

Loyola College

**Student Civic Engagement
Class of 2010**

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Student Civic Engagement Class of 2010

Introduction

In 2006, Loyola College participated in a national survey of entering first-year students—the CIRP—that is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California at Los Angeles. The CIRP is used to develop a national profile of entering college students and some of the questions that are asked on the survey touch on issues of civic engagement. This report focuses on items related to civic engagement and is intended to inform program development at Loyola by describing the attitudes and behaviors related to civic engagement that students have when they arrive on campus.

Methodology

The CIRP survey was administered to all 946 incoming students during orientation. The surveys, in paper-and-pencil format, were provided to student orientation leaders (Evergreens) and were administered to the students in a group setting. Students completed the surveys in the group setting and returned them to their Evergreen.

A total of 859 students completed and returned their survey for a response rate of 91%. Based on this response, sampling error for proportions is $\pm 1\%$. Sampling error for subgroups may be higher and the number of responses to any one question may be smaller than 859 because of student non-response.

Where possible, comparisons have been made to the national norms for all CIRP completers at 4-year colleges/universities in fall of 2006. All group differences described in this report are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level unless otherwise noted.

Demographics of the survey respondents and the national sample are found in Table 1, on the next page.

Table 1. Key Demographics of Survey Respondents

	Loyola N	Loyola Percentage	National Average Percentage ¹
Gender			
Women	537	63%	55%
Men	320	37%	45%
Ethnicity			
African-American	29	4%	12%
Asian/Pacific Islander	36	4%	4%
Hispanic/Latino	21	3%	8%
White	735	88%	80%
Other	14	2%	5%
Political Leaning			
Far right	7	1%	2%
Conservative	240	29%	25%
Middle of the road	367	45%	44%
Liberal	193	24%	26%
Far left	10	1%	3%

For purposes of the subgroup analyses throughout this report, African-Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics/Latinos are grouped together as “students of color.” “Other” ethnicity students have been dropped from subgroup analyses. With regard to political leaning, the “far right” and “far left” groups have been dropped from analyses because of their small number.

¹ Percentages will add to more than 100% if any student marked more than one response

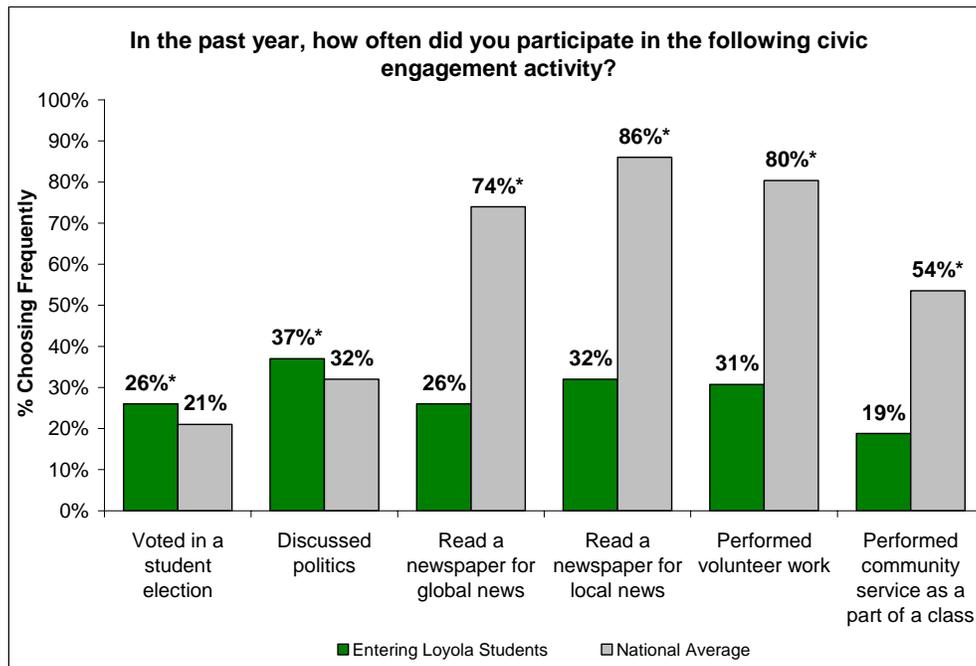
Executive Summary

- ◆ When compared to the national norms for entering college students, more Loyola students reported discussing politics and voting in student elections, but fewer Loyola students reported that they frequently read newspapers or participated in volunteer or community service work.
- ◆ Participating in community action programs and becoming a community leader are important to between one-quarter and one-third of Loyola's entering students; this is consistent with national norms for first-year students.
 - ◆ When compared to the national norms, fewer Loyola students indicate interest in organizations like the Peace Corps and AmeriCorp/VISTA and environmental organizations.
- ◆ The civic engagement orientation of Loyola students lags behind the national norms in terms of interest in "influencing social values," helping "promoting racial understanding," and "influencing the political structure."
 - ◆ When it comes to "helping others who are in difficulty" Loyola students responded similarly to students nationally.
- ◆ Over half of entering students plan to participate in student clubs/groups at Loyola and one-third of them plan to participate in volunteer or community service work during their first-year. More Loyola students plan engagement in both of these activities than do students nationally.
 - ◆ When compared to the national norms, fewer of Loyola's entering students plan to participate in protests or demonstrations during their first-year at college.

Detailed Findings

Pre-Loyola Experience with Civic Engagement Activities

Students were asked several questions about their experience with civic engagement activities during the year prior to arriving at Loyola. Discussing politics was the most common civic engagement activity that was asked about, with 37% of Loyola students having *frequently* done that in the prior year. Nearly a third of Loyola first-year students reported that they read the newspaper for local news or performed volunteer work. Just over a quarter of students reported that they read the newspaper for global news or voted in a student election in the year prior to entering Loyola. Loyola students reported higher rates of discussing politics and voting in student elections than did first-year students nationally but they also reported much lower rates of reading newspapers and performing volunteer or community service work. See Figure 1.



**indicates a significant difference between groups*

Figure 1. Civic engagement behaviors: Differences between Loyola students and first-year students nationally

As seen in Table 2 (next page), more men than women reported that they had frequently discussed politics in the year prior to arriving at Loyola, however more women than men had frequently voted in a student election and performed volunteer work. Students of color performed more volunteer work than did white students.

Those who are politically liberal responded that they had discussed politics, voted in student elections, and read newspapers for global news at a proportionally higher rate than did politically moderate students. Politically conservative students also reported discussing politics in greater numbers than did the politically moderate students. See Table 2 (next page).

Table 2. Civic Engagement Behaviors: Differences Among Loyola Student Subgroups

	Discussed politics	Voted in a student election	Read newspaper for local news	Read newspaper for global news	Performed volunteer work	Performed community services as a part of a class
Gender						
Women	34%	29% *	32%	24%	35% *	20%
Men	42% *	22%	32%	28%	24%	17%
Ethnicity						
Students of color	32%	25%	34%	22%	48% *	18%
White	37%	26%	32%	26%	29%	19%
Political Leaning						
Conservative	42%	27%	30%	27%	29%	21%
Middle of the road	29% *	22%	31%	22%	29%	18%
Liberal	44%	31% ^M	37%	31% ^M	33%	18%

Percents reflect the proportion of people in each group on the rows who indicated that they "frequently" participated in the each civic engagement activity.

**Indicates a significant difference from all other groups within a category.*

^MIndicates a significant difference from the middle of the road students.

Importance of Civic Engagement

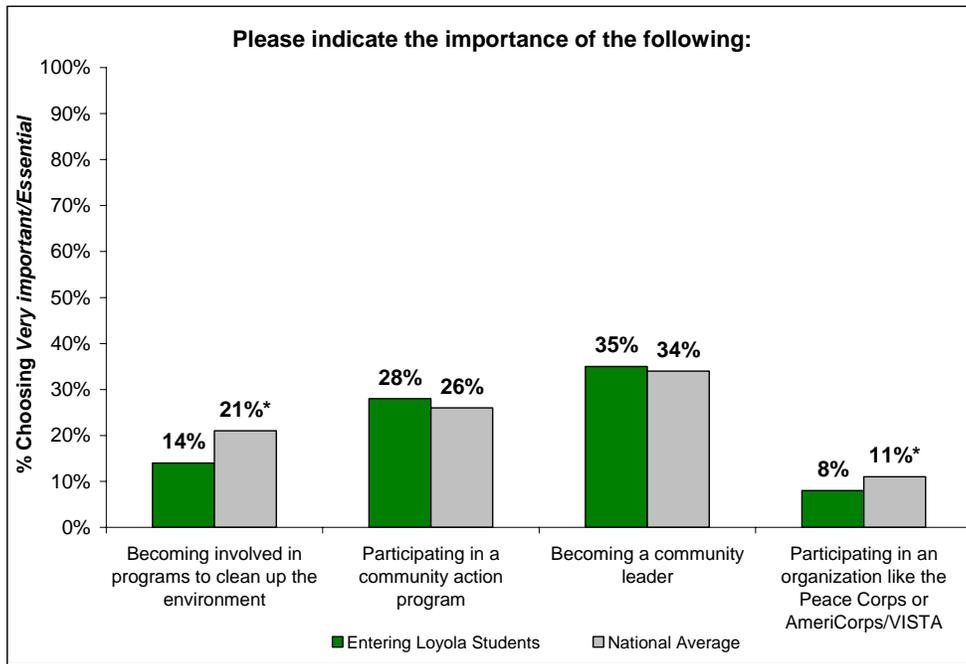
Students were asked several questions about their views on the importance of a variety of activities that can be characterized as relating to civic engagement. These data are provided below in sections focusing on participation in programs/organizations and engaging in activities to promote change.

Participation in Programs/Organizations

Of the items that asked students about that importance of involvement in leadership or organizations, becoming a community leader was endorsed most often, although only 35% of Loyola students indicated that this was *very important* or *essential* to them personally. Over one quarter of students reported that they view participating in a community action program as *very important/essential*. Fewer Loyola students than students nationally indicated that being involved in programs to clean up the environment or participating in an organization like the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps/VISTA was *very important/essential*. See Figure 2, next page.

As seen in Table 3 (next page), more women than men responded that they view becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment, participating in a community action program, and participating in an organization like the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps/VISTA as *very important/essential*.

More of the politically liberal students, as compared to politically conservative students, place importance on becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment. Additionally, more of the politically liberal students, as compared to both the politically conservative and politically moderate students, place importance on participating in an organization like the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps/VISTA. See Table 4 (next page).



*indicates a significant difference between groups

Figure 2. Civic engagement views: Differences between Loyola students and first-year students nationally on participation in programs/organizations

Table 3. Civic Engagement Views: Differences Among Loyola Student Subgroups

	Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	Participating in a community action program	Becoming a community leader	Participating in an organization like the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps/VISTA
Gender				
Women	17% *	33% *	37%	11% *
Men	12%	23%	34%	7%
Ethnicity				
Students of color	14%	38%	41%	11%
White	15%	28%	35%	9%
Political Leaning				
Conservative	12%	27%	36%	7%
Middle of the road	15%	29%	34%	8%
Liberal	19% ^C	31%	38%	13% ^{M,C}

Percents reflect the proportion of people in each group on the rows who indicated that they each civic engagement activity as "Very important/Essential".

*Indicates a significant difference from all other groups within a category.

^CIndicates a significant difference from politically conservative students.

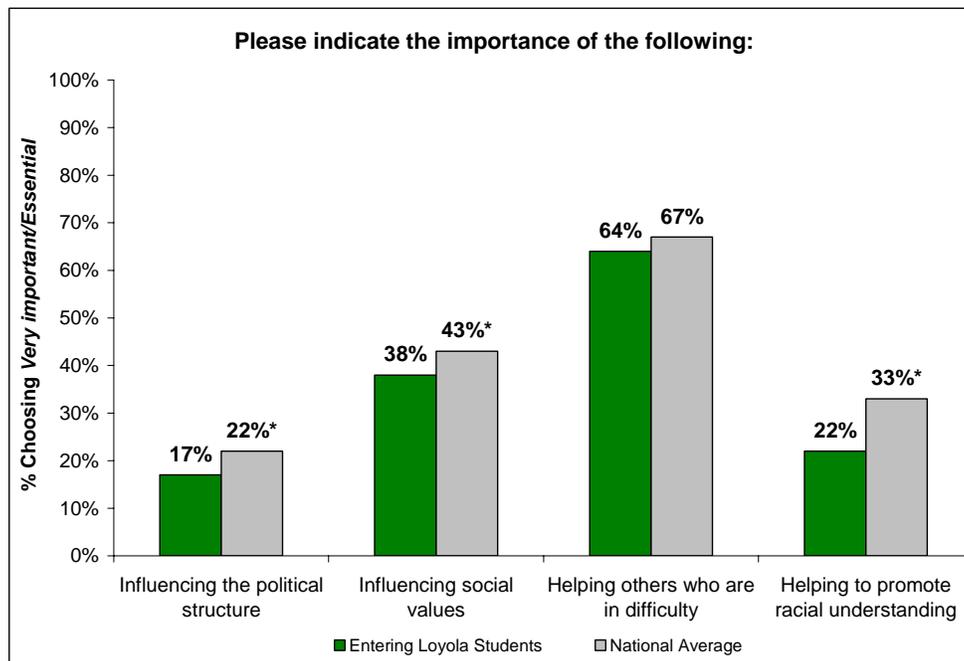
^MIndicates a significant difference from politically moderate students.

Activities To Create Change

When asked about engaging in activities that can create change, nearly two-thirds of students indicated that that “helping others who are in difficulty” was *very important* or *essential* to them personally—this is consistent with the national norms for entering college students. Substantially fewer students reported that “influencing social values,” helping “promoting racial understanding,” and “influencing the political structure” were *very important* or *essential* to them. In each of these three areas, the civic engagement orientation of Loyola students lags behind the national norms. See Figure 3.

As seen in Table 4 (next page), more women than men responded that they view helping others who are in difficulty as *very important/essential*.

More students of color than white first-year students viewed “influencing social values,” “helping others who are in difficulty,” and “helping to promote racial understanding” as *very important/essential* to them personally. Politically liberal students place a greater emphasis on “influencing the political structure” than do other students and politically conservative students are more concerned about “influencing social values” than are the middle-of-the-road students. See Table 4.



*indicates a significant difference between groups

Figure 3. Civic Engagement views: Differences between Loyola students and first-year students nationally on activities which create change

Table 4. Civic Engagement Views: Differences Among Loyola Student Subgroups

	Influencing the political structure	Influencing social values	Helping others who are in difficulty	Helping to promote racial understanding
Gender				
Women	15%	40%	69% *	22%
Men	22%	37%	59%	25%
Ethnicity				
Students of color	19%	49% *	74% *	49% *
White	17%	37%	64%	20%
Political Leaning				
Conservative	17%	43%	64%	17%
Middle of the road	15%	34% ^c	63%	19%
Liberal	21% *	41%	71%	39%

Percents reflect the proportion of people in each group on the rows who indicated that they each civic engagement activity as "Very important/Essential".

*Indicates a significant difference from all other groups within a category.

^cIndicates a significant difference from politically conservative students.

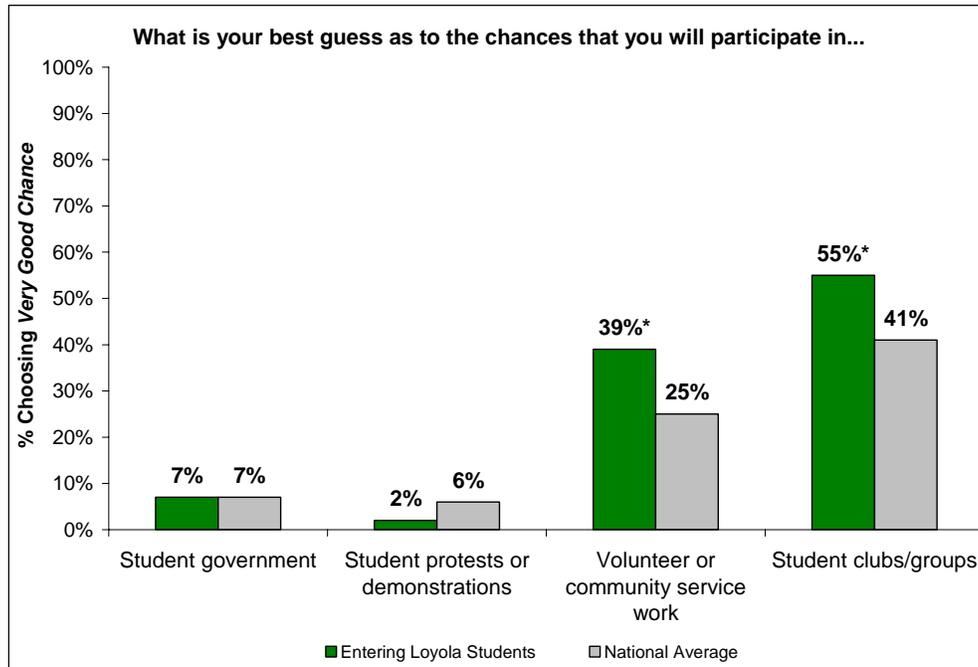
Desires to be Involved in Civic Engagement Activities

Students were asked several questions about their anticipated participation in a variety of activities that can be characterized as relating to civic engagement during their first year at Loyola. The most popular activity was participating in student clubs/groups with 55% of entering students stating that there was a *very good chance* that they would be involved in student clubs or groups during the year. Over a third of students (39%) reported a *very good chance* that they would participate in volunteer or community service work.

When compared to the national norms, Loyola students reported higher levels of intended participation in student clubs/groups and volunteer/community service work than did students nationally. Intended participation in student protests or demonstrations is lower at Loyola than it is nationally. See Figure 4 (next page).

As seen in Table 5, more women than men indicated that they would participate in student clubs/groups and volunteer or community service work. Students of color were more likely than white students to report an intention to participate in student clubs/groups.

Politically liberal students responded that there is a *very good chance* they will participate in volunteer or community service work at a higher rate than did middle-of-the-road students. More students who are politically liberal than all other political leanings responded that they will participate in student clubs/groups. See Table 5.



*indicates a significant difference between groups

Figure 4. Civic engagement participation: Differences between Loyola students and first-year students nationally

Table 5. Civic Engagement Participation: Differences Between Loyola Student Subgroups

	Participate in student government	Participate in student protests or demonstrations	Participate in volunteer or community service work	Participate in student clubs/groups
Gender				
Women	8%	2%	49% *	61% *
Men	6%	3%	21%	44%
Ethnicity				
Students of color	11%	6%	46%	69% *
White	7%	2%	38%	53%
Political Leaning				
Conservative	7%	0%	39%	49%
Middle of the road	6%	2%	35%	53%
Liberal	7%	5%	44% ^M	65% ^{M,C}

Percents reflect the proportion of people in each group on the rows who indicated that there was a very good chance they would participate in the each civic engagement activity.

*Indicates a significant difference from all other groups within a category.

^CIndicates a significant difference from politically conservative students.

^MIndicates a significant difference from the middle-of-the-road students.

Summary

In general, Loyola students appear to be more service oriented than civic oriented. For example, Loyola students are more interest in helping individuals than in changing political or social structures. Still, with a few notable exceptions, the civic engagement experiences and expectations of incoming students at Loyola are consistent with national norms.

Given Loyola's proximity to city, state, and national governmental agencies there is an opportunity for the College to promote the accessibility of civic engagement activities to students and attract students who are interested civic issues. Evidenced by the decline in political science majors over the past five years (from a five-year high of 163 majors in 2003 to 145 in 2007) and the modest levels of civic engagement as measured on the CIRP, Loyola has clearly not taken full advantage of this opportunity.

With regard to service, it is interesting to note that expectations of engaging in service oriented activities at while in college is higher among Loyola students than student nationally, but involvement before college and interest in involvement after college is lower among Loyola students than students nationally.

It should be noted that the CIRP survey is not a survey aimed to exhaust all questions about civic engagement or to create a full and complete assessment of civic or service orientation among students. Still, these data can be useful in establishing a baseline for improvement and, if tracked over time, help determine whether efforts to increase the civic engagement among students are successful.