Civic Engagement and Public Hope among Millennials

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February 3, 2012
Dalton Institute for College Student Values
Definition of Civic Engagement

- Civic Engagement is the activities and attitudes of active citizenship
- Broad range of activities that are incorporated into Civic Engagement
Examples of Civic Engagement

- Belonging to at least one community group
- Attending religious service at least monthly
- Reading newspapers at least once a week
- Voting
- Working on a community project
- Service
Possibilities of democracy

- Having faith in the collective will of people
  - de Tocqueville “civic life as ubiquitous”

- World view based in hope
Generalized trust

Link between us and strangers

Millennial’s differentiation of engagement
Attitudes of college students from a longitudinal perspective
Millennial College Students

- Millennial is a student born after 1981.
- Wrongly portrayed as being apathetic to community needs (Twenge, 2006)
  - “Generation Me”
Generational Differences in Civic Attitudes

- When a person develops has a significant effect on their civic identity
  - Generation X distrusts career politicians
  - Millennials believe conventional politics is ineffective, want to do hands-on work, like volunteer

- Millennials are checking-out of political engagement.
Civic engagement is a key part of the transition between adolescence & mature adulthood.

Millennials are less likely than previous generations were to exhibit 9 of 10 important characteristics of citizenship.
Delay, Not Decline

- Millennials are delaying many traditional transitions to adulthood
Constance Flanagan and Peter Levine

Figure 1. Voting Turnout over the Life Course

So What are Millennials Doing?

![Image of a volunteer]

![Image of a protest sign with Revolution Tools: AK-47, Machete, Twitter, Facebook]
Partner activity
Think About Your Civic Development

• When you were a college student, where were you when you learned about injustice, politics, or religion?

• When you were there, what helped you learn? How did others support you, specifically?

• As an adviser, what are a few strategies you can employ to facilitate civic engagement?
Advise Students for Higher Levels of Civic Engagement

- Role model participation in the community
- Stand for something and let students know about it
- Hold high expectations
  - i.e. voting, watching president addresses, etc.
- Engage in conversations about current events regularly
- Be open to conversation, regardless of taboo, to facilitate development/understanding
- Help steer activism towards constructive outlets
Consider civic issues, not just service when developing an experiential learning program
  • Learning Reconsidered (2010)

Establish behavioral norms now
Contact Us

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Sources

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