

The Ohio State University Council on Enrollment and Student Progress Asynchronous Learning and Civic Engagement Day for November General Elections

Synopsis: The Ohio State University Senate passed a resolution in March 2024 that "the Provost develop procedures for university-wide asynchronous classes in the academic calendar on Nov. 5th, 2024 as a one-time trial on Election Day." The resolution was crafted by the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) after an extensive process of consultation with student government (USG, CGS and IPC), and university bodies including OAA, the Registrar's office, the Office of Student Life, and Faculty Council.

The asynchronous learning day took place on Nov. 5th, 2024. CESP committed to collect data and study the impact of this change. A CESP taskforce carried out this work in Fall 2024. The data collected showed that the trial asynchronous learning day on Election Day was popular, and that the policy developed by the Provost to exempt lab and clinical classes when necessary was effective. The data showed strong support for holding asynchronous learning and civic engagement days for future general elections.

Whereas our Undergraduate Student Government, Council of Graduate Students, and Inter-Professional Council have requested and strongly support Election Day being a day free from classes on the university calendar, and

Whereas these student bodies noted the importance of exercising their fundamental rights to vote and engage fully in civic engagement and community involvement, and

Whereas an asynchronous¹ learning day will allow students the flexibility to vote in-person and volunteer for civic duties on Election Day, and

¹ Definition of Asynchronous Learning:

Following Policy 6.15 (Weather or Other Short-Term Closing), "Faculty who normally teach in-person classes must, at the beginning of the term, notify their student whether they intend to use alternative teaching methods when classes are canceled, which could include but are not limited to the use of webcasts, podcasts, email, supplemental readings etc." (<https://hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/policy615-faq.pdf> p.4).

Per Ohio State Online: "Asynchronous learning allows you to **learn on your own schedule**, within a certain timeframe. You can access and complete lectures, readings, homework and other learning materials at any time..." (<https://online.osu.edu/resources/learn/whats-difference-between-asynchronous-and-synchronous-learning>)

Whereas given the need to balance the specific educational needs of courses which are essential to hold in-person with the goal of applying an asynchronous learning day to as many students as we can, that labs and clinical classes with a strong need to be held in-person for educational or accreditation reasons should be exempted from this policy, and

Whereas the survey on the effectiveness of the trial asynchronous learning day on Election Day in 2024 showed strong support for continuing this initiative: 63.7% of students surveyed said that the asynchronous day allowed them to vote; 55.5% of students surveyed said that the asynchronous day allowed them to volunteer for civic duties; and 96.9% of respondents supported having asynchronous learning days for future general elections.

Whereas among faculty surveyed, 79.6% support having asynchronous learning days on future general elections. Fewer than 10% of the instructors whose classes proceeded asynchronously said it was difficult to implement the asynchronous day. Instructors who found it difficult to implement the asynchronous day were most likely to be among those who did NOT hold asynchronous classes on election day.

Whereas USG's voting data report on on-campus voter turnout showed a 4% increase in turnout between 2020 and 2024, against a backdrop of overall turnout in Franklin County decreasing by 4%.

Whereas the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) voted unanimously to approve this resolution.

Let It Be Resolved: that the University Senate requests that the Provost shall implement a university-wide Asynchronous Learning and Civic Engagement Day on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years to coincide with Federal general elections, starting on Nov 3rd, 2026. Procedures for the Asynchronous Learning Day would be based on those successfully developed by the Provost for the November 2024 trial Asynchronous Learning Day. The Asynchronous Learning and Civic Engagement Day should be listed on OSU's Academic Calendar and should be included in course syllabi, with standard language provided on OSU's list of Recommended Syllabus Statements and Policies. Lab and clinical classes may be exempted when necessary for compliance certification and other compelling educational purposes. This would not apply to OSU academic units that already provide an Election Day holiday.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of CESP:

- Yvonne Goddard, Associate Professor, Educational Studies and Chair, CESP
- Daniel Thompson, Professor, Mathematics, and Co-Chair, CESP