

# Critical Thinking & Democracy

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

With Bridget Trogden ([trogden@clemson.edu](mailto:trogden@clemson.edu))





# Game: Red/Yellow/Green

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“My kid getting a good job” is a major reason that families send their students to college.

To students, “to learn more about what interests me” is a #1 reason for attending college.

College students show apathy about social issues.





# Isn't this interesting?!

Students "Agree Strongly" or "Agree Somewhat":	
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	17.8
Abortion should be legal	73.1
Colleges have the right to ban extreme speakers from campus	51.0
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	67.9
Addressing global climate change should be a federal priority	85.8
The federal government should have stricter gun control laws	76.3
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	50.2
The federal government should raise taxes to reduce the deficit	36.2
Gays and lesbians should have the legal right to adopt a child	90.5
The U.S. government should create a clear path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants	85.9
My political views closely resemble those of my parent(s)/guardian(s)	65.6

The American Freshman: National Norms 2019.

<https://heri.ucla.edu/publications-tfs/>



# A VERY short primer – what's the purpose of American higher education?

Era of the American Revolution: British sympathizers called America's institutions of higher education 'seminars of sedition'

Jeffersonian era: state legislatures began to charter universities to prepare leaders for the new nation

Mid 19th century: land-grant institutions were created to serve America's workers – farmers, mechanics

Mid 20th century: John Dewey – *Democracy and Education* - we need voting rights AND development of public opinions, accomplished by communication among citizens

2012: The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (commissioned by U.S. Dept of Education) report – *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future* - "pushes back against a prevailing national dialogue that limits the mission of higher education to workforce preparation and training while marginalizing disciplines basic to democracy."



# And now?

Latest

*The Atlantic*

IDEAS

## Democracies Don't Try to Make Everyone Agree

Marxist literary  
one of

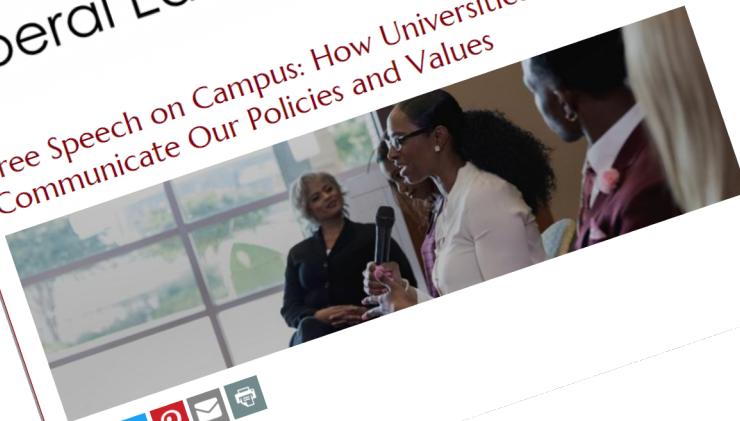
ace theory have  
rs: a tendency to

**The Democratic Imperative  
for Higher Education:  
Empowering Students to  
Become Active Citizens**

By: Tony Gallagher

**Liberal Education BLOG**

**Free Speech on Campus: How Universities Can  
Communicate Our Policies and Values**



## Parents Must Stop Letting Woke Colleges Indoctrinate Their Children | Opinion

MICHAEL  
ON 7/19/21

The Heritage Foundation

DIRECTOR OF MEDIA, COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION



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## Most Parents and Teachers Are Done With Critical Race Theory

Jul 7th, 2021 3 min read

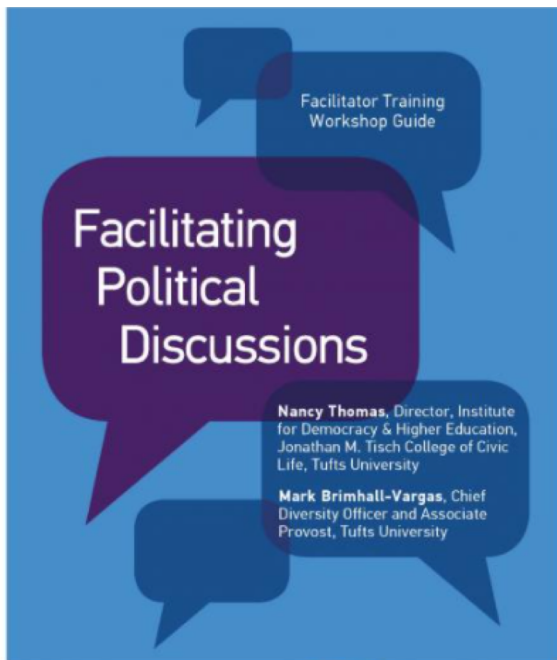
The Seneca Journal  
May 29, 2021

There is a danger in doing too much critical thinking. Often, one thinks too much and begins to believe what they are thinking. Common sense is the way to go.



# What is the faculty role?

Working with students through real-world, societal issues – yes, the ones that affect *all* of our disciplines – is not "getting political"!



<https://idhe.tufts.edu/resources>



<https://www.askbigquestions.org/resources>





## My goals for our time together in this session:

1. To help you feel empowered about when and how to infuse real-world societal issues and democratic/voter education into any courses that you teach.
2. To provide you with nonpartisan and useful resources for enabling any activities extending from item 1.

# What is the faculty role?

Advocacy from ACC member institution Provosts in fall 2019:

Using the working definitions of *democratic engagement and civic education*:

A combination of promoting the education of students for engaged participation through democratic participation in their communities, respect and appreciation of diversity, applied learning, and social responsibility.



Students Learn Students Vote Coalition. (2019). Strengthening American Democracy.  
<http://apps.naspa.org/files/StrengtheningAmericanDemocracyGuide.pdf>



## Activities of DemocrACCy:

A Cross-University Challenge to Support Improved Student Democratic Engagement

- Voter registration and participation, improved voting culture

- Curricular involvement

How can we share resources and best practices for infusing democratic engagement in the curriculum in ways that increases *critical thinking* and *information literacy*?

- Co-curricular involvement
- Athlete engagement
- Collective PR, media, communication



DemocrACCy Challenge website – hosted with ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge - <https://allinchallenge.org/democraccy/>

# What is the faculty role?

Statement from the Association of Chief Academic Officers in September 2020:

*As the Association of Chief Academic Officers (ACAO), we support the role of college faculty and instructors in improving nonpartisan student voter engagement. We believe that student engagement in American democracy is integrally connected to curricular priorities of critical thinking and information literacy. We encourage our faculty colleagues across all ranks and disciplines to infuse in disciplinary- and subject-specific ways tenets of nonpartisan democratic and voter engagement into their work with students across the three pillars of voter registration, education, and turnout.*

[Direct link to statement](#)

**ACAO**  
Association of Chief  
Academic Officers

[www.acao.org](http://www.acao.org)



# What is the faculty role?



## Goals of Clemson Votes:

#1 and #2: Increasing student voter registration and turnout.

#3: Increase democratic engagement and civic learning in our Clemson graduate and undergraduate curricula. Work with faculty on explicitly creating voter education activities.

#4: Collaborative programming

#5: Develop University-level democratic engagement and civic learning student learning outcomes.

(Bridget put a copy of a 1-pager into Box)

See also: [bit.ly/ClemsonVotes](https://bit.ly/ClemsonVotes)

# So why are we talking about this?

## Important facts:

- Historically, just 39% of young adults aged 18-29 vote in presidential election years, and ~20% vote in midterm elections.
- Nationally, students in STEM fields are less likely than their peers to vote, and education majors vote at the highest rates.
- → However, we saw a historic 20% increase in college student voter participation nation-wide in the 2018 midterms, largely due to efforts of specific institutional efforts. (2020 data is not yet available.)
- **Look at Clemson NSLVE data – on the Clemson Votes bitly. Big differences by discipline.**



# Resources for the classroom – see handouts

