Infusion of Civic Engagement Into the Curriculum
School of Communication, Illinois State University

ABSTRACT
ISU is one of approximately 250 institutions involved with the American Democracy Project (ADP) and one of twelve involved with the Political Engagement Project (PEP). The School of Communication (SoC) is an important element for civic and political engagement. To continue to impact these areas, the SoC must integrate curriculum, provide training and resources for faculty and students, and foster scholarship to assess student learning and develop relevant coursework.

Funded by a grant from the Cross Endowed Chair for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the purpose of this assessment is to advance the discipline and the SoC by expanding the role of communication in civic and political engagement through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

METHOD
This project began in the fall 2008 semester in undergraduate courses in the SoC at ISU. This sample includes over 400 students spread evenly between the control and experimental groups. The survey tool, adapted from the Carnegie Foundation measured indicators of student engagement including political skill, motivation to engage in politics, political knowledge, and affective learning.

Coursework in the experimental group represented infusion of content designed to enhance student engagement in one or more of the following areas: Public Opportunity, Responsible Citizenship, Knowledge Formation, Diverse and Global Perspectives, and Democratic Awareness. As part of the experimental design, instructors attended a series of training workshops designed to enhance their instruction in civic and political engagement.

RESULTS
• Affective Learning
Students in the experimental sections reported liking the content, instructor, and course in greater numbers than in the control sections. Students also reported that they were more likely to engage in the learned behaviors and take another course of similar skill content.

• Perceived Engagement
Students in the experimental sections perceived the course content to be strongly correlated with the Civic Engagement Learning Objectives

• Communication Skills
Students in the experimental sections reported having increased communications abilities as a result of the course.