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UNLV, LVCVA & CCSD UNVEIL PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE-THEMED EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

UNLV, LVCVA and Clark County School District will partner to provide hands-on learning opportunities for local K-12 and college students this fall.

LAS VEGAS (June 15, 2016) — UNLV, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) and Clark County School District (CCSD) will partner this fall on a host of election-themed educational activities for K-12 and college students leading up to October's presidential debate. Leaders from the three agencies launched the partnership June 15 in the Paradise Elementary School library to a room full of students.

Nevada — both a battleground state and site for the final presidential debate — will be front and center in the political narrative throughout the year as presidential candidates debate issues here that will decide the election. The third and final presidential debate for the general election will be held at UNLV's Thomas & Mack Center Oct. 19.

The event's intense focus on Las Vegas provides an unmatched educational opportunity for students at all academic levels to experience hands-on activities about American history/government, political and policy debate, the election process, voter education, and [related issues](#).

"The 2016 election is shaping up to be one of the most highly anticipated in recent memory, and this partnership will allow us to extend the reach of the debate with programs designed to engage all levels of the education system, the business community, and local residents," said UNLV President Len Jessup. "Hosting an historic event in our community gives our students a front row seat to experience the political process on the biggest stage."

Standing against a backdrop of election-themed artwork, Jessup, his Las Vegas Debate Committee co-chair Rossi Ralenkotter (LVCVA president/CEO), and CCSD Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky highlighted existing partnerships and unique elements being incorporated into lesson plans this fall:

Classroom Connections

- CCSD essay contests this fall, judged by community leaders, geared toward students in grade 4-12 with scholarships and other prizes on the line.
- Debate-themed lesson plans, including online “Join the Debates” curriculum through the Commission on Presidential Debates.
- UNLV courses in areas such as political science, history, and [communication studies](#) featuring an election/debate focus

Extracurricular Connections

- Debate watch parties at UNLV and CCSD school sites throughout debate season leading up to the Oct. 19 event at UNLV
- Collaborative activities between UNLV and CCSD debate teams, such as analytical commentary sessions during watch parties and classroom outreach
- [Volunteer opportunities](#) for students, including welcoming thousands of foreign dignitaries and other visitors to campus, providing technical support, and assisting media covering the debate
- Voter education activities at CCSD high schools and local colleges
- Collaboration with student government leaders and school personnel on community forums, online resource directories, and other election-themed activities

"I want to extend my gratitude to UNLV and LVCVA for partnering with the district to include students at all levels in the excitement that comes with hosting the final presidential debate," said CCSD Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky. "Our teachers are prepared with focused curriculum and high school students are ready to continue their civic engagement by hosting debate events on their campuses. This is an exciting opportunity for our entire district and we look forward to participating in this educational opportunity."

Nevada has previously hosted primary debates and presidential appearances, [including several at UNLV](#) and LVCVA facilities, and Las Vegas has been in the election spotlight over the past year as the city hosted primary debates for both the Democrats and Republicans in 2015 and numerous appearances from the candidates.

The October presidential debate is expected to draw 2,500 media representatives and attract approximately 70 million viewers from around the world. Figures from the 2012 Presidential Debate in Denver brought close to \$56 million in publicity for the university, and media value for Las Vegas from the upcoming October debate has already eclipsed \$20 million.

“Las Vegas has an incredible opportunity to showcase our city this fall when we host the final Presidential Debate. With thousands of media in attendance, we can show the world that we are professional city and thriving community,” said Rossi Ralenkotter, President/CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. “We also have an opportunity to look inward and use the debate as a teaching tool to educate our youth on the importance of the debate process in our election system. We are looking forward to partnering with UNLV and the Clark County School District on another excellent education partnership.”

Las Vegas Presidential Debate community information, activities, and opportunities to get involved will be listed at www.lasvegasdebate2016.com. For UNLV campus-related debate information, activities, and academic initiatives, visit unlv.edu/2016debate. Follow on social media at #UNLVPresDebate and #UNLVegasDebate2016.