

Center for Civic Engagement Observer

democracies need
engaged citizens

"In true democracy every man and woman is taught to think for himself or herself"
-Thomas Jefferson

Learn; Focus; Then Go Do Something About It

By Michael LaFemina

This summer, for the first time in its history, the Center for Civic Engagement had the opportunity to welcome new students at each of the orientations.

The CCE is trying to increase its visibility and profile among the Hofstra community. With that in mind, Izzy [Goodman], intern for the CCE, and I began each of our Tuesday presentations with an introduction, followed by a video, and a short presentation about democracy and civic engagement. The presentation was to begin a simple and ongoing conversation about the fundamentals of American democracy, how they relate to civil rights, and how all that can be exercised through civic engagement.

We're trying a new mantra for civic engagement- the three steps are [1] learn, [2] focus, and [3] act, if you remember. I think we should all feel comfortable participating in politics, whether it be voting, writing letters to representatives, or being a part of a political demonstration.

At the CCE event, students discussed the rights entitled to every American citizen in the First Amendment. We spoke of each of the five rights: freedom of speech, the press, religion, to petition the government with grievances, and to peacefully assemble. By a show of hands, it was the first time for many of the students had 'seen of what democracy looks like.'

On Thursday mornings, Izzy and I could be found in CV Starr Hall where all the new students were registering for classes. As one of the goals of the CCE is to increase democratic participation, a voter registration drive was open to the students every week. Izzy believes, "voting is something that shouldn't just be important to students who care about politics." She told the students at the registration table, "[Voting is] a right that is guaranteed to every American citizen and it's not something that should be taken for granted."

Throughout the summer, the CCE registered approximately 300 students. This semester, we'll be in the Student Center atrium every Tuesday and Wednesday until October holding a voter registration drive between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

CCE in the Airwaves: Students Have a Voice!

By Kimberly Chin

Part of CCE's mission is to get students involved in their community. We do this in many ways, from tabling in the Student Center to opening dialogue sessions in residence halls or hosting events for all to participate in. This involves increasing our exposure so that students are not only aware of what CCE does, but also motivated to in our work.

This semester, the CCE is bringing on another element to arouse student awareness. The CCE is bringing together student leaders, activists and volunteers, as another way to draw people to the issues that most affect them. These future leaders will serve as role models for the Hofstra community.

The participants will discuss their work around campus, in student organizations, or even in the communities around their neighborhood, nation or globe, as well as their views on issues that are important to them. Every week the voices of Hofstra student leaders can be heard on WRHU, Radio Hofstra University in a short interview as part of a regular broadcast on the campus radio station.

"If you turn the air waves to people who are not professionals, what you can create is an amazing production," School of Communication Dean Susan Murphy said. "This is an opportunity to give young people a way to express their eloquence and passion," she added.

Stay tuned to 88.7 FM WRHU each week on Friday at 6 p.m. during Studio South and the Hofstra Morning Wake-Up Call, Mondays to Fridays at 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Upcoming Events in September

9th @ 2 p.m. - Economic Issues facing the Prez
Adams Playhouse

10th @ 8:30 p.m. - Sustained Dialogue Series
Amsterdam Hall, N.S.

16th @ 4 p.m. - Town Hall Meeting: Economy
Monroe LTC

16th @ 8:30 p.m. - Sustained Dialogue Series
Nassau Hall, 6th floor

17th @ 8:30 p.m. - Student Dialogue Series
Liberty/Republic, Liberty Lounge

23rd @ 12:45 p.m. - Foreign Policy Priorities?
Cultural Center Theater

24th @ ALL DAY - Day of Dialogue
Campus-wide event : see schedule t.b.a

25th @ 8:30 p.m. - Sustained Dialogue Series
New Complex, main floor lounge

Sustained Dialogue Series Begins

CCE is programming in a residence hall near you!

By Michael LaFemina

I must say that it was great to meet all of you over the summer. I hope you enjoyed our time together and are looking forward to a college experience filled with opportunity to grow and mature in ways you never thought possible.

As promised, the Center for Civic Engagement will be a resource for you throughout your time at Hofstra.

Beginning this year, we will be launching a series of programs known as the "Sustained Dialogue Series." These ongoing conversations will take place in the residence hall lounges of Utrecht and Amsterdam houses of Netherlands South, Liberty/Republic, New Complex, Nassau Hall, and in the back of the student center cafeteria.

We will be getting together regularly in order to further our discussion that began at orientation: What does it mean to be an engaged citizen and how do we do that?

Check out the 'upcoming events' section at the top to see when we'll be in your hall. Feel free to come to any of the events. Just email me if you don't live where the program will be and we'll walk in together.

Civic Engagement Coffee Hour



Tuesday, September 16th
8:30pm - Student Center (back atrium)

bring a mug and an open mind...

Next Edition:

Monday, September 22, 2008
Featuring the first ever CCE
Spotlight Student!