

# 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:

- Each Sister should bring a notebook and pen.
- Power Point
- When using the accompanying PowerPoint, please make sure you check the slides to ensure you have the correct fonts downloaded. You can download the fonts needed
- Download the correct fonts (so everything matches!)
  - You can find them in the Alpha Xi Delta Branding and Graphics Folder on Exclusively Xi. The file is titled "Fonts"
  - The three fonts you'll need are called:
    - *Ciao Bella*
    - **Crimson Text**
    - **Montserrat**

### Notes:

- If in the script it says "(slide)" you should move to the next slide in the deck (slide images are also in the left column for reference). If the script says "(advance)" it indicates animation within the same slide.
- It is recommended that, if virtual, you use a platform that allows Sisters to see your screen (for the slide) but also allows them to see you and each other. Don't be afraid to stop sharing your screen when there's a discussion so it feels more personal!

5/5	<h1>Introduction</h1>
  	<p>Recently, Alpha Xi Delta has partnered with Democracy Works, a non-partisan, non-profit organization, to roll out TurboVote. TurboVote is a tool designed to make registering to vote easy. It also helps those who are already registered, by keeping them up-to-date 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><i>(Slide)</i> 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 can 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>Civic Engagement, Who is She?</h2>
	<p><i>(Slide)</i> 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</p>



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.

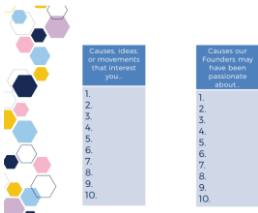
*Pause and allow some time.*


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 and allow some time.*

Hold onto these examples, and we will come back to them in a bit. For now, *(slide)* 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 Cheney, who wrote many of our songs, was an advocate for women’s suffrage and freedom.

Just like us, our Founders had their own unique interests and causes they were passionate about, in and outside of Alpha Xi Delta. Like us, these interests fueled their actions and led them to making 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. One of our Founders, Alice Bartlett Bruner, was only 15!
0/25	<h1>Us vs. Our Founders, We aren't That Different</h1>
	<p>If like Alice, you're just discovering causes that inspire you, or even if you have a long list, it can help to spend some time brainstorming. Time spent planning and researching will allow you to prioritize your time and energy. <i>(slide)</i></p> <p>Take a moment and jot down some causes, ideas, or movements that interest you, 5-10, big or small. 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. Go ahead and take 2 to 3 minutes.</p> <p><i>Pause and allow some time.</i></p> <p>Next, think of some issues that our Founders may have faced in 1893. <i>(Advance slide)</i> 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> <p><i>Pause and allow some time.</i></p> <p>Thank you for taking that time to make some notes! While writing in particular about our Founders, you may have noticed some similarities.</p> <p>Looking at both lists, circle any causes or ideas that are similar.</p> <p><i>Pause and allow some time.</i></p> <p>When we look closely at our civic engagement, we begin to see that issues which affected our Founders over 125 years ago, are not so different from those</p>

	<p>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 encounter war, pandemics, and environmental crises.</p> <p>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 eligible voters 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 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. Eighty percent of African Americans lived in the southern U.S. in 1920. As more black women moved north, they were able to vote more freely. 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); <a href="http://www.2020centennial.org">www.2020centennial.org</a>)</p>
10/35	<h2>So, Now What?</h2>
 <p>So, now what? Now, we act. Empower others. Loud or soft.</p>	<p>(Slide) (Advance) So, now what? (Advance) Now, we act. (Advance), Empower others, (Advance), 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,</p>



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?

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?

*Pause and allow some time.*

Thank you! A simple Google search can also help generate some ideas on involvement. For your convenience, here are some examples of civic engagement, both in and outside of Alpha Xi Delta.

In your *(Slide)* Community:

- *(Advance)* 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)
- *(Advance)* Volunteer! (Community service, a polling station, shovel your neighbor's driveway, or a park clean up, there are many great ways to volunteer yourself and your time!)
- *(Advance)* Shop smarter. Shop local, support small businesses, and support companies that share your values.
- *(Advance)* Donate! (Your time, money, blood, food, etc. Many Sisters recently took time to make and donate face masks in their communities.)
- *(Advance)* 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. Be aware and seek out varying viewpoints.


*(Slide)* In Alpha Xi Delta/at School:

- *(Advance)* Study Abroad or service trips. This is an excellent opportunity to represent yourself and your community, while enriching your perspective through service and immersion in other cultures.
- *(Advance)* Leadership roles. Big or small your involvement promotes personal growth, sisterhood, and the long-term wellbeing of your chapter.
- *(Advance)* Philanthropy! Sisters volunteer and fundraise to help perpetuate the mission of Autism Speaks.
- *(Advance)* 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.
- *(Advance)* Show up. Supporting your Sisters' efforts inside the chapter, or other organizations, keeps them feeling empowered and strong.
- *(Advance)* 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. This year celebrates the 100-year anniversary of women's right to vote\*—something many of our Founders proudly fought for. 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. *(Advance)* Spend 5 minutes brainstorming. Organize your thoughts into a plan of action.



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <i>(Advance)</i> 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.</li> <li>3. <i>(Advance)</i> 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 ways to make an impact, or lead you to new causes you can be passionate about.</li> <li>4. <i>(Advance)</i> 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 partnership with Autism Speaks.</li> <li>5. <i>(Advance)</i> Take a break. 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.</li> </ol>
5/40	<h2>Conclusion</h2>
	<p>The <i>(Slide)</i> 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. 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</p>





share them with others. I leave you with this quote from our former National President, Ann O' Connor Briggs.

"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

*(Slide)*