

# PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

Election offices depend on a reliable and diverse pool of poll workers whom they can depend on to serve. Some serve only during the busy presidential cycles but most serve for many years in the same polling locations. These veterans make up the core of most poll teams.

Since the 18-21 year old age group often reflects the lowest voter turnout, any effort to encourage and involve students in the electoral process is worthwhile. Although most students are not likely to commit to more than one election, the goal is to foster a sense of civic duty and encourage participation in the future.

The key to creating a successful college poll worker program is to establish a streamlined process for faculty and student organizations. Elections offices should commit to utilizing young students, in not only busy presidential elections, but also in smaller local elections such as municipal elections.

## Keys to Successful Student Poll Worker Program

- **Start early planning and communicating with university faculty liaisons.** For the November 8, 2016, General Election, Carroll County Elections officials met with UWG faculty in summer of 2015 to begin planning for the busy cycle.
- **Review materials and training manuals for updates that may change.** Make sure all documents are up to date including HR employee packets.
- **Communicate!** Communication is the key to any successful program. Consider developing a MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the school and select one person at your office to serve as point of contact for program.
- **Clarify student roles.** Carroll County decided early that students would be trained in **all** poll duty stations: voter certificate check-in, Express Poll lookup/encoding, greeter/VA card pick up and DRE opening and closing. Poll managers were sent program specifics which stated UWG students were to be afforded the opportunity to work **all** duty stations throughout the day.

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- **Provide convenient training classes.** Carroll County decided to train all UWG students together and adjusted training time to better accommodate student schedules. UWG provided bus transportation to the elections office so all students were trained together as a group.
- **Make training fun!** Let's face it, students love to eat. Carroll County Elections office provided pizza for the students to enjoy after training. Carroll County Sponsor Michelle Morgan provided dessert, drinks, and paper products for the event. West Carrollton Poll Manager, Linda Houston negotiated an affordable pizza price with a local vendor.
- **Promote program.** Carroll County utilized social media and local news outlets to advertise the program as well as added program information on the county website.
- **Appreciation and recognition.** Follow up after the election and send out a thank you to each student. Carroll County sent a *Certificate of Appreciation* to every student. Don't forget to recognize university faculty and team members as well.