

## **Teaching Political Science and Political Engagement through Community-Based Research**

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**Abstract:** In the fall of 2005 we conducted a survey of voters in San Francisco to assess the ease with which people adapted to a new ballot form and election system. The project offered an opportunity to provide a service to the community while expanding the learning experience of over 100 students in three classes at a large state university (San Francisco State). We designed the project with two general pedagogical goals: enhance learning about political science, and promote civic engagement. We describe the activity and draw on student feedback to evaluate the project. Reports were positive and we deem the project a success, more in regard to enhanced learning than civic engagement. We find a difference in students' experiences across the type of classes they were in, with more positive feedback coming from those in a smaller class with a focus on research design. A discussion is offered on the potential value for others using similar projects to enhance learning and promote civic engagement.

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