



GOALS FOR THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR POLITICAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

SUBMITTED BY: THE NEW HAMPSHIRE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS AT SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE

ELECTIVE POLITICS

The Institute has capitalized on the importance of the New Hampshire primary and the frequent visits of the major presidential candidates to the state. Our efforts in elective politics are focused on two areas: candidate education/familiarity and voter registration/GOTV.

Candidate Education. For the past year, the Institute's staff has developed good relationships with key presidential campaign staffers. Those relationships, combined with our first-class facility and proximity to campaign headquarters and the Manchester Airport, make the Institute an attractive and important stop for the campaigns. We seek to cover the spectrum of candidate appearances ranging from classroom lectures, to policy addresses in the auditorium to informal luncheons, to pivotal announcements and kick-offs. We think this type of range helps students see and understand the candidates in different settings. In addition to opportunities for students to hear what candidates' policy positions are, students also want to get a sense for a candidate's personality and style. We ensure that our students introduce the candidates; get to meet and spend one on one time with the candidate before/after the talks in the green room; and that students are able to ask their questions first during the question and answer period following the candidates' talk. Since January 2003, the following candidates have made appearances at the Institute: Rev. Sharpton; Gov. Dean (three times); Sen. Edwards (two times); Sen. Lieberman; Rep. Kucinich; Rep. Gephardt; Gen. Clark.

In addition to individual candidate visits, we coordinated *America's Youth Forum 2004*, a nationwide civic engagement program designed to provide voting-age students with the opportunity to research public policy issues of significance to them, and to formulate thought-provoking questions to be asked of the democratic presidential candidates, in a series of live forums at the New Hampshire Institute of Politics. We partnered with USA TODAY on this program that reached 8,000 students in 40 states.

Voter Registration. Guided by the research showing that voter registration is most effective when it is done peer-to-peer, the NHIOP started the Near Peer program for the November 2002 elections. Near Peer was designed to help college students reach, register, and engage high school seniors as future voters. Near Peer connected a pair of Saint Anselm students with a local class of 20-30 high school seniors. Upon developing a relationship with interested teachers of high school seniors, Saint Anselm students worked in the classroom on educating and motivating the high school students to register to vote.

Our focus for the 2004 elections will be registering Saint Anselm students. To achieve early success, we will start with a discrete and manageable sized project: for the NH Primary on January 27, we will be focus on registering those students who are from NH (as it is a bit less complicated than registering out of state students.) From there, we will expand voter registration (and get out the vote efforts) for the November 2004 general election. While we

will hold standard voter registration drives, our approach will rely more on field organizing. We will use our NHIOP Ambassadors (about 25 students) to register their peers. Each Ambassador will be responsible for registering 20 students. The Ambassadors will go through training from NHIOP staff and receive a Voter Registration Coordinator kit that will include NH voter registration rules; contact information for their 20 peers; appropriate domicile and citizenship affidavits; town clerk contact information; absentee voter request forms. Because our college is a relatively small community, it is reasonable for our Ambassadors to canvass their 20 peers and make door-to-door visits. We believe the in-person approach will yield higher results than leaving it simply to emails, voicemails and snail mail. It is also important to measure success, so after the election, students will look at the voter checklist to see how many students did in fact vote.

New Hampshire is fortunate to have same day voter registration. To capitalize on that, we will provide transportation to the polling station along with the appropriate forms students will need to register once they arrive at the polls.

We will study what worked well and what did not for the January 27 primary (and March 9 local election), to shape voter registration efforts in preparation for the November 2004 election.

CIVIC EDUCATION

Learning Liberty. Our primary civic education program for next semester will be helping the College organize “Learning Liberty: Studying Citizenship at Saint Anselm College.” Being led by Saint Anselm’s president, Fr. Jonathan, Learning Liberty is a semester-long dialogue to help the College find ways we can develop and nurture student learning about democracy and citizenship. While the specific outcomes of Learning Liberty are unknown at this time, it will shape all future civic engagement efforts at the College and is intended to transform students’ learning and engagement as students for years to come. Learning Liberty will be tied directly to Saint Anselm’s strategic planning process, which will be occurring simultaneously.

Public Achievement. Public Achievement is an international youth initiative focused on the most basic concepts of citizenship, democracy and public work. Public Achievement draws on the talents and desires of ordinary people to build a better world and to create a different kind of politics. Public Achievement’s work is anchored on a few core ideas: everybody can do citizen work (especially K-12 students); power starts in each of us when we find an issue important to us; democracy is messy and often frustrating but it can accomplish extraordinary things; and we learn by doing public work.

To capitalize on the strong commitment to service and volunteerism that students at Saint Anselm College have demonstrated for decades, the NHIOP has identified Public Achievement as an exemplary civic engagement program that will help us establish a strong tradition of civic engagement and activism. We believe Public Achievement will help students better understand how public policy affects their lives and concerns and provide opportunities for students to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to impact public policy and make a difference in the civic life of our communities. We are partnering with a public high school in Keene, NH to pilot Public Achievement this year. Public Achievement will strengthen our relationships with area service agencies and schools.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT/INTERNSHIPS

At the time of this writing, we have not had the appropriate meetings on campus to develop this area. However, we do have a number of students interning in Washington next semester in a variety of settings and we continue to talk with the Partnership for Public Service on how we can create job maps for students of all majors, highlighting the opportunities (within their major) to find relevant public service jobs. During the spring semester, we will be spending

time in Manchester and Concord, talking with our existing community service agencies about internships that would be available focused on policy. For example, the NH League of Women's Voters has contacted us in hopes of finding a student interested in serving on their Board.

Questions and comments about the NHIOP's goals can be addressed to Mica Stark, Director of Civic Education. (603) 222-4101; mstark@anselm.edu