

Youth Engagement Committee Report, April 2019 – April 2020

The Committee had a successful year with many accomplishments and some disappointments.

Activities and Accomplishments

Civic Engagement Project – This is a collaboration with the Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS). Monthly meetings involve teachers, LCPS administration staff, League members and the County Clerk's office. The following activities were done:

- Defined a "Champion of Democracy" award to be given to a selected student for his/her civic engagement activities.
- Provided opportunity for a teacher to attend all-expenses-paid Case Study Workshop at Harvard University.
- Coordinated and promoted student Mayoral Candidate Forum at Ocate High School.
- Collaborated on October 8 "Democracy in Doña Ana County" event – students came and learned how rank-choice voting worked, were able to register to vote.
- "Getting to Know Your Local Government" – This was probably the most successful Youth Engagement activities of the year. Teachers created lessons about what local governmental entities do. The decision was made to concentrate on the Las Cruces city government for this year. Via a meeting with City Councilor Yvonne Flores and the City's Community Liaison Jamey Rickman, the plan for the "Getting to Know your Local Government" event was put in place. This event took place on February 21, 2020 at City Hall with 10 students from each of the six major high schools invited to meet with City officials and solve a city problem. Four student teams were each assigned a real city problem. The solutions were briefed to a panel of judges, who found the solutions genuinely realistic and innovative. The plan to brief the City Council on the proposed solutions has been dropped due to the coronavirus crisis.

18-24 Year-Olds Voter Participation Survey – Through a difficult process, this was approved by NMSU's Institutional Review Board. Survey was administered to NMSU and DACC students. Getting the survey to non-students via Instagram has run into several roadblocks by Facebook – still aiming to complete this at some point.

NMSU Intern – Engaged a graduate student intern, who helped with the survey and other League activities.

Marketing the Committee & Free Student Memberships – created flyer for the committee and to attract student members. Met with NMSU students, have two new student members.

Plans for Upcoming Year

- Attract more student members
- Collaborate with NMSU students to form a focus group on 2020 election issues and on voting
- Collaborate with NMSU and high school students to develop social media material that will promote voter registration and voting among young people
- Collaborate with LCPS and County Clerk for another "Democracy in Doña Ana County" event, with participation from all the local high schools
- Engage Hatch and Gadsden schools to participate in "Democracy in Doña Ana County"
- Work with LCPS to add more civics education lessons in the early grades
- Promote another "Get to Know Your Government" event, possibly at the state government level.