



Empowered Women

The Legacy of our Founders and Their Tie to Civic Engagement

Learning Outcomes:


- Sisters will discover how the actions of our Founders, bold or quiet, are connected to engagement within the community.
- Sisters will be able to identify civic involvement, and how they, and their fellow Sisters may already be involved, intentionally or unintentionally.
- Sisters will create a plan for how they can take a more proactive, intentional approach towards making a difference within their communities.

Supplies:

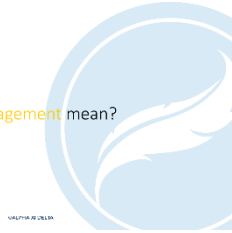
- Scratch paper and writing utensil
- Slide deck
- Microphone if needed for the size of the space

Facilitation notes:

- Facilitation Key:
 - *Items in italics are notes for the facilitator*
 - Items in highlighted in gray are questions the facilitator should pose to the group
 - Items in regular font should be shared with the participants, but not necessarily read verbatim. The facilitator can put them in her own words to make it conversational.
- The left-hand column below gives you lots of information! The images are the corresponding slides to what is listed in that section of the written content. The numbers (example "5/5" or "5/10") refer to timing. The number to the left of the slash indicates the amount of time that section should take to facilitate. The number to the right of the slash is the total amount of time that will have elapsed by the end of that section.
- *(Slide)* indicates that the PowerPoint should be advanced. Make sure you review the slides along with the facilitation guide in preparation for the program. Sometimes *(Slide)* or *(Advance)* advances to the next, and sometimes it starts animation within the same slide.

5/5	<h2>Welcome and Introduction</h2>
	<p>Hello and welcome! <i>Depending on the level of familiarity with the group, introduce yourself and share a little bit about your background.</i></p> <p>This program was created as part of Alpha Xi Delta Votes, an initiative to help our members feel confident and have the tools needed to be civically engaged, feel connected to others and to learn about their resources and stay up-to-day on local and national elections. Being aware of the issues that are important to you, and the voting process are only a piece of a much larger civic engagement puzzle.</p> <p>As women, we have played an influential role in the history of America and democracy. This role for some women, manifests in quiet and unassuming actions, for others, it can be a momentous roar. Alpha Xi Delta was founded to bring the local women of Lombard College together in an empowering environment. Over a century later, its legacy has impacted hundreds of thousands of women and communities. You, yourself, are a product of this legacy. And just like our Founders, it is likely that your actions, however intentional or unintentional, make an impact in your community. Awareness of your actions and their tie to civic engagement can help you make the most of your influence. To help us better understand, we will look at our own Founders ties to civic engagement, what it means to be civically involved, and how our actions now will shape our future.</p>
10/15	<h2>What is Civic Engagement?</h2>

What does civic engagement mean?



(Slide) Defining Civic Engagement takes only a simple breakdown, and a quick Google search. Civic, meaning in relation to a community (that could be a city, town, administration, etc.) and engagement meaning, participating, or becoming involved in. So basically, being involved in a community or its activities equals civic engagement. Pretty simple, right? You may already be thinking of a time when your actions fit this description.

Now, with that definition in mind, go ahead and take a moment, 2-3 minutes, to jot down some scenarios where you got involved at school, abroad, or in your community. For example, maybe you got involved in your community when you helped to clean up a local park.

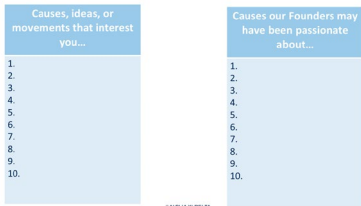
Pause 2-3 minutes for reflection.

Next, take another 2-3 minutes, and this time, make some notes on “why” or “how” you got involved in those scenarios. For example, if you wrote that you helped with a park clean up, was it because you love spending time there and want the environment to be clean and welcoming? Or, perhaps some friends were involved and you enjoy taking time to support your friends and a cause they’re passionate about. Take 2-3 minutes, to jot down some “whys” and “how” you got involved.

Pause 2-3 minutes for reflection.



Hold onto these examples, and we will come back to them in a bit. *(Slide)* For now, imagine our Founders participating in that activity, taking inventory of their involvement and what motivated their actions. Cora Bollinger Block, our first President, had a passion for animals, and was involved in the Audubon Society, focused on the conservation of water birds. Frances Elisabeth

	<p>Cheney, who wrote many of our songs, was an advocate for women's suffrage and freedom.</p> <p>Just like us, our Founders had their own unique interests and causes they were passionate about, inside and outside of Alpha Xi Delta. Like us, these interests fueled their actions and led them to having an impact in their communities. Founder Harriet Luella McCollum was interested in psychology and wrote literature that is still referenced today. Having lived full lives, we can easily look back on all they did, but when they were collegiate women, like you, they were just getting started.</p>
10/25	<h2>Us and Our Founders, We Aren't That Different</h2>
	<p>If like Alice, you're just discovering causes that inspire you, or even for those who have spent lots of time engaging civically, it can help to spend some time brainstorming how we too can make an impact. Time spent planning and researching how you will engage will allow you to prioritize your time and energy. <i>(slide)</i></p> <p>Take a moment and jot down 5-10 causes, ideas, or movements that interest you, 5-10. It may be your community's access to basic necessities (food and shelter), your University's stance on a particular issue, or simply your own self-improvement. No idea is too big or too small. Go ahead and take 2 to 3 minutes.</p> <p><i>Pause 2-3 minutes for reflection.</i></p> <p>Next, think of some issues that our Founders may have faced in 1893. As a woman in that era, what were some causes they would have been passionate about?</p> <p>Take another 2 to 3 minutes to jot those down, try to think of 5-10 (be sure to label yours, versus the Founders).</p>

Pause for another 2-3 minutes.


Thank you for taking that time to make some notes! While writing in particular about our Founders, you may have noticed some similarities.

Looking at both lists, circle any causes or ideas that are similar.

Allow 1-2 minutes for this activity.

When we look closely at our civic engagement, we begin to see that many of the issues which affected our Founders over 125 years ago are not so different from those today. They faced issues like women's rights, access to education, healthcare, betterment of self, family care, poverty, crime, global issues, representation; the list goes on! In the years to come, they would also, like us, encounter war, pandemics, and environmental crises.

Today, we face the same challenges. Discrimination still exists, and many people do not have consistent access to food, shelter, education or healthcare. There are still many women, and men who face boundaries to casting their vote. The times have changed, but the issues, and our ability to be engaged, have not. The language of the 19th Amendment included all eligible voters, but not all citizens of the country could exercise their right to vote. The Constitution in 1920 mandated a minimum voting age of 21, so the 19th Amendment allowed for women 21 and over to vote. Then, although the 19th Amendment included women of color, many were still unable to vote. In the southern United States, restrictive state or local laws called for poll taxes and/or literacy tests before a citizen could vote. And given that eighty percent of African Americans lived in the southern U.S. in 1920, it is clear to see the massive inequalities that existed. As more black women moved north, they were able to vote more freely, but we still had a

	<p>lot of work to do. Full exercise of black voting rights was intended with the Voting Rights Act of 1965; however, even today some states continue to erect barriers to black voting. Native American women were largely excluded from voting before the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924; some states and localities still passed laws effectively barring Natives from voting until the late 1940s. Not until the late 1940s and 1950s were restrictions on Asian American voting removed. (Source: 2020 Women's Vote Centennial Initiative (WVCI); www.2020centennial.org)</p> <p>It's hard to believe that now, many decades later, voting is still not accessible, however that is the case for many Americans. Just within the past few years, several states have implemented strict voter ID laws, decreased the accessibility of absentee voting, and closed poll locations, making it more difficult to cast your vote and have your voice heard.</p>
<p>10/35</p>	<h2>So, Now What?</h2>
	<p><i>(Slide)</i> So, now what? Now, we act. Empower others, loud or soft to be engaged in whatever way makes sense. Let's take a moment and look back at some of the civic engagement examples you came up with earlier. Compare your personal civic engagement examples with the list of causes you are passionate about. How do the two compare? Are you already engaged or pursuing some of the causes you have listed? Are there any causes or issues you have yet to explore?</p> <p>Take a moment to compare your notes. How can you prioritize your time, and maximize your current efforts? What are some new ways you can take action?</p> <p><i>Pause 4-5 minutes for reflection.</i></p> <p>Thank you! A simple Google search can also help generate some ideas on involvement. For your</p>

In Your Community

1. Read and Listen
2. Volunteer
3. Shop Smart
4. Donate
5. Educate Yourself



convenience, here are some examples of civic engagement, both in and outside of Alpha Xi Delta.

In your *(Slide)* Community:

- Read or listen to the local, regional, or national news. Make sure your news sources are considered credible. You can get some advice on how to gauge if a source is credible on the one sheet resource, Politics 101: A Quick Reference Guide (found in the Alpha Xi Delta Votes section of the website)
- Volunteer! Examples of community service include volunteering at a polling station, shoveling your neighbor's driveway, or engaging in a park clean up. There are many great ways to volunteer yourself and your time!
- Shop smarter. Shop local, support small businesses, and support companies that share your values.
- Donate things like your time, money, blood, food, etc.
- Educate yourself. Be aware of the issues and current events. Learn more about causes your friends, neighbors, and family are passionate about. In the end, make decisions for yourself—you don't have to share the views of your best friend, your parents or a significant other. Your views are just that...yours. But, diversify your media consumption. Read something that is different from what you believe. Seek out an intentional conversation about a topic that you might want to learn more about. Our social media curates an experience that feeds what we already believe, creating an echo chamber of thoughts and beliefs. Be aware and seek out varying viewpoints.

(Slide) In Alpha Xi Delta/at School:

In Alpha Xi Delta or School

1. Study Abroad or Service Trips
2. Leadership Roles
3. Philanthropy
4. Your Major
5. Show Up
6. Register with TurboVote

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5 Tips as You Plan

1. Brainstorm
2. Discuss
3. Open Mind
4. You're Not Alone
5. Take a Break

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- Study Abroad or go on service trips. This is an excellent opportunity to represent yourself and your community, while enriching your perspective through service and immersion in other cultures.
- Leadership roles. Big or small your involvement promotes personal growth, sisterhood, and the long-term wellbeing of your chapter.
- Philanthropy. Sisters volunteer and fundraise to help perpetuate the mission of the Kindly Hears Initiative.
- Your major. Is your degree based in nursing, education, non-profit work, or the government? Does it somehow better your community? Just by furthering your education you are furthering your civic engagement.
- Show up. Supporting your Sisters' efforts inside the chapter, or other organizations, keeps them feeling empowered and strong.
- Register with TurboVote, the non-partisan voter engagement tool. It does not spam you with candidate info, rather helps you get registered to vote or if you already are, sends you updates on your polling location and date of elections. To register with turbo vote visit [\(slide\)](#) and find it here [\(slide\)](#)

In addition to these ideas, [\(Slide\)](#) here are 5 tips to keep in mind as you plan:

1. Spend 5 minutes brainstorming. Organize your thoughts into a plan of action.
2. Discuss your plans or ideas with others. They may have some tips or be able to connect you with more opportunities, or the right people to maximize your efforts.
3. Keep an open mind and keep challenging yourself. A simple search can help you feel good about ways you may already be involved. It can also help you identify new

	<p>ways to make an impact, or lead you to new causes you can be passionate about.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. You are not alone. Use your friends, your neighbors, your family, your Sisters, etc. These networks support our efforts and actions. As a member of Alpha Xi Delta, we are connected with causes through programming, leadership roles, and in our dedication to the Kindly Hearts Initiative. 5. Take a break and don't forget to rest. Sometimes you'll feel like you have moved mountains, but sometimes it can feel like you are still in square one. Things take time, be patient, be kind to yourself, and remember quiet or loud, big or small, all actions make a difference.
<p>5/40</p>	<h2>Conclusion</h2>
	<p><i>(Slide)</i> The legacy of our Founders is a product of hard work and time. It took almost 10 years for the second chapter of Alpha Xi Delta to be founded after establishing in 1893. Over 125 years, and over 130 chapters later, our Sorority has been home to generations of women. Women who are astronauts, politicians, designers, writers, business women, actresses, musicians, philanthropists, and more. It doesn't end here. In 10 years, what will you be proud to say you've done? Your legacy starts here and now. Take your time and be patient. Our actions will not always be grand sweeping gestures of courage or selflessness. Sometimes it's just a quiet decision to cast your vote, to pick up trash you see on a walk, to keep going, and to try again tomorrow. Thank you, Sisters, so much for your engagement, I hope you'll continue to work towards your own goals and take the time to share them with others. I leave you with this quote from our former National President, Ann O' Connor Briggs.</p>



Thank you!

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“Alpha Xi Delta has always had a more serious mission than to merely offer social activities to the undergraduate. We believe it involves the entire life of our members from the development of an ability to live with and for others through the stages wherein we supplement our schools by encouragement of high scholarship into any field of active practice where our standards may be carried. We have great tasks awaiting us, great problems that must be confronted, great possibilities that must be developed into certainties.”

-Ann O’ Connor Briggs, Alpha Theta, Former National President, National Convention Opening Address