GETTING REGISTERED AND GETTING INVOLVED:  
The Impact of Voter Registration Strategy 
& Information Provision on Voting Behavior  

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ABSTRACT  
Every election year colleges and universities across the nation witness a plethora of on-campus voter registration activities. The results of these drives are most often assessed by tallying the number of voter registration cards collected through the drive. Little has been done, however, to more carefully investigate the results of these registration efforts.  

As a first attempt to look at the post-drive results more carefully, we ask two questions. First, do students registering through an on-campus voter registration drive actually make it to the voting booth? Second, does the provision of basic information about the voting process increase turnout among students who register through an on-campus registration drive? In the context of the 2008 Presidential Election, we investigate the overall turnout rate of students registering at on-campus registration tables by validating votes through the office of the county voting registrar. We then compare the turnout rate of students registering through the on-campus registration drive with the turnout rate of similar young people nationwide. Further, we investigate whether the provision of information through certain avenues boosts turnout more than others.  

Results show that students registered through an on-campus registration drive turned out to vote at a higher rate than similar young people nation-wide. Further, it appears the there are small, but important, effects of information provision through different formats.
Every election year colleges and universities across the nation witness a plethora of on-campus voter registration activities. The results of these drives are most often assessed by tallying the number of voter registration cards collected through the drive. Little has been done, however, to more carefully investigate the results of these registration efforts. As a first attempt to look at the post-drive results more carefully, we ask two questions. First, do students registering through an on-campus voter registration drive actually make it to the voting booth? Second, does the provision of basic information about the voting process increase turnout among students who register through an on-campus registration drive?

In the context of the 2008 Presidential Election, we investigate the overall turnout rate of students registering at on-campus registration tables by validating votes through the office of the county voting registrar. Unlike studies utilizing survey measures of voter turnout, we are able to establish objectively whether students who registered through the on-campus registration drive actually cast a ballot in the election. We find that students registered through an on-campus registration drive turned out to vote at a higher rate than similar young people nation-wide. We further explore the impact of information provision by providing students with information regarding the voting process in a number of different formats, including information brochures, posters, and e-mail reminders. We find small, but important, effects of information provision through different formats.

**USING REGISTRATION TO MOBILIZE**

The very act of registering through an on-campus voter registration drive can be expected to boost turnout to some degree. On-campus registration drives help to overcome a number of the barriers young people typically face. Registration rates among young citizens (aged 18-20) lag well behind those of the older population (see e.g., Frisco, Muller, and Dodson 2004; Parry and Shields 2001), and college students, like most who are residentially mobile, frequently find the act of registering to vote at their school address challenging (i.e., Brians 1997; Highton 2000; Lipka 2008; Strama 1998; Zukin, et al 2006). Further, regulations related to registering at a school address vary by state so many college students are not even aware that they have the right to register at their school address (Eshleman 1989; Haslup and O’Loughlin 2004). On-campus registration drives inform students of this right and the ease of
registering on campus overcomes the difficulty of the task. Similarly, the costs of time and effort to either return home to vote or secure an absentee ballot, which are typically utilized more by higher income, older, and more conservative voters (Cook 1991; Karp and Banducci 2001; Oliver 1996), and vote in that manner frequently prevent college students from voting. By becoming registered at their school address, students can avoid these costs, thus improving their chances of casting a ballot.

Beyond the logistical hurdles of registering and casting a ballot, college students are also typically disadvantaged by their low levels of political knowledge and lack of media consumption (Delli Carpini and Skeeter 1996; Mindich 2005; Wattenberg 2007). Knowledge has long been known to affect voter turnout, with the turnout of those possessing more knowledge outpacing that of the less knowledgeable (see e.g., Dolan and Holbrook 2001; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Despite their educational pursuits, college students exhibit remarkably low levels of political knowledge, with those under 30 answering about 15% fewer questions about American government correctly than those over 30 (Wattenberg 2007: 77). Media consumption represents another key correlate of political participation, with those reading a newspaper daily being most likely to vote and television consumption being related to lower levels of voter participation (e.g., Gentzkow 2006; George and Waldfogel 2006; Graber 2000; Morgan and Shanahan 1992; Putnam 1995). While digesting a multitude of newer medias, college students consume relatively little traditional media, with only about 20% of those aged 18-22 reading a newspaper every day (Mindich 2005: 28). So while college students may be advantaged by their on-going educational endeavors, they are hindered by their disinterest and disengagement. Because they do not find electoral politics inherently interesting and avoid consuming traditional media, college students frequently possess relatively little knowledge about the basics of the electoral process. This lack of knowledge serves to further depress the turnout level of college students.

Consequently, a part of the remedy for ailing student turnout could be information provision. If part of the reason that college students do not vote at higher rates is because they do not understand how, when, or where to vote, then providing students with basic information about the electoral process should boost turnout. To investigate the possibility that on-campus voter registration drives that provide basic
information about the electoral process can boost turnout, we investigate a Fall 2008 voter mobilization drive conducted on the Sam Houston State University (SHSU) campus. Sam Houston State is typical of many state universities in the nation. It is a large public university located in Huntsville (Walker County), Texas, and draws students mostly from the rural areas of East Texas and the Houston and Dallas urban areas. The student body is racially/ethnically diverse with students generally coming from modest financial backgrounds, many representing the first in their family to attend college.1 Thus, the students investigated here are fairly representative of students at public colleges and universities nationwide.

In the context of the 2008 Presidential election, the Political Engagement Project (PEP) committee undertook a multi-faceted voter mobilization drive, which included a traditional non-partisan voter registration drive, informational brochures, get-out-the-vote posters, and e-mail reminders.2 Additionally, the student Democratic organization, the Bearkat Democrats, conducted a traditional voter registration drive with a distinctly partisan message.3

Voter Registration Drives

Over the month of September, 2008, PEP provided an easily accessible opportunity for students to register to vote in Walker County (the county within which the university resides). For three days each week during the month, PEP set up a table near the centrally located student center and provided students with information about and assistance with registering to vote.4 Students wishing to register to vote in Walker County were able to fill out a voter registration card and turn it in to an on-site officially

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2 The Political Engagement Project is a non-partisan campus organization with the goals of increasing political participation, political knowledge, and political leadership among students. For more information about PEP, see these websites: http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/programs/index.asp?key=25 http://www.shsu.edu/~org_adpuc/documents/PEP%20Report%20revised%205%2011%2007.pdf

3 The campus Republican organization, however, did not conduct a similar drive.

4 The registration table was run at varying times and days in places and at times when students typically congregated. Due to the closing of the university in response to Hurricane Ike, one full week of planned registration had to be cancelled. See Appendix A: “PEP Registration Schedule” for details.
deputized representative of the Walker Country Voter Registrar’s Office. Those wishing to register in another county were assisted in filling out their registration card and instructed on how to deliver it to the appropriate county official. In addition to providing assistance with registration, students were also provided with information about the voting process, and volunteers were available at the registration tables to answer questions about the registration and voting process.

Similarly, the Bearkat Democrats staffed voter registration tables in the same area during the month of September. Contrasting the nonpartisan PEP efforts, the student Democratic organization made an explicitly partisan appeal to students, linking their interest in key issues to stances taken by Democratic candidates and building on the excitement of the Obama campaign to encourage students to register. Like the PEP drive, the Bearkat Democrats had deputized volunteers on hand to answer questions and assist students in filling out their voter registration applicants. In the end, a total of 562 students were registered through these efforts; with the PEP drive registering 447 students and the Bearkat Democrats registering 115.

We expect that students taking advantage of either registration opportunity will vote at a higher rate than young people nationwide. Since the difficulties of registration and/or absentee voting frequently keep young people from the polls, diminishing the impact of these barriers should result in higher turnout. Students who become registered in the county where they attend classes will be able to vote (early or on election day) at a place proximate to their day-to-day residency, thus avoiding the costs of time and effort to either return home to vote or secure an absentee ballot and vote in that manner.

Further, we expect that students registering through the student Democratic organization to exhibit even higher turnout than those registering through the non-partisan PEP drive. We expect this result for two reasons. First, students drawn to register through the partisan registration drive are likely to be more partisan, more interested in the campaign, and more motivated to see a particular candidate win. Stronger partisanship, higher levels of interest, and a clear candidate preference are traditionally associated with a higher probability of turning out to vote (e.g., Campbell, et al 1960; Downs 1957; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). We further believe students registering through the partisan effort will be
more likely to turnout to vote because of peer influence. Peer-to-peer appeals have been linked to increased turnout in a number of studies (Bennion 2005; see also Shea and Green 2007 for an overview), and the Bearkat Democrats staffed their registration table exclusively with currently enrolled undergraduate students. In contrast, the non-partisan PEP effort was primarily staffed by faculty, staff, and graduate students.  

Informational Brochures

All students registering through the PEP drive were given a brochure containing basic information about the voting process, such as how to confirm voter registration status, basics of absentee, early, and election day voting, and where to locate more information on candidates (see Appendix B: “Voter Brochure” document). Some of these brochures were printed on pink paper and others were printed on white paper. White and pink brochures were handed out on alternating days, so that about one-half of the students registering at the PEP table received white brochures and one-half received pink brochures. (see Appendix A: “PEP Registration Schedule” for details on brochure distribution).

We expect students who received the pink brochures to be more likely to cast a ballot than those who received a white brochure. While the color of the paper on which a brochure is produced may seem trivial, it can have important consequences. In order for students to utilize the information provided in the brochure, they must be able to locate the brochure when they need it – probably months after they received it. A white brochure stands a very good chance of getting camouflaged in the many course materials, usually printed on white paper, with which most students contend. In contrast, a pink brochure stands out among the mass of course material, so students are more likely to be able to locate the brochure and utilize the information it contains in order to find their way to the polls.

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5 While some undergraduate volunteers helped with the PEP effort, they had little one-on-one interaction with the students registering through this effort since they were not responsible for answering student questions or assisting students in filling out their application.

6 While the Bearkat Democrats provided no such informational brochure, they did provide informational materials of a partisan nature.
Get-Out-The-Vote Posters

Between the close of the registration period (October 3rd) and Election Day (November 4th), PEP posted reminders about when and where to vote in a number of venues. First, posters were displayed in all residence halls reminding students that they could vote during the early voting period (October 20-31) and on election day (see Appendix C: “Early and Election Day Voting Posters”). Second, a PowerPoint slide reminding students about early and Election Day voting was shown before each motion picture screening in the student cinema. Finally, the same PowerPoint slide was included on the student center monitors which display daily scheduled activities (see Appendix D: “GOTV Slide”).

We expect that students exposed to these reminders will vote at a higher rate than those who are not exposed to them. Though excited about the prospect of voting at the time they register, students frequently lose that enthusiasm by the time voting opportunities present themselves. Exposure to the posters and GOTV slide might remind students about their chance to cast a ballot. Additionally, the reminders provide students with information about how to confirm their registration status, what documentation they will need in order to vote, as well as when and where to vote. While we have no objective way of knowing which of the students registered though the registration drives viewed the poster and GOTV slide reminders, we were able to ascertain which students resided in campus housing and which did not. We assume that students residing in campus housing are much more likely to view the Early and Election Day Voting posters since they were displayed only in the campus residence halls. Further, on-campus students typically predominate the audience at on-campus movies. Thus, we expect that on-campus students, who are more likely to see the posted reminders, will be more likely to vote than those who live off campus (and are thus less likely to view the reminders).

Get-Out-the-Vote E-mail Reminders

In addition to the brochures and flyers, PEP sent e-mail reminders to some students who registered at either of the voter registration tables.\(^7\) The students who registered through either the PEP or Bearkat

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\(^7\) E-mail reminders were sent on October 23, 2008 – about two weeks before Election Day, during the early voting period.
Democrats registration drive were randomly assigned to one of three groups. The first (control) group received no e-mail contact. The second (information only) group received an e-mail from a faculty member that reminded them that they had registered, and provided information on how to verify their registration status, when and where to early or election day vote, documentation necessary to vote, and places to obtain more information about the election and candidates. The third (information and motivation) group received an e-mail containing a short statement on why it was important that young people vote in addition to all of the information that the second group received. See Appendix E: “E-mail Text” for full text of e-mail messages.

Among these three groups, we expect students receiving the “information and motivation” e-mail to vote at the highest rate, those receiving the “information only” e-mail to exhibit the second highest voting rate, and students receiving no e-mail to have the lowest turnout. Students who receive no e-mail reminder are more likely to simply forget to vote or be unable to find information on how, when, and where to vote than those receiving either of the e-mail reminders. The “information only” e-mail reminder provides students with basic information about the electoral process that many highlight as key to getting students to the voting booth (Shea and Green 2007: 163-179; see also Kirby, Linkins, and Glennon 2008; Wolfinger, Highton, and Mullen 2004). Additionally, some have argued that low youth voter turnout results from the delayed feedback of the electoral process. Young people tend to gravitate toward activities that provide more immediate results and feedback (Shea and Green 2007: 10) than voting typically does. By reminding students about the potential impact that casting their vote can have, the “information and motivation” e-mail is expected to encourage students to make the link between their vote and policy outcomes relevant to them, as well as provide basic information on the electoral process, thus boosting turnout.

**DATA AND ANALYSES**

To test our hypotheses about the effects of information provided through a campus-based voter registration drive, we gathered information about voter turnout from publicly available records. Following the November, 2008, general election, we accessed voter logs of the Walker Country Voter
Registration/Elections Office. We located the name of each student who registered through either campus registration drive (PEP or student Democrats) on the voter logs, and recorded whether each person cast a ballot. Additionally, we distinguished whether a person voted during the early voting period or on election day.

Type of Registration Drive: To test our first hypothesis that students taking advantage of either of SHSU’s campus-based registration drives will vote at a higher rate than young people nationwide, we compare the turnout rate of our registrants to that of young people more generally. While about 48.5% of young people (aged 18-24) nationwide voted in the 2008 general election, more than three-quarters (about 76%) of the students registered through the SHSU drives cast a ballot. The high level of turnout among our campus registrants even exceeds the 62% nationwide turnout reported for young people with at least some college experience. Thus, our first hypothesis is confirmed. Providing on-campus registration opportunities appears to boost turnout.

Our second hypothesis argued that students registering through the student Democratic organization would exhibit even higher turnout than those registering through the non-partisan PEP drive. Our data, presented on Figure 1, bear out this expectation. Students registering through the partisan, student led registration drive turned out at a higher rate than those registering through the non-partisan, faculty/staff led drive. While almost 84% of those registering with the Bearkat Democrats voted, only about 74% of those registering through the PEP drive cast a ballot. Interestingly, this advantage obtains only for early voting, with 13% higher turnout among Bearkat Democrat registrants. Conversely, there appears to be no statistical difference in turnout rates for Election Day voting. It thus appears that student led, partisan registration drives result in higher turnout than non-partisan, non-student led registration drives, though this advantage may only apply to some types of voting.

[Figure 1 about here]

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It is not too surprising that the partisan drive resulted in higher turnout for early voting than the non-partisan drive. The Bearkat Democrats’ registration drive likely drew students with stronger partisan attachments and higher political interest; precisely the portion of the electorate who is likely to have made a vote choice early and be committed to casting a ballot. Conversely, the non-partisan PEP drive probably drew many more uncommitted voters, who waited until later in the campaign season to make up their minds. Some evidence of this effect can be seen in our results. Notwithstanding statistical significance, the non-partisan drive witnessed slightly higher Election Day turnout than the partisan drive.

**Informational Brochure:** Our third hypothesis posited that students receiving pink brochures would be more likely to cast a ballot than those receiving a white brochure. Our results, presented in Figure 2, support this expectation. The pink brochures seem to make about a 10% difference in overall voter turnout, with about 78% of those receiving a pink brochure voting and only 68% of those receiving a white brochure casting a ballot. Further, the brochure color effect is about the same for early voting and Election Day voting – with a “pink brochure bump” of about 5% for each. It thus appears that providing information at the time of registration can help increase turnout among college students and, importantly, the format of that information matters.

[Figure 2 about here]

It further appears that the effect of brochure color seems to be most relevant for off-campus students (see Figure 3). While on-campus students voted at about the same rate regardless of the color of the brochure they receive, off-campus students receiving the pink brochure exhibited significantly higher turnout than those receiving a white brochure (see Figure 3). About 16% more of the off-campus

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9 Since the Bearkat Democrats did not hand out the same brochure, only students registered through the PEP registration drive are included in this analysis.

10 This result holds when controlling for the type of registration strategy. That is, those receiving pink brochures turned out to vote at a higher rate than those receiving white brochures, regardless of whether they registered through the partisan, Bearkat Democrats or the non-partisan PEP drive.

11 For on-campus students, 71.3% of those receiving white brochures voted and 77.9% of those receiving pink brochures voted (difference is statistically insignificant).
students receiving color brochures voted (about a 7% increase in early voting and about a 9% increase on election day).\(^\text{12}\)

> [Figure 3 about here]

The heightened impact of the pink brochures for off-campus students might derive from the fact that off-campus students tend to be older students, who have more college experience and are closer to graduation. These students are likely to be more concerned about current events and the ways in which the election outcome might affect their futures, particularly in the context of the 2008 general election when the news was filled with dire economic warnings daily. Conversely, on-campus students, who are more likely to be younger and have less college experience, are far less likely to follow news about current events or care much about how the election outcome might affect them.\(^\text{13}\) Informational brochures, regardless of their color, are likely to have little impact on students who hold very low levels of political awareness. Providing younger, less engaged students with information seems to have little impact on voter turnout, but providing easily accessible information to more mature, interested students appears to significantly increase their presence at the polls.

**Poster and E-mail Reminders:** Our last two hypotheses were not as well supported. We expected on-campus students, who are more likely to see the posted GOTV reminders, to be more likely to vote than those who live off campus (and were thus less likely to view the reminders). Our results (Figure 4) revealed no such effect. Those more likely to be exposed to the posted reminders were no more likely to vote than those who were less likely to be exposed to them.

> [Figure 4 about here]

The ineffectiveness of the posted reminders might stem from several sources. As suggested above, on-campus students, who predominately live in the residence halls and frequent the campus theater, are far more likely to be younger and less politically aware and engaged. The passive nature of

\(^\text{12}\) Again, this results holds when controlling for type of registration strategy.

\(^\text{13}\) While about 81% of SHSU freshman live on campus, only about 20% of the student body in general does. *(SHSU Factbook.* Produced by the SHSU Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Available on-line at: [http://www.shsu.edu/~ird_www/factbooks/index.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~ird_www/factbooks/index.html).*
the posted reminders is not likely to grab the attention of students who have little interest in public affairs and may be struggling with the newness of the college environment. Further, the placement of the flyers was not ideal. The residence hall flyers were tacked on bulletin boards inside each residence hall. Informal conversations with those living in the residence halls suggests, however, that students rarely check for announcements on these boards. Instead, “important” announcements are typically placed on the entry/exit doors.

Finally, we expected students receiving the “information and motivation” e-mail to vote at the highest rate, those receiving the “information only” e-mail to exhibit the second highest voting rate, and students receiving no e-mail to have the lowest turnout. Our expectations were not borne out (see Figure 5). Regardless of the type of e-mail received, students turned out to vote at about the same rate. Disregarding the statistical insignificance of the results, it appears that students receiving no e-mail contact tended to vote at slightly higher levels (especially on Election Day) than those receiving either type of e-mail reminder.

[Figure 5 about here]

A number of reasons might explain these findings. First, the e-mail messages were sent from a faculty member’s e-mail address. It is quite likely to that many students did not even open the message, choosing to simply delete a message from a professor from whom most were not currently taking a class. A reminder that goes unread can be expected to have remarkably little impact. Second, the timing of the e-mail reminder might have discouraged students from reading the message and utilizing its contents. The e-mail reminders were sent out very close to mid-semester. It is quite possible that many students were overwhelmed with class concerns, and were ignoring non-class related material. Finally, the format of the e-mail might have turned off those who opened it. The messages contained only black and white text, with no color or graphical images to draw attention to key passages. Consequently, it is likely that students opening the e-mail did not read the entire message. These three possibilities strongly suggest that e-mail reminders should be carefully crafted for maximum effectiveness.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We set out to investigate the possibility that providing basic information about the voting process to students who register through on-campus registration drives can increase their turnout. We found some support for the argument that offering students some simple information can increase the likelihood that they will vote. We demonstrated that on-campus voter registration drives appear to increase turnout among those who register through them. Further, we determined that student-led, partisan drives, which likely draw students with stronger partisan attachments and higher political interest, appear to boost turnout during the early voting period. At the same time, non-partisan drives, which likely draw in less interested and partisan students, augment Election Day turnout among this group. Finally, we determined that providing basic information to students can enhance their chances of casting a ballot. Importantly, however, the method by which this information is conveyed is important. The information must be accessible well after the registration drive takes place. Thus, colorful brochures, which are easily located months after they are received, appear to boost turnout, but poster and e-mail reminders that easily go unnoticed have no appreciable effect on attendance at the polls.

Overall, our findings suggest that how we conduct our campus-based voter registration drives can have an important impacts on the possibility of students actually making it to the voting booth. Our successes and failures highlight key lessons learned. First, peer-to-peer appeals are important and involving students on both sides of the registration table enables two-levels of political engagement. Second, being partisan is okay – in fact, it can boost turnout during the early voting period. At the same time, non-partisan appeals, which appeal more to weaker partisans and late deciders, should not be overlooked. Finally, making information available only seems to work if it is accessible and interesting. Unconsumed information is as bad as no information.

Fundamentally, our research suggests that we need to remember that what we do at registration time has important consequences for students turnout. This suggests that we need to think more carefully about how we conduct our registration drives. Sometimes simple things (like colored brochures) can
make a big difference. This is good news to many since it suggests that we do not necessarily need big-budget endeavors to make real gains in getting young people to voting booths.
# APPENDIX A:
## PEP REGISTRATION SCHEDULE

**September, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>NONE SCHEDULED</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9:00-9:30 setup)</td>
<td>(9:30-10:00 set up)</td>
<td>(11:30 –12:00 setup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 – 11:30</td>
<td>10:00 – 12:00</td>
<td>12:00 – 2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11:30-12:00 take down)</td>
<td>(12:00-12:30 take down)</td>
<td>(2:00-2:30 take down)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White Brochures</td>
<td>Pink Brochures</td>
<td>White Brochures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>CANCELLED DUE TO HURICANE IKE</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CANCELLED DUE TO HURICANE IKE</strong></td>
<td><strong>CANCELLED DUE TO HURICANE IKE</strong></td>
<td><strong>NONE SCHEDULED</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>(5:30 – 6:00 set up)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 – 8:00</td>
<td><strong>NONE SCHEDULED</strong></td>
<td>(9:00-9:30 setup)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(8:00-8:30 take down)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 – 11:30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>inside student center</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11:30-12:00 take down)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Color Brochures</td>
<td></td>
<td>(12:00-12:30 take down)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>(1:30 – 2:00 set up)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:00 – 4:00</td>
<td>(9:30 -10:00 set up)</td>
<td><strong>NONE SCHEDULED</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4:00-4:30 take down)</td>
<td>10:00 – 12:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pink Brochures</td>
<td>(12:00-12:30 take down)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White Brochures</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>(9:30-10:00 setup)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10:00 – 12:00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(12:00-12:30 take down)</td>
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APPENDIX B:  
VOTER BROCHURE

Voter Registration

The state of Texas requires voters to register to vote at least 30 days before the day of the election the voter wishes to vote in. Thus individuals who wish to vote in the November 4, 2008 general election must register to vote by October 4, 2008.

Students who are not registered to vote

Students who wish to vote in the general election but who are not registered to vote can register to vote by filling out a voter registration card. Individuals register with the county which they list as their residence for voter registration purposes. Because many college students spend time at different locations (e.g., college campus home and parent's home) Texas law allows students to determine which location they consider to be their permanent residence for purpose of voter registration. A student cannot register in more than one location.

Students may request a voter registration application online at: http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/census.shtml. Students may also obtain voter registration cards at post offices, libraries, and county election offices.

Students who are unsure if they are registered to vote

Students should contact the county voter registration office that they may have registered with, such as the county of their parent's residential address or the county of their university address. Officials at the voter registration office will inform students if their names are on the voter registration roll.

A complete list of all Texas county voter registration offices can be located at: http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/voteregistration.shtml

Youth voters, candidates and the United States general election

The following websites offer non-partisan (i.e., politically neutral) information about issues relevant to youth voters, background information on candidates, voting information, and more.

http://www.newvotersproject.org/
http://www.declareyourself.com/
http://www.votecsmart.org/
http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/index.shtml

This information pamphlet has been provided to you courtesy of Dr. Tamara Waggener's Fall 2007 American Government Honors course students and the SHSU Political Engagement Project.

Sam Houston State University
Voter Registration Drive 2008

Bearhats
United States General Election

The 2008 general election will be held on November 4, 2008. A general election is an election in which voters cast votes for the candidates they wish to hold office. The candidates for president/vice president in the general election are as follows:

Democratic Party: Barack Obama/
Joe Biden

Republican Party: John McCain/
Sarah Palin

Libertarian Party: Bob Barr/
Wayne A. Root

A complete list of all positions and candidates can be found at: http://www.votesmart.org/

There are three types of voting options:

Absentee voting:
Absentee voting by mail is designed for individuals who will not be at their place of voter registration during the day of the election. For example, United States military men and women who are stationed abroad during the election will engage in absentee voting. The general election will occur on a Tuesday (Nov. 4, 2008), a day when most college students are on campus. Thus college students who are registered in a county other than Walker County may need to absentee vote by mail if they do not early vote or Election Day vote.

Information regarding absentee voting may be obtained at: http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/pamphlets/facs.shtml

Early Voting:
Voters can vote at their convenience beginning on the 17th day before an election and ending on the 4th day before Election Day in most elections. Early voting does not require a voter to vote at their precinct. There is one central location for early voting.

Students who wish to early vote should contact their county voter registration office to determine the location for early voting. For further information about early voting please see: http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/earlyvoting.shtml

Election Day Voting:
Voters vote on the official day of the election. Election Day voting requires a voter to vote at their precinct. Precincts will be open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on the day of the election.

*Information on how to find polling places can be obtained from the election office in the county individuals deem their county for voter registration purposes. A full list of all county election offices can be found at: http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/votercoduties.shtml

General Voter Registration
and Voting Information
For more information about registration and voting see the Texas Secretary of State voter information webpage at: http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/index.shtml
APPENDIX C:
EARLY AND ELECTION DAY POSTERS

Not Sure if You Are Registered in Walker County?
Check Here: http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections

Vote Early
Avoid the Election Day Rush

Who: Voters Registered in Walker County
Date: Mon-Fri, October 20–31
Time: 8:00 AM–5:00 PM
Place: Walker County Annex Building
1301 Sam Houston Avenue
Bring: Voter Registration Card and/or Picture ID

Need Help?
Contact:
Dr. Stacy G. Ulbig
936-294-1468
ulbig@shsu.edu
Don’t Forget to Vote

Make Sure Your Voice is Heard

Who: Voters Registered in Walker County

Date: Tuesday, November 4th

Time: 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Place: At Your Precinct Polling Place
Find it Here:
http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections

Bring: Voter Registration Card and/or Picture ID

Not Sure if You Are Registered in Walker County?
Check Here:
http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections
Get the VOTE out!

Election Day is Tuesday, November 4, 2008. Polls are open 7 am - 7 pm. To locate your polling place, go to www.sos.state.tx.us.

Voters registered in Walker County can VOTE EARLY from October 20 through October 31, 2008, at the Walker County Annex, 1301 Sam Houston Avenue, 436-4959.

Sam Houston State University, A Member of the Texas State University System
(1) Information Only E-mail:

Thank you for registering to vote in Walker County. As you know, registering to vote is only part of the process of having your voice heard. This message is meant to provide you with information about how you can become more informed and vote in the Fall 2008 election.

Please utilize as much or little of this information as you please, and feel free to contact either Dr. Stacy Ulbig (ulbig@shsu.edu) or Dr. Tamara Waggener (pol_taw@shsu.edu) if you have any questions about the information contained in this message.

You may exercise your vote in one of two ways:

- You may vote during the EARLY VOTING PERIOD, between October 20 and October 31. Voting hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00AM to 6:00PM. The voting location is the Walker County Annex Building, located at 1301 Sam Houston Avenue (the Blue and White building across the street from the Donut Wheel).

OR

- You may vote on ELECTION DAY (Tuesday, November 4) at the polling place for your precinct. Polling hours are 7:00AM to 7:00 PM.

The polling locations for the Huntsville area are (What is my precinct number?):
- Precinct 101: Walker County Justice Center (717 FM 2821 West)
- Precinct 102: Walker County Annex (1301 Sam Houston Avenue)
- Precinct 104: Northside Baptist Church (1207 FM 908)
- Precinct 201: First Presbyterian Church (1801 19th Street)
- Precinct 204: Walker County Fairgrounds (3925 State Hwy 30 West)
- Precinct 205: Elkins Lake Conference Center (634 Cherry Hills Drive)
- Precinct 206: Region VI Education Service Center (3332 Montgomery Road)
- Precinct 301: Martin Luther King Center (300 Martin Luther King)
- Precinct 302: Calvary Baptist Church (1135 U.S. 190)
- Precinct 401: University Heights Baptist Church (2400 Sycamore Ave)

No matter how you vote, you will need to bring your voter registration card and/or a valid Texas drivers’ license or ID card. It is best if you can bring your voter registration card, but as long as you are registered, you may vote with a Texas driver’s license or ID card.

To find out more information on where the candidates stand on the issues that matter to you, check out some of these non-partisan websites:

League of Women Voters (and their Presidential Election Guide)
Project VoteSmart
New Voters Project
Declare Yourself
Texas Secretary of State
(2) **Information & Importance E-mail:** This e-mail will contain all of the information contained in the “Information Only E-mail” as well as the following:

*Young People are Silent.* Young people in America have traditionally not had their voices heard in elections because they tend to vote at much lower levels than people in other age groups. While about 1 of every 2 older people vote, less than 1 in 3 college-aged citizens typically cast a ballot ([www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)).

*Why Does this Matter?* It is estimated that young adults represent about 44 million voters. This means that about 1 in 5 eligible voters is a college-aged citizen ([www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)). If all these young people voted, their opinion about who should lead would be heard.

*How does this affect me personally?* Elected representatives make many decisions that affect your day-to-day life. From the war in Iraq to the economic trouble the nation faces to the cost of tuition, the policies elected representatives choose affect you.

*What Can I Do?* You can become informed about the issues that matter to you and vote in the upcoming election.
REFERENCES


Figure 1
Voter Turnout by Registration Strategy

*Difference is statistically significant at $p<0.05$ (two-tailed).
Figure 2
Voter Turnout by Brochure Color

*Difference is statistically significant at p<0.05 (two-tailed).
Figure 3
Voter Turnout by Brochure Color
Off-Campus Students Only

*Difference is statistically significant at p<0.05 (two-tailed).
Figure 4
Voter Turnout and Get-Out-The-Vote Posters

- Voted: 77.3% (Not Exposed) and 74.3% (Exposed)
- Early Voted: 48.5% (Not Exposed) and 43.2% (Exposed)
- Election Day Voted: 28.8% (Not Exposed) and 31.3% (Exposed)
Figure 5
Voter Turnout and E-Mail Reminders