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CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

Student voice in a campus civic engagement program: A description and assessment

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript explains a civic engagement activity and presents assessment data on the activity.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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In this manuscript, we explore a large civic engagement project embedded in introductory communication courses at a mid-sized Western university. Since spring 2010, students have participated in the Great Debate, which takes research normally confined to the classroom into the public sphere for a day of discussion and dialogue centered on a unifying theme. Students from general education courses in public speaking, small group communication, and argumentation courses come together for an event that started with 300 students and community members, and now serves more than 2,000 per semester. We assess the program each semester using a variety of instruments. In this manuscript, we feature the quantitative measures of civic and academic engagement textured with qualitative student reflections on the program. Before sharing our assessment results, we will review the relevant literature concerning civic engagement in education, especially as it pertains to introductory communication courses. We then offer an extended explanation of the program itself, followed by a description of our assessment and some of our results.

Review of the literature

A growing body of scholarship has identified external practices such as service learning, often defined as community or regional service and civic engagement, which can be differentiated from service learning by extensive course integration, as important to student learning (Mann & Patrick, 2000; Warren & Sellnow, 2010). Learning strategies that promote civic engagement provide opportunities for students to participate actively in their local communities by engaging in informed discussion and debate about political issues. While service learning and civic engagement practices can be useful in any discipline, research points to introductory oral communication courses as an ideal place to implement these strategies effectively (McIntyre & Sellnow, 2014). The fundamental

purpose of oral communication courses in the communication discipline is to teach students how to become articulate citizens who can affect political change (Hart, 1993), and the best way to meet this goal is through civic engagement. Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995) note that civic skills are essentially communication skills, and becoming civically engaged contributes to enhanced communication competence, and reduces communication apprehension (Brammer & Morton, 2014; McLeod, Shah, Hess, & Lee, 2010)—all being goals of oral communication courses (Sellnow & Martin, 2010).

Civic engagement has not only proven to enhance student confidence in public communication, but has also compelled students to feel more excited about their future as democratic citizens. Programs that place students in direct dialogue with peers, faculty, and community members have shown positive increases in student perceptions of self-efficacy, social empowerment, and the likelihood of future civic participation (Knapp, Fisher, & Levesque-Bristol, 2010). When students feel “deeply involved in their own learning experience,” it causes them to “feel as if they [have] grown more” than students in passive learning environments (Strayhorn, 2008, p. 10). The measurable benefits of civic engagement have spurred widespread interest among educators, and most consider it to be an essential learning strategy. However, there is no consensus on how to implement civic engagement most effectively in higher education (The Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003). The benefits of civic engagement are numerous and in line with many higher education priorities. Assessment is critical to understanding how these programs work and the impact they have on students. The following section explores some of these trends.

Assessing civic engagement

An assessment of civic engagement is essential to determine what areas of the program require improvement and to explain how students are impacted by their civic engagement experience. Civic engagement and service learning assessments have been implemented in a variety of ways, and have yielded results that indicate that civically engaged students are positively impacted by their involvement in many areas such as motivation to study, attitudes toward instructor, and overall growth in knowledge (Mann & Patrick, 2000; Warren & Sellnow, 2010). Researchers have seen both cognitive and affective advantages in students who become more civically active compared with those who do not (Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001). Cognitive outcomes “include theoretical knowledge and critical thinking, problem-solving and decision making skills,” while affective outcomes include “changes in attitudes toward community issues ... and personal values” (Gelmon et al., 2001, p. 20).

There is not one correct way to assess engagement, but there are certain approaches to assessment that have clear benefits. Researchers advocate assessment approaches “that incorporate multiple methods,” both quantitative and qualitative, because they have “proved to be useful as a strategy for enhancing the validity of findings” (Gelmon et al., 2001, p. 24). Implementing both quantitative surveys and qualitative written reflections is a combination of assessment measures that essentially mitigates any error in data collection and analysis (Gastil & Dillard, 1999; Gelmon et al., 2001).

Quantitative surveys are beneficial due to the convenience and ease of analysis that is offered to students and researchers (Gibson, Kostecki, & Lucas, 2001; Hatcher, 2011).

Surveys can be administered to large numbers of participants, and they also give researchers the ability to compare study groups. Furthermore, survey prompts guide students to focus their responses on either cognitive or affective outcomes that are of particular interest (Gelmon et al., 2001). Since surveys have a degree of limitation for students in the freedom of their responses, qualitative reflection write-ups are an effective way to allow students to express their experiences in a way that may fall outside the scope of what surveys can encompass. Moreover, reflective activities have been observed as “important to the learning process” because they cause students to think about the purpose of their experience (Mann & Patrick, 2000, p. 49). When students self-report, they provide detail that could not otherwise be as easily obtained and recorded if collected through questionnaires or focus groups (Gelmon et al., 2001).

In assessing the Great Debate, we take our lead from the literature and collect responses to a nationally normed survey and conduct a qualitative assessment of student reflections on the event. This manuscript focuses on the quantitative results, but we do make use of the qualitative results for internal analysis and program evaluation. Some examples of student responses from the qualitative assessment are integrated in our discussion of the quantitative results in order to demonstrate how both approaches of assessment work together. Before we proceed to the assessment results, we offer a more robust description of our civic engagement activity.

Activity

Our campus has been an early adopter of programs that feature a civic engagement component. Most prominently, we have held a Town Hall for students in first-year classes since 2006. This program places students in dialogue with community members on key issues and has a proven track record on our campus. The Town Hall has paved the way for other civic engagement programs such as the Great Debate. In fall 2009, during the wake of rowdy healthcare town hall meetings all over the nation and growing incivility in our community, members of the faculty were approached by the assistant city manager about an event to showcase civility in discussion of contentious issues. The Great Debate was born out of these initial conversations. In its infancy, the event featured 300 students and community members. However, rapid adoption by full- and part-time instructors has led to the participation of more than 2,000 students and community members. The event now includes all students taking the required oral communication courses at the university and students from a local community college. The Great Debate is a semester-long activity, which adds meaning to the experience of students enrolled in oral communication courses by connecting their classroom research to a civic experience. A semester’s worth of research, speaking, listening, and dialogue culminates in a daylong event at the city council chambers and downtown city plaza.

Before the start of the semester, teachers, students, and city officials meet to choose a broad theme that will shape a semester of discussion and speech at the university. The theme is selected to match a local hot topic that will sustain a semester of classroom presentations. For instance, with the looming budget crisis in fall 2012, we selected “Government spending and taxation” as our theme. The theme finds its way into courses through different avenues. In our version of the public speaking course, students research and deliver speeches on the theme throughout the semester. In small group communication,

the theme structures one or two group presentations. In argumentation, the course director uses the theme to craft resolutions that students then debate through the course of the semester. While the engagement of the theme is varied, the collective result is a semester of dialogue and research on a particular topic. Students often leave the courses with a piece of content knowledge to go with the required skill development.

The theme requires instructors to modify course content each semester. Fresh examples of speeches and topic areas are drafted each term, and content knowledge is sometimes supplemented with special workshops made available through campus resources. For example, a previous topic was “Diversity and Discrimination.” We worked with our Cross-Cultural Leadership Center to deliver specialized teaching workshops to help instructors engage diversity in the classroom. Students find smaller topics within the theme for their own presentations. For instance, with the aforementioned topic of government spending and taxation, students delivered speeches on particular aspects of military spending, prisons, a proposed local tax increase, and changes to healthcare. Instructors frequently share lists of topic ideas that are supplemented by course coordinators and student staff. In addition, an event Facebook page provides students with a steady stream of presentation ideas and news articles related to the theme of the semester. It is exciting work, but as explained above, fresh topics do mean additional work for instructors each semester. In addition to student learning, there are side benefits, including fresh student speech topics each semester and fewer instances of plagiarism, since speeches from previous semesters are inappropriate. Throughout the semester, students educate each other as well as themselves through sharing research and delivering presentations. This mutually informing process is enhanced when students from different sections interact at the event itself.

More than 2,000 students participate in the event, but not all students have formal speaking roles. In some classes, the instructors select outstanding students or groups and offer extra credit to speak at the event. In the public speaking course, students can participate in a one-day preliminary tournament that is run by the course director and volunteers from the speech and debate team who evaluate speeches and recommend the most deserving students. The common goal is to get the best representation of course-work at the event.

The logistics of the event, including the scheduling of student speakers and presentations, are handled by the event coordinator and a large student staff from the First-Year Experience (FYE) office. The preliminary work, including reserving rooms, securing outdoor facilities such as tents and chairs, and promotion of the event, is also run by students. On the day of the event, staff are mobilized to check students in at specific areas of the event, help direct traffic, and solve problems. The FYE staff also recruit public participation for the event. The Great Debate is open to the public, but outreach is necessary to get individuals and groups to the event. The public can participate as speech respondents, audience members, and advocates. This participation can be uneven, as public events tend to be unpredictable. Public participation runs the spectrum from insightful questions and informed participation to rambling diatribes that distract from the topic at hand. The community is engaged on a strictly voluntary basis, but in almost all cases, after attending once, community partners become regulars. For example, the local Republican women’s organization was initially reluctant, but now enthusiastically attends the event every semester to engage students, register voters, and

increase their profile with the student population. The best and most challenging parts of the event have been embraced by the university as part of the learning process for students.

The Great Debate features two distinct genres of events: traditional platform speaking and interactive dialogue. The platform-speaking students are taking their classroom presentations into the public sphere. There are always opportunities for question and answer following the speeches, which help improve the experience for all parties. These periods also give community members a chance to ask difficult questions that raise the bar for everyone. Even though a relatively small number of students participate as speakers at the event, it helps all students make the connection between what happens in the classroom and what happens in the public sphere.

The interactive dialogue aspects of the event are slightly more complicated. Students in designated sections of small group communication produce exhibits instead of platform speeches for the “Civic Expo.” The forms are varied, but they typically include some sort of quiz or game that encourages participation. The student booths are interspersed with local advocacy groups such as the Republicans, Democrats, or organizations with a focus that aligns with the theme of the event. Other groups such as the Farm Bureau or local technology companies have also participated when there is overlap between their interests and the topic. Students make their way through the event interacting with other students, political groups, and a variety of ideas. Facilitated “Discussion Groups” are the other interactive option at the event. In these structured dialogues, students from different classes are led through a series of discussion points by trained facilitators from advanced communication classes. All students at the Great Debate attend one platform presentation and one interactive component. Students sometimes voluntarily extend their day, and some are offered additional credit for attending special events or additional presentations.

The Great Debate is different from other civic engagement efforts in scale/inclusion and profile. Many civic engagement programs focus on a few outstanding students in specially designated classes. The broad base of the Great Debate means everyone in one of the required oral communication courses participates in the event. Rather than rely on a small number of outstanding experiences, we seek measurable change in a large number of students, since we are able to include every participating student in a meaningful dialogue. Specifically, we hypothesize that participating students will exhibit higher levels of academic engagement in their courses and more positive predispositions toward community and political involvement. The Great Debate is one of the ways we communicate to incoming students that we know you have something to say and that we are ready to listen. The event includes non-native English speakers, first-generation college students, honors students, community college students, and students who put off taking the oral communication course until they are seniors. The scale and inclusiveness of the Great Debate have also helped to raise the profile of the event. We regularly benefit from positive local media coverage. We have also been able to recruit politicians from the local and state level to come to the event. On campus, the event is a prominent feature that bridges the community with students and highlights the positive impacts of the campus as a steward of place.

The FYE program relies on a communities of practice (Wenger, 2000) model wherein learning is caused by participation. As such, the grading for the event tends

to be pass–fail based on whether students participated. All students are required to attend one platform-speaking event, one interactive event, fill out a survey, and reflect on their experience in a qualitative assessment. Completion of these tasks earns students full credit in most courses. We track participation with the use of bar codes printed on an “Interaction Sheet” with a student name and places to fill in what they did at the event, including questions they asked at speaking events. The goal of the sheet is to get the students to participate in the fullest because participation causes learning. The scanning system produces an Excel sheet with check-in and check-out times for each event.

Now that we have a grasp of the event itself, we will move into the assessments of the student experience at the event.

Assessment

The focus of the assessment is not on traditional oral communication course outcomes. Previous research indicates these can be positive outcomes of civic engagement (Brammer & Morton, 2014), but our focus has been on the event as it relates to civic engagement and academic engagement.

Students complete a quantitative survey every semester that draws from nationally normed measures of civic engagement, academic engagement, and a variety of other factors. This allows us to examine students with nationally normed measures such as questions on civic agency from UCLA Cooperative Institutional Research Program’s (CIRP) Freshman Survey’s Civic Index, and measures of Academic Engagement from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014; CIRCLE & Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003). In previous semesters, when participation in the Great Debate program was not complete, this survey allowed us to compare students who went through the program to those that did not for comparison. This “comparison group” of students who are not in the Great Debate program consists of students in similar—predominately freshman and large lecture courses—who fill out the survey during the same time period as students in the program.

Method

Participants

The total number of participants in this study consisted of 2,944 students in introductory communication courses who participated in the Great Debate and 1,002 students in introductory American government courses, who were not in the Great Debate for comparison, as aforementioned in the previous section. It is important to note that any students enrolled in the Town Hall sections of American government were dropped from the proceeding analysis of the survey data as a way to avoid influence from other civic engagement experiences. Students received extra credit for filling out this survey in all course sections, although the amount of extra credit offered has varied by semester and by instructor. Student demographics are reported in [Appendix A](#).

Materials

Shortly following the event, students fill out an online survey about their academic and civic engagement (see [Appendix B](#)). The survey involves a variety of questions about students' academic engagement, civic and political attitudes, and their social and psychological well-being.

Procedure/design

Since we surveyed students who participated in the program and, for comparison, students in courses who were not participating, this provides us with data that we best describe as a quasi-experimental design with a nonequivalent comparison group (see [Appendix C](#)). We conducted multivariate regression analyses, both ordinary least squares and logistic regression, to explore our hypotheses, controlling for key demographic differences among the survey respondents.

Results

This report on the assessment results includes some of the significant quantitative data, which is textured with direct quotation from the qualitative assessment students receive at the same time. Since fall 2010, we have administered an online survey to students immediately after they attend the actual CGD event. Students in the CGD program report higher levels of academic engagement than those who are not in the program (see [Table 1](#)).¹ One student connected the Great Debate to broader learning goals, reporting, "The Great Debate further advanced my goals of becoming a life-long learner that is open to discovering and contemplating new perspectives." Another student reported academic learning more closely related to their individual course:

To me, the Great Debate was a learning experience, I not only learned a lot about different topics, but also how I could improve my speeches. Listening to other speeches, given by students who are very passionate about their topic is a great way to be able to improve your own speech.

These qualitative responses are typical of student reflections and reinforce the quantitative measurements.

When asked to contemplate their outlook on the importance of community involvement based on three prompts, CGD students placed more importance on becoming involved overall. Students in the CGD program find participating in a community action program "very important or essential" compared with those who were not in the program (54.0% vs. 45.8%; see [Table 2](#)). One student reported, "I left the debate feeling like I wanted to do something. The experience was amazing. It felt great to feel a part

Table 1 Level of Academic Engagement Index (Mean Scores)

	In the Great Debate Program (<i>n</i> = 1,783)	Not in the Great Debate Program (<i>n</i> = 1,177)
Level of academic engagement*	37.59	35.72

*Mean differences between two groups are significant at $p \leq 0.05$, controlling for sex, ethnicity, class level, and HS GPA in an ordinary least squares regression; see [Appendix D](#).

Table 2 Importance of Community Involvement

	In the Great Debate Program (<i>n</i> = 1,841)	Not in the Great Debate Program (<i>n</i> = 1,228)
Participating in a community action program*	54.0%	45.8%
Becoming a community leader*	40.8%	31.0%
Influencing political structure*	48.7%	44.1%

*Percent differences between two groups are significant at $p \leq 0.05$, controlling for sex, ethnicity, class level, and HS GPA in logistic regressions; see [Appendix D](#).

of something political and to understand the issues.” Becoming a community leader is also something students in the CGD program see as “very important or essential” compared with students not in the program who were also surveyed (40.8% vs. 31.2%; see [Table 2](#)). Finally, a greater percentage of students in the CGD program find influencing the political structure very important/essential (48.7% vs. 44.1%; see [Table 2](#)). One student echoed a common refrain on these issues, noting, “It made me realize you can be a freshman in college but still make a difference. Your voice can be heard.” In general, we have found the quantitative and qualitative data to be mutually reinforcing.

Discussion

This case study has yielded several important insights for future researchers and practitioners. First, we have seen the positive impact on academic engagement civic curriculum can have in introductory communication courses. Academic engagement is broader than the course outcomes McIntyre and Sellnow (2014) analyzed, but is still consistent with their findings. In addition, academic engagement has positive implications for students outside the particular course in question and beyond the timeframe of the course. This is a finding that should propel institutional commitment rather than just instructor commitment.

Second, the positive impact civic curriculum can have on perceptions of community engagement is showcased here. This should be a point of interest for institutions and communities seeking stronger town/gown connections. The increase in dispositions toward community engagement is especially important early in education, as it sets students up for commitment throughout their time in higher education, and indeed throughout their lives.

Limitations

This study was limited by several factors, including the comparison groups and our response rate. Our study design is best described as a quasi-experimental design with nonequivalent comparison groups, as the control group was a subset of another general education class not enrolled in either of the large public sphere programs. All the results reported are statistically significant in multivariate regression analyses when controlling for group differences such as sex, ethnicity, class level, and HS GPA to accommodate for the research design’s limitations (see [Appendix D](#) for regression results). Additionally, we cannot continue or replicate the current study arrangement. Due to growth in the Great Debate program, our current participation level is at 100%, leaving

us with no comparison group. Finally, the rapid growth of the program caused some coordination problems in administering the assessment. As a result, our response rate is lower than we would have preferred.

Future directions

The Great Debate has made a significant impact on our campus and throughout our service region. Targeting first-year students makes it a civic engagement program equally well suited for universities and community colleges. The scale of what we have done is massive, but most programs start small and build up. With proper classroom integration, it is a high-impact practice and has the potential to improve the student experience substantially.

In the past two years, we have seen the emergence and integration of the Great Debate program on a variety of campuses. Preliminary reporting from our most advanced community college partner suggests students who participate in the event are more likely to persist successfully in their education. This will be a focal point of future research. With this preliminary information and anecdotal results from other campuses, we are confident that this model translates well across institutional and curricular environments.

Notes

1. Questions in Academic Engagement Index are replicated from the American Association of Colleges and Universities' Bringing Theory to Practice Program "Toolkit Assessment Survey," http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/documents/FacultyToolkit.docxs. The index is the sum of responses and ranges from 10 to 50. For items in the index, see [Appendix C](#).
2. Questions 1–17 are from the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Bringing Theory to Practice Program "Toolkit Assessment Survey," http://www.aacu.org/bringing_theory/documents/FacultyToolkit.docx.
3. The first two "trust" questions are from the National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey (National Opinion Research Center, 2003). The second two are from the Monitoring the Future project as employed in Rahn and Transue (1998).
4. Questions 22–27 are adapted from Verba, Lehman Schlozman, Brady, & Nie the American Citizen Participation Study (1990), archived at Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>).
5. Question 39 is replicated from the 2000 Social Capital Benchmark Survey (<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu>).
6. Questions 40–47 are from the UCLA Cooperative Institutional Research Program's Freshman Survey. This survey is administered nationally and annually to college freshman (<http://www.heri.ucla.edu/cirpoverview.php>).
7. Item adapted from the Civic Engagement Questionnaire (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina & Jenkins, 2002).

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Appendix A. Demographics

Demographics, Fall 2010– Spring 2013

	In the Great Debate Program (<i>n</i> = 1,833)	Not in the Great Debate Program (<i>n</i> = 1,191)
<i>Class Level</i>		
Freshman	72.8%	48.7%
Sophomore	17.3%	26.3%
Junior	5.5%	12.9%
Senior	4.4%	12.1%
<i>Sex</i>		
Female	57.4%	53.0%
Male	42.6%	47.0%
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>		
White	52.2%	58.3%
Hispanic	25.2%	16.6%
African American	1.9%	1.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.9%	7.1%
Other	12.8%	16.2%
Mean High School GPA	3.19	2.88

Appendix B. Survey

SECTION I: ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT²

Please indicate how often this semester you (very often, often, sometimes, rarely, and never):

1. Came to class prepared.
2. Participated actively in class.
3. Came to class with questions about the material.
4. Felt bored in class.
5. Felt the time you spent in class was worthwhile.
6. Looked forward to going to class.
7. Tried to see how ideas from different courses fit together.
8. Tried to do your best work on a paper or test.
9. Made adjustments outside of class to improve or increase the time you could devote to your studies.
10. Worked with another student informally outside of class (e.g., studied together, worked on assignments, proofread each other's work).

For this semester, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree):

11. I have related class material to my life outside of the classroom.
12. Things I have learned in class have changed my view on a particular topic or issue.
13. I have sought more information on a particular classroom topic outside of class (read something online, in a magazine, or newspaper).

14. I have had a discussion(s) about something I've learned in class with someone (e.g., friend, boy/girlfriend, co-worker, family member).
15. I have engaged in conversations with other students who have different ideas or perspectives than my own.
16. Classroom experiences have influenced the organizations I am interested in working with or contributing to.
17. I have critiqued or challenged something I have read or heard outside of class using an argument or facts learned from a class.

SECTION II: CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Questions 18–38 are measured on a Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, disagree, strongly disagree):

SOCIAL TRUST³

18. Most people can be trusted.
19. You can't be too careful in dealing with people.
20. Most of the time, people try to be helpful.
21. People are mostly just looking out for themselves.

POLITICAL INTEREST AND DISCUSSION⁴

22. I am interested in national politics and national affairs.
23. I *discuss* national politics and affairs with my friends.
24. I am interested in local community politics and local community affairs.
25. I *discuss* local community politics and local community affairs with my friends.
26. I am interested in international politics and international affairs.
27. I *discuss* international politics and international affairs with my friends.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND CITIZEN/COMMUNITY IDENTITY

28. Being politically conscious is important to who I am. (Political consciousness)
29. Being a citizen is important to who I am. (Citizen identity)
30. Being a member of my community is important to who I am. (Community identity)

CITIZENSHIP

31. A good citizen should seek political discussion.
32. A good citizen should discuss politics with those who disagree with them.
33. A good citizen should be willing to justify their political views.
34. A good citizen should listen to people who disagree with them politically.
35. A good citizen should allow others to challenge their political beliefs.

POLITICAL REFLECTIVENESS

36. It is ultimately up to me to make up my mind about political issues.
37. I feel personally responsible for my own political views.

MOTIVATION

38. I am motivated to participate in future discussions about politics and community affairs.

EFFICACY⁵

(a big impact, a small impact, a moderate impact, no impact at all):

39. Overall, how much impact do you think people like you have in making your community a better place to live.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTION⁶

Please indicate the importance to you of each of the following (essential, very important, somewhat important, or not important):

40. Influencing the political structure.
41. Participating in a community action program.
42. Keeping up to date with political affairs.
43. Becoming a community leader.
44. Improving my understanding of other countries and cultures.
45. Influencing social values
46. Helping others who are in difficulty
47. Helping to promote racial understanding
48. Did you vote in the most recent general election in November?
 - A. Yes, I voted
 - B. No, I did not vote

When you think about your life in the future in both college and after college, how likely is it that you would do each of the following?⁷

Likelihood Scale

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Maybe		Extremely Likely

49. Vote in an election.
50. Contact or visit someone in government who represents your community.
51. Contact a newspaper, radio, or TV talk show to express your opinion on an issue.
52. Sign an e-mail or written petition.

Thank you for participating in this important research!

Appendix C. Response rates

	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013
Responded	207	158	271	462	895	951
Participated	400	500	800	900	2,000	1,800
Response rate	51.8%	31.6%	33.9%	51.3%	44.8%	52.8%

Appendix D. Multivariate regression analyses

Table A1 The Effect of the Great Debate on Frequency of Academic Engagement
OLS Regression on Semester Assessment Surveys, Fall 2010–Spring 2013

	<i>n</i> = 2,857
<i>Treatment</i>	
Great Debate Program	2.43** (0.20)
<i>Covariates (Controlling for non-equivalency of groups)</i>	
Male	−0.62** (0.19)
White	−0.40** (0.19)
Freshman	−0.28 (0.39)
Sophomore	−0.68 (0.42)
Junior	−0.53 (0.49)
High School GPA	−0.02 (0.12)

Entries are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression, and standard errors are given in parentheses.

**Significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

Table A2 The Effect of the Great Debate on Community Action, Being a Community Leader, and
Influencing Political Structure
Logistic Regression on Semester Assessment Surveys, Fall 2010–Spring 2013

	Community action, <i>n</i> = 2,968	Community leader, <i>n</i> = 2,975	Influencing political structure, <i>n</i> = 2,989
<i>Treatment</i>			
Great Debate Program	0.30** (0.08)	0.37** (0.08)	0.20** (0.08)
<i>Covariates (controlling for non-equivalency of groups)</i>			
Male	−0.26** (0.08)	0.002 (0.08)	0.22 (0.08)
White	−0.30** (0.08)	−0.28** (0.08)	−0.20** (0.07)
Freshman	−0.04 (0.16)	−0.20 (0.17)	0.23 (0.16)
Sophomore	0.04 (0.17)	0.05 (0.18)	0.23 (0.17)
Junior	0.10 (0.20)	0.08 (0.21)	0.31 (0.20)
High School GPA	0.04 (0.05)	−0.01 (0.05)	−0.03 (0.05)

Entries are unstandardized logistic regression coefficients (interpret coefficients as log-odds), and standard errors are given in parentheses.

**Significant at $p \leq 0.01$.