

Student-Generated Local Candidate Voter Guides

Teaching Information Literacy through Partnering Librarians and Faculty

*Angeline Prichard, Sarah M. Surak, and
Adam Hoffman*

This chapter describes a collaboration between a research and instructional librarian and two political science faculty members, teaching information literacy through the development of candidate voter guides.

Information Literacy, Civic Engagement, and Faculty Partnerships

As options for obtaining political information continue to expand dramatically, information literacy skills become essential for democratic engagement. This is especially true for young people, as political scientists have for decades lamented about their low levels of political knowledge and engagement.¹ Students today, often first-time or new voters, receive information from a variety of places, including social media sites such as Facebook,



media sharing platforms such as YouTube, friends and family, and the more traditional sources such as television news.² These publicly accessible sources of information are important spaces for voters regarding particular candidates' platforms. For local elections, social media platforms might provide some of the only information available regarding candidate positions. Given the heightened focus and attention, it is often during political campaigns that citizens have the best opportunities to learn about parties, issues, and candidates.³ As a result, faculty should ask students in the political science classroom to engage these common sources of information even further while teaching the critical skills of information literacy required to assess their credibility.⁴

One important and often underutilized source of information literacy skill development and learning in the college classroom is campus librarians.⁵ While teaching faculty serve as experts in their field of study, librarians serve as experts in navigating the ever-expanding world of information. Given their expertise, librarians are essential instructors for students and partners for faculty in teaching these skills.⁶ Unfortunately, faculty primarily engage librarians' expertise within the classroom through a one-shot visit at some point in the academic semester.⁷ Requiring the least amount of planning and course scaffolding on the faculty's part, the learning results of such engagement are shown to be minimal.⁸ Literature on information literacy underscores that student learning is better served through collaboration and extended engagement with library faculty.⁹

The one-shot model is the common engagement experience for faculty in the Department of Political Science at Salisbury University (SU), a regional comprehensive university with normal school roots. Located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the university is attended by more than 8,700 primarily undergraduate students. The university's core values reflect an approach to undergraduate learning rooted in student-centeredness and community-focused civic engagement. These values are elaborated in the university's mission statement, which recognizes that the university's "highest purpose is to empower our students with the knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to active citizenship, gainful employment, and life-long learning in a democratic society and interdependent world."¹⁰

To shift the library's role in supporting teaching and learning at Salisbury University beyond the one-shot model, the dean of libraries and instructional resources offers an annual course enhancement grant. The grant supports projects that encourage a deepening of students' instruction experience through a faculty/librarian collaboration. The grant structure requires that faculty communicate with their librarian partner throughout a redesign or enhancement process, from creating an assignment to providing the partnered educational experience in the classroom. The goal of this partnership is to improve the students' learning experience in the course, as well as to strengthen the library. Even without grant incentives, including financial, aimed at encouraging participation, there are many benefits and motivating factors for faculty/librarian collaboration that warrant developing faculty/librarian partnerships without financial support.

This chapter describes how one such library course enhancement grant brought together a librarian (A. Prichard) and two political science faculty members (A. Hoffman and S. Surak) to develop an innovative, community-focused civic engagement information

literacy assignment. Before this grant collaboration, the librarian had worked with political science faculty in introductory courses for several years. This instruction was limited to the traditional one-shot experience, focusing on research in library databases tied directly to a conventional exploratory paper. Several topics were crowded into a fifty- or seventy-five-minute time slot, and information overload experienced by the students was not uncommon.

The initial attempt at collaboration as an exploratory project reveals much about faculty partnerships and assignments and the design of future pedagogical research projects. The case study in this chapter, focusing on one of two collaborations resulting from this partnership, demonstrates that a faculty/librarian collaboration using candidate voting guides is an excellent way to explore important engagement needs and teach information literacy skills useful both in the classroom and beyond. In sharing the experience, the chapter first describes the Information Literacy Matrix (ILM) used at Salisbury University to support librarians in communicating and engaging the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* and *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*.¹¹ Next, it discusses the theoretical foundations for the collaboration, drawing particularly on Cope and Flanagan's work.¹² The chapter then describes the assignment and the development of a candidate literacy guide related to the library information literacy (IL) learning objectives. The chapter concludes by evaluating the usefulness of this assignment for students and lessons learned, and outlines intentions to redesign the assignment for future classroom use.

Information Literacy at Salisbury University: The Information Literacy Matrix

In 2014, Salisbury University Libraries created the Information Literacy Matrix (ILM) to steer library instruction away from “library orientation tours” and bibliographic instruction toward supporting information literacy (see appendix 3A). While relying predominantly on the Information Literacy Matrix (ILM), it is essential to note that Salisbury University Libraries does not shy away from the ACRL *Framework*. Instead, the *Framework*'s more in-depth theoretical approach is incorporated into information literacy instruction in conjunction with the ILM. Librarians at SU found that the ACRL *Framework* through the ILM, albeit limited to skills rather than broader theory, acted as a more easily understood communication tool with faculty, particularly during its creation amid the transition to the *Framework*.

The ILM identifies skills appropriate for lower-division, upper-division, and graduate students in the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards*. For example, if including in a lesson plan Standard Three, evaluating research, a lower-division learning objective might distinguish between scholarly and popular sources by the end of the learning experience. In contrast, upper-division students would be expected to evaluate their sources critically based on disciplinary convention.

When considering the ACRL *Framework*, both of the learning outcomes described above would, for example, also introduce students to the frame Authority Is Constructed and Contextual. This frame is thus not lost but translated into functional assignment language for faculty. While this system was created during the difficult transition between the *Standards* and the *Framework*, it has not yet outlived its usefulness at SU. Using the ILM allows the librarian to provide scaffolding to the faculty members in initial planning discussions on expectations while also providing the librarian with a method to recognize information overload in a class. There should be no difficulty mapping the class outcomes to the frames solely for those institutions that have fully transitioned to the *Framework*.

Designing for Information Literacy: Local Candidate Voting Guides

In the increasingly digital environment, information literacy plays a particular role in the political science classroom. Courses are frequently framed around debate and discussion of current topics. While not all political events are scheduled, courses centered around elections-based projects are, for the most part, occasions for engagement with current events, which can be anticipated on an annual or biannual basis. Leveraging the political moment serves as a beneficial teaching tool as such discussion can lead to greater political efficacy among students.¹³ These also offer students opportunities to combine academic or course-based work with their professional and civic engagement, which might co-occur outside of the classroom. Many political science students, for example, intern or volunteer with local or state campaigns. In combining academic, professional, and civic engagements, classroom discussions of elections are essential spaces to develop both the academic skills needed in the political science classroom and prepare students to engage in their own professional and civic lives. This intersection centers information literacy.¹⁴

Although the final assignment described in this chapter ultimately bears little resemblance to it, Cope and Flanagan's 2013 article on a classroom collaboration was inspirational as a jumping-off point for the course enhancement grant proposal.¹⁵ Cope and Flanagan, a librarian and political science faculty member respectively, outline the shifting nature of authority in the source material in the realm of political science and its implications for teaching critical information literacy. Specifically, they note the increasing and beneficial use of nontraditional political information sources such as "blogs, social media, and other new media forms" in the political science classroom.¹⁶ This shift toward online media sources is driven by how students, and increasingly the general public, access information via the internet. As the number of traditionally reliable sources such as local newspapers declines due to the inability to capture profits from subscriptions, and the popularity and availability of blog and opinion reporting increase, traditional news sources are no longer the most readily available sources of local political information.¹⁷ At the same time, researchers have discovered that students today rely primarily on electronic media from the internet for information in both their academic and private lives.¹⁸

To consider what this might mean for teaching information literacy, Cope and Flanagan designed a project where students in a lower-level political science course were

assigned to cover a contested House of Representatives race. The students tracked the race over several weeks and found that they could not rely solely on large national news sources. They had to seek coverage from local news outlets, social media, think tanks, and other nontraditional sources due to a lack of national content. By having their students complete this assignment, Cope and Flanagan discovered that their students had difficulty evaluating these spaces, especially in determining when they should use or trust a particular type of source over another.

Spurred by conversations about Cope and Flanagan's assignment, the authors of this chapter ultimately developed an assignment for POSC 480: State and Local Voting. The project centers on the student creation of candidate guides to inform constituents using a model developed by the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP).¹⁹ The guides focus on presenting information on candidates running for local, county, and state offices (down-ballot races) rather than the higher-profile national race for president. The CEEP is a national nonpartisan organization that works with hundreds of college campuses to help students, professors, and administrators to encourage voter education and get-out-the-vote efforts. One of their most popular resources is a step-by-step guide illustrating many strategies that students can use to politically engage their campus community.

The overall project's goals were twofold: incorporate information literacy beyond the one-shot model into a course and create voting guides to share with the local community. To engage these goals, students in A. Hoffman's POSC 480 course were tasked with drafting candidate guides, showing where candidates in a race stood on specific issues. The assignment required students to identify and evaluate sources and communicate their findings to the general public.

Students were paired, assigned particular state and local races, and directed to pay careful attention to obtaining accurate and unbiased information about the candidates' position on issues. The assignment focused on down-ballot races, offices listed below the high-level national or state offices that often bring larger numbers of people to the polls to vote because there tends to be a shortage of information and knowledge about candidates who run for offices, including the county council or the state legislature, especially in, but not limited to, off-general election years. The absence of easily accessible public information on the down-ballot race candidates challenged students to select issues upon which the public would evaluate the candidates. The assignment required students to describe these stances in an unbiased way. In addition to practicing information literacy skills, the assignment was an opportunity for students to connect with the surrounding campus community. Students were encouraged to seek out and include in their guides resources that were most salient to locals. Groups were assigned to research gubernatorial candidates, candidates running in the House of Representative district, and the down-ballot races impacting constituents in the local community. The two up-ballot races were quite competitive, causing the candidates to mount very active campaigns, offering a contrast to the down-ballot races.

Although not the focus of this chapter, as part of the grant, the authors sought to connect the learning outcomes of an upper- and lower-level political science course. After the POSC 480 students drafted their candidate guides, S. Surak's students in an

introductory-level class (POSC 101) met three times with the librarian to discuss how to evaluate non-peer-reviewed academic sources. Prepared with this information, the lower-level students reviewed the sources cited on the drafts of the candidate guides for accuracy and quality. Reviewing and critiquing draft versions of the candidate guides allowed the POSC 101 students to apply the skills developed through sessions led by the librarian in a meaningful way. It also gave them the opportunity to learn more about local elections. This assignment also benefited the POSC 480 students as they received feedback from a general audience before making the guide available more widely.

Connecting the Candidate Voting Guide Assignment to the Matrix

SU Libraries' ILM addresses the five ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards* pertaining to identifying the type of information needed, accessing information, evaluating information, using the information to meet a particular need, and using information ethically and legally.²⁰ The candidate voting guide assignment focuses primarily on the last three, as indicated in the table 3.1. The full assignment description is available in appendix 3B.

ACRL Standard	Lower Division Students Can	Upper Division Students Can
3. Evaluating Information	<p>3.a Begin to evaluate sources based on given criteria (relevancy, currency, authority, reliability).</p> <p>3.b Distinguish between scholarly and popular sources.</p>	<p>3.a Critically evaluate sources based on disciplinary standards.</p> <p>3.b Choose the most appropriate source types to support an argument or outline a topic in a long research paper or other assignment.</p> <p>3.c Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.</p>
4. Using Information to Meet a Need	<p>4.a Use reference sources to locate background information on a topic.</p> <p>4.b Use books and/or periodical articles to support an argument in a short research assignment.</p>	<p>4.a Strategically select from a variety of source types to support an argument or outline a topic in a long research paper or other assignment.</p>
5. Use Information Ethically and Legally	<p>5.a Cite sources using a citation style.</p> <p>5.b Read and understand SU's policy on academic integrity.</p>	<p>5.a Cite sources using a citation style appropriate for the discipline if one exists.</p> <p>5.b Recognize issues of intellectual property and copyright.</p>

Table 3.1

A Relevant Excerpt of SU's Information Literacy Matrix

As the candidate guide assignment was unlike the type of traditional research paper more commonly assigned in upper-level political science courses, students were not required to develop a specific research statement. Instead, the assignment prompt asked them to “evaluate research” (Standard Three) by identifying critical issues in a particular race and then determine the stance of each candidate on those issues. Based on the resources they found, or in many cases, did not find, the students decided on what to include in the guides. When it came to accessing information, students identified important news databases, local and state newspaper archives, nonprofit think tanks, and government websites. This assignment’s nontraditional nature necessitated looking beyond usual sources to “use the information to meet a need” (Standard Four), even traveling to the Democratic and Republican county party headquarters to gather brochures and literature for the local candidates. Throughout the assignment students found it challenging to “evaluate their research,” especially with concern to the appropriateness of various sources. In most cases, primary sources provide a unique and valued perspective. In this assignment, students often found that statements attributed to candidates in their campaign literature were contradicted by information retrieved from more objective secondary news sources.

One of the assignment goals was to include in the guides at least six to eight issues in which each candidate took a specific stance. Students had to select sources that yielded such information strategically, which was not always easy, as part of the campaign strategy for many political candidates is to do precisely the opposite. That is, it is beneficial for candidates to not reveal their position on controversial issues so as not to alienate those who would otherwise vote for them. As indicated in the student feedback, reported later in the project, students were often frustrated when they thought they found the perfect source, indicating a candidate’s specific yes or no stance on an important issue, only to then discover that there was no information on how the opposing candidate felt about the same issue. To ensure that the guides were as balanced as possible with both candidates weighing in on each issue listed, the perfect source information for the first candidate could no longer be included. Ultimately, one of the most accurate sources where students could pinpoint candidates’ positions was the videotaped candidate forum, filmed by a local cable access organization and posted on YouTube. Along with sources such as campaign brochures, learning how to cite these videos, “using information legally and ethically” (Standard Five) also proved to be challenging to students.

Teaching Informational Literacy

The teaching of information literacy skills beyond those needed to complete a traditional research paper required the guidance of the librarian expert partner who met multiple times with the students in the library, for full fifty-minute class sessions. Students also had access to a specially developed online research guide (LibGuide) for reference throughout the project. The librarian was integral to the entire assignment, from introduction to final completion.

A. Prichard led two fifty-minute classes in the first month of the semester after introducing the candidate guide assignment. The first meeting, in week two of the semester,

primarily addressed choosing appropriate places to begin research. As upper-level students, all class members had experience incorporating peer-reviewed work, but few were proficient in expanding their understanding of what was considered an authoritative source beyond peer-reviewed journal articles. As the students were required to use nontraditional sources such as government websites, nonprofit think tanks, YouTube, local newspapers, and census data, they needed to be prepared to learn and utilize this new skill set. The librarian began with an open discussion and then guided students by introducing the CRAAP evaluation model (content, relevancy, authority, accuracy, and purpose) with particular emphasis placed on the idea of using this method in the context of constructed authority.²¹ This included questions such as “Do our standards for what is current change depending on the format?” “Should we use social media as a reliable source?” and “What if the author of the social media post is the candidate in question?” Students were given nearly half an hour to begin searching while the librarian and course instructor were present to tackle difficult source questions.

While the authors relied upon the CRAAP model, others models such as ACT UP or lateral reading could be incorporated instead.²² CRAAP presents both benefits and drawbacks. In the latter category, it might become nothing more than a quick checklist that results in surface approval rather than something deeper, and it may also perpetuate the inequality present in academic publishing and research. At its best, it can perhaps instead serve as a springboard of question categories to consider for each resource, sparking awareness. There are certainly other models educators may prefer, and the authors recommend using models recommended by campus librarians within the context of each campus.

The second meeting with the librarian occurred in week five and focused on plagiarism and citations assessment. Students needed support at this point to learn how to cite sources with which they were not familiar, including pamphlets created by the candidates and a local television recording on YouTube. The candidate guides were intended to be publicly available to the community at large, so the importance of accurate citations was twofold: giving credit to creators and allowing the public to educate themselves with the direct sources. The class meeting began with an exercise to identify instances of plagiarism. Students were placed into groups and given a text to read with several examples of paraphrasing and quotations. They were then asked to identify examples of plagiarism within the text. The exercise concluded with a group discussion of the answers, and this discussion opened a space to compare citation strategies with which they were familiar using in traditional research papers, with a variety of nontraditional sources. The librarian then transitioned the students into a discussion of how to cite specific nontraditional sources, assisting students with engaging with citation style guides. Finally, in the remaining time, students continued to explore their individual research needs, with the librarian and instructor available to answer questions.

Information Literacy in Action

Students were asked to provide a written reflection of their experience to conclude the assignment and fill out a voluntary post-semester survey. On both, students indicated that

the course assignments helped them examine sources with a critical eye, engage with the lack of substantive issues down-ballot candidates run on, and recognize the media's failure to cover local campaigns. Students were often frustrated by the lack of available information, prompting them to turn to the candidates' campaign literature and websites, which they viewed with a healthy amount of wariness. They were surprised by the degree of "fluff" (as one student put it) in the campaign literature. Campaign literature usually contains broad feel-good statements instead of candidate positions on substantive issues that students could include in the guides. In some instances, however, candidates did include their stances on some issues, motivating students to learn how to identify fact from fluff.

Students also observed that, in some cases, candidates' specific issue positions were revealed only due to a university cosponsored candidate forum, where the audience was able to ask pointed questions and candidates were compelled to answer. A local public access channel filmed the forum, and students accessed the video via YouTube for analysis. Students noted that these events and resulting information sources are vital if the public is to be better informed about candidates running in local elections. Finally, about 30 percent of students felt it was challenging to set aside partisan bias when completing their guides. This may be partly due to most undergraduates' liberal-leaning characteristics contrasting with a very conservative geographical area where local races often favor the Republican candidate. Most of the students highlighted evaluating sources, in particular, as an area of personal growth. They also emphasized the difficulties inherent in becoming civically engaged, particularly for those without the necessary resources and knowledge to search out and evaluate information.

Lessons Learned: Teaching Information Literacy through Collaboration

Overall, the authors found the assignment and experience beneficial to both the students and faculty members. Concerning the efficacy of communicating information literacy skills, students engaged most deeply with the constructed nature of authority within the political field and information creation as a process. This assignment also heightened students' awareness of the complex nature of democracy in the United States, particularly in down-ballot local races. Students were surprised to learn that, unlike the much higher profile presidential elections occurring every four years, these less salient off-year elections often revolve around issues of more direct concern to the community, including waste management, school safety, and the county budget.

Educators (especially in political science) continue to be challenged by the ever-expanding universe of political information. With sources mainly centered on the internet, including social media and political websites, value lies in engaging nontraditional sources and recognizing the new complexities associated with IL when engaging these materials. This project revealed that when teaching IL, close collaboration in assignment design and deployment is essential, especially when factual accuracy and unbiased sources are

the critical components of the assignment. Such was the case with the student-produced nonpartisan candidate guides.

The initial collaboration was sparked by the course enhancement grant offered by the library. There are several benefits to offering a small, monetary grant to encourage this work. First, the grant provided the motivation for collaboration between faculty and librarians who had worked together in the past, but only in a limited capacity. Second, the grant provided a structure and requirements for the activity, including the emphasis of going beyond the one-shot fallback to which many librarians find themselves restricted. It also required project design up front (rather than on the fly) and deadlines, particularly helpful for an institution with twelve-month appointments for librarians and ten-month appointments for teaching faculty. These deadlines were useful for keeping the faculty on track and not leaving the librarian to create a majority of the work as the fall semester began. Finally, beyond the monetary motivation, the grant program recognized this work as of substantive benefit for both the librarian and the faculty members. This provided a legitimacy in doing so and also provided a boon for end-of-year evaluations and promotion materials.

The authors realize that it is not always possible (or even prioritized within a library) to offer a grant used to encourage collaboration, though librarians at SU have found this grant to be quite useful for funding a variety of projects. However, other factors do exist that encourage faculty to work in collaboration with librarians. Work at SU, for example, is embedded within a university that values a focus on pedagogy, as well as publishing pedagogical literature. Both are considered forms of scholarship in tenure and promotion. This collaboration has led to a fruitful publication agenda for the partners, both with this and future projects. For faculty at more research-heavy institutions, collaborations could be focused on the goal of a publication agenda as well, and especially because most disciplines now publish pedagogical journals. Additionally, libraries can encourage collaboration through the recognition of faculty on a routine basis as partners through newsletters and other outlets; SU Libraries offers the Information Literacy Partners of the Month. Here, librarians nominate teaching faculty who have worked with their liaison to go beyond a one-shot in the classroom. This award is not monetary, but rather a university-wide recognition by the library dean via e-mail and website, as well as building signage and book purchase in the participant's name. Similar programs can help librarians gain traction with teaching faculty while offering nonlibrary faculty something beyond the valuable classroom collaboration.

With the proper scaffolding of the *ACRL Framework*, accomplished by librarian A. Prichard's presence in the classroom, upper-level political science students could produce an accurate and useful new resource for the public to utilize to assist them with their political voting choices. As students navigated varied political information sources about the candidates, they learned how challenging it is to find and evaluate local political candidates' information. While student feedback yielded valuable information about issues, such as the potential for the student researcher's own political bias resulting in skewed information in the guide, in the future, the authors plan on expanding this project to include both an upper- and a lower-level class and incorporate an experimental design, including a pre- and posttest.

APPENDIX 3A

SU Libraries Information Literacy Standards and Matrix

An information literate student can:

Determine the extent of information needed

Search & obtain the needed information effectively and efficiently

Evaluate information and its sources critically

Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose

Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

"We are drowning in information while starving for wisdom. The world henceforth will be run by synthesizers, people able to put together the right information at the right time, think critically about it, and make important choices wisely."

E. O. Wilson, world-renowned American biologist, as quoted in Fareed Zakaria's, *In Defense of a Liberal Education* (2015)

To incorporate information literacy student learning outcomes, please contact your department liaison librarian or:

James Parrigin
Coordinator of Information Literacy and Library Instruction
JLPARRIGIN@salisbury.edu
410-677-0131

"In defining information literacy goals, an institution should distinguish between lower-level, rudimentary information literacy skills and higher-level, more sophisticated skills."

—MSCHE Guidelines for Information Literacy in the Curriculum

ACRL Standards	Lower Division Students can	Upper Division Students can	Graduate Students can
1. Information Need	<p>A. Begin to formulate research questions based on a topic or assignment requirement.</p> <p>B. Find background information in general reference sources.</p>	<p>A. Articulate focused research questions.</p> <p>B. Broaden or narrow a research question based on research interest and resources available.</p>	<p>A. Formulate a highly specific research question, reevaluating when necessary.</p>
2. Accessing Information	<p>A. Identify keywords, synonyms and related terms.</p> <p>B. Identify and retrieve books and other materials owned by the library; find a book on the shelf using its LC call number.</p> <p>C. Search multidisciplinary data bases to find full text articles on a topic.</p>	<p>A. Identifies the most appropriate tools & resources to answer a question.</p> <p>B. Use Interlibrary Loan.</p> <p>C. Find sources using a citation, bibliography, or references list.</p>	<p>A. Use a variety of resources (databases, Quick Search, Interlibrary loan) to locate and request materials in his or her field.</p>
3. Evaluating Information	<p>A. Begin to evaluate sources based on given criteria (Currency, Relevancy, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose).</p> <p>B. Distinguish between scholarly and non-scholarly sources.</p>	<p>A. Critically evaluate sources based on disciplinary convention.</p> <p>B. Distinguish between primary, secondary sources.</p> <p>C. Draw conclusions based on sources; develops a critical response to the information.</p>	<p>A. Evaluate sources in the con text of methodology used in their field.</p> <p>B. Identify valued information within a discipline or profession, its contradictions, the author's research methodology, and other unique characteristics</p>
4. Using Information to meet a need	<p>A. Use new and prior information to support an argument in short re search assignment.</p> <p>B. Communicate clearly to fulfill the purpose of the assignment.</p>	<p>A. Effectively organize, analyze, & synthesize info from multiple sources to achieve a purpose.</p> <p>B. Use an editorial style appropriate to the specific discipline involved.</p>	<p>A. Expertly organize content in support of the student's product or performance</p> <p>B. Produce new knowledge in the discipline or develops new strategies as a practitioner</p> <p>C. Further own research using alternative methods or strategies</p>
5. Using Information ethically and legally	<p>A. Define plagiarism</p> <p>B. Cite sources using an established citation format.</p>	<p>A. Identify issues of intellectual property and copyright.</p>	<p>A. Recognize issues of intellectual property and copyright in the context of own published work.</p> <p>B. Discuss research integrity in the context of own discipline.</p>

APPENDIX 3B

POSC 480 Assignment

POSC 480

Fall 2018

Nonpartisan Candidate Guides

Due October 3

Each student has been assigned a partner. Each student team has been assigned two state, county, or congressional races with two to three candidates in each race. Each team is responsible for drafting questions/issues and corresponding answers/stances for approximately four to six candidates.

Students will access a variety of sources (many of which are found on our class library guide as well as MyClasses, and some of which you will find on your own) to first identify critical issues in the race you are assigned and, if possible, frame them in yes/no questions for each candidate. Please see examples on MyClasses from CEEP for guidance as to what our guides will look like.

- You must carefully cite all sources where you get information for candidate positions.
- Keep issues and answers brief, as space is at a premium.
- County council candidates should have eight to ten issues, while the others should have about twelve to eighteen.
- For the most part, you should use only issues where you can find clear and concise stances from both candidates. (You may have one or two where you indicate “position unknown.”)
- **YOU MUST BE OBJECTIVE** in choosing issues and documenting stances.

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