



Ferris State University
Political Engagement Project

Annual Report for 2008-09

Submitted by the PEP Steering Committee:

Dr. Richard Griffin, Faculty Coordinator
Dr. William Potter, Administrative Coordinator
Dr. Tony Baker, Steering Committee Member
Dr. Denise Mitten, Steering Committee Member
Dr. Wendy Samuels, Steering Committee Member

March 11, 2009

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Introduction – The following narrative describes the third year of the Political Engagement Project (PEP) at Ferris State University. Ferris was one of eight public universities selected in 2006 for inclusion in a pilot program that would permit faculty to develop pedagogies to help their students be meaningfully engaged in the political process as a part of their coursework. The FSU team elected to accept this challenge by inviting faculty from across campus, regardless of discipline, to participate. The response to that invitation has been both overwhelming and gratifying, with a total of 70 different instructors from seven different colleges and nearly 30 different disciplines at the Big Rapids campus becoming involved in just three years.

Highlights for the third year include:

- Reorganizing the American Democracy Project Advisory Council
- Expanding the Political Engagement Project Steering Committee to 5 members
- Adding 10 new PEP faculty for 2008-09; total of 70 faculty now in PEP
- Funding 76 PEP sections in Fall 2008 and 67 sections in Spring 2009
- Reaching nearly 1,800 students in fall and 1,700 students in spring via courses
- Sponsoring or co-sponsoring 8 public lectures or debates in the fall semester
- Sponsoring voter registration and awareness activities throughout fall semester, including the Election Fair and the Election Watch events
- Initiating a weekly film series related to The Politics of Green theme for spring
- Identifying spring course activities to culminate in Earth Day/Week events
- Continuing the bi-weekly PEP faculty roundtable sessions during fall and spring
- Conducting an outcomes survey of students at the end of fall semester
- Continuing *New York Times* deliveries for participating faculty, students and staff
- Developing a plan and recommendation for continuation of PEP after 2009
- Sharing the Ferris PEP experience with colleagues in Michigan and the United States at various venues

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Organizational Restructuring – In preparation for the final year of the Political Engagement Project three-year pilot program, and in hopes of laying a foundation for the continuation of PEP after completion of the pilot program, Academic Affairs and PEP leaders at Ferris State University implemented several organizational changes for 2008-09. First, the American Democracy Project (ADP) parent committee was re-constituted, allowing the replacement of faculty and staff who had retired or who had moved on to other initiatives by faculty and staff who had been active in PEP. The original ADP parent committee had not met regularly since the advent of PEP, but the new ADP-PEP Advisory Council has met monthly during the current academic year to help support the onslaught of courses and activities related to the themes selected for fall (The 2008 Election) and spring (The Politics of Green) semesters. The membership of the current council is listed below:

American Democracy Project/Political Engagement Project

ADP/PEP Council Members 2008-09

Anthony Baker	Associate Professor of Sociology; Steering Committee
Michael Berghoef	Professor of Social Work; PEP Scholar
Edward Brayton	Department Chair, Construction Technology and Management; PEP Scholar
Nina Davis	Administrative Assistant, University College; Administrative Assistant
Richard Griffin	Professor of Political Science; Faculty Coordinator
Scott Herron	Associate Professor of Biology and Education Program Coordinator; PEP Scholar
Richard Hewer	Associate Professor of Accountancy, Finance and Information Systems; At Large, College of Business
Judith Hooper	Associate Professor of Developmental Curriculum; At Large, University College
Cindy Horn	Director of University Recreation; At Large, Student Affairs
Geri Johnson	Governmental Relations Assistant; At Large, Governmental Relations
Denise Mitten	Associate Professor of Recreation, Leisure and Wellness; Steering Committee
Marcia Parry	Associate Professor of Health Care Systems Administration; At Large, College of Allied Health Sciences
William Potter	Dean of University College; Administrative Coordinator
Steve Reifert	Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice; At Large, College of Education and Human Services
Wendy Samuels	Associate Professor of Social Work; Steering Committee
Randall Schroeder	Department Head for Public Services; At Large, FLITE
Todd Stanislav	Director of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning; At large, CTLF
Stephanie Thomson	Assistant Professor of Humanities; At Large, College of Arts & Sciences
Leroy Wright	Dean of Student Life; At Large, Student Affairs

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The revitalized Advisory Council includes Faculty Coordinator, Dr. Rick Griffin, and Administrative Coordinator, Dr. Bill Potter in addition to three members of the PEP Steering Committee, the three Political Engagement Project Carnegie Scholars, and 11 at-large representatives from each college on the Big Rapids campus as well as four relevant administrative offices.

In addition to the changes in Advisory Council membership, the Political Engagement Project Steering Committee was invigorated by the addition of two experienced PEP faculty, Dr. Denise Mitten and Dr. Wendy Samuels. These women joined continuing members Dr. Rick Griffin, Dr. Tony Baker and Dr. Bill Potter in anticipation of higher activity levels, to introduce some new ideas to the program, and to allow for continuity in the event of turnover.

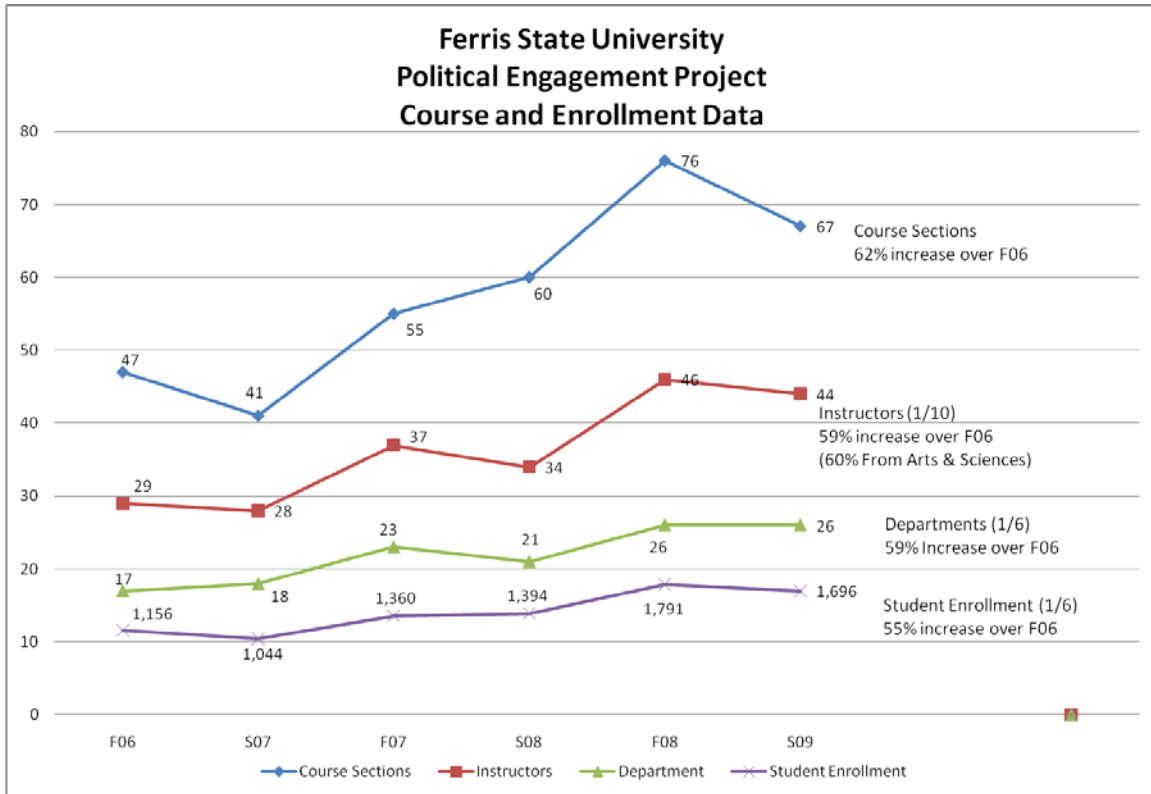
In conjunction with these program governance changes, it was also determined to combine the budgets for ADP and PEP for the current fiscal year. Due to the pilot nature of the programs, this combined budget is funded by one-time (not base) dollars totaling approximately \$160,000 for the year allocated as listed below:

- Fall and Spring Release-time (.5) for Faculty Coordinator
- Summer Pay (.25) for Faculty Coordinator
- Fall and Spring Release-time for 3 Steering Committee Members (.25)
- Stipends for PEP Faculty (40 per semester X \$500 each)
- Overload Stipend for Clerical Support
- Fringe Benefits for Faculty and Support Person
- Student Wage
- Supply and Expense Allowance for PEP Courses (40 per semester X \$250 each)
- New York Times* Subscription for Academic Year (100 copies, M-F)
- Speaker Fees and Expenses
- Contributions to non-PEP Events (speakers, panels, poster sessions)
- Food Service
- Travel to ADP/PEP June Conference for Steering Committee (n=5)
- Printing, Copying, Office Supplies
- Advertising and Promotion

The administrative coordinator time was provided at no additional compensation or release-time expense. This budget is comparable to that of a large academic department at Ferris.

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PEP Courses and Enrollments – During the fall and spring semesters, Political Engagement Project faculty at Ferris State University offered a record number of courses (42 in fall and 48 in spring) and course sections (76 in fall and 67 in spring) to 1,791 students in the fall and 1,696 students in the spring (duplicated count). The growth of the PEP curriculum is also measured over time, by semester, in the graph displayed below:



These data show that instructional activity – courses and sections offered, instructors involved, and students enrolled – related to the Political Engagement Project increased by nearly 60% since the first offerings in Fall 2006. Viewed from another perspective, during the current year, one out of six students enrolled at the Big Rapids campus took a PEP course. Moreover, one out of ten of the 440 full-time faculty at that campus taught a PEP course. Seven out of the eight colleges and 26 out of the 170 degree programs (60% from Arts and Sciences) in Big Rapids participated in PEP. Over the three year pilot program, a total of 70 different faculty (equal to 1/6 of the full-time staff) have taught at least one PEP course.

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PEP Co-curricular Events for 2008-9 -- Beyond the scheduled activities for the PEP courses each semester, the Political Engagement Project at Ferris State University sponsored or co-sponsored numerous co-curricular events. **The 2008 Election** theme for fall semester was made-to-order for both courses and events. Our fall calendar included the following:

**FSU Political Engagement Activities at a Glance
 Fall Semester 2008
 General Theme – The 2008 Election**

Friday (130)	September 12	David Boaz, Libertarian	Speaker: <i>The Politics of Freedom</i>
Monday-Friday	September 15-19	Constitution Week	Voter Registration
Tuesday	September 16	Secretary of State Mobile Branch	Voter Education and Registration
Tuesday (300)	September 16	Dr. David Pilgrim, FSU Chief Diversity Officer	Lecture: <i>“Hateful Images: Presidential Election 2008”</i>
Wednesday (300)	September 24	The Great Debate Co –sponsored with student organizations	Mark Brewer, <i>MI Democrat Chairman</i> v. Saul Anuzis <i>MI Republic Chairman</i>
Thursday	September 25	Kristie Dugan, Secretary of State	PEP Faculty Development
Thursday (500)	September 25	Sister Helen Prejean Lecture preceded by social-political discussion of the death penalty Co-sponsored with student organizations	Speaker: <i>Dead Man Walking</i>
Tuesday	September 30	“The Minority Vote in 2008” Co-sponsored with student organizations	Panel Discussion <i>José Reina & FSU Student Minority Organizations</i>
Tuesday (25)	October 7	Presidential Debate Viewing	Student-Faculty
Wednesday (80)	October 15	Saul Hansell, NY Times Courtesy of partnership with the <i>New York Times</i>	Speaker: <i>The Media & Technology</i>
Tuesday (300)	October 21	PEP Election Fair	Election Education Event
Tuesday (50)	October 21	Legislative Candidate Debate	<i>U.S. House and MI House Candidates</i>
Wednesday	October 29	Lambda Pi Eta Speaking Contest	<i>Debate Topic: Presidential Candidates</i>
Tuesday (400)	November 4	PEP Election Watch	Community Viewing of Results
Thursday (75)	November 13	Dr. Richard Scher	Speaker: <i>2008 Election Analysis</i>

Attendance at the various events is listed with each event. The total attendance for fall PEP events was more than 2,000 people. It was especially gratifying to host Mr. Saul Hansell, a *New York Times* writer, as one of our speakers, taking good advantage of our relationship with the *Times* beyond the subscription for 100 copies per day which are distributed to PEP faculty and others on the campus.

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Spring semester promises to be equally rich, in spite of an anticipated let down after the excitement of a presidential election, as demonstrated by the calendar below.

**FSU Political Engagement Activities at-a-Glance
 Spring Semester 2009
 General Theme: "Politics of Green"**

Tuesday	January 20, 2009	Obama Inauguration Events co-sponsored with Martin Luther King Week	Big Screen View, 10-Noon Panel Discussion, 6-8 pm
Tuesday	February 3, 2009	Video Series	"The Story of Stuff"
Wednesday	February 4, 2009	Repeat Viewing	
Monday	February 9, 2009	Prof. Clayton Rye Video FSU-PEP Professor Co-sponsored with the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs	"Detroit Area Trilogy"
Wednesday	February 11, 2009	Video Series	"FLOW: For the Love of the Great Lakes"
Thursday	February 12, 2009	Repeat Viewing	
Thur.-Fri.	February 12-13, 2009	Michigan Campus Compact Meeting	FSU PEP Presentation
Wednesday	February 18, 2009	Video Series	"Solutions for the First 100 Days"
Thursday	February 19, 2009	Repeat Viewing	
Wednesday	February 25, 2009	Video Series	"Living a Nightmare"
Thursday	February 26, 2009	Repeat Viewing	
Wednesday	March 18, 2009	Dr. Beverly Wright Lecture	"Environmental Justice"
Thursday	March 19, 2009	Dr. Beverly Wright	Faculty Forum
Wednesday	March 25, 2009	Video Series	"Crapshoot"
Thursday	March 26, 2009	Repeat Viewing	
Tuesday	March 31, 2009	Keith McHenry Lecture Co-sponsored with Associated Student Government	Cooking for Peace and Social Justice
Wednesday	April 1, 2009	Video Series	"Dying to be Heard"
Thursday	April 2, 2009	Repeat Viewing	
Thur.-Fri.	April 16-17, 2009	FSU Energy Conference Co-sponsored with College of Engineering Technology	
Tuesday	April 21, 2009	Earth Day Activities co-sponsored with many organizations are to be announced, but currently include: A. Earthwork Collective Concert on April 21 B. Awareness Week activities about healthy living and environments April 20-24	
Thur.-Sat.	June 11-13, 2009	ADP/PEP National Meeting	FSU PEP Presentation

One significant change in the current semester calendar has been the addition of a film series related to the PEP theme, **The Politics of Green**. Each movie in the series is shown two times, once on Wednesday evening and again at 11 a.m. on Thursdays (an hour when no classes are offered). Another video, *Detroit Area Trilogy*, co-sponsored by PEP and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs was the sabbatical project of one of

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the PEP faculty. It does not relate directly to the semester theme, focusing instead on the issue of race relations in mid-20th century Detroit and using interviews to deliver its message.

Program Highlights – In general terms the Political Engagement Project at Ferris has accomplished many of its original goals. First, it has inspired a robust curriculum, spanning 26 disciplines in 7 colleges. As one might expect, the Ferris PEP roster of courses includes such standard fare as PLSC 122-Intro. to American Government, HIST 315-Civil Rights Movements, COMM 121-Public Speaking, PLSC 410-Politics and Media, and BLAW 301-Managing in the Legal Environment. Less traditional courses, however, have also found their way into PEP. Courses such as SOCY 347-Sociology of Disasters, CONM 412-Construction Contracts, NUCM 100-Introduction to Nuclear Medicine, GEOG 121-Weather and Climate, TVPR 499-Advanced Producing and Directing, RMLS 225-Outdoor Recreation Leadership, and ISYS 105-Intro.to Micro Systems have been modified to meaningfully and appropriately engage students in the politics that are relevant to the respective disciplines. PEP activities included:

- In Construction Management 412, Dr. Ed Brayton uses the U.S. Constitution as the basis for instruction about contract law in the construction field.
- In Sociology 347, Dr. Tom Behler requires students to obtain certification in at least one emergency preparedness field such as first aid, ham radio, etc.
- In Geography 121, Dr. Jennifer Johnson requires her students to prepare a poster presentation for submission to the Ferris Energy Conference, an event that is co-sponsored by PEP.
- In Social Work 210, Dr. Katherine Palazzolo-Miller took her students to Chicago to visit Hull House, teaching them how Jane Addams worked for change at the city, state and federal levels a century ago.
- In Education 303, Dr. Virginia Hines took her students to the Grand Rapids Public Schools to visit a “Comer Model” school and a traditional urban school, followed by attendance at a GRPS Board of Education meeting.
- In Journalism 251, Dr. Steven Fox is assigning a group project that requires students to analyze media coverage of “green” issues and to present their findings in the form of news coverage, a public relations report, or an ad campaign.

Second, PEP at Ferris provided those instructors with important professional development activities, networking opportunities, course support, and recognition – both on campus and beyond. During 2008-9, PEP faculty began the academic year with a day-long conference in August. This kick-off event was followed during fall semester by the bi-weekly faculty roundtable sessions staffed by members of the PEP Steering Committee at three different times to accommodate faculty teaching schedules. The roundtable sessions were continued for PEP faculty in the spring semester. In collaboration with other departments and offices, PEP has also supported faculty attendance at professional and scholarly meetings where Steering Committee members

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and faculty have shared the Ferris PEP experience. Listed below are the conference venues and dates for this academic year.

- Lilly North Conference in Traverse City, September 2008
- Association for General and Liberal Studies, Asheville NC, September 2008
- Michigan Campus Compact Conference , Grand Rapids, February 2009
- National Association Developmental Education, Greensboro NC, February 2009
- Michigan Equity Conference, Rochester MI, April 2009
- Faculty Conference on Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Civic Engagement, Mt. Pleasant MI, May 2009
- American Democracy Project Conference in Baltimore, June 2009

Third, PEP has supported faculty, student and staff access to teaching resources. For example, the PEP budget funds a 100-copy daily subscription to the *New York Times*. PEP student workers deliver these papers to faculty mailboxes, the deans' offices for each college, and in various public access locations across campus every morning before 8 a.m. In addition, PEP purchased copies of *Educating for Democracy* for distribution to ALL participating faculty. With assistance from the university webmaster, the PEP administrative coordinator maintains an up-to-date website, www.ferris.edu/PEP. The Political Engagement Project at Ferris has also identified and supported three Carnegie-PEP Scholars. Professors Ed Brayton (Construction Management), Mike Berghof (Social Work) and Scott Herron (Biology) were recognized with this designation in 2007 due to their early accomplishments as instructors. They have continued to support PEP by teaching, providing additional leadership at the roundtable discussions, and sponsoring campus events.

Fourth, PEP has allowed budgetary support for class activities in PEP-designated courses. These funds supplement existing supply and expense budgets in the academic departments and have helped to pay for speakers, field trips, special training or certification, and course materials beyond textbooks or lab items. Some instructors have pooled the \$250 per course allocation to offer their students special opportunities including:

- Social Work faculty pooled funding to allow their students to attend the National Association of Social Workers Legislative Day in Lansing on March 17, 2009.
- Communication faculty contributed to support a campus-wide speaker, Keith McHenry, on the subject of "Cooking for Peace and Social Justice" on March 31, 2009 in collaboration with student organizations.
- History and Political Science faculty combined their resources to sponsor students who traveled to interview WWII veterans in the Upper Peninsula in April, 2009 as part of the American Government class PEP project.
- Other faculty funded travel to Washington D.C. in February, 2009 so that they could attend Powershift '09, a 4-day student summit that was promoted in one of the videos – "1st 100 Days" – from the PEP spring video series.

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Student Learning Outcomes – From the beginning in 2006, the Political Engagement Project (PEP) at Ferris had identified a core set of objectives to accomplish regarding increasing student engagement in politics. These objectives fall within the parameters of an academically rigorous and balanced presentation of political ideas in the context of existing course content. As stated on the PEP website,

The major distinction of a Political Engagement Project Course (PEP) is that it does not require creation of a new course or the complete overhaul of an existing course. Rather, PEP requires only that at least one of the course objectives will serve to improve student political engagement in relation to course material by exposing students to real events and players in a political arena. Examples of relevant activities include, but are not limited to: guest speaker series, attendance at governmental meetings, travel to events away from campus, utilization of current media resources in addition to or in place of texts, etc. Some will wonder what an appropriate level of course emphasis we are requesting. We would suggest that, at a minimum, a PEP course module would account for about 25% of the course grade (it could certainly be more)

- *Course must be enhanced in some way (i.e., includes new component(s) beyond readings, lectures, and/or discussions that address PEP objectives)*
 - a) *increase knowledge and understanding of democratic process*
 - b) *develop skills in political deliberation and critical judgment*
 - c) *motivate students to become politically engaged*
 - d) *relate course discipline to political engagement and/or public policy*

- *Students in the course activity must directly "encounter" the political process*
 - a) *attendance at appropriate governmental meetings*
 - b) *relevant guest speakers in class*
 - c) *field research about a political issue*
 - d) *in-class simulations*
 - e) *travel to events away from campus*
 - f) *experiential activities (e.g., interviews)*
 - g) *assign students to mentors in the field*

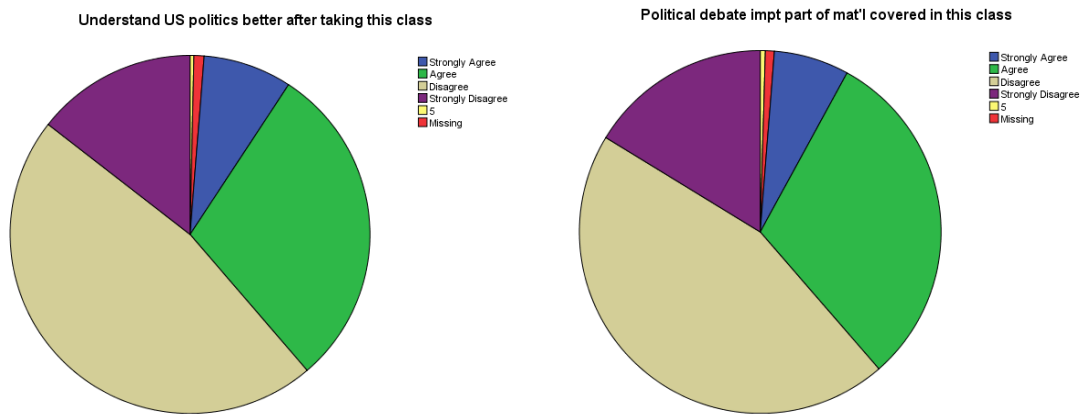
- *Students must have the opportunity to reflect upon/process those activities using*
 - a) *journals*
 - b) *essays*
 - c) *blogs*
 - d) *oral reports or speeches or group presentations*
 - e) *academic papers*

- *Instructors must provide for outcomes assessment (this is beyond the SAI)*
 - a) *PEP survey instrument*
 - b) *student satisfaction surveys*
 - c) *student anecdotes*
 - d) *instructor feedback via survey or focus group*

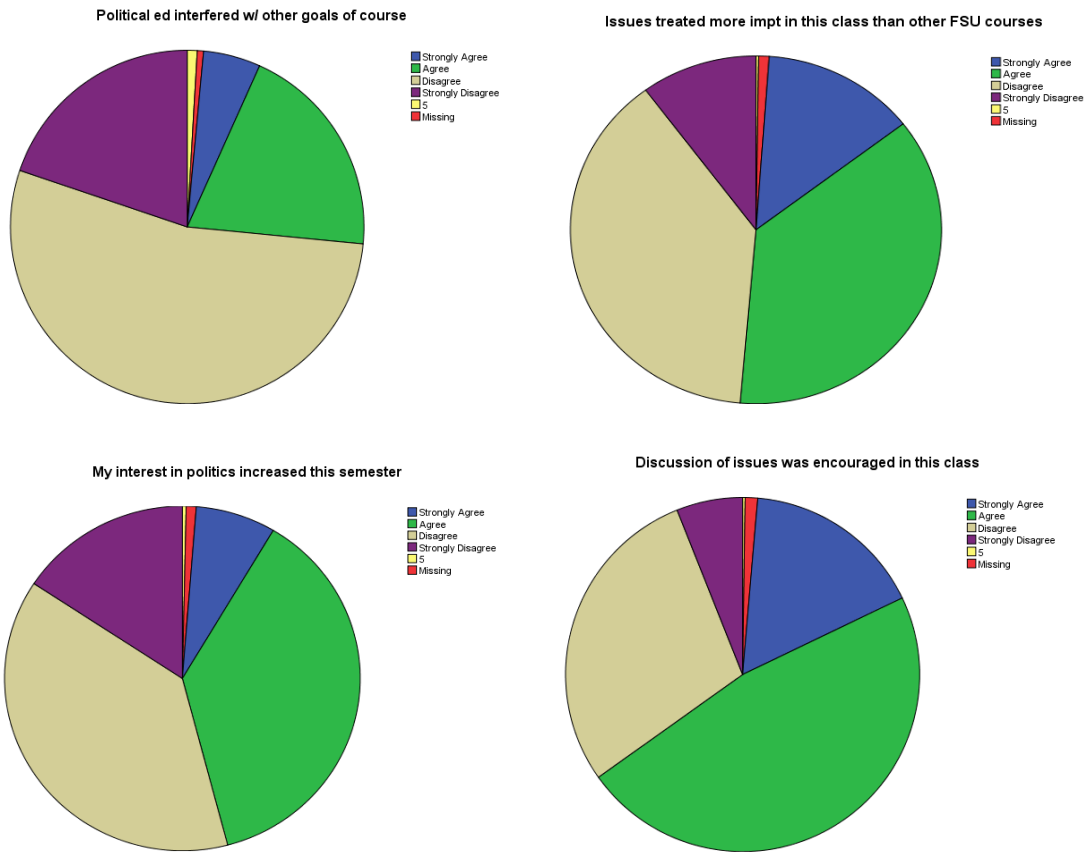
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The following data reveal findings from three surveys designed to measure the impact of PEP on course participants and the University in general. The first two surveys produced pre and post data from more than 1000 course participants in the fall semester of 2007 (the second year of the program). Those data are included here to provide comparison points for the data from the third survey of 500 PEP students completed after the 2008 presidential election. Those survey results are reported below as they relate to the four Ferris PEP learning outcomes.

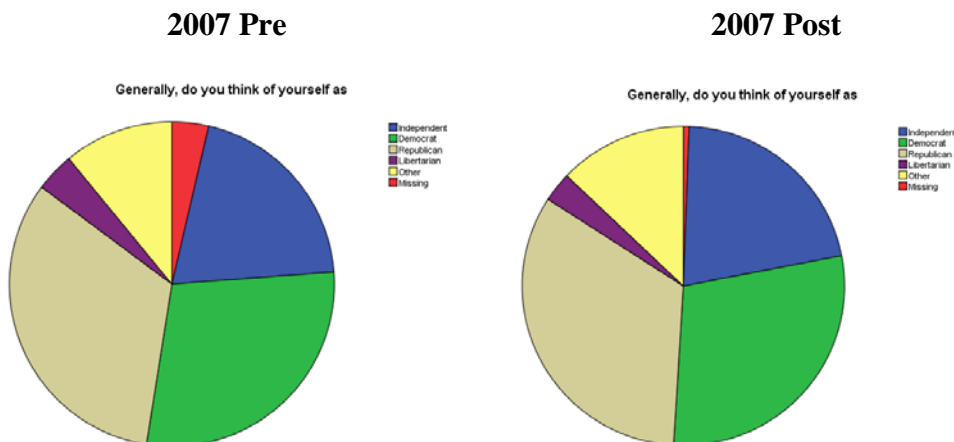
Outcome A: Increase knowledge and understanding of democratic process. Measuring student knowledge before and after the course proved challenging. Most students self reported their own knowledge as quite extensive before and after the courses. However, their actual knowledge of basic political facts, such as the names of their U.S. Senators was sketchy. The following charts illustrate the students' perceptions of their experiences in the PEP courses. Apparently, well over half of the students in Fall 2007 did not see political material of the class to be important, or their knowledge gained significant. Some (about 1/4) felt that the political material interfered with the course material. Nearly 3/4 did not take this view. Remember, most of the students had no knowledge that the course would cover political discussions prior to enrolling. With this in mind, over half felt that issues were treated more importantly and over a third felt that their knowledge increased and the material was important. Nearly half of the students reported an increase in their interest in politics. Two thirds of the students agreed that discussion of issues was very much encouraged compared to other courses. Considering the breadth of these courses, this impact becomes remarkable over the years.



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Outcome B: Develop skills in political deliberation and critical judgment, rather than political/ideological socialization. A number of critics have charged that when professors introduce politics in the classroom that there is likely to be a tendency for professors to express a bias when presenting content and that this bias may affect student attitudes and beliefs. The Ferris PEP coordinators and faculty discussed in detail the need for balanced presentation, both in class and at public events. The pre and post survey results from 2007 showed that student opinions about their political leanings did not change much after a semester of PEP.



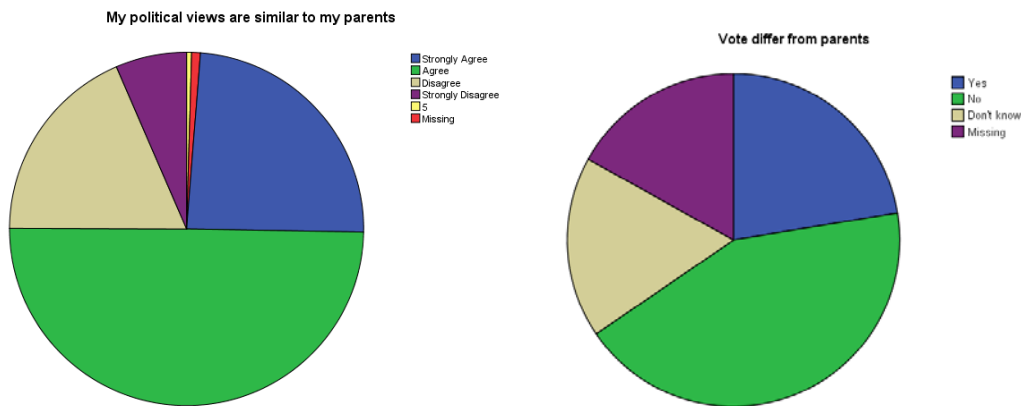
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The students in our surveys identified themselves as being from a wide array of political ideologies and party affiliations. It is evident from the above charts that there does not appear to be a shift of political identification as a result of the PEP courses. There does appear to be a small shift from no identification (“Missing” category in red ink) of political party to an actual choice. Hopefully, this includes increased knowledge of the political parties leading to an informed ability to make a choice.

What is more likely is that students are influenced most by their prior experiences with politics, especially by their parents. This notion is consistent with national studies (e.g., Hively, et. al. 2008). Nearly three-fourths of PEP course participants reported their views as similar to their parents. The 2008 election data is interesting in that only slightly more than a third of the respondents knew that their vote was the same as their parents. However, it does appear to be a likely predictor. The unique experience of this election and the well-reported generational divide in the vote outcome does show that Ferris’ student population is probably reporting similar behavior as the national experience.

2007 Post (End of Semester)

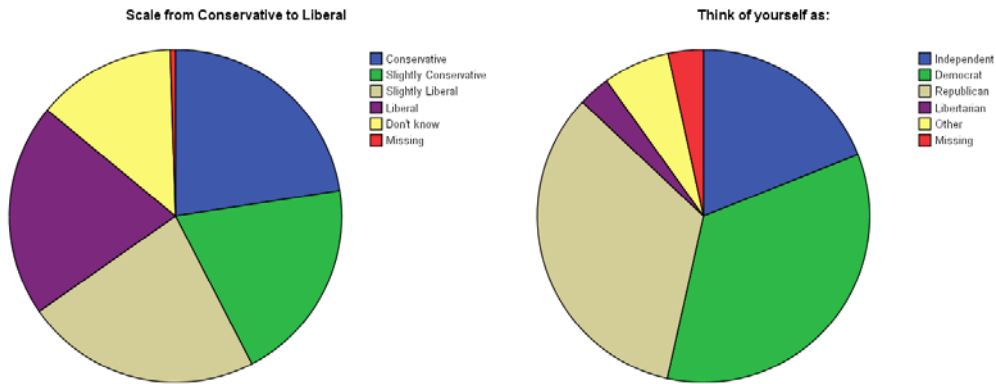
2008 Post Election Data



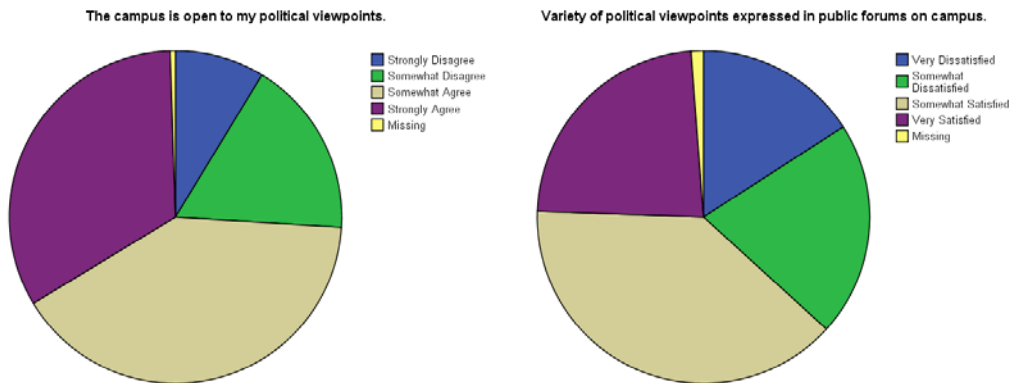
Campus Political Demographics and Climate: The following charts demonstrate the political leanings of the most recent Ferris student sample. About the same proportion considered themselves to be conservative or slightly conservative as liberal or slightly liberal. A similar proportionality was seen for students who reported their party leanings as either Democrat or Republican.

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2008 Post Election Survey



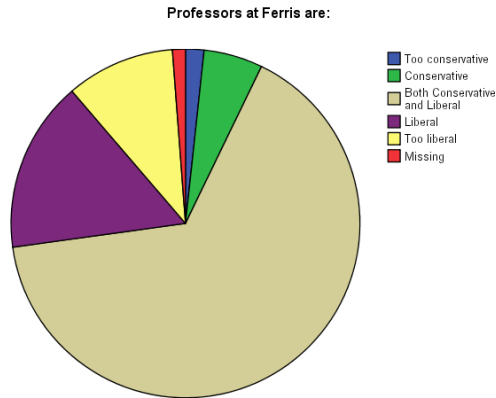
Nonetheless, as indicated in the two charts below, most students (beige and purple) found the campus open to their politics and reported that a variety of views are expressed on campus.



With regard to professors, students also seem to believe that Ferris professors have a variety of viewpoints. However, for those who perceive a bias, it is more likely that this bias is perceived to be in the direction of liberal views.

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2008 Post Election Survey



This trend continues especially when students are sorted students by their viewpoints and feelings toward the campus climate. The following table illustrates that students who identify themselves as Republican are more likely to find the campus unsatisfactorily diverse in viewpoints and to believe that professors are more liberal than did other student groups.

Table 1 – Student Satisfaction with Campus Political Views

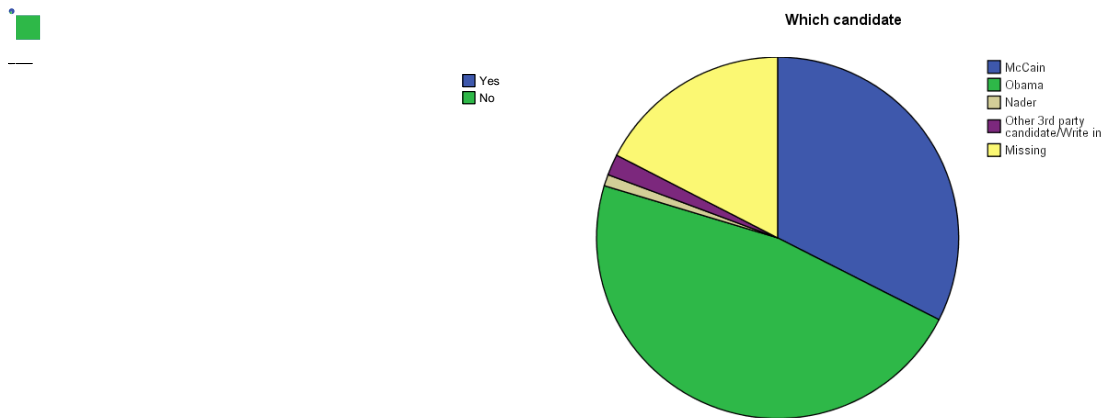
	Republicans (195)	Democrats (198)	Independents (111)
Satisfied/Very Sat. w/Campus Political Views	42%	82%	66%
Dissatisfied/Very w/ Campus Political Views	58%	18%	33%
Professors Conserv.	1%	12%	6%
Professors Both	50%	77%	75%
Professors Liberal	49%	11%	18%

Outcome C: Motivate students to become politically engaged. A remarkable 83% of Ferris student survey respondents reported voting in the 2008 election. This figure compares very favorably to the 52% reported in the Youth Voter Turnout – National (CIRCLE) 18 – 29 Year Olds, a survey used to analyze the overall campus climate and also the impact of numerous campus activities to promote engagement. This participation rate does appear to be very high, but even anecdotally many PEP classes reported high rates of voting.

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2008 Post Election Survey

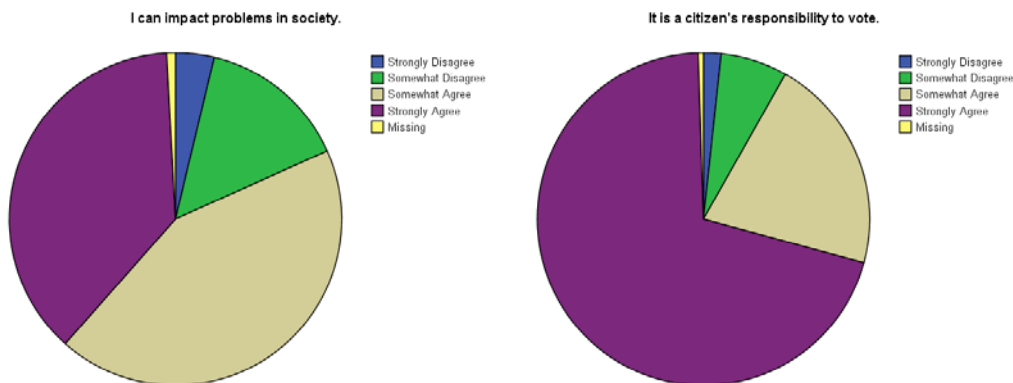
The Campus Vote



However, this figure should be viewed with caution. The Ferris 2008 Post Election survey was conducted in the week following the election and it is likely that students experienced a political “fatigue” and was thus biased against those least likely to participate in voting. However, it is quite a large sample.

Clearly, PEP cannot accept complete responsibility for such a high rate of participation. This past election broke records for participation in many respects and certainly for this age group. Nonetheless, much was accomplished due to the numerous efforts to engage the students and to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by this historic election.

2008 Post Election Survey



Moreover, the confidence students reported about the significance of their votes and potential engagement is quite substantial. Finally, we would like to add the following evaluation of the 2008 Post Election survey responses (585) assessing the campus activities to prepare students for the election. These activities are reported on pages 6 and 7. The following data illustrate that all of the hard work hosting the events was quite beneficial to the campus.

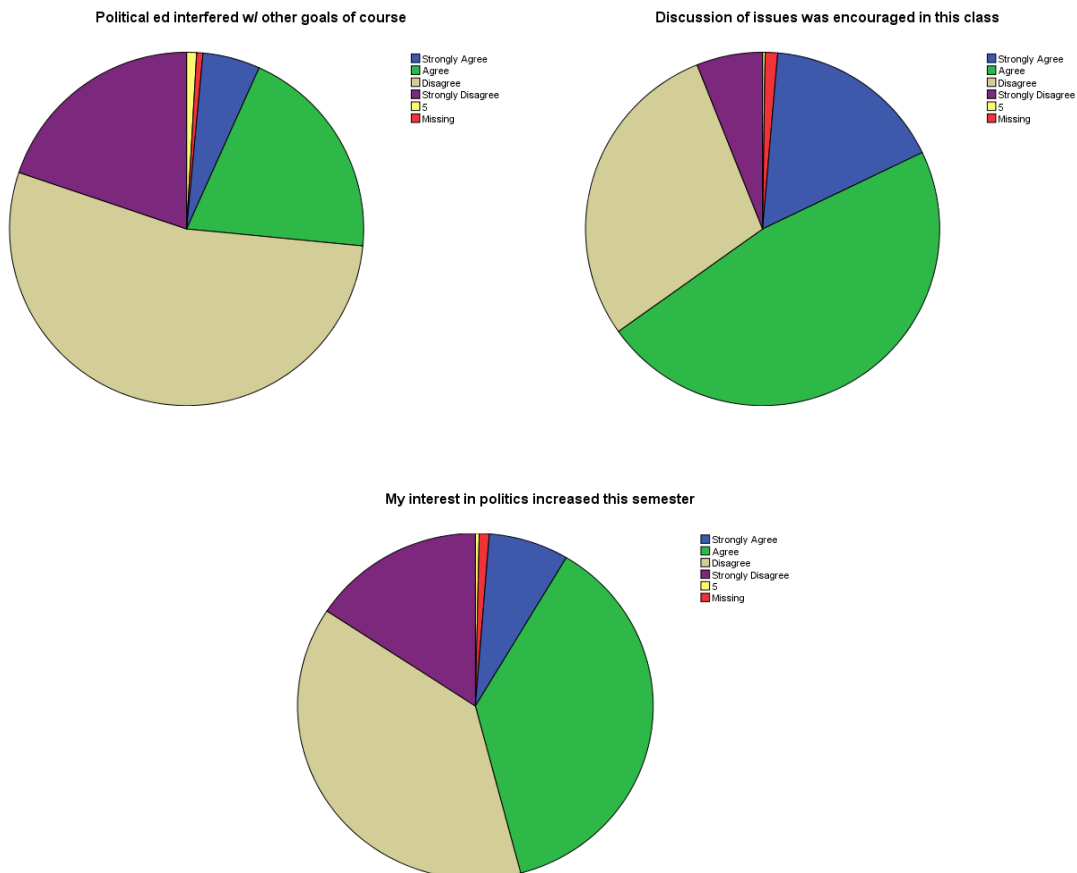
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Table 2 – Student Satisfaction with Voter Registration Activities

Satisfied/Very Satisfied with Voting Registration Opportunities on Campus	Dissatisfied/Very Diss. with Voting Registration Opportunities on Campus	Too Many Election Related Activities	Too Few Election Related Activities	Just Right amount of Election Related Activities
87%	11.4%	5 %	32.5%	62.5%

Outcome D: Relate course discipline to political engagement and public policy. Considering the fact that the vast majority of students taking PEP classes were in Ferris courses that typically would not be seen as policy- or politically-related subjects, this final point is very significant. Roughly one fourth of the students felt that political discourse distracted from the class, yet nearly three fourths did not feel this way. The other charts clearly show that students recognized that political discourse was a significant and, in many ways, welcome aspect of the class. Connecting political discourse with course material also served as a useful method of connecting typical classroom material to wider academic outcomes.

2007 Post



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Planning for 2009-10 – As the PEP pilot project comes to a conclusion, the Steering Committee has worked on a proposal for continuation of funding and administrative support that would permit the Political Engagement Project at Ferris State University to continue into the future.

It is clear that the three-year pilot program has engaged a large number of Ferris faculty members at a significant level. Each participant has modified the course(s) taught to meet the criteria established in 2006. The PEP Steering Committee believes that those changes have had a systemic effect on the courses that were approved for PEP status during the past three years. Indeed, many of those courses have been taught each year of the pilot program and some have been taught every semester!

Moreover, attendance at the many PEP events by students, faculty and staff has been quite good, considered by some campus leaders as an exemplar for other programs. The campus co-curriculum has been enriched, and enriched with a purpose, during the past three years, by the myriad programs that the Steering Committee and the instructors have provided. The collaboration of faculty from across campus has been remarkable.

The program's size is a concern with regard to future planning. The involvement of more than 40 faculty and nearly 2,000 students per semester caused this pilot program to approach the size of a very large Ferris department or even a small college. Looking forward, it seems clear that continuation of even a scaled-down version of PEP will require budget consideration and some recognition of the need for independent administrative leadership and clerical support which were provided by the University College dean's office during the pilot period.

In summary, we propose that the Political Engagement Project be continued after 2008-9 with the following considerations:

- Continued faculty release-time to administer the program with responsibility for managing the program assigned to one of those release time faculty who could report to a dean
- Office space for release time faculty and a part-time support staff person (we suggest the space vacated by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs on the ground floor of the Rankin Center)
- Budgetary support, base or one-time dollars, that will allow the current level of programming to be continued; consideration here could be given to eliminating the faculty stipends and moving funding from that line to the course support, co-curricular support, and faculty travel lines
- Consideration to use the model established by PEP to revitalize *academic service learning* at Ferris (possibly create a "Center for Student Engagement" in the aforementioned location to give a home and visibility to both operations) with appropriate faculty release-time to administer that arm of the program
- Long-term consideration of adding a third element to such a "Center" that would focus on student leadership development, again using the PEP model

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The modest expense for these initiatives seems reasonable given the impact that they would have on our campus and on our students. Moreover, such a cross-disciplinary and cross-divisional thrust would serve well the newly revised University mission and goals listed below.

Mission - *Ferris State University prepares students for successful careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. Through its many partnerships and its career-oriented, broad-based education, Ferris serves our rapidly changing global economy and society.*

Goal 1: Become a demonstrable center of excellence in educational quality and student learning.

3. Cultivate a stimulating, student-centered learning environment that integrates theory and practice.
4. Support the emphasis on quality performance by faculty, staff, administration that demonstrably improves student learning.
5. Review the curriculum and increase the emphasis on preparing students for a global society and leadership roles.

Goal 5: Foster collaborative internal and external working relationships.

2. Develop and implement strategies for increasing collaboration among divisions, colleges, programs and student organizations.
3. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the University community to encompass the activities of its members engaged in volunteer, service and outreach initiatives.

Goal 6: Foster innovation and improve processes to move the University forward.

1. Enhance programs to develop leadership for faculty, staff and administration.