

# CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE NEW LA&S CURRICULUM

Development Day

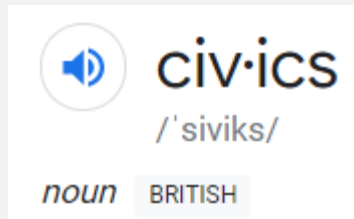
January 21, 2021

# WELCOME!

*This session explores the “civic learning” and “civic engagement” elements of the new LA&S curriculum. We will differentiate the two concepts, provide examples of courses that do this work, and offer guidance for anyone thinking of applying for these designations for their classes.*

- Dr. Jonathan Harvey, Assistant Professor, Humanities
- Dr. Christa Marr, Assistant Professor, Economics History and Political Science
- Dr. Zachary Miner, Assistant Professor, Behavior Sciences

# WHAT IS CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT?



The study of **rights** and **duties** of citizenship (*Oxford Language*)

- **Civic Learning / Civic Engagement:** Knowledge, intellectual skills, practical skills, and/or values involved in informed and effective participation in civic and democratic life ... beyond the classroom (*Massachusetts Bureau of Higher Education*)
- Civic learning **versus** civic engagement

# WHAT IS CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT IN COURSES?

Difference between civic learning and civic engagement as defined by the Massachusetts BHE

- **Civic Learning (without Engagement):** Courses which simply focus substantially on the knowledge, intellectual skills, practical skills, and/or values involved in informed and effective participation in civic and democratic life.
- **Civic Learning with Engagement:** Courses in which all students are engaged in Civic Learning work beyond the classroom.



Figure 1 Framework and dimensions for the HEIghten civic competency and engagement assessment.

# WHY CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT?

1. Liberal arts education grounded in civic learning and engagement
  1. John Dewey (1916): Democracy depends on educated citizens engaging in public issues for the betterment of society and the social good.
    1. Rhoads (2003): “liberal education has been seen as the primary vehicle for fostering learned, democratic citizens”
2. Revitalization of civic education path set forth by the Obama Administration and carried on by Massachusetts Bureau of Higher Education
  1. A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy’s Future (2012) “pushes back against a prevailing national dialogue that limits the mission of higher education to workforce preparation and training while marginalizing disciplines basic to democracy”
  2. Massachusetts BHE policy on civic learning (2014) “understanding of the social values that underlie democratic structures and practices”



# WHY CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT?

## **Our Mission**

“Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.”

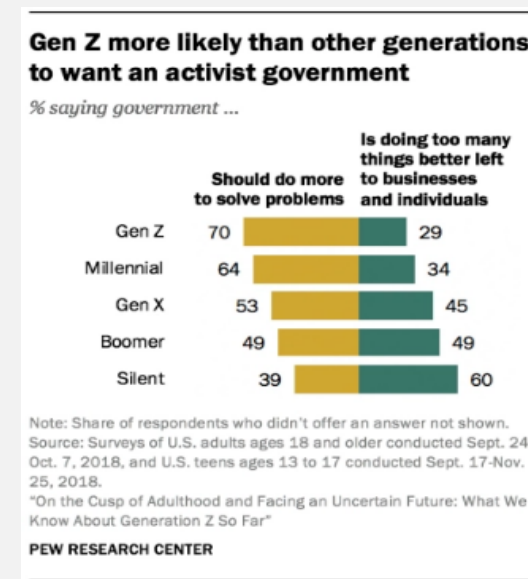
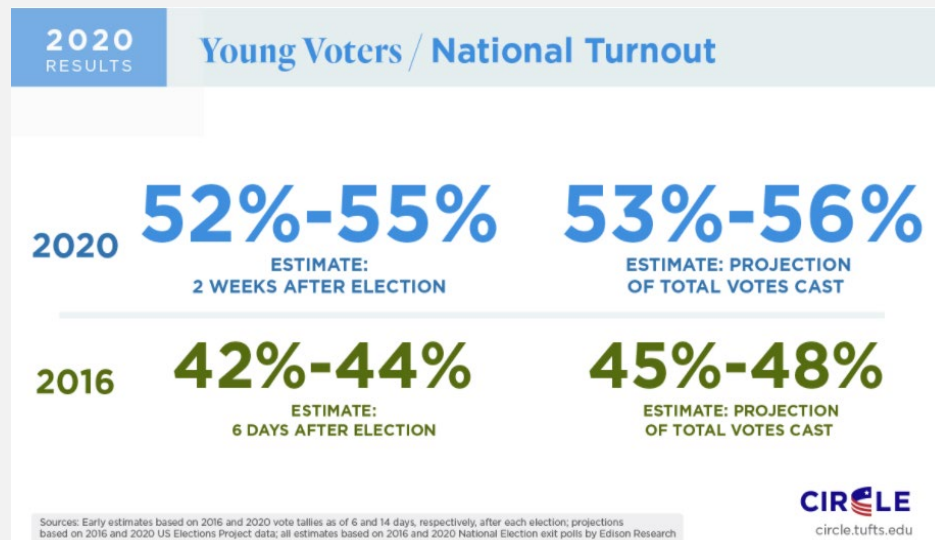
# WHY CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT?

## Our Mission

“Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small college environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and **civic and global responsibility**. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.”

# WHY CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT **NOW?**

- Gen Z, representing students who are college-aged (born after 1995), is participating in political elections
- Gen Z theoretically wants government to play a role in their (social) lives

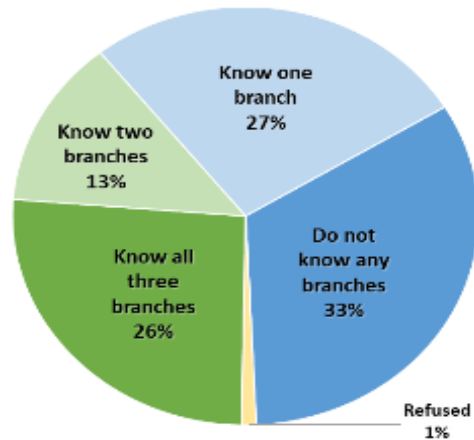




# WHY CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT **NOW?**

- Our students (Gen Z or not) would benefit from a proper grounding in civic education

**% of people who can name the three branches of government**



Source: Annenberg Constitution Day Civics Survey, August 9-13, 2017.  
Annenberg Public Policy Center

**Those who get most political news from social media most likely to be under 30**

Among U.S. adults who say each pathway is the most common way they get political and election news, % who are ...

	Social media	News website or app	Cable TV	Local TV	Network TV	Radio	Print
Ages 18-29	48%	21%	7%	10%	5%	12%	7%
30-49	40	44	23	31	23	42	17
50-64	9	23	31	39	34	28	28
65+	3	12	39	20	38	18	47

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 29-Nov. 11, 2019.

\*Americans Who Mainly Get Their News on Social Media Are Less Engaged, Less Knowledgeable\*

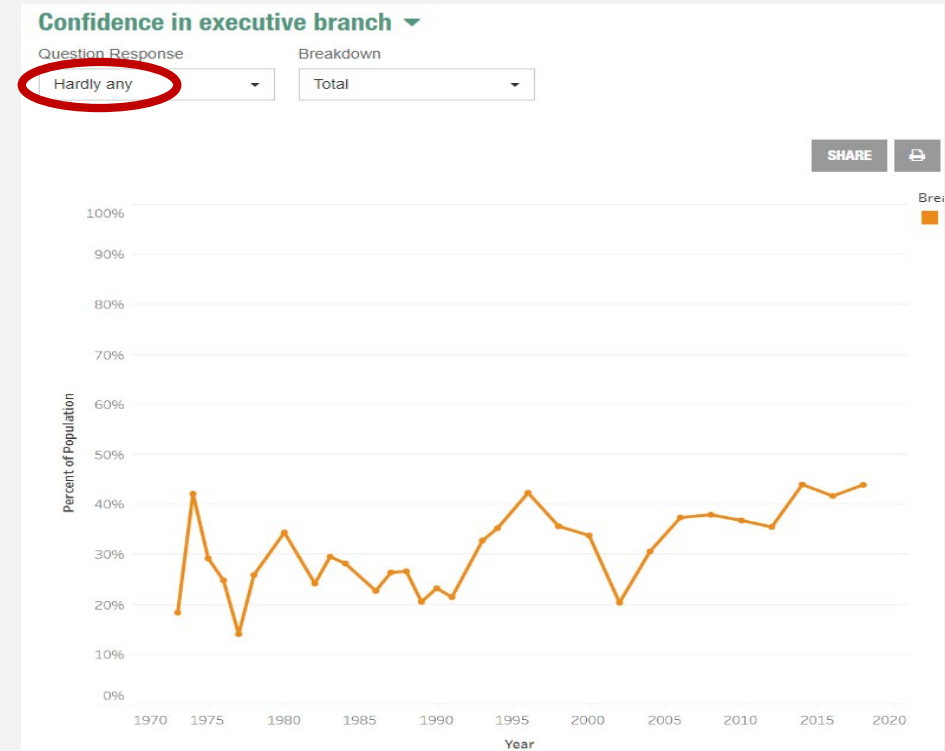
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# WHY CIVIC LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT **NOW?**

- ...as they grow up in an increasingly polarized political environment where there is an abundance of misinformation shared and government trust wanes

**Dr. Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral of MIT found "false news reached more people than the truth; the top 1% of false news cascades diffused to between 1000 and 100,000 people, whereas the truth rarely diffused to more than 1000 people"**

\*Important work is being done on this topic at FSU



# REFERENCES

- Annenberg Constitution Day Civics Survey. 2017. Annenberg, MD: Annenberg Policy Center.
- Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE). 2020. *Election Week 2020: Young People Increase Turnout, Lead Biden to Victory*. Medford, MA: Tufts University.
- Duncan, Arne. 2012. *For Democracy's Future: Education Reclaims Our Civic Mission*. Washington, DC: The Obama Whitehouse.
- Dewey, John. 1916. *Democracy and education*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University. General Social Survey
- General Social Survey. 2021. *Confidence in Executive Branch*. Chicago, IL: NORC at University of Chicago.
- The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement. 2012. *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities
- Liu, Ou Lydia, Katrina Roohr and Joseph A. Riord. 2018. *Assessing Civic and Intercultural Competency in Higher Education: The ETS HElghten © Approach*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services Research Report Series No. RR-18-23.
- Mitchell, Amy, Mark Jurkowitz, and Elisa Shearer. 2020. *Americans Who Mainly Get Their News on Social Media Are Less Engaged, Less Knowledgeable*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center: Research on Journalism and Media.
- Parker, Kim and Ruth Igielnik. 2020. *On the Cusp of Adulthood and Facing an Uncertain Future: What We Know About Gen Z So Far*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center: Pew Research on Social Trends.
- Policy on Civic Learning. (2014). Boston, MA: Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.
- Rhoads, Robert. 2003. *How Civic Engagement Is Reframing Liberal Education*. Washington, D.C.:AAC&U Peer Review Vol. 5, No. 3
- Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral (2018). *The Spread of True and False News Online*. Science. Vol. 359, Issue 6380, pp. 1146-1151.
- Winthrop, Rebecca. 2020. *The Need for Civic Education in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Schools*. Washington, DC: Policy 2020 Brookings.