

**I Will Register, if You Teach Me How:
Results from Voter Registration Field Experiments on College Campuses**

Elizabeth A. Bennion
Indiana University – South Bend
ebennion@iusb.edu

David W. Nickerson
University of Notre Dame
dnickers@nd.edu

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ABSTRACT:

In the United States, the burden of registering to vote falls upon prospective voters. Voters must learn how, when, and where to register, and they must take the time to complete a registration form each time they relocate. College campuses provide excellent testing grounds to measure the effectiveness of different approaches to voter registration. Like other young people, who turnout at low rates, students move frequently and have little or no voter history. Using student directories to randomly assign students to different registration appeals, this study demonstrates the *effectiveness* of face-to-face, classroom-based appeals, and the corresponding *ineffectiveness* of less personal mail- and email-based approaches to registration. Unlike mail and email campaigns, classroom presentations provide young citizens with the combination of information, motivation, and designated time required to successfully complete the registration process.

Expanding the portion of the electorate that participates in the electoral process is frequently cited as a worthy goal. Political scientists have uncovered a number of factors that correspond with low rates of voter turnout. People who are young (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980), frequent movers (Squire, Wolfinger, and Glass 1987), have no past history of turnout (Pultzer 2002; Bendor, Diermeier and Ting 2003; Green and Shachar 2003; Fowler 2006), and are disinterested in politics (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995) are less likely to vote. College students typically fit these categories better than other demographic groups. Many factors underlay young people's relative lack of political engagement. Young people are less likely than older people to follow political news stories, read a daily newspaper, or watch an evening news broadcast (Wattenberg 2008). Although many young people have turned to the Internet for information, they do not often read online newspapers or news magazines. As a result, young people are less likely than older people to demonstrate a strong knowledge of public affairs. Young people are also less likely than older age cohorts to vote or to believe that voting is a civic duty (Wattenberg 2008).

Members of the U.S. Congress have increasingly argued that colleges and universities should be preparing students for lives as active citizens, and they have legislated accordingly. A 1998 amendment to the Higher Education Act requires colleges and universities to celebrate Constitution Day each September. It also requires them to obtain voter registration forms before the local registration deadline and distribute them to students enrolled in all degree or certificate programs. Colleges that fail to comply with the provision could jeopardize their federal student-aid funds. Colleges and universities are driven both by their concerns about low levels of political engagement among young citizens and by their concerns about legal compliance.

Many universities and teacher-scholars have decided to turn this federal mandate into an opportunity. Scholars with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, for example, have promoted civic engagement on college campuses, publishing such books as *Educating for Citizenship: Preparing Undergraduate for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility* (Colby et al, 2003), and *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement* (Colby et al, 2007). Professional associations have also taken up this mission. The American Political Science Association created the Standing Committee on Civic Education and Engagement to "articulate a political science of citizenship." The committee's September 2004 report, "Democracy at Risk: Renewing a Political Science of Citizenship" targeted a broad audience of citizens, public officials, journalists, policy makers, and social scientists – "everyone interested in democracy." Other associations have reached across the disciplines to promote civic knowledge, skills, and participation among U.S. college students. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) partnered with the *New York Times* and AASCU member campuses to create the American Democracy Project in 2003. The goal was to follow the advice presented in *Educating for Citizenship* while creating a national movement designed to promote civic and political engagement among students enrolled in the nation's public colleges and universities.

In the United States, even the most minimal level of political participation, voting, requires that citizens add themselves to the voter rolls. Voters must learn how, when, and where to register, and they must take the time to complete a registration form each time they relocate. Political scientists have a great deal to learn about the best way to get voters to take this critical step. The difficulty is blending theory and practice, applying the methodology of social science to the practice of voter registration. Most academics have little experience organizing voter registration campaigns. Meanwhile, colleges and universities engage in a broad range of activities to register students to vote, yet there is little effort to rigorously evaluate these efforts and no consensus on what techniques are most effective.

This study explores several research questions: What is the most effective way for colleges and universities to register their students to vote? What is the most cost-effective way to register students to vote? Should administrators and faculty register students themselves or train students to register their peers? College campuses provide excellent testing grounds to measure the effectiveness of different approaches to voter registration among low turnout demographics. AASCU campuses provide particularly appropriate settings for this research because they are generally affordable and non-competitive, catering to first-generation college students, historically disenfranchised groups, and students from middle and low income families. Unlike Research 1, Ivy League, and private liberal arts colleges, students at AASCU institutions reflect a broad range of demographics, including those most associated with low levels of political participation. This paper reports the findings of randomized field experiments on 37 college campuses and demonstrates that face-to-face registration in college classrooms is an effective way to get students registered to vote, while campus mail, direct, mail, and email are ineffective. The person making the registration appeal is less important than the registration technique employed. Face-to-face registration efforts in the classroom are highly effective, whether delivered by a faculty member or a fellow student.

Previous Field Experiments on Civic Engagement

While the number of academic studies of voter mobilization campaigns has grown significantly over the past decade, there is very little published about voter registration campaigns. The topic is important because we cannot provide meaningful information about the best way to mobilize voters if we do not know how to get them to take the first step of adding themselves to the voter rolls. It is difficult to assess scientifically the effectiveness of voter registration campaigns because there are no good, reliable lists of all eligible but unregistered voters. Prior work provides a great deal of information about how to get registered voters to the polls, but is deficient because we still do not know how to get people registered in the first place.

Recent academic field experiments have used random assignment to test the effectiveness of different voter mobilization strategies —measuring the relative effectiveness of direct mail versus phone calls versus door-to-door canvassing (for a summary of recent studies see Gerber and Green 2004). The voter mobilization literature has grown increasingly sophisticated. Several scholars have tested the

effect of delivering different types of get-out-the-vote messages (Green and Gerber 2000; Bennion 2005; Arceneaux and Nickerson 2006; Green & Karlan 2006; Nickerson 2006; Niven 2006). Most recently, scholars have studied the effects of social pressure, including researcher surveillance and publicity of neighborhood voting records (Gerber, Green, and Larimer, 2008).

Another line of studies have explored the effect of the message and the messenger on the success of voter mobilization campaigns. David Nickerson tested the relative effectiveness of professional versus volunteer phone banks (Nickerson 2006). Melissa Michelson tested the relative effectiveness of Latino versus non-Latino canvassers in Hispanic neighborhoods (Michelson 2005). Other scholars have tested to see if specific messages and techniques work differently for different populations including Latinos (Michelson 2005; Ramirez 2005; Frey and Suarez 2006), Asian Americans (Wong 2005; Gimpel, Shaw and Cho 2006) and Indian Americans (Trivedi 2005). There has even been some attention to the degree to which canvassing effects are passed on to other voters living in the same household (Nickerson 2008).

Despite the growth in the field experiment literature studying the effects of various strategies to mobilize registered voters, we still know very little about the best way to get people on the registration rolls. Recent studies have demonstrated that voting is a habit (Pultzer 2002; Bendor, Diermeier and Ting 2003; Green and Shachar 2003; Fowler 2006). Voters who have voted regularly in the past are more likely to vote in the future. However, in most states, you cannot vote on Election Day if you are not already on the voter rolls. For this reason, scholars concerned with voting behavior, activists concerned with civic engagement, and politicians concerned with maximizing the participation of would-be supporters, must do more to understand what techniques are most effective in getting prospective voters registered to vote.

The Experimental Approach

While voter registration is critical to electoral participation in the United States, it is a very difficult process to study. Politically engaged people choose to register themselves and the disengaged never bother. This process creates a powerful sorting effect where people who want to participate in politics are generally registered and the people who are disinclined to participate are less likely to be registered (Erikson 1981). Thus, observational studies relying on individual-level data need to model the selection process (Timpone 1998). Unfortunately, the assumptions underlying these two-stage models are unverifiable and one can never be certain model choice does not drive the results.

Many scholars have side-stepped the self-selection of the registration process by examining changes to state (e.g., Knack 1995, 2000; Highton 1997; Brown, Jackson, and Wright 1999), county (Ansolabehere and Konisky 2006), or federal laws (e.g., Martinez and Hill 1999; Brown and Wedeking 2006) reasoning that the changes in laws are plausibly exogenous to individual-level factors for

participation. As Hanmer (forthcoming) notes, this assumption is suspect as states adopt registration reforms for different reasons that may be correlated with the overall political climate and administration of elections. At the very least, this empirical strategy requires an assumption that registration and turnout rates contrasted to estimate the effect of the change in the law are indeed comparable, whether the comparison is made over time (e.g., Minnesota 1972 to 1976) or across space (e.g., Minnesota to Iowa in 1974). In short, examining the changes in laws simply moves the selection process from the individual to the state. The *ceteris paribus* assumption may be less onerous at the state-level, but remains unverifiable.

When feasible, experiments offer a solution to selection effects by randomly assigning the treatment of interest. Experiments generally require a well-defined subject population that can be tracked, a treatment that can be randomized and administered to the correct person, and the ability to measure the outcome of interest for both the treatment and control groups. Voter mobilization experiments fit these requirements by focusing on registered voters, of whom there is an official list that can be randomized and later updated with turnout. Unfortunately, an official list of unregistered persons does not exist. Even if such a list did exist, residential mobility is much higher among unregistered persons and the reliability of such a list would be suspect.

Faced with this problem, many civic organizations evaluate their voter registration drives by the number of cards collected over the course of the campaign. For instance, ACORN touted registering 1.3 million new voters in 2008 (Falcone and Moss 2008). However, reports such as these overstate the effect of registration efforts for three primary reasons. First, not all the cards collected will appear on voter rolls. Second, many of the people who filled out cards were previously registered and merely updating address information.¹ Finally, and most importantly, there is no way of knowing how many of these people would have registered another way. Many of the people approaching voter registration tables at super markets are likely to be politically motivated and would have found alternative means of registering. A randomly assigned control group would provide a baseline estimate of how many people would register on their own, but it is not obvious how such a control group could be constructed.

Conducting the experiments on college campuses solves the problem with defining a subject population. Working with university administrators, student directories were used to define the subject population. The student directory has several notable advantages for the purposes of studying voter registration. First, the addresses should be accurate because students registered for classes (and paid tuition) only a month prior to the experiment and the administration will need to mail grades and future bills. Second, where applicable, schools provided both home and local/school addresses. Since young people often maintain addresses with parents, having both addresses allows subjects to be tracked more accurately. Third, 84% of the schools in the experiment provided date of birth to facilitate an accurate match in the voter file – even if the address happened to be out of date. Fourth, the directory

¹ Updating registration information is an important function, however. Many jurisdictions require that voters be registered at their current address to be eligible to vote. Furthermore, groups rely on the voter file, so updated information makes the voter more likely to be mobilized by campaigns and civic organizations.

also contained accurate email addresses, which allowed for the administration of the email treatment. Finally, the directory defined the list of every subject in the experiment.

Campuses were recruited by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and its American Democracy Project (ADP) through email solicitations to member campuses. Upper-level administrators agreed in principle to participate in the experiments and generally appointed someone as chief contact and coordinator for the experiments.² This coordinator was paid a small stipend which most used to hire a student assistant. Researchers followed up with all campus contacts by email and telephone, answering questions, confirming participation, completing IRB forms, and mapping out campus registration plans. Each coordinator participated in a five-hour training session at the national ADP meeting in Utah. Coordinators who were unable to attend the training session participated in scheduled make-up sessions using a combination of telephone and computer technology for interactive teleconferencing.

The campuses in the experiment are all public, do not have competitive enrollment processes, and generally cater to area residents. The students in the experiment come from higher socio-economic strata than non-college youth, but the students come from a diverse array of racial, economic, and social backgrounds. Some facts about the schools included in the experiment are provided in Table 1.

On campus, schools could opt to experiment with email, direct mail, or classroom based registration strategies. In the end, 11 schools tested mail, 28 schools tested email, and 19 schools tested classroom-based registration. Presumably, administrators opted for strategies that they felt best fit the needs and capacity of their campuses. Thus, greater than average registration treatment effects may be observed from the techniques employed on the campuses.

In all the experiments, registration was ascertained by matching student directories to a nationwide voter file maintained by Catalist. Matches were made to both school and home addresses, but relied primarily on name and date of birth, which is a unique identifier in nearly all instances. As a result, the key dependent variable is measured accurately for both the treatment and control groups regardless of the county of residence. It was also possible to append voter turnout for people matching the voter file. Thus, it is also possible to determine the effect of the registration drives on subsequent voter turnout.

The design of the mail and email experiments was straightforward. In the mail experiment, students on the directory were randomly assigned to the treatment or control groups. On most campuses, the treatment consisted of a packet containing a letter of encouragement and registration card. A sample letter is included in Appendix A. Ultimately, the mail experiment involved 8 campuses and 62,028 students. The email study was similar, but students were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: a) Control (no email); b) Receive three emails from an administrator such as the University president or Dean of Students; c) Receive three emails from a student leader – usually the Student Body

² Administration consent was not sufficient for institutional review board (IRB) approval. As a result, it was necessary to secure IRB approval on more than 40 campuses – a non-trivial bureaucratic hurdle.

president. The emails were brief, explaining why registration is important and providing a link to the Rock the Vote on-line registration tool. A sample of the email text and the schedule for sending the emails is provided in Appendix B. Administrators were very eager to test the effectiveness of email for boosting voter registration because it is cheap. As a result, the experiment involved 26 campuses and 249,384 students. In both experiments, the student is the unit of randomization and analysis.³

The classroom-based registration experiment was more difficult to implement and required several steps. First, professors had to be recruited to participate in the experiment. Most professors did not respond to requests to participate.⁴ Several especially motivated professors did not agree to participate because they objected to the control group. The set of professors who ended up participating covered a broad range of disciplines and levels of classes. It is unlikely that the classrooms are wholly representative of classes on the campus, but there is no obvious pattern regarding participation.

Second, the classes needed to be randomly assigned to one of three condition: a) Control, which received no registration outreach; b) Registered by the professor, where an assistant would deliver registration cards to professors at the beginning of class and return at the end to collect the filled out cards; c) Registered by a student, where the professor, typically, allowed the student assistant to come in at the end or beginning of class to give a brief presentation and pass around registration cards to be filled out. Professors had a great deal of latitude as to what they said surrounding registration. A sample script was provided to project coordinators on each campus (see Appendix C), but each campus, peer, and professor customized these presentations.⁵

Third, a solution to strictures imposed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) had to be ironed out. FERPA forbids universities from disclosing the courses a student is currently enrolled in. Working with the legal department of many universities, it was agreed that courses would be provided a meaningless code associated with treatment assignments. These codes were then appended to the student directory. This strategy allows the researcher to know the assignment and unit of randomization without knowing the specific class taken by the student. In the end, 14 of the 19 schools provided such codes. The remaining 5 schools appended treatment assignment but no provided no course code.

Knowing the unit of randomization is important because it is possible that students taking a particular course share similar civic participation propensities. For instance, early morning courses may be more appealing to people with afternoon jobs, or students taking political science courses may receive other pressures to register to vote. As a result, the analysis needs to cluster the standard errors on the classroom – the unit of randomization (Donner and Klar 2000; Arceneaux 2005; Green and

³ Some schools sent fewer than three emails or used only one type of sender. Deviations from the protocol used in other schools are noted in the analysis.

⁴ Ironically, very few political science, psychology, and economics professors participated.

⁵ A few schools used only one type of presenter in the experiments. These schools are noted in the table reporting results.

Vavreck 2008). On average, the clustered standard errors were 24% larger than in a naïve analysis that treated all students as independent observations. For the 5 schools that did not provide course codes, the standard errors provided by a naïve analysis treating all students as independent observations were multiplied by 130% adjust the standard errors conservatively. The next section reports the results from each experiment.

Results

Tables 2-4 report the results of the mail, email, and classroom registration experiments, respectively. The first columns report the effect of each treatment and its associated standard error. The column named “Constant” reports the baseline registration rate among the control group.

Before analyzing the experiments, it is interesting to consider the range of registration rates across schools. The average school had 59% of the control group registered. Most of the schools fell narrowly within those bounds (10th percentile = 51% and 90th percentile = 68%).⁶ According to the 2006 Current Population Survey, 78% of citizens over the age of 18 in the United States were registered to vote, so these figures are below the national average. Only 62% of the eligible students in the 2006 CPS sample reported being registered to vote, so the schools involved in the experiment are fairly representative of students broadly.

Table 2 reports the results from the direct mail experiment. In total, 9 campuses participated in the experiment. The University of Wisconsin – River Falls split its sample into three separate experiments. Students who lived on campus were mailed on campus. Students without a campus address were mailed registration forms to their home address. Since the laws are slightly different in Minnesota and Wisconsin, the particular forms mailed depended on the state of residence. The precise point estimate differs from school to school, but none of the mailings boosted registration significantly. Each individual experiment is not very informative, but pooling across the experiments allows for gains in precision. The ultimate estimate is that the mailing decreased registration rates by -0.1 percentage points (s.e. = 0.4). That is, registration did not appear to increase at all from delivering letters with registration materials to students at their campus or home addresses. With 62,028 subjects, the experiments are sufficiently precise to claim that any increase in registration from these mail-based registration efforts could be no larger than 0.7 percentage points (i.e., 7 registrants per 1,000 cards).

The picture is very similar for email encouraging registration (see Table 3). The typical school saw 4% of the students sent an email click through to the registration website, so there is good reason to believe that the email was read and acted upon. However, this activity does not appear to have increased voter registration rates. Focusing on emails sent by university administrators, only 1 of the 25 schools approached a statistically significant increase in voter registration rates. This result is likely due

⁶ The two samples with very low match rates could be due to a problem with the data provided by the school or the county. Since an identical matching algorithm was used for each school, the matching algorithm is unlikely to be the problem.

to sampling since another school appears to have decrease voter registration by an equal amount and the other schools range around zero. Pooling all the results from the administrative emails together, the estimate is that receiving the three emails from an administrator lowers registration rates by 0.1 percentage point (s.e. = 0.2). The picture is similar for the emails sent by peers. Two of the twenty schools appear to be success stories, but the uncertainty surrounding each estimate never approaches statistical significance. Pooled together, the estimate is that receiving an email from a student leader decreases registration rates by 0.4 percentage points (s.e. = 0.2). The estimate does not quite achieve statistical significance, but is extremely close. At the very least, these results suggest that email is not an effective tool for registering college students to vote – even with well-designed on-line voter registration tools.

If mail and email appear ineffective at increase rates of voter registration, classroom presentations are a stark contrast. Table 4 presents the results from the classroom mobilization experiments for both professor and student-led presentations. In all, 12 of 17 professor-led presentations resulted in positive coefficients and 8 of these experiments cross traditional thresholds for statistical significance. Pooling all the experiments together, the estimate is that presentations by professors increased the rate of voter registration by 6.3 percentage points (s.e. = 1.3). Since the rate of voter registration in the control group was around 60%, this means registration rates rose by 10% due to the presentation. Thus, nearly half the difference between registration rates in the general populace and among students could be addressed by classroom presentations by professors.

The picture is nearly as rosy for student led presentations. Of the 15 schools conducting experiments on student-led classroom presentations, 11 were positive and 3 experiments crossed traditional thresholds for statistical significance. Pooling together the results, it is estimated that student presentations encouraging voter registration increased registration by 4.0 percentage points (s.e. = 2.0). That is, registration rates increased by 6% in treatment classrooms. Mobilization by students is only two-thirds as large as the effect from professors, but these estimates are statistically indistinguishable.

A natural follow-up question is what happened to turnout after being registered. In particular, what percentage of the students who registered because of the classroom presentations then voted? In order to estimate this quantity, the students who would have registered on their own need to be purged from the analysis. The experimental design makes such an analysis straightforward. Treatment assignments can be used as an instrument for registration rates using two-stage least squares with voter turnout as the dependent variable. The resulting coefficient on the registration variable reports the percentage of people registered solely as a result of the experiment who then voted.

Table 5 presents the results the two-stage least squares estimate. The uncertainty surrounding each experiment is considerable, but the picture is much clearer when the results are taken in aggregate. Only 1 of the 19 experiments yields a negative estimate and pooled together, it is estimated that 35% (s.e. = 6.5) of the students registered cast a vote because of the experiment. That is, if a

professor made a presentation to 100 students, she would create 6 new registrants and 2 votes among students who would otherwise abstain.

Conclusion

Democratic theorists, voting behavior scholars, U.S. legislators, campaign professionals, civic organizations, and institutions of higher education are seeking answers about the best way to engage young people in the electoral process. While recent field experiments have shed light on the best ways to mobilize already-registered voters, they largely ignore the question of how to get people on the registration rolls. People cannot vote if they are not registered to do so.

This study overcomes the problems of observational studies and registration card counts by working with college administrators on 37 U.S. college campuses to randomly assign students to different voter registration treatments. In this way, this research is able to answer specific questions about the most effective (and cost effective) ways for colleges to register their student to vote. The results suggest that the most effective way for colleges and universities to register their students is through face-to-face contacts, such as classroom registration campaigns.

Classroom registration is also more cost-effective than mail and email campaigns. Mail campaigns are more expensive, but much less effective. Attempts to reduce the monetary costs of postage by stuffing campus mailboxes proved ineffective. On campuses where specific boxes were provided to return these registration forms, only a handful of students took advantage of this opportunity to register to vote. Indeed, this study found no consistent results for either campus mail or home mail registration efforts.

Email is virtually free, but also completely ineffective. In fact, when combined with the results of a previous study (Nickerson 2007), there is reason to believe that email may actually demobilize students as they pass up more immediate and effective registration opportunities such as tables and classroom-based registration. Only the classroom registration campaign produced a statistically significant boost in registration rates when comparing the treatment and control groups.

Should administrators and faculty register students themselves or train students to register their peers? This study found no evidence that the speaker matters. In some cases, trusted sources may affect political attitudes (Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Druckman 2001) and demographic similarity may be sufficient to constitute a trusted source (Kuklinski and Hurley 1994). However, students at AASCU's largely commuter campuses may trust authority figures more than unfamiliar peers. Although peers were slightly more effective on some campuses, and professors more effective on others, there was no statistically significant difference in registration rates based on the identity of the person collecting the registration forms.

Public, non-competitive, college campuses provide excellent testing grounds to measure the effectiveness of different approaches to voter registration among low turnout youth. AASCU campuses provide particularly appropriate settings for this research because they are generally affordable and non-competitive, catering to first-generation college students, historically disenfranchised groups, and students from middle and low income families. Future studies are needed to replicate and expand upon these findings, and to expand the analysis, if possible, to non-college youth.

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Table 1

School	Classroom	Email	Mail	Trained	State	Enrollment	Locale
Ball State University	X	X	X	X	IN	20507	Mid-size city
Bloomsburg University	X	X	X	X	PA	8304	Urban fringe of mid-size city
California State University - Long Beach		X		X	CA	33479	Large city
California University of Pennsylvania	X				PA	6640	Urban fringe of large city
Castleton University	X			X	VT	1971	Rural
Central Missouri State University	X			X	MO	10051	Small town
College of Charleston	X	X	X		SC	11607	Mid-size city
East Central Oklahoma University	X			X	OK	4651	Small town
Eastern Kentucky University	X	X	X	X	KY	16183	Urban fringe of mid-size city
Emporia University		X		X	KS	6194	Large town
Georgia College and State University	X	X		X	GA	5531	Small town
Illinois State University		X	X		IL	20757	Mid-size city
Indiana University - Northwest	X	X		X	IN	5138	Mid-size city
Indiana - Purdue Fort Wayne		X		X	IN	11810	Mid-size city
Indiana University - Purdue University - Indianapolis			X		IN	29953	Large city
Indiana University - South Bend	X	X		X	IN	7501	Mid-size city
Middle Tennessee State University		X		X	TN	22322	Mid-size city
Millersville University		X		X	PA	7998	Urban fringe of mid-size city
Morehead State University	X	X		X	KY	9278	Small town
Pennsylvania State University - Altoona		X		X	PA	3766	Mid-size city
Salisbury University		X		X	MD	6942	Small town
State University of New York - Cortland	X	X		X	NY	7350	Small town
State University of New York - Geneseo		X		X	NY	5573	Urban fringe of mid-size city
University of Illinois - Springfield	X	X		X	IL	4396	Mid-size city
University of Memphis	X	X		X	TN	20668	Large city
University of Tennessee - Martin		X	X	X	TN	6098	Small town
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh	X	X	X	X	WI	11532	Mid-size city
University of Wisconsin - River Falls	X	X	X	X	WI	5950	Urban fringe of large city
Washburn University			X	X	KS	7251	Mid-size city
Western Carolina University	X			X	NC	8396	Small town
Western Kentucky University		X			KY	18485	Large town

Table 2 Results from Mail Registration Experiments

School	Mail Effect	Constant	Observations	Type
Ball State University	0.011	0.336	5656	Campus
	0.013	0.009		
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania	-0.02	0.618	3064	Campus
	0.018	0.012		
College of Charleston	-0.009	0.574	2593	
	0.019	0.014		
Eastern Kentucky University	0.022	0.674	3970	
	0.015	0.01		
Illinois State University	-0.013	0.327	6860	Campus
	0.011	0.008		
Indiana University - Purdue University - Indianapolis	0.004	0.637	25694	Home
	0.006	0.004		
University of Tennessee - Martin	0.004	0.668	1637	
	0.023	0.016		
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh	-0.009	0.638	10813	Home
	0.009	0.007		
University of Wisconsin – River Falls	0.021	0.565	861	Campus
	0.034	0.023		
University of Wisconsin – River Falls	-0.039	0.566	361	Home MN
	0.053	0.038		
University of Wisconsin – River Falls	-0.05	0.599	519	Home WI
	0.044	0.03		
Pooled	-0.001		62028	
	0.004			

Top number reports the coefficient, bottom number the associated standard error.

Constant reports registration rates among the control group.

Pooled results calculated using random effects estimator.

Table 3 Results from Email Registration Experiments

School	Administrator	Peer	Constant	Observations	Emails Sent
Ball State University	0		0.531	17343	3 / 0
	0.008		0.005		
Bloomsburg University	-0.015	-0.01	0.653	8043	1 / 2
	0.013	0.013	0.008		
California State University - Long Beach	0.003	-0.007	0.785	32660	3 / 3
	0.006	0.006	0.003		
College of Charleston	-0.024	-0.022	0.635	9612	3 / 2
	0.012	0.012	0.007		
Eastern Kentucky University	-0.005	-0.012	0.735	15504	2 / 2
	0.009	0.009	0.005		
Emporia University	-0.023	-0.025	0.742	6102	3 / 3
	0.014	0.014	0.008		
Georgia College and State University	0.005	0.005	0.704	5895	3 / 3
	0.015	0.015	0.008		
Illinois State University	0.015	-0.004	0.384	20049	3 / 3
	0.008	0.008	0.005		
Indiana - Purdue Fort Wayne	0		0.389	1754	3 / 0
	0.028		0.016		
Indiana University - Northwest	-0.007		0.635	4836	2 / 0
	0.017		0.01		
Indiana University - South Bend	0.004		0.637	6379	3 / 0
	0.015		0.009		
University of Memphis	-0.005	-0.004	0.626	19885	2 / 0
	0.008	0.008	0.005		
Millersville University	0.012	-0.005	0.628	7023	3 / 3
	0.014	0.014	0.008		
Morehead State University	-0.004		0.722	8043	1 / 0
	0.012		0.007		
Middle Tennessee State University	-0.001	0.002	0.642	22248	1 / 1
	0.008	0.008	0.005		
Pennsylvania State University - Altoona	-0.007	0.006	0.509	4070	1 / 1
	0.019	0.019	0.011		
Salisbury University	0.007	0.013	0.684	7190	1 / 2
	0.013	0.013	0.008		
State University of New York – Cortland	-0.026	-0.021	0.647	1484	3 / 3
	0.031	0.031	0.018		
State University of New York – Geneseo	0.003	-0.016	0.789	4236	3 / 3
	0.015	0.015	0.009		
University of Illinois – Springfield	-0.003	0.01	0.637	3572	2 / 2
	0.02	0.02	0.011		
University of Tennessee	-0.015	-0.004	0.642	6863	1 / 1

– Martin	0.014	0.014	0.008		
University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh	0.001 0.011	0.005 0.011	0.63 0.006	11026	1 / 2
University of Wisconsin - River Falls	0.02 0.029	0.053 0.029	0.549 0.017	1762	3 / 3
Washburn University	0.009 0.014	0.023 0.014	0.645 0.008	7326	2 / 2
Western Kentucky University	0.004 0.009	-0.007 0.009	0.701 0.005	16479	3 / 3
Pooled	-0.001 0.002	-0.004 0.002		249384	

Top number reports the coefficient, bottom number the associated standard error.

Constant reports registration rates among the control group.

The number of emails sent first report emails from administrators and then emails from student leaders.

Pooled results calculated using random effects estimator.

Table 4 Results from Classroom Registration Experiment

School	Professor	Student	Constant	Observations	Clusters
Ball State University		0.021	0.514	3020	122
		0.038	0.026		
Bloomsburg University	-0.045	-0.009	0.624	377	11
	0.108	0.107	0.085		
Castleton University	-0.052		0.55	478	37
	0.047		0.032		
Central Missouri State University	-0.017	-0.116	0.719	1191	45
	0.039	0.041	0.028		
College of Charleston	0.055	0.051	0.616	3090	209
	0.027	0.027	0.019		
California University of Pennsylvania	0.112		0.531	1263	60
	0.044		0.032		
East Central Oklahoma University	0.098	0.08	0.583	1217	97
	0.037	0.038	0.025		
Eastern Kentucky University	0.083	0.032	0.673	1280	N/A
	0.0689	0.0364	0.022		
Georgia College and State University		0.119	0.676	273	13
		0.056	0.044		
Indiana University - Northwest	0.049		0.585	702	N/A
	0.052		0.029		
Indiana University - South Bend	0.081	0.056	0.628	2160	108
	0.033	0.032	0.023		
University of Memphis	0.098		0.596	3643	107
	0.02		0.014		
Morehead State University	0.117	0.174	0.584	1101	65
	0.039	0.038	0.028		
State University of New York - Cortland	0.131	0.082	0.612	1328	74
	0.047	0.045	0.028		
University of Illinois - Springfield	0.009	-0.046	0.534	424	N/A
	0.0754	0.0806	0.043		
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh	0.086	0.057	0.476	2069	N/A
	0.0351	0.0351	0.033		
University of Wisconsin - River Falls	-0.02	0.013	0.559	1424	N/A
	0.065	0.0468	0.025		
Washburn University	0.084	0.008	0.593	1434	89
	0.057	0.096	0.03		
Western Carolina University	-0.163	-0.233	0.545	94	4
	0.113	0.145	0.075		
Pooled	0.063	0.040		26568	104
	0.013	0.020			

Top number reports the coefficient, bottom number the associated standard error.

Constant reports registration rates among the control group.

Pooled results calculated using random effects estimator.

Table 5 Effect of Registration on Voter Turnout

School	Registration	Constant	Observations	clusters
Ball State University	0.294	-0.038	3020	122
	0.232	0.12		
Bloomsburg University	0.883	-0.385	377	11
	0.695	0.408		
Castleton University	0.612	-0.23	478	37
	0.637	0.338		
Central Missouri State University	-0.24	0.455	1191	45
	0.423	0.287		
College of Charleston	0.373	-0.019	4420	222
	0.259	0.172		
California University of Pennsylvania	0.473	-0.071	1263	60
	0.26	0.154		
East Central Oklahoma University	0.464	-0.059	1918	107
	0.273	0.179		
Eastern Kentucky University	0.041	0.06	1280	N/A
	0.465	0.25		
Georgia College and State University	0.426	-0.248	273	13
	0.307	0.232		
Indiana University - Northwest	0.299	-0.015	754	N/A
	0.861	0.406		
Indiana University - South Bend	0.577	-0.083	2160	108
	0.357	0.241		
University of Memphis	0.356	0.1	3643	107
	0.171	0.11		
Morehead State University	0.333	-0.159	1352	65
	0.122	0.084		
State University of New York - Cortland	0.258	-0.066	1328	74
	0.284	0.192		
University of Illinois - Springfield	1.603	-0.603	424	N/A
	1.833	0.739		
University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh	0.664	-0.045	2069	N/A
	0.313	0.137		
University of Wisconsin - River Falls	2.406	-1.01	1424	N/A
	3.279	1.408		
Washburn University	0.204	0.178	1434	89
	0.494	0.304		
Western Carolina University	0.118	0.054	94	4
	0.317	0.145		
Pooled	0.354		28902	1064+
	0.065			

Estimates derived from two-stage least squares analysis using treatment assignments as an instrument for registration.

Top number reports the coefficient, bottom number the associated standard error.

Pooled results calculated using random effects estimator.

Register to Vote in the November Election!

MTSU is sending you this form as part of the American Democracy Project, a nonpartisan nationwide effort to increase the civic engagement of college students.

You can use this form to:

- register to vote for the first time (or if your registration has been purged).
- change your address.
- report a change in your name.

When completing the form:

- Use blue or black ink (not felt tip).
- Write legibly.
- Complete all items (leave item 8 blank if you have never registered before). Your Social Security number is required by state law.
- Check the appropriate boxes under “Voter Declaration.” Make sure not to check the wrong box to question 4.
- Sign the form by the “X”.

If you live on campus and want to vote in Murfreesboro, item 3 should be completed as follows:

1301 E. Main St. Murfreesboro Rutherford 37132

In item 4, list your MTSU P.O. Box

If you live off campus and want to vote in Murfreesboro, simply provide your off campus address.

If you want to register to vote in a Tennessee county other than Rutherford, you CAN use this form. We will make sure that it is turned in to the right place. Just remember that you will have to go to that county to cast your vote (or arrange for an absentee ballot).

Return this form by **Tuesday September 29** to the MTSU Department of Political Science. You can send it through campus mail to Box 29 or drop it off at Peck Hall 209.

APPENDIX B: Sample Email Scripts

MESSAGE #1 (send Monday September 18, 2006)

Subject line: Why do politicians ignore you?

Do you have an issue you care about? Maybe it's the environment, or terrorism or healthcare or the availability of jobs. Some issues are so large that they seem impossible to address as just one individual, but you can make a contribution and have a voice in these issues. You just have to get someone to listen to you.

Politicians tend to ignore the issues college students care about because too many college students do not vote. I urge you to vote in the national election on Tuesday November 7. But you can't vote if you are not registered.

It's easy to register to vote. Just click on this link [CAMPUS LINK HERE](#) and you can register right now.

However, if you don't register by early October (as early as October 6 in many states), you can't vote this year.

Let the politicians hear your voice. Please vote. Register **NOW** so you can.

MESSAGE #2 (send Monday September 25, 2006)

Subject line: Educated citizens vote. How about you?

Politicians pay attention to those citizens who vote. They are not likely to care much about the issues of college students who do not vote. Part of the purpose of a college education is to prepare you to be active, engaged citizens in our democracy. At a very minimum, that means being able to vote.

Our democracy depends on voters. Our democracy depends on you voting. Are you registered to vote? You can register right now. Just click on this link [CAMPUS LINK HERE](#) and you can register to vote. If you don't register by early October (as early as October 6 in many states), you can't vote this year.

Get engaged, get registered to vote and then make your voice heard by voting in the national election on Tuesday, November 7th.

MESSAGE #3 (send Monday October 2, 2006)

Subject line: Time is running out to register to vote

Have you registered to vote yet? If you don't register to vote by early October (as early as October 6 in many states), you can't vote in this year's national election on Tuesday, November 7th. Residents of [INSERT YOUR STATE HERE] must register by [INSERT YOUR REGISTRATION DEADLINE HERE]

Register to vote before it's too late. You can register right now. Just click on this link [CAMPUS LINK HERE](#).

Take an active role in our democracy. Help ensure that the issues you care about are addressed by elected officials.

APPENDIX C Sample Script for Classroom Presentations (Peer)

- **This script may be shortened and adapted if necessary.**
- **No partisan opinions or bias may be introduced.**
- **No partisan t-shirts or buttons may be worn.**
- **Volunteers should MEMORIZE the presentation.**
 - ✓ Practice the presentation out loud before presenting in a classroom.
 - ✓ Concentrate on delivery.
 - ✓ Speak slowly so that people can fully digest what you're saying.
 - ✓ Speak clearly so that everyone can hear you.
 - ✓ Vary your tone and pace for emphasis.

Hi. My name is _____, and I am a student at [campus name]. [Campus name] is working with a coalition of public colleges and universities across the nation to make sure that students and young people are heard in the fall 2006 elections.

I am here to make sure that young people turn out to vote this November so that we can get attention paid to students and to the issues that matter to us.

So let me tell you about what's going on in the elections right now, and what we are doing.

First, I think most of us see some of what is going on with the elections: The ads, the news about this candidate and that candidate. But mostly it seems pretty much like the whole thing is going on without us. Especially here in (X STATE) it seems like the election is everywhere you turn, but often has little to do with us.

It's not surprising really. Even though there are 24 million people between 18 and 24 in this country, older people – like over 65 - they vote at twice the rate that we do. Campaigns just know those people are going to vote. That is why the ads are talking about prescription drugs and Medicare. That's why they spend so much money making phone calls and sending pieces of mail to older people trying to get them to vote for this candidate or that candidate.

How many people here are on Medicare? C'mon don't be shy now. Raise your hands if you are on Medicare.

Right. Now how about those of you who could use more financial aid to help pay for college?

We don't hear a lot of talk about that. Go ahead, raise your hands.

Right. There are a lot of important things going on right now that affect students' lives. Getting a good job, paying for college or deciding what happens with the war in Iraq. It's not like we all have the same opinion on this stuff just because we are young people or students, but we do need politicians to pay attention to these issues and to pay attention to us.

But a lot of it comes down to voting and what we do on Election Day this November.

Our coalition is all about getting young people registered and out to vote. Of course, we want non-traditional students to register to vote too. As students, they understand many of the issues confronting young people today. But our primary goal is to get at least 40,000 college students (under the age of 30) registered to vote, including 400 here at [campus name]. And we are one of more than 80 colleges that is doing this all across the country—and that's just counting schools in our coalition.

Each of you has a voter registration form on your desk. I'm asking you take just a couple of minutes to complete them now. I'll collect them now and be sure that they are turned in to the proper voter registration office. It's important that you register NOW, before you forget. [School name] will even send the form in for you!

Personal story . . . Rap Up . . . *(optional)*