

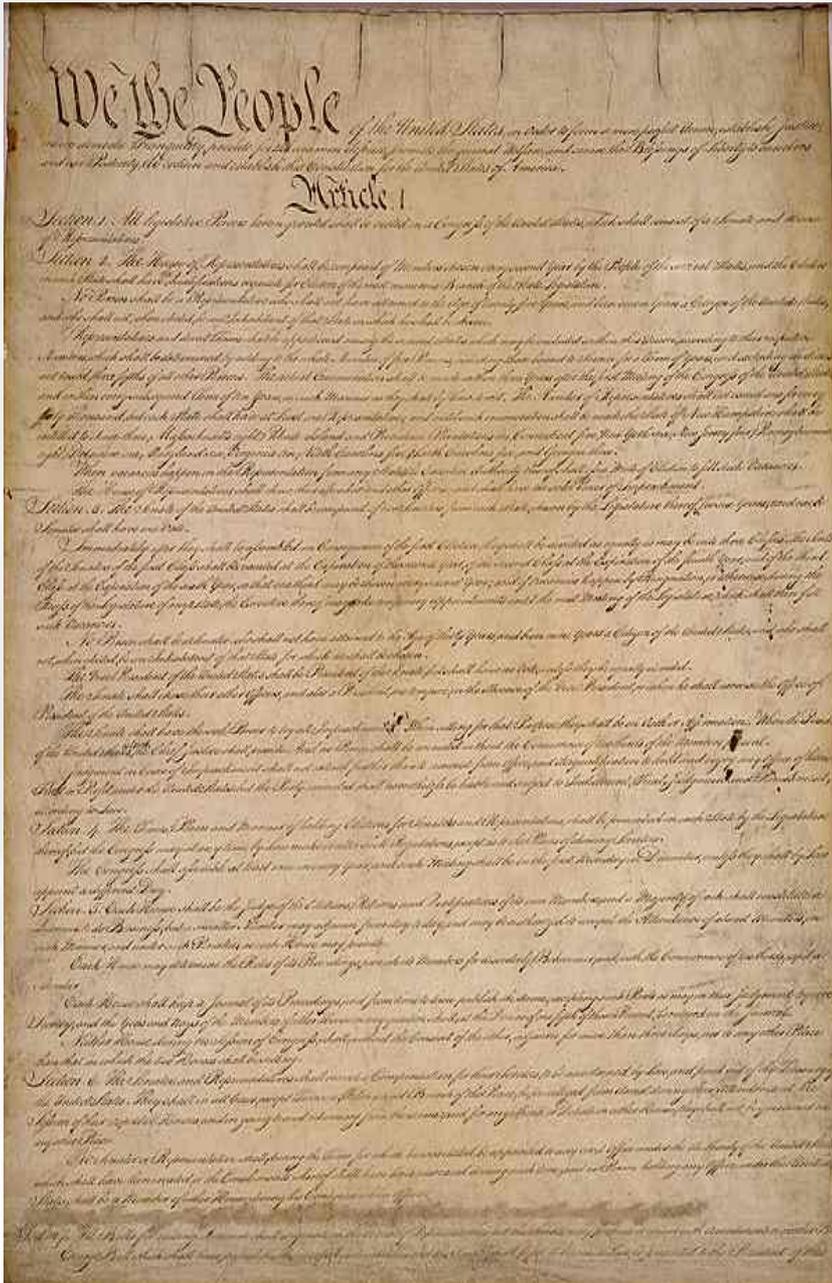
# American Democracy Project



## **Developing Informed and Engaged Citizens: The Imperative for Higher Education**

**Illinois State University**

**10 January 2007**



**We the People** of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity...

# **So How Are We Doing?**

## **Civic Health Index September 2006**

**“Steep declines over the past 30 years.”**

## **Saguaro Seminar 2000**

**“Without strong habits of social and political participation, (America is) at risk of losing the very norms, networks, and institutions of civic life that have made us the most emulated and respected nation in history.”**

## **National Commission on Civic Renewal**

**1998 “America turning into a nation of spectators.”**

## Dewey reminded us...

“The trouble...is that we have taken our democracy for granted; we have thought and acted as if our forefathers had founded it once and for all. We have forgotten that it has to be enacted anew in every generation.”

*John Dewey*



# Why the Concern About Declining Levels of Citizenship?

- The global problems we confront are more ominous: global pandemics, global warming, terrorism, the viability of the nation-state
- The national problems we confront are more insistent: political polarization, health care, growing divide between rich and poor, role of science v. religion

In a democracy, we must have an educated and engaged citizenry if we are to address these issues effectively.



# Recent Threats to American Democracy

- Decline in social capital
- Increasing inequality
- Atomization of interests, news sources, and the pervasive focus on entertainment
- The role of money in politics
- Increasing partisanship
- Lack of civic understanding and civics education in K-12 and college
- Decline in political participation, especially among the youngest adults

# A Decline in Social Capital

## Declining Social Capital: Trends over the last 25 years

Attending Club Meetings                      ↓ Down by 58%

Family dinners                                    ↓ Down by 33%

Having friends over                            ↓ Down by 45%

## Factors Contributing to Declining Social Capital

Commuting (Each 10 minutes = 10% reduced participation)

Television

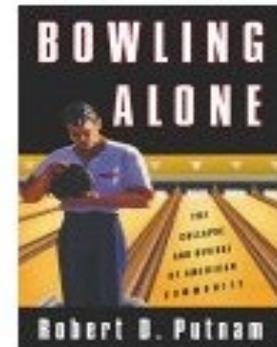
Two parents working

**Less Social Capital (esp. bridging social capital) =**

**Less Democracy**

Studies in the United States and Italy

Robert Putnam [Bowling Alone](#)



*aascu*

# Increasing Inequality

- Disparities of income, wealth, and access to opportunity are growing more sharply in the U. S. than in many other nations.
- People with wealth are “roaring with a clarity and consistency that public officials readily hear and routinely follow.” Citizens “with lower or moderate incomes are speaking with a whisper.”
- Progress toward American ideals of democracy may have stalled, and in some arenas reversed.

*American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality, Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, American Political Science Association, 2004, [www.apsanet.org](http://www.apsanet.org)*

# The Economist

## **Corporate Compensation in the U.S.**

- 30 years ago: Average compensation, top 100 CEOs, 30 times the pay of average workers
- Today: 1,000 times the pay of average workers

## **School Systems**

Increasingly stratified by social class in which poor children attend school with fewer resources.

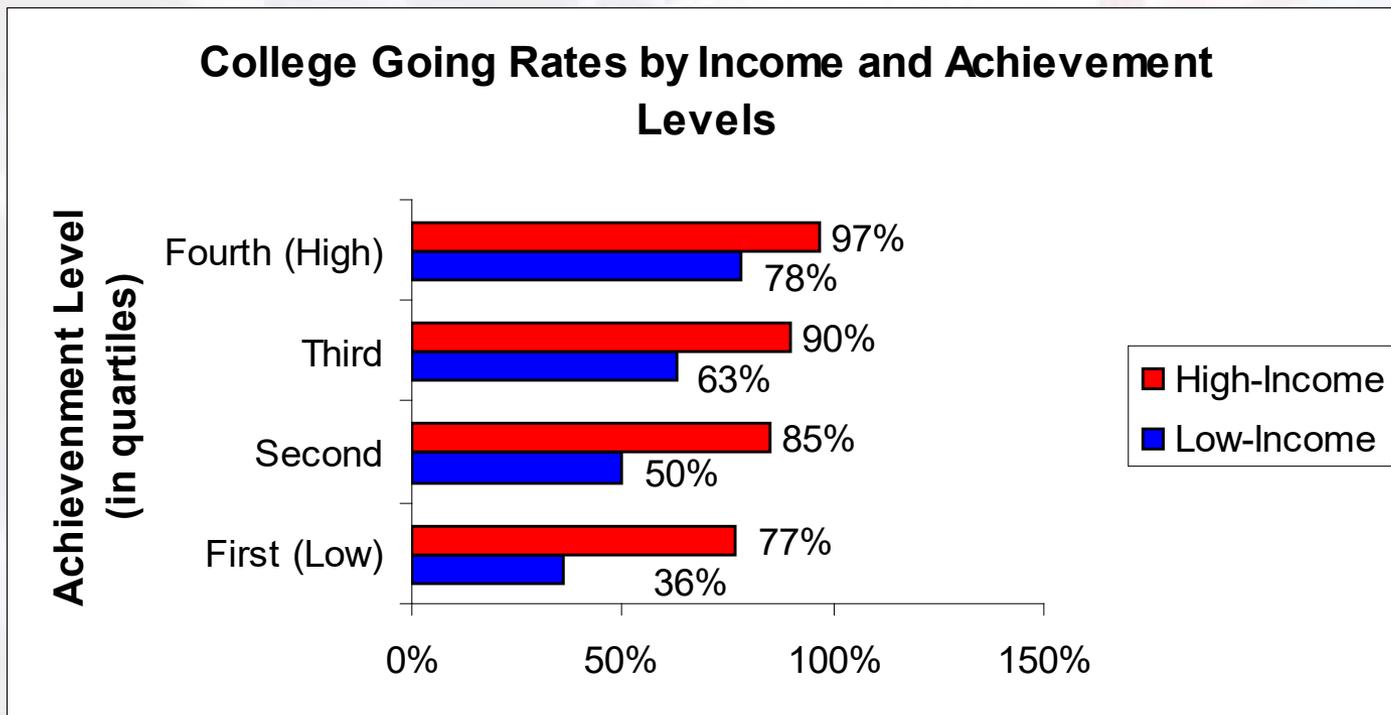
## **Universities**

Increasingly reinforcing rather than reducing educational inequalities.

**December 2004**

*aascu*

# Reinforcing Inequality



Highest achieving low-income students attend college at same rate as lowest achieving high income students. (Data taken from Promise Abandoned, report by the Education Trust, August 2006)

52% of federal aid, \$ 45 billion, not based on need. 34% of federal tuition and fee deductions go to families with incomes above \$100,000.

**Education Trust September 2006**

# Atomization of Interests, News Sources and the Pervasive Focus on Entertainment

- Lobbyists: The # registered lobbyists in Washington has more than doubled since 2000 from 16,342 to 34,750.
- News Sources: More television channels (100 channels per household), more talk radio (repeal of FCC fairness doctrine in 1987), internet, 60 million blogs, etc.
- Newspapers: 58% in 1994, 42% today. Nightly network news: 18 yr olds 18%; over 65 yrs old 56%.
- Entertainment: 40 million watched American Idol finale; 37 million watched 2<sup>nd</sup> Bush/Gore debate.

# Money and Politics

Presidential elections

2000 Total = \$ 327 million

2004 Total = \$ 545 Million

60 % increase in 4 years

- .09 % of population gives at least \$ 1,000 to political campaigns,  
55% of funds raised
  - 1/4 of Congress are millionaires; 1% of U.S.

*“The sad thing is that in America today if it’s going to take **\$2 million** to win, then normal people can’t run anymore. You either have to be very, very wealthy or very, very bought.”*

*Janice Bowling, Republican Nominee from Tennessee*

# Increased Levels of Partisanship

- Creates a climate of us versus them
- Contrasts drawn in black and white
- More focus on extreme positions
- Lack of a focus on shared solutions
- More of a focus on winning / losing
- Makes politics increasingly bitter
- Makes compromise increasingly difficult

Example:

Distrust in others is rising yet voter participation is increasing.

Are we voting only to protect personal interests?

**Where is the WE in “We, the People...”**

# Partisanship

## Most Believable News Sources\*

<i>Republicans</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Democrats</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Independents</i>	<i>%</i>
Fox News.....	29	CNN.....	45	60 Minutes.....	29
CNN.....	26	60 Minutes.....	42	CNN.....	28
60 Minutes.....	25	C-Span.....	36	C-Span.....	26
Wall St Jrnl.....	23	ABC News.....	34	U.S. News.....	26
C-Span.....	22	CBS News.....	34	NBC News.....	24
Local News.....	21	NPR.....	33	NewsHour.....	24
Assoctd Press.....	12	Assoctd Press.....	29		
NY Times.....	14	NY Times.....	31		
Time.....	15	Time.....	30		
USA Today.....	14	USA Today.....	25		

**\* Percentage who believe all or most of what the organization reports. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press: “News Audiences Increasingly Politicized” 2004**

**So who will we turn to make  
sure these issues of  
democracy get addressed?**

**The 18-25 year olds...  
the net generation.**

# Lack of Civic Knowledge

**“Young Americans are strikingly uninformed or misinformed about important aspects of politics and current events.”**

**CIRCLE survey of 2,232 people aged 15-25 found that:**

- **53% don't know that only citizens can vote**
- **30% can name a single member of the Cabinet**
- **34% know that U.S. holds a permanent UN Security Council seat**

**On NAEP 1998 Civics, 23% of 4<sup>th</sup> graders, 23% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and 26% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders scored at or above proficient.**

Source: National Civic and Health Survey, 2006.



**CIRCLE**  
The Center for Information & Research  
on Civic Learning & Engagement

# Lack of Civic Understanding

- **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Survey**  
**112,003 high school students in 2004: 36% believe**  
**that newspapers should get “government approval”**  
**of stories before publishing.**
- **Fewer than half of persons 15-26 years old think that**  
**communicating with elected officials, volunteering, or**  
**donating money to help others are qualities of a good**  
**citizen.**

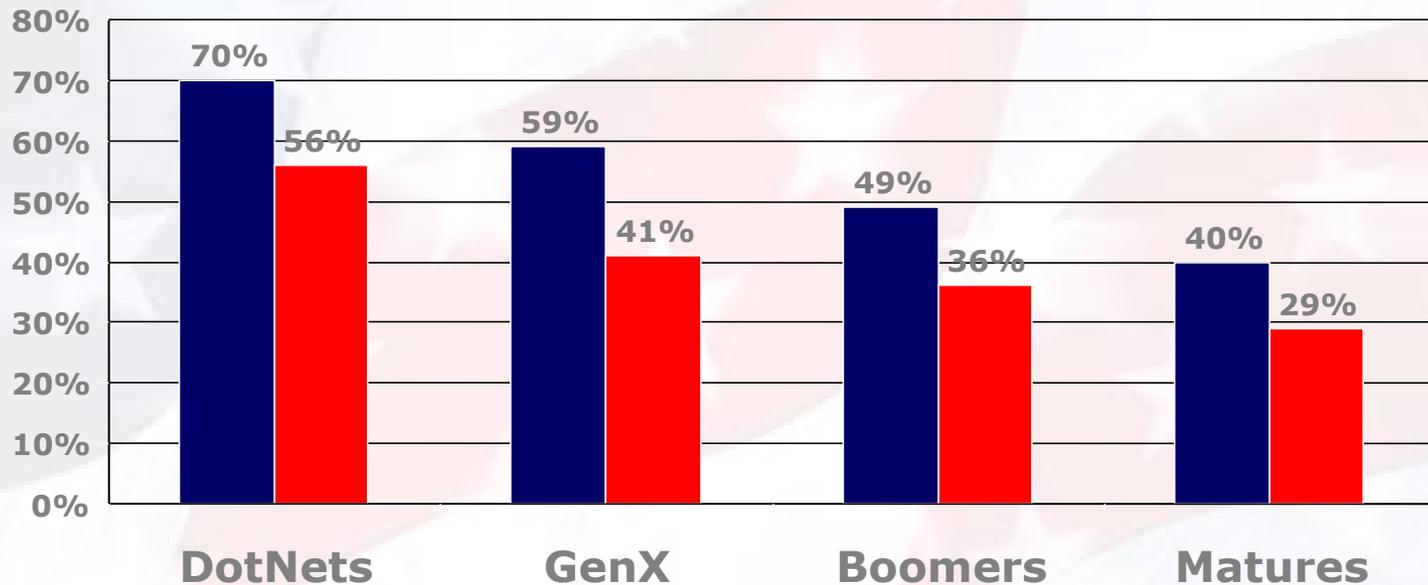
# **Findings from the Intercollegiate Studies Report (ISI) The Coming Crisis in Citizenship**

- 1. America's universities fail to increase knowledge about America's history and institutions**
- 2. Prestige doesn't pay off**
- 3. Students don't learn what colleges don't teach**
- 4. Greater civic learning is linked to more active citizenship**

(Survey of 14, 000 students, 50 colleges) Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI), The Coming Crisis in Citizenship, September 26, 2006

# Decline in Trust

The youngest generation of voters has the greatest distrust of others



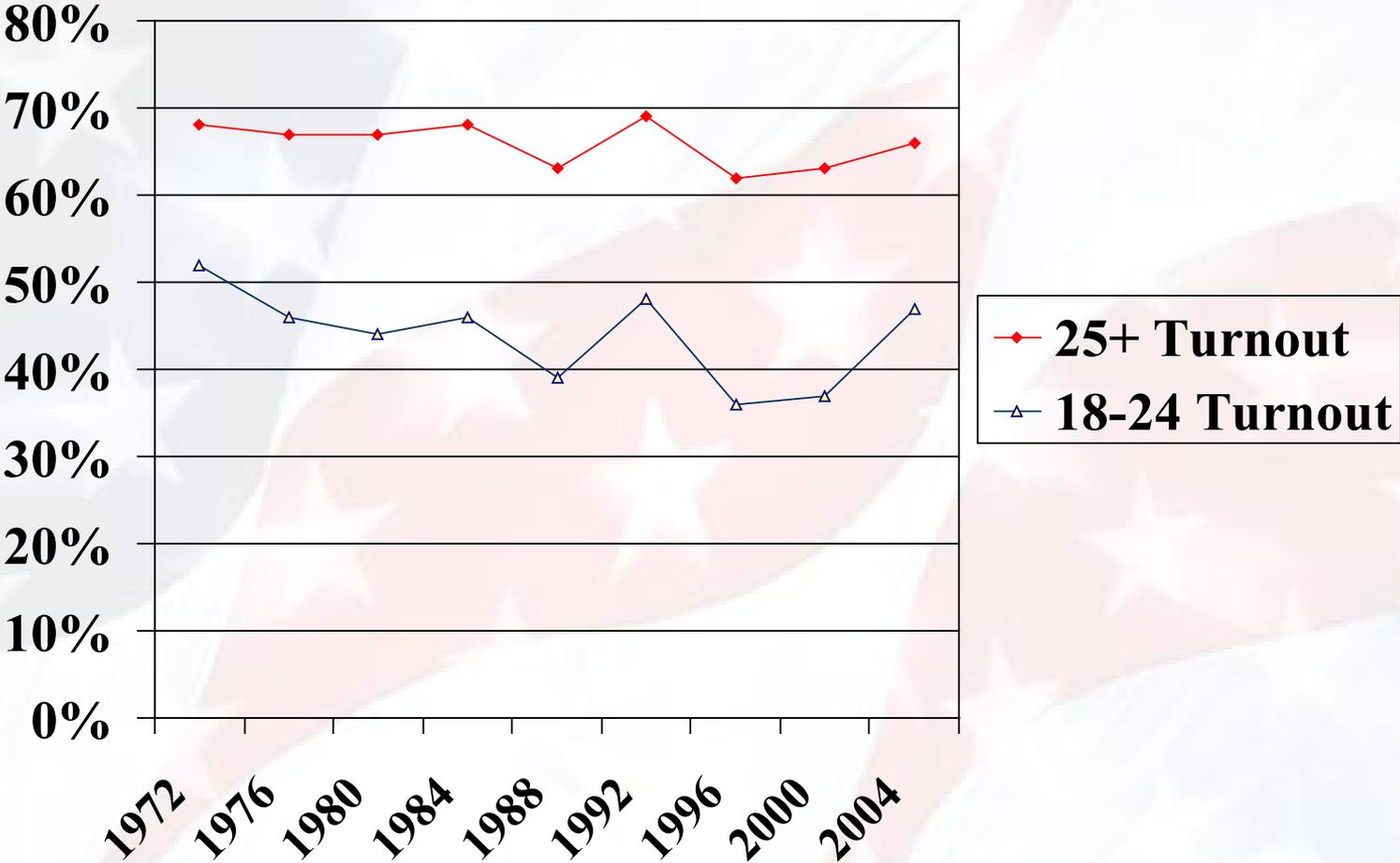
■ **Most people look out for themselves**  
■ **Most people would take advantage of you**

Source: The Civic and Political Health of the Nation, A Generational Portrait, 2002.



**CIRCLE**  
The Center for Information & Research  
on Civic Learning & Engagement

# The youngest voters have the lowest participation in presidential elections



Source: Current Population Survey (CPS), November Supplement, calculated using CIRCLE method.



**CIRCLE**  
The Center for Information & Research  
on Civic Learning & Engagement



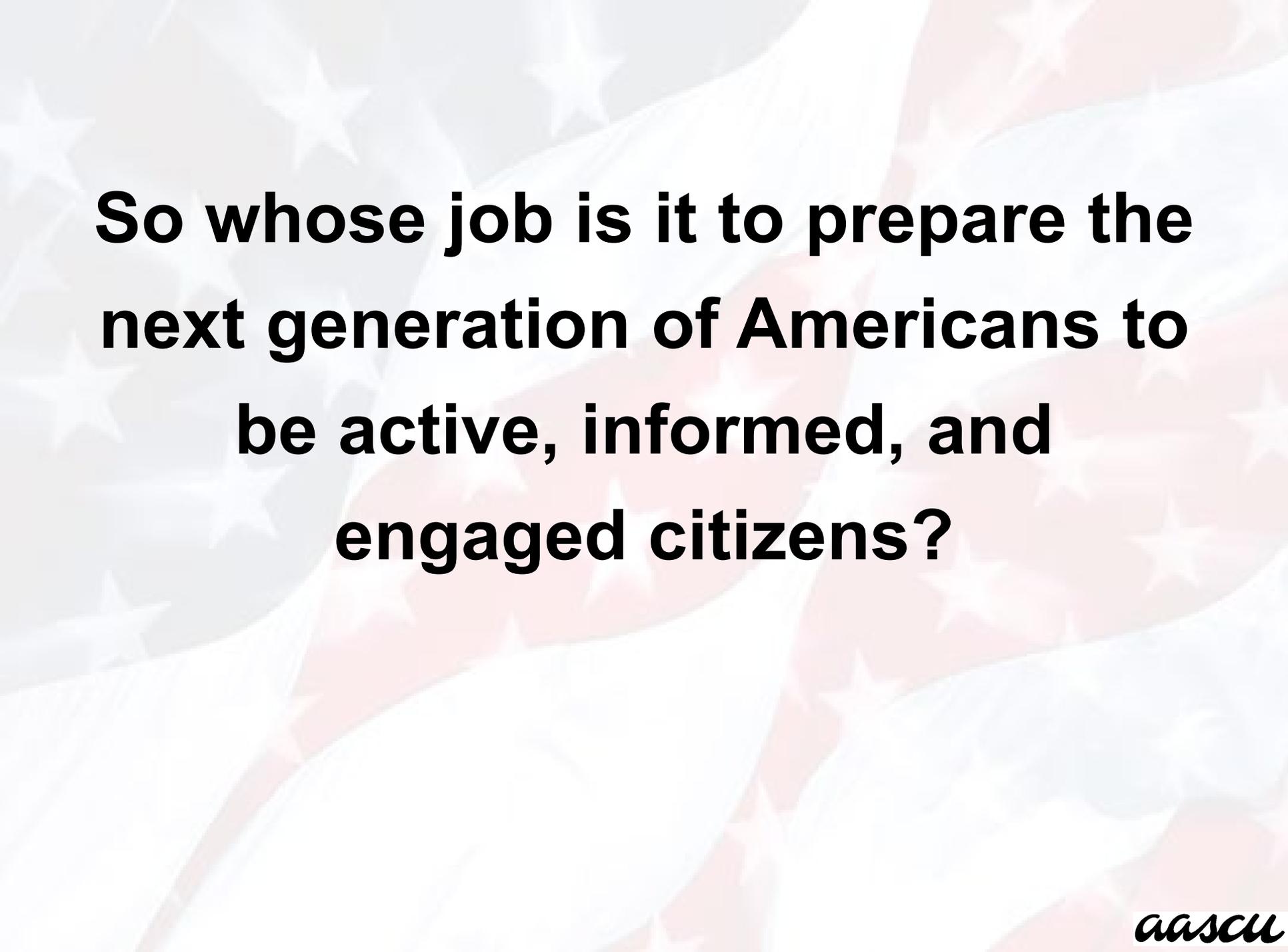
**But do we really want them involved?**

**Do we really want them to vote?**

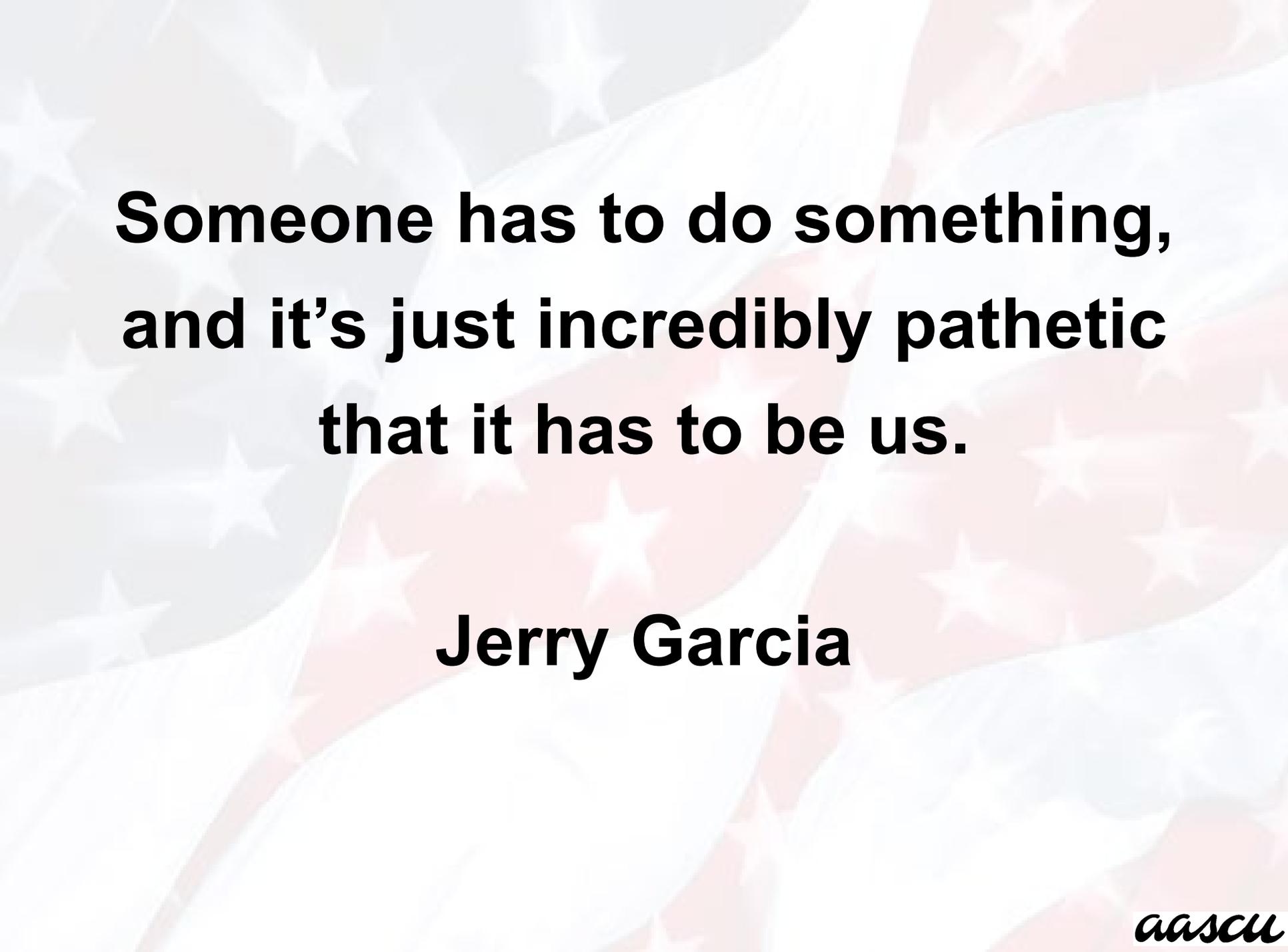
AIR/Pew Study (January 2006)

More than 50% of students at 4 year colleges do not score at the “proficient level of literacy.”

That means that they cannot compare credit card offers with different interest rates or summarize the arguments in newspaper editorials.

The background of the slide is a stylized, semi-transparent American flag. The stars and stripes are visible but faded, creating a patriotic backdrop for the text.

**So whose job is it to prepare the  
next generation of Americans to  
be active, informed, and  
engaged citizens?**

The background of the slide is a faded, high-angle view of the United States flag, showing the stars and stripes in a soft, light tone.

**Someone has to do something,  
and it's just incredibly pathetic  
that it has to be us.**

**Jerry Garcia**

# **19 Measures of Civic Engagement**

## **Civic Measures**

- **Community problem solving**
- **Regular Volunteering**
- **Active Group Membership**
- **Participation in fundraising run/walk/ride**
- **Other fundraising**

# **19 Measures of Civic Engagement (cont'd)**

## **Electoral Measures**

- **Regular Voting**
- **Persuading Others**
- **Displaying buttons, signs, stickers**
- **Campaign Contributions**
- **Volunteering for a candidate or political organization**

# **19 Measures of Civic Engagement (cont'd)**

## **Indicators of Political Voice**

- **Contacting Officials**
- **Contacting the Print Media**
- **Contacting the Broadcast Media**
- **Protesting**
- **Signed E-mail petitions**
- **Signed Written petitions**
- **Boycotting**
- **Buycotting**
- **Canvassing**

The background of the slide is a stylized, semi-transparent American flag. The stars and stripes are visible but faded, creating a patriotic backdrop for the text.

**What Are The Strategies We  
Are Using To Address  
Declining Civic Engagement?**

# **A Focus on Institutional Intentionality**

**How Do Campus Leaders Organize and Align  
the Campus and its Resources  
to Achieve Specific Institutional Outcomes?**

**How Do We Create A National Movement to  
Support Campuses?**

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS FIRST THREE YEARS

## American Democracy Project

219 institutions, 1.6+ million students

### Meetings

- 4 National meetings  
*1,000+ participants*
- 11 Regional meetings  
*500 + participants*

### Conceptual Design Process

- Wingspread Conference  
*40 participants, publication*

### Assessment Project

- National Survey of Student Engagement questionnaire  
*32 institutions, 13,000+ students*

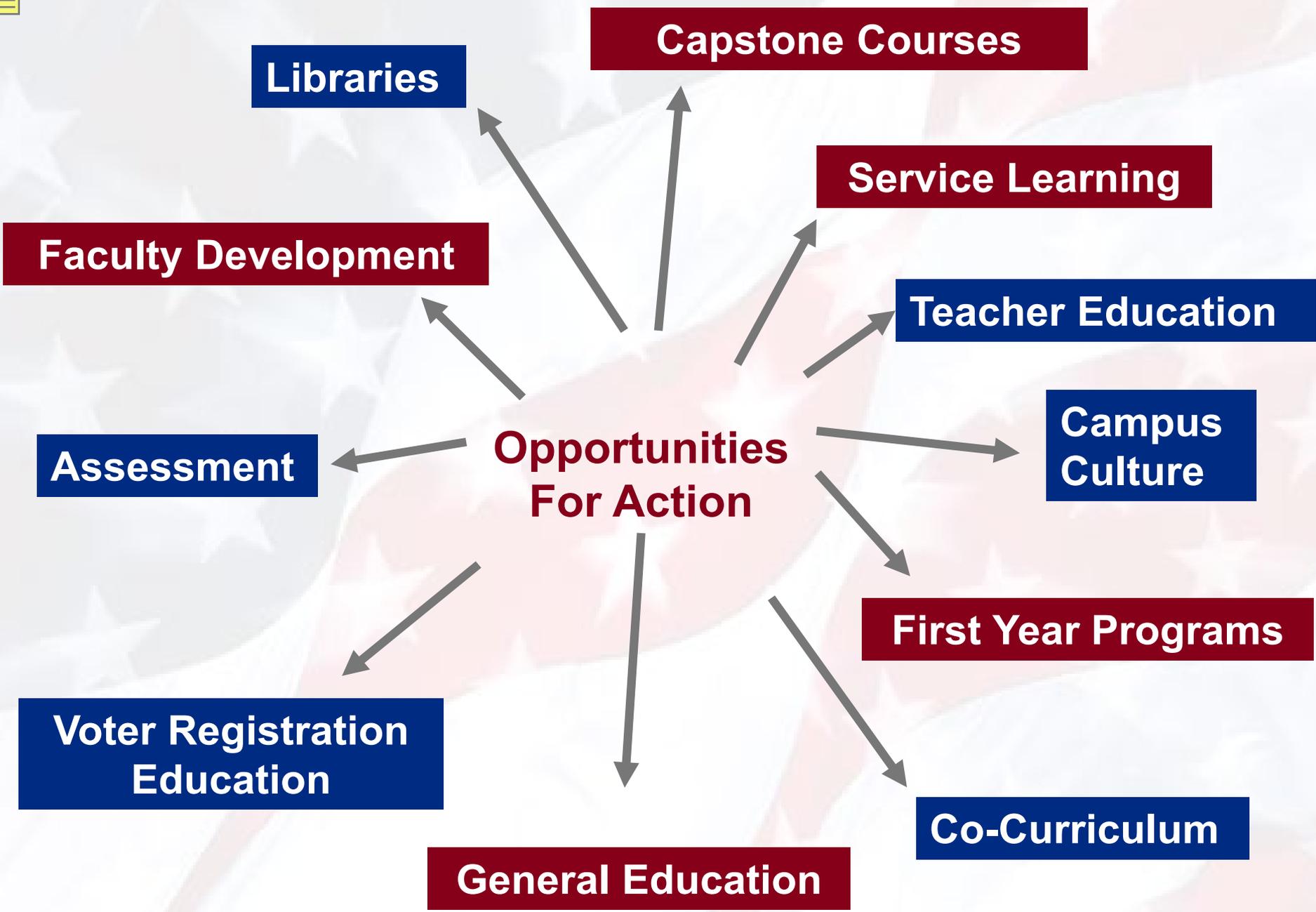
### Programs

- IUPUI meeting on Civic Engagement  
*105 participants*
- “Inside The Times”  
*270 participants, 2 years*
- Civic Engagement in Action Series launched
- Young Voter Strategies and monograph on voting published

# Hundreds of Campus Projects

- ✓ Campus Audits
- ✓ Campus Conversations
- ✓ Voter Education/Registration Projects
- ✓ Curriculum Revision Projects
- ✓ Library Projects
- ✓ First Year Projects, Capstone Courses
- ✓ Fine Arts Projects, Graduation Pledges
- ✓ Speaker Series, Democracy Day
- ✓ Recognition and Award Programs

**A recent Google search = 76,000 entries for term  
“American Democracy Project”**



**Libraries**

**Capstone Courses**

**Service Learning**

**Faculty Development**

**Teacher Education**

**Assessment**

**Campus Culture**

**Opportunities For Action**

**First Year Programs**

**Voter Registration Education**

**Co-Curriculum**

**General Education**

# **A New Series Civic Engagement in Action**

5 Initiatives Currently Underway

- Stewardship of Public Lands
- Political Engagement Project
- Jury Service
- Electoral Voices
- 7 Revolutions

# The Stewardship of Public Lands

**Issue:** How are controversies over public lands resolved in a democracy? What roles can/do citizens play? How do universities create programs that educate, inform, and engage students?

**Partner:**

YELLOWSTONE ASSOCIATION

**Activities:**

2005 Wolf Reintroduction



2006: Politics and the  
Yellowstone Ecosystem.  
8 states, 14 campuses

# Political Engagement Project: Campus Phase

**Issue:** How can political engagement be fostered and encouraged in colleges and universities? How can campuses develop civic knowledge and understanding, active involvement, an increased sense of political efficacy and identity, and skills of democratic participation?

**Partner:**  The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

**Activities:** 8 campuses have been selected to work with Tom Ehrlich and his colleagues at Carnegie

**Monograph:** *The New York Times* and First Year Center will produce a monograph in 2008



# Jury Service as Democratic Participation

**Issue:** How can colleges and universities support federal and state court systems in encouraging jury participation?

**Partner:** National Center for State Courts; Council for Court Excellence

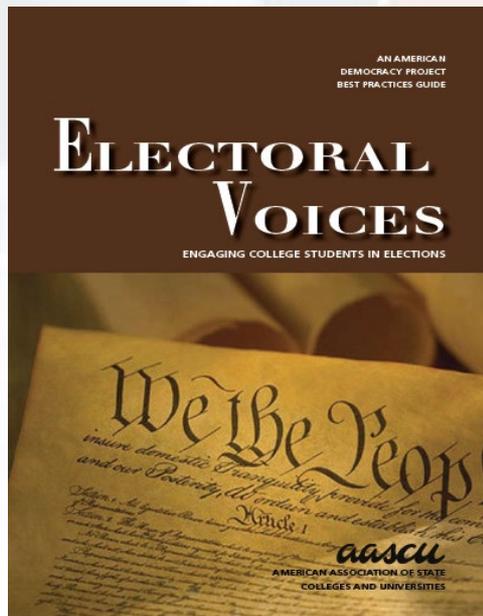


**Activities: 2005-2006:** Activities underway on 11 campuses

# Electoral Voice: Organizing for Voting

**Issue:** What are the best strategies for campuses to use to encourage voter registration, voter information, and voter participation ?

**Partners:** ADP member institutions, the Graduate School of Political Management at The George Washington University, and Pew Charitable Trusts



**Activities:** Monograph Electoral Voices: Engaging College Students in Elections published in September 2006

Young Voter Strategies project underway, seeking to register 50,000 new voters for the November 2006 elections.



## **7 revolutions that will change our world between now and 2025:**

- (1) Population;
- (2) Resource management;
- (3) Technology innovation & diffusion;
- (4) Information and knowledge creation and dissemination;
- (5) Economic integration;
- (6) Conflict;
- (7) Governance

# 7 Revolutions Initiative

**Issue:** How can we prepare undergraduates to be knowledgeable and engaged citizens about global issues?

**Partner:** Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington, DC (a strategic think tank founded in 1962) and *The New York Times*

**Activities:** Meeting in late September 2006 in Washington, DC with 8 participating ADP campuses. Creation of a series of materials and curriculum objects for use on campus, converting materials designed for policy makers to use on campuses.

[http://www.7revs.org/sevenrevs\\_content.html](http://www.7revs.org/sevenrevs_content.html)

# What does it take to create civically-engaged graduates?

## 3 Critical Features:

### **Institutional Intention**

(leadership, culture, policies)

### **Programs and Activities**

(curriculum, co-curriculum)

### **Measuring Results**

(institutional and course/ program results, using NSSE, Carnegie, HERI tools)

# Institutional Intentionality

- Leadership: at many different levels
- Culture: reflecting widely-shared beliefs
- Statements: Mission statements
- Accreditation and promotional documents
- Materials, etc.
- Policies
- Administrative structures
- Budget
- Rewards and recognition

# Programs and Activities

**Knowledge:** Teaching democratic values, traditions, history of democracies, U.S. history.

**Skills:** Teaching communications, critical thinking, collective decision-making, organizational skills, etc.

**Experiences:** Designing campus and community experiences for knowledge and application.

**Reflection:** Creating explicit connections between experiences and civic obligations.

# Knowledge

## **History of the United States**

What is the history of the U.S. that all undergraduates need to know? What are the themes and issues? What would you use as a measure of completion?

## **Principles of Democracy**

What are the core principles of democracy that all undergraduates must understand? What is the irreducible list of books that must be read? What would you use as a test of democratic principles?

# Skills

**Communications:** writing, speaking, etc.

**Critical thinking:** analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, etc.

**Collective decision-making:** deliberating, listening, working as a team, making collective decisions, compromising, identifying and solving public problems

**Organization:** organizing, planning projects, influencing policy decisions, implementing policy decisions, taking collective actions

# Hypothesized Skill Acquisition Sequence

## Collective decision making sequence

- Write and speak\*
- Understand, explain and take positions+
- Organize tasks and acquire resources\*\*
- Express own preferences/Opinions\*  
Identify constructive ways to improve complex  
Situations+
- Understand other's preferences++
- Compromise (if necessary) for collective good++

\*Communication \*\*Organization +Critical Thinking ++Collective  
Decision Making

*Adapted from Kirlin, Mary 2003. Acquiring Civic Skills: Towards a Developmental Model of Civic Skill Acquisition in Adolescents. International Conference on Civic Education Research,*

# Experiences

What are the experiences on and off campus that could be designed to foster citizenship understanding?

What might be involved?

Group work, experiences with diversity, community, leadership, compromise, struggle, imperfect conclusions, other?

# Reflection

How could reflection be built into the curriculum to foster deeper understanding, self-awareness, and greater conviction?

Who would be involved? Faculty, other students, community members, others?

## **Where are knowledge, skills, experiences, and reflection found in the curriculum?**

In first year programs

In capstone courses

In the general education curriculum

In majors and minors

## **Where are knowledge, skills, experiences, and reflection found in the co-curriculum?**

In student government

In student organizations

In residence halls

In joint academic affairs/student affairs programs

# Measuring Results

**What are the metrics you would use to assess civic engagement in undergraduates?**

**At least three sets of measures:**

1. Knowledge and understanding
2. Activities and behaviors
3. Attitudes and perceptions

**Types of measures:**

1. National and local tests
2. Self report data on behaviors
3. Political efficacy scales
4. Other tools

## Some Interesting Facts

1. Participation in democratically run student organizations...a more powerful predictor of future political participation than taking courses in American politics or political science.
2. The more courses a student takes in science or engineering, the less they participate politically.
3. The more courses a student takes in business, the less they engage in community service, vote, or try to influence the political process
4. Students who spend time volunteering during college become more convinced that individuals can change society, feel more committed to effecting social change, and develop stronger leadership skills.

# What does it take to create civically-engaged graduates?

## 3 Critical Features:

### **Institutional Intention**

(leadership, culture, policies)

### **Programs and Activities**

(curriculum, co-curriculum)

### **Measuring Results**

(institutional and course/ program results, using NSSE, Carnegie, HERI tools)



A row of seven diverse graduates in black caps and gowns, looking forward. The graduates include a woman of South Asian descent, a man of African descent with glasses, a woman of European descent with glasses, a woman of African descent, a woman of European descent, a man of Latin American descent, and a man of European descent with curly hair.

400 Public Colleges and Universities  
**Delivering America's Promise**

**aaau**

**American Association of State Colleges And Universities**