



**Sent: November 3, 2008**

**Subject: After the Election – Continue the Engagement**

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Campuses around the country are taking advantage of this historic election and the tremendous interest it has generated among faculty, staff and students. Here's a sampling of some of the activities campuses have been doing this fall: issue forums and public conversations, dialogues about race and gender in public life, structured reflection on political experiences, political research, courses on campaign rhetoric or ethics, voter registration, polling, and service learning that emphasizes political action.

Colleges and universities are not the only ones seizing the moment. In July, three leading democracy-building organizations - [Everyday Democracy](#), [Demos](#), and [AmericaSpeaks](#) - convened civic leaders and researchers to map out an agenda for strengthening American democracy. They identified three reform objectives: electoral reform, community development and building, and **advancing deliberative democracy**.

Last week, the same group released a set of recommendations in a new report, ***An Agenda for Strengthening Our Nation's Democracy*** that they've taken to both the Obama and McCain campaigns. These recommendations call upon the next administration to:

- Establish a White House Office on Civic Engagement that works to increase collaboration among federal agencies and trains staff about the values and methods of public participation and collaborative government.
- Convene national discussions to provide citizens with a voice in the policy-making process.
- Adopt policy reforms for increasing local participation in public life and eliminate obstacles to public engagement.

**You can read and download the full report [here](#).**

### **What You Can Do**

The organizers of the report will be formally releasing it after the election in mid-November. In the meantime, we encourage you to read it, share it with your colleagues, students and networks - and if you agree with what you read, endorse it. And pass it on.

The challenge for the next president and for all of us working in the deliberative democracy field is to sustain and build upon the interest, excitement, and engagement that unfolded during the course of the campaign. Higher education will need to play a critical and active role in making deliberative democracy *the way we do our business* in American public life *and* higher education.

Vote tomorrow.