunct Professor Eduardo Pineda's Fall 2020 Critical Ethnic Studies Mural Art course.

2020, CCA secured a \$2 million gift to create the Deborah and Kenneth Novack Creative Citizens Endowment, which provides consistent funding year-on-year to support democratic engagement and has an annual report and review process. We are happy to share that CCA will open our expanded campus in San Francisco in fall 2024, which includes the “Deborah and Kenneth Novack Creative Citizens Hub,” a flexible gathering and lecture space that will help support ongoing and dedicated programs at the college.

The Creative Citizens in Action initiative includes:

- CCA Voting Coalition and related voting work
- The Deborah and Kenneth Novack Creative Citizens Public Program Series
- Teaching Resources
- Faculty Grants
- Student Fellowships
- Creative Citizens courses

Action Plan Goals and Implementation

The CCA Voting Coalition, which comprises staff, faculty, and student representatives, developed this action plan to build on the successes of our past civic engagement efforts and is responsible for its implementation. The plan aims to lay out comprehensive, organized, actionable steps to encourage and enhance maximum voter turnout for upcoming elections and establish a replicable model of methods and strategies that CCA can employ to cultivate democratic engagement and creative citizenship.

In 2020, CCA saw a significant increase in student turnout for the U.S. Presidential Election, marking a promising starting point for future engagement. We are determined to build on that momentum and continue to grow engagement among our student body in 2024 and beyond.

Ensuring Equity

The Voting Coalition is committed to ensuring that the goals in this action plan are met in an equitable manner so that all members of CCA’s diverse student body have access to voter registration, education, and participation with particular attention to members of communities who have historically faced barriers to voting and civic engagement.

One strategy that the Voting Coalition has employed is to encourage faculty engagement in our voting registration events so that students are invited to participate in these events as part of their regular class time. This allows students who may not have had the time or access to voting registration and education to attend as part of their usual course schedule. Additionally, we set up a voter registration table at a required event for incoming first year students, which greatly increased first year student access to voting registration and education during one of their first weeks on campus. These two strategies have helped make voter registration more accessible to a broader group of students.

In conjunction with the Voting Coalition’s efforts to make voting registration more accessible to students, the group has also trained its voting registration volunteers to guide students through common barriers to voting. Examples of this assistance include one-on-one guidance through complicated out-of-state voting regulations; access to printing and postage by providing stamps, envelopes, and on-the-spot printing; decreasing time limitations by offering to mail forms for students; and providing civic engagement resources for international students.

A third strategy employed by the college to ensure more equitable civic engagement is the facilitation of conversations across difference and providing brave and safer spaces for difficult conversations. This strategy has been developed through the Office of DEIB and several streams are in place related to this strategy. Examples include:

- A Task Force on Expression, Community, and Policy, which was established to address pertinent

questions regarding academic freedom, freedom of expression, communication guidelines, and processes for restoring dialogue after conflicts. The Task Force analyzed the current landscape of free expression at CCA and identified steps to clarify principles, procedures, and policies related to various forms of college expression. The task force's objectives included:

- Reviewing and evaluating existing policies
- Conducting research and consultation
- Considering various contexts in free expression
- Gathering input and assessing community needs
- Making recommendations for policy direction
- The development of faculty self-guided resources and tools for dialogic pedagogy and praxis at CCA
- An initiative to foster constructive dialogue and understanding in partnership with SFMOMA and Beyond Conflict.

Facilitating difficult conversations across difference, from a perspective of reducing conflict and harm, fosters brave and safer spaces for students to engage in civic discourse by increasing psychological safety and feelings of belonging in these spaces.



Students visit a voter information table outside the campus cafe, fall 2022.

Leadership

CCA Voting Coalition

Our Action Plan was developed collaboratively by the CCA Voting Coalition's core members in consultation with an advisory network of staff, faculty, and students. The CCA Voting Coalition's core members meet monthly to coordinate efforts and form workgroups between meetings to execute specific strategies and events. Advisory members join workgroups on an ad hoc basis.

CCA's Exhibitions and Public Programming department oversees the Creative Citizens in Action (CCA@CCA) initiative; the CCA Voting Coalition and our campus voting work are centralized within this initiative. CCA's Director of Exhibitions and Public Programming chairs the Voting Coalition with assistance from the college's Gallery Manager. In addition, they manage the Coalition's funding and take the lead on strategic events and course connections.

Support for the Voting Coalition is also a core responsibility of CCA's Assistant Director for Student Engagement, Activities, and Leadership, who ensures that civic engagement events are a highly visible and integral element of co-curricular campus life. The Senior Director of Campus Life serves as the main point of contact with the San Francisco Department of Elections, and coordinates CCA's polling place. The Director of the President's Office liases between the Coalition and senior administration.

While staff members serve on the Coalition long-term, faculty and student members are recruited annually each spring. Their roles vary based on capacity, skills, and interests.

The Voting Coalition can be reached as a group at vote@cca.edu.

Core Members

- Jaime Austin (Committee Chair), Director of Exhibitions and Public Programming/Academic Affairs/jaustin2@cca.edu
- Bryndis Hafthorsdottir, Gallery Manager/Academic Affairs/bryndis@cca.edu
- Adriana Lopez Lobovits, Director of the President's Office/a.lopez@cca.edu
- Noki Seekao, Senior Director of Campus Life/Student Affairs/noki@cca.edu
- Stephaine Villanova, Assistant Director for Student Engagement, Activities, & Leadership/Student Affairs/villsa@cca.edu
- Pia Zaragoza, 2024 CCA@CCA Faculty Coordinator/Faculty Representative/piazaragoza@cca.edu
- Elisabeth Cobb Hughes, Graduate Design Program/2024 CCA@CCA Student Fellow
- Maitri Bhateja, Anurag Pradipkumar Bhavsar, Arunima Walimbe, Mehak Prashant Kothari, Nidheesh Hasabnis, Graduate Interaction Design Program/ Student Representatives

Advisory Members

- Joyce Alcantara, Assistant Director, Content and Marketing/Marketing & Communications
- Tricia Brand, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Shiraz Chavan, Senior Director of Enrollment Management & Undergraduate Admissions and Sponsor of Manos Abiertas LatinX Club/Enrollment Services
- Jose de los Reyes, Associate Director of Institutional Research/Academic Affairs
- Janeece Hayes, Director of Student Belonging & Inclusion/Student Affairs
- Sarah Kruse, Associate Director of Learning Resources/Academic Affairs

- Tracy Tanner, Assistant Director, Center for Art and Public Life
- Trey Terrio, Director, Auxiliary Services/Enrollment Services
- Katie Lindsey, Assistant Director, Student Engagement & Communications/Enrollment Services
- Lisa Jonas, Director of Alumni Engagement/Advancement
- Daniel Ransom, Librarian, Instructional Services/Libraries
- Erik Scollon, Associate Professor and Chair, First Year Core Studio Program
- Jill Tolfa, Associate Director, International Student Services/Student Affairs
- Dominick Tracy, Associate Provost, Educational Effectiveness/Academic Affairs
- Lindsay Wright, Director of Integrated Communications/Marketing & Communications

Local Election Office

- Karlie O'Toole Gabour, Deputy, San Francisco Department of Elections
- Deanna Mitchell, Precinct Services/Voter Outreach, San Francisco Department of Elections

Community and National Partners

- [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge \(which includes Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation\)](#)
- [Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities \(AICCU\)](#)
- [California Secretary of State California University College Ballot Bowl](#)
- [Campus Vote Project](#)
- [National Voter Registration Day](#)
- [The Potrero Boosters Neighborhood Association](#)
- [Voter Friendly Campus](#)
- [For Freedoms](#)

Institutional Support

The CCA Voting Coalition has experienced strong support from upper administrators, including the President, Provost, Associate Provost, Vice President of Student Affairs, Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications, and Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Last fall, CCA welcomed its 10th president, David C. Howse. Coming from Emerson College in Boston, President Howse brings over 20 years of experience stewarding arts organizations through strategic visioning, fundraising, and community building to CCA. He signed the ALL IN Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation and has been briefed on the Voting Coalition's work. David C. Howse and Provost Tammy Rae Carland have re-committed to sending out campus-wide communications this fall to help reinforce the importance of voting.

[See David Howse's 2024 National Voter Registration Day video message for the CCA community →](#)

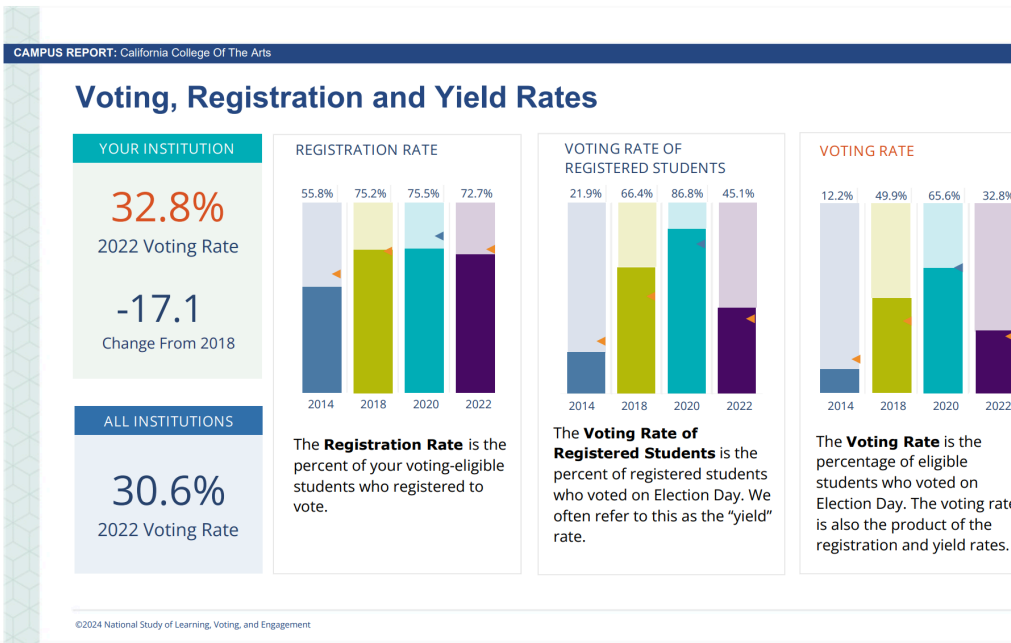
Landscape

NSLVE

CCA registered for the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement for the first time in 2020 and received our first report in 2021. When we receive data, CCA's Associate Director of Institutional Research reviews it and then shares their assessment with the Voting Coalition, who discusses the results in detail. NSLVE data is made public on CCA's Voting Resources page on Portal and is shared via internal meetings with student clubs, senior administration, and other stakeholders.

Our voting rate during the 2022 Midterm Election was 32.8%, representing a 17.1% decrease from 2018. We believe several barriers (outlined in this report's Reflection section) contributed to this decrease and are encouraged that CCA's Voter Registration rate held relatively steady from 2018 to 2022 by comparison.

Our voting rate during the 2020 Presidential Election was 65.6%, which represents an increase of 17.2% from 2016. Because 2024 is a Presidential Election year, we have set a goal to increase our voting rate by 10 points from the last Presidential Election to 75.6%. We are hopeful that a robust voting action plan and a return to in-person outreach and events will contribute to an increase in our voting rate in future elections.



NSLVE gives a valuable breakdown of voting rates by age group. Our 2022 report indicates that voting rates among young voters 18-24 years old are consistently the lowest among our student body. This data informs our engagement strategies, including our partnership with CCA's First Year Program. We have set an ambitious goal to increase our voter registration rate for incoming students to 80% in 2024.

Our NSLVE report does not provide a complete picture of voter registration and turnout by racial identity or sex. Its breakdown of voting rate by field of study is similarly unhelpful, as nearly all of CCA's programs fall into their "Visual and Performing Arts" category.

The CCA Voting Coalition draws on information from three other sources to better understand students' backgrounds and needs.

Student Data

In addition to analyzing data from the NSLVE report, we worked with CCA's Institutional Research and Student Records departments to collect students-by-state data for the first time in 2022. We have noticed that many students wish to vote in their home states, and having this data will allow us to collect and share election deadlines and helpful information by state. We plan to focus on all states with five or more students based on fall 2023 data.

40% of our student population is international. Members of the CCA community participate in elections across the globe, including in India, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Mexico, and Canada. In 2020, we developed a presentation on being an informed voter and understanding U.S. elections from an international student perspective. We are working to support interest in democratic engagement in students' home countries by including information on how to register as an International Voter on our Voting Resources page on CCA's Portal Intranet.

Campus Climate Survey

In March 2023, CCA administered the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Diversity and Equity Climate Survey to all staff, students, and faculty. Participants were surveyed about perceptions of CCA regarding climate, diversity, and equity support, experiences with disparaging remarks, and experiences with discrimination and harassment.

As it relates to democratic engagement, the climate survey findings indicate that there is a perceived need for fostering connections across different groups and facilitating open and restorative conversations, a perceived need for greater student and faculty voice in governance processes, and a desire for more institutional support of freedom of expression and authentic expression. The college's Voting Coalition, senior administration, and the Equity Advancement Council (a group of staff and faculty who steer priorities, action planning, and metrics for the success of college-wide integration of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging), along with other key stakeholder groups, will continue to explore how the campus climate data informs CCA's upcoming strategic planning process and its efforts around democratic engagement and creative citizenship.

NSSE

We use the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to assess trends from the following topics both in comparison to the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD) consortium as well as national data, and make adjustments to continue to enhance our democratic engagement efforts:

1. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in being an informed and active citizen?
2. How much does your institution emphasize attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues?

Based on the 2020 NSSE results, CCA appears to be doing better than our AICAD peers when it comes to contribution of knowledge/skills in being informed and active citizens, as well as the institution's emphasis on attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues. In particular, for question 18j related to "Being an informed and active citizen" CCA scored 2.7 versus the AICAD mean of 2.4.

Statistics

1063
undergraduate students

327
graduate students

38%
international students

22%
first generation
undergraduate students

65.6%
2020 student voting rate
(up 17.2% from 2016)

32.8%
2022 student voting rate
(down 17.1% from 2018)

State	Total Students
California	698
Washington	20
Florida	12
Texas	12
New York	11
Illinois	10
Oregon	10
Massachusetts	8
Nevada	6

Reflection

Data

In spring 2022, the CCA Voting Coalition partnered with ALL IN To Vote to create a CCA-branded voter registration portal that tracks voter registration data. While the portal has been live since the end of April 2022, the Voting Coalition did not commit to exclusively using this portal for voter registration until 2024, when ALL IN added tools to check registration and request absentee ballots to the portal. The portal recorded only 22 voter registrations during the 2022-2023 academic year and 18 registrations during the 2023-2024 academic year, but all recorded registrations align with events presented by the Voting Coalition. We did not track voter registrations we facilitated by other means. We expect to have more comprehensive voter registration data connected to each event going forward.

Barriers & Lessons

This year marks a monumental milestone as CCA opens its new, expanded college campus in San Francisco in fall 2024. The expansion includes 82,305 square feet of all-new maker spaces, classrooms, studios, galleries, and a continuous indoor-outdoor environment. The new design will unite the college's art, crafts, design, architecture, and writing programs in one centralized location to cultivate collaboration across disciplines.

In 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, CCA struggled to recover from hardships produced or worsened by the COVID-related campus closures of 2020-2021, combined with challenges presented by campus expansion. With the closure of CCA's historic Oakland campus and the new San Francisco campus still under construction, CCA lacked community gathering spaces, which made tabling and running events challenging. While we persisted in conducting all civic engagement activities as planned, we often had to scale them down to accommodate facilities and public health restrictions. During the 2022 midterm election season, particularly, the Voting Coalition found students reticent to plan or attend in-person events. Work-study Community Voting Organizers required more support than initially planned, and while intimate voter education events were highly successful, we only engaged small numbers of students at once.

At CCA, there is generally less excitement and engagement around Midterm elections, than Presidential elections. To help the Midterm election feel more relevant to eligible voters in 2022, the Voting Coalition needed to shift its messaging to focus on the election's impact on California and local issues. Even so, international students felt less personally affected by the Midterm election outcome and were less engaged than usual in U.S. politics (though they engaged with what was happening in their home countries, e.g. Brazil, China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan).

Another barrier we faced was that CCA does not have a dedicated staff position solely focused on civic engagement work. Each member of our Coalition leads these efforts as part of, or in addition to, their regular job responsibilities. Staffing reorganizations led to increased workloads, which impacted the Coalition's effectiveness. For example, in 2022-2023, we grew internal partnerships but did not have the capacity to develop relationships with new external partners related to voting.

Each of these barriers taught us valuable lessons. We are hopeful that CCA's much-anticipated unification will boost opportunities to engage large swaths of the student body more effectively and provide better facilities to host voter engagement events. That said, we've learned the value of intimate voter education events and personalized peer-to-peer assistance with the voter registration process and hope to continue these programs going forward. Similarly, our focus on distributing information about local ballot initiatives has paid off and continues to engage students effectively even during this presidential election season.

To better harness students' energy, we've pivoted from a work-study model that recruited a small

group of students to tackle a checklist of predetermined job responsibilities, toward a more flexible model that mobilizes work-study staff distributed across various CCA departments to engage students in conversations about civic engagement.

While we still feel limited by staff capacity, we've grown to see the Coalition's diverse staff positions as a positive, allowing us to embed democratic engagement activities more deeply across departments at CCA. Coalition members have learned to redirect some of their existing funding and energy toward integrating voting related information into programs that they're already running so as not to overextend resources.

Internal Partnerships

Internal partnerships with departments within CCA are critical to the success of our voting initiatives. Of particular note are the Voting Coalition's collaborations with other Creative Citizens in Action programs, the First Year Program, and CCA's Marketing and Communications Department.

Creative Citizens in Action

While the CCA Voting Coalition organizes and implements all events directly tied to voter registration and turnout at CCA, the larger Creative Citizens in Action Initiative encourages civic engagement on campus through various other programs, outlined below. Whenever possible, especially during election years, these programs support the Voting Coalition's efforts by guaranteeing funding and course participation in voting events.

Deborah and Kenneth Novack Creative Citizens Series

By integrating civic engagement events into the Deborah and Kenneth Novack Creative Citizens Series, the Voting Coalition was able to draw on the endowment gift to plan and execute a rich series of 14 events throughout fall 2022, despite budget cuts across other areas of the college.

Curriculum Connections

"Creative Citizens" courses build students' skills in creative activism and civic engagement, and receive a special tag in CCA's Workday course registration module that allows students to search for them specifically when registering for courses. Course topics may include social justice, environmental activism, civic or political engagement, activist movements, forms of protest, social practice, community engagement, design activism, and more.

Examples include:

- Ethnic Studies 2000-6: Citizen Artists/Designers/Journalists taught by Kim Anno
- Writing 6020-2: Creative Communities: Literature & Culture of the Bay Area taught by Faith E. Adiele
- Social Science and History 2000-1: American Politics taught by Maxwell Leung
- Upper Division Interdisciplinary Elective 3000-9: Rooted: Forming Identity taught by Steve Jones

We take a multi-pronged approach in identifying courses with creative citizenship components. All faculty are invited to nominate their courses to receive the "Creative Citizens" designation and simultaneously the Voting Coalition vets the course catalog and extends invitations to select academic courses to join the program. There are an average of 40 "Creative Citizens" tagged courses over the academic year.

CCA@CCA Faculty Grants

CCA@CCA Faculty Grants are designed to support course efforts tied to civic and democratic engagement by CCA faculty. The goal of this program is to support the implementation of small-scale, immediate public-facing events, projects, or activations that aim to improve the learning experience of students and offer critical resources for civic involvement. Projects are developed as part of course curriculum and are featured in the Creative Citizens Series as well as on social media and online platforms. We have \$10,000 allocated to Faculty Grants each academic year.

CCA@CCA Teaching Modules

CCA@CCA Teaching Modules are designed to support classroom learning related to creative citizenship. They bundle videos, readings, and worksheets produced by The Creative Citizens in Action initiative, together with prompts that faculty can use to facilitate course discussions. Past modules include “What is your voting story,” which asks students to share their voting experiences and prepares them to actively participate in upcoming elections. This module is appropriate for all students, whether they are eligible or ineligible to vote.

First Year Program

For the past four years, the Voting Coalition has worked with the First Year program to develop and maintain a required Moodle module that introduces students to CCA’s Creative Accord, describes creative citizenship, shares examples of relevant student and faculty projects, and provides resources to eligible students to register to vote. Expanding this partnership is a critical part of our strategic partnership in 2024.

Marketing and Communications

The Voting Coalition maintains a Voting Resources page on the college’s intranet, which consolidates information about upcoming local and national elections, suggests ways to become more civically engaged, and links out to helpful tools, such as the League of Women Voters Education Fund’s Vote411 tool. In addition, in spring 2024, the Voting Coalition began the development of a new child page dedicated to voting on CCA@CCA’s homepage, creativecitizens.cca.edu. Both the intranet page and the CCA@CCA homepage direct members of the CCA community to CCA’s voter registration portal, presented in partnership with the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

For the past 6 years, the Coalition has partnered with the college’s Marketing and Communications department to integrate election information into its institutional communications strategy, including social media and community-wide communications. CCA shares out curated voting reminders on channels such as Instagram, and designed its own customized voting GIFs to help the community promote voting on their own social media platforms. New in spring 2024, each monthly edition of CCA’s college-wide newsletter, the “Creative Brief,” includes a “Voting 101” section, which keeps current students, faculty, staff, and alumni up-to-date on the college’s democratic engagement efforts.

Programming

Between February and June 2024, the Voting Coalition completed a “road show,” sending core members to meet with the following stakeholders across the college to update them on our progress and goals for 2024 and renew their support.

- Academic Affairs / Academic Deans
- Marketing & Communications
- Office of Student Belonging and Inclusion
- Enrollment Management & Admissions
- Residential Life
- Learning Resources
- Center for Art and Public Life
- Advancement
- Libraries
- International Student Services

Past collaborations with these internal partners have enabled the following civic engagement programs:

Voter Registration

- Voter registration information embedded in Orientation content for all incoming students
- Voter registration tabling at Orientation, Chimerapalooza (welcome week community fair and celebration), and key large events on campus
- Participation in National Voter Registration Day
- Communications from CCA President encouraging the community to register to vote

Voter Education

- Constitution Day Town Hall events
- Faculty teaching modules and toolkits emphasizing the importance of voting that includes specific and inclusive messages for DACA and international students
- Flyer and Poster campaigns

Voter Turnout

- Communications from CCA President encouraging the community to turn out to vote
- Polling Location for Precinct 7002 located on CCA's campus
- Voting artwork campaigns, including posters and voting stickers

External Partnerships

SF Department of Elections

We worked with the San Francisco Department of Elections in Spring 2022 to relocate CCA's polling place on our San Francisco campus from CCA's Main Building to the first floor of Blatter Residential Hall. CCA has hosted a polling place in every election since fall 2018 and its convenient on-campus location provides easy access for our students to vote. Blattner Hall was a polling place for the March 2024 Presidential Primary and will continue to be a polling station in 2024-2025.

In September 2023, the San Francisco Department of Elections asked a member of the CCA Voting Coalition to help jury their "I Voted!" Sticker Design Contest, alongside SF Department of Elections Staff and members of the SF Arts Commission. The jury narrowed down more than 650 design submissions from San Francisco residents. A public vote selected the winning design from nine top submissions.

Campus Vote Project, Voter Friendly Campus, and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

We submitted our first democratic engagement action plan to the Campus Vote Project, Voter Friendly Campus, and ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge programs in 2020. CCA has been designated as a Voter Friendly Campus since 2021 and has received awards from ALL IN for highly established action plans (2022, 2024), for silver or platinum-level voting rates (2018, 2020, 2022), and for "most engaged campus for college student voting" (2022, 2024). CCA's President, David Howse, has personally signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation for the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. The CCA Voting Coalition has committed to using ALL IN's branded voting portal for its voter registration efforts in fall 2024 and beyond in an effort to deepen this partnership and to improve voter registration data tracking.

California Secretary of State California University College Ballot Bowl and Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU)

Each election season, CCA participates in the California Secretary of State's University and College Ballot Bowl. In 2022, CCA was honored with the "Most Creative Approach to Register Students to Vote" award. As a result, in May 2023, the SOS and AICCU invited a representative from the CCA Voting Coalition to present campus resources and strategies to engage students, at their webinar, Enhancing Civic Engagement on College Campuses Ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election.

Short-term Goals

Goals (2024–2026)

High-Level Goals

- Increase student voting rate by 10% to 75.6% by focusing efforts on increasing turnout by 18-24 year olds.
- Increase our voter registration rate to 80% for eligible incoming students.

Additional Goals: Meet Students Where They Are

- Partner with departments across the college to provide clear voting information, registration, educational resources, and support to students in spaces where they normally operate and encourage student-to-student voting outreach.
- Identify and designate a visible and consistent physical location on campus for voter registration, education, awareness, and resources that is installed before students arrive on campus in August 2024 and is available through Election Day.

Additional Goals: Strengthen Existing Programs

- Increase student engagement in the research, planning, and execution phases of Voting Action Plan development through course collaborations and paid work-study positions.
- Raise the profile of CCA's Voting Resources page as a central resource for democratic engagement that is measured by unique views. To this page, add comprehensive resources for out-of-state students who wish to vote absentee, ensuring they understand the necessary processes, as well as resources designed for students ineligible to vote in the U.S.
- Provide \$5000 in funding to the CCA@CCA Faculty Grant Program for faculty members incorporating public activations related to voting and democratic engagement in their fall 2024 classes.
- Introduce the work of the CCA Voting Coalition to CCA's new President, secure his signature on the President's Commitment to Student Voting, and confirm support for voting-specific communications for fall 2024. Ensure these communications are inclusive of out-of-state voters and students ineligible to vote.
- Expand and diversify staff representation in the CCA Voting Coalition, with a specific focus on representation from Student Affairs, the President's Office, and the Office of Student Inclusion and Belonging.

Strategies for Implementation

Meet Students Where They Are

1. Orientation and Welcome Week
 - a. Integrate Voter Registration into the orientation and Welcome Week schedule via tabling, scheduled presentations to orientation groups during campus tours, and direct outreach.
2. Residential Education
 - a. Partner with the Resident Advisors for Peer Connections to support and engage the

approximately 400-500 residents that live within our two residential halls. We anticipate the peer-to-peer connection will provide a more targeted outreach to first-time voters who are trying to navigate the registration process and educate our international students who may not be familiar with US elections. This will involve:

- ii. Training student chimera leaders (RAs, OLs) at chimera leadership training
- iii. Providing resources and practice to the RAs having individual conversations with residents to educate and support students in the voter registration process
- iv. Posting voting information in visible locations in Residence Halls

3. First Year Program

- a. Partner with the First Year Program on an event related to voting and democratic engagement in Fall 2024 that would be a requirement of the Core First Year class that is taken by all first year students. This would allow us to directly reach all first year students in an academic setting, and give us the opportunity to provide faculty in the First Year Program with voting resources.

4. CCA Libraries

- a. Partner with the Libraries team to install a Voting Kiosk near the entrance of CCA's Simpson Library (main library) in August 2024, before students return to campus. The Voting Kiosk would include the following:
 - i. A computer station that is open to CCA's Voter Registration Webpage and gives users the option to print their application for free (a common roadblock).
 - ii. Signage provided by the Voting Coalition
 1. Voter Registration banner signage
 2. Step-by-step instructions
 3. Contact information for questions
 4. Envelopes and stamps
 5. Drop-off mailbox
- b. Library staff will be trained in summer 2024 to support voter registration. A Voting Coalition member will come to a summer 2024 staff meeting to provide training, and provide a handy FAQ document for librarians.
- c. A special display of books and periodicals related to democratic engagement and creative citizenship will be on view starting September 17, 2024 (Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day).

5. Learning Resource Center

- a. The Learning Resource Center (LRC) is a team of 10-15 CCA students (undergraduate and graduate) and faculty/staff members who serve as coaches in all academic subject areas. Voter Registration training will be delivered to the incoming cohort during Orientation Week so that LRC coaches can outreach to students regarding voter registration during initial coaching sessions.
- b. The LRC Podcast, Creative Chaos Advice, could create a student-led episode related to voting, with content support from the Voting Coalition.
- c. The LRC will repost voting messages to their departmental Instagram account

6. International Student Services

- a. Partner with the International Student Services Office to create inclusive information and opportunities for students who are not eligible to vote in the United States to be engaged in democratic engagement activities. This could include:
 - i. Posting election dates and information for students from other countries on our Voting Resources page

- ii. Creating social media messages about civic engagement, specifically geared toward students ineligible to vote

Strengthen Existing Programs

1. Masters in Design Strategy (MDes) Program
 - a. Co-design an opportunity for students to conduct research as part of a course assignment that will inform the Voting Coalition's outreach strategies related to youth voting. Topics identified by students for research via polls and student interviews include:
 - i. Reasons why non-voters may not vote
 - ii. Zones of influence related to voting
 - iii. Behaviors and trends related to news and voting information consumption
 - iv. Issues youth voters most care about
2. Work Study
 - a. Knowing how limited student free time is, we will partner with key departments across the college that train large teams of work-study students to assist with voter outreach and registration as part of their scheduled work shifts. This is a new program that will allow students who are employed on campus to receive training and be paid for their time, and will facilitate us training a larger and more diverse group of students to support student-to-student voting efforts. In addition to the aforementioned Resident Advising, Learning Resource Center and Libraries team partnerships, we will also partner with student workers employed by the Media Center, the Center for Art and Public Life, Exhibitions & Public Programming, and Campus Life. This partnership program will allow us to leverage existing work-study students who have built trust with their respective student communities.
3. Voting Resources Page
 - a. We plan to expand the content featured in CCA's voting intranet pages to include non-partisan voter education resources from partnering organizations, information about democratic engagement for international students, and a toolkit with a concise presentation deck for faculty to share with their students. We will leverage our partnership with ALL IN to provide CCA's customized voter registration portal, which provides us specific data related to voter registrations started, voter registrations completed, voter registration portal clicks, and voter registration portal hits and offers a "one-stop shop" for students registering to vote across all states. The Voting Resources Page will be available via a kiosk in a visible location in CCA's library and will be used during tabling events.
4. Tabling Engagement
 - a. As our track record has proven that we can engage between 70-100 students via tabling events, we will continue to engage students regularly with tabling events. We will strategically table during high-traffic days and in high-foot-traffic locations. In conjunction with the newly expanded campus building opening in fall 2024, we plan to host regular tabling events in the new open-air promenade space since this is likely to be highly populated with students. We will also specifically have tabling to increase voter education, voter awareness, and general information regarding the upcoming Presidential Election during key college events such as Chimera Welcome Week, Opening Weekend, National Voter Registration Day, and Constitution Day. Engaging students in high-traffic events will allow us to have a greater reach with hundreds of students who would not otherwise necessarily seek out this information on their own. Tabling events will employ a number of engaging activities ranging from expressive art-making projects to surveys and pledges to gather data on whether students are registered to vote, if they are planning to vote, and/or reasons voting is important to them.

2. Faculty Involvement

- a. We've found that direct faculty engagement with their students is an effective outreach tool. The CCA@CCA Faculty Grant program directly engages with approximately 88 students per semester who benefit from course-specific funding. In addition to offering grants to faculty who have a desire to organize democratic engagement events with their students, at the first faculty meeting in the fall, a representative from the Voting Coalition will share toolkit information with faculty members and encourage them to talk with their students about registering to vote in the first weeks of classes. Additional faculty outreach will take place with the First Year Program, and we are planning to partner with faculty specifically on Constitution Day programming.

3. Voting Coalition

- a. We are working to build a Voting Coalition that includes a diverse group of individuals from departments across the college with a focus on consistent staff representation to help balance out the faculty and students who turn over more frequently. As staff leave the college or rotate off, we continue to recruit new members. In 2024-2026, we are focusing on new staff representation from Student Affairs, the President's Office, and the Office of Student Inclusion and Belonging
- b. To secure faculty representation, we have created a paid faculty coordinatorship position, the CCA@CCA Faculty Coordinatorship, to help recruit and compensate a faculty leader for their time and efforts related to supporting democratic engagement during key election years, such as 2024.
- c. For students, we have been working to connect to course curricula, such as the Masters in Design Strategy research course, to create opportunities for students to conduct research and programs as part of course participation.



Provost Tammy Rae Carland, Former President Stephen Beal, CIO Mara Hancock, and Director of Undergraduate Program Management, Academic Services, & Curricular Events John Jenkins visit a voter registration table staffed by Voting Coalition Members Stephaine Villanova, Jaime Austin, and Bryndis Hafthorsdottir, fall 2023.

Long-Term Goals

Goals (5-year)

- Identify concrete opportunities in CCA’s upcoming strategic planning process (beginning in January 2025) for addressing and strengthening civic learning and democratic engagement.
- Thanks to partnerships with the Office of Student Belonging and Inclusion, Vice President of DEIB, and others, voter turnout among students of color will match that of white students.
- Partner with the Marketing & Communications department to incorporate creative citizenship and democratic engagement into CCA’s Mission/Values page on cca.edu.
- By 2028, develop relationships with two additional community organizations in adjacent San Francisco neighborhoods related to voting and democratic engagement.
- Include a civic engagement module in student orientations (work is already being done, but we are working toward long-term commitment).
- Increase engagement with faculty teaching “Creative Citizens” tagged courses by providing opportunities for them to apply for funding to support course outcomes, offering a class visit by a member of the Voting Coalition to talk about voting, and providing toolkits and support for democratic engagement.

The CCA Voting Coalition’s Impact and Future

The CCA Voting Coalition, though small, wields significant influence thanks to its core members’ extensive institutional knowledge—three of its five staff members have worked at CCA for six or more years and have served on the Coalition since its inception in 2018. Representing a diverse array of departments, the Coalition effectively utilizes existing resources and leverages strong connections with internal partners, including senior leadership, to enhance civic engagement on campus. The Coalition also benefits from diverse input from faculty and students, which fosters fresh ideas and ensures accountability. This broad support has cultivated a pervasive voting culture across the college, as evidenced by accolades from Voter Friendly Campus, the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, and the SOS Ballot Bowl. Despite staffing, funding, and facility shortages, the Coalition has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, solidifying its impact and ensuring its longevity in promoting civic participation.



Event Requirements

Fall 2024–Summer 2025

August 19–23, 2024: Chimera Welcome Week

The CCA Voting Coalition will engage incoming students by tabling at high-traffic events during Orientation Week, known at CCA as Chimera Welcome Week. In addition to registering students to vote and helping them request absentee ballots, we will employ a number of engaging activities ranging from expressive art making projects to surveys and pledges in order to gather data on if students are registered to vote, if they are planning to vote, and/or reasons voting is important to them.

September 17, 2024: National Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day

National Voter Registration Day in 2022 and 2023 helped us increase the visibility of voter registration opportunities on campus. In 2024, National Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day are both on September 17, 2024 so this event will continue to be a main focus of the Coalition. Professors Chris Treggiari (First Year Program) and Michael Wertz (Illustration Program) will guide students, staff, and faculty through screen printing voting t-shirts and posters, while members of the CCA Voting Coalition help students register to vote and request absentee ballots. Daniel Ransom of the CCA Libraries will staff a pop-up library of books on the constitution and the intersection of art and politics.

October 19, 2024: CCA Campus Opening Celebrations

As a part of a menu of public events on October 19th, celebrating the official opening of CCA's expanded campus, Professors Chris Treggiari and Michael Wertz will reprise their voting merch screen printing workshops, and Fall 2024 CCA@CCA Faculty Grant recipients Natalie Pellolio (History of Art and Visual Culture Program) and Isabel Samaras (Illustration Program) will present exhibitions of student-designed "get out the vote" posters.

October 23, 2024: Drag & Democracy

Honey Mahogany was the inaugural Executive Director of San Francisco's Transgender District, and is a founding queen of Drag Story Hour. Honey and surprise guests will kick off the Fall 2024 Deborah and Kenneth Novack Creative Citizens Series with a performance and panel discussion on drag, democracy, and what it means to be a "creative citizen."

November 5, 2024: Polling Location

CCA will host an official polling place in Blattner Residence Hall on Election Day.

November 5, 2024: Election Watch Party

CCA@CCA Faculty Grant recipient Maxwell Leung (Critical Ethnic Studies Program) and his students will host an election watch party in CCA's Makers Cafe.

