

Engage: Participate in Democracy

Goals

- To understand the difference between participatory democracy and representative democracy.
- To reflect on how that difference impacts one's engagement with political issues.
- To evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of participatory democracy.

Notes

- This assignment should be completed in a Canvas discussion board.
- Students must complete Part I before completing Part II.
- The college at which this assignment is assigned must have a student government.

Part I

To complete this assignment, press Reply and answer the questions below.

1. Imagine you have been granted \$10,000 by Saddleback College (or whichever college or university you primarily attend) to spend on whatever you think money should go to on campus. What would you spend it on? Why? [Suggested length: one paragraph]
2. Comment on the suggestions of at least two of your classmates. Do you agree with their proposal? How could it be modified to gain your support? Feel free to share your campus experiences in your responses to their posts. [Suggested length: one paragraph for each response.]

Part II

You might not know this, but Saddleback College has a student government. You elect representatives. They allocate money to things on campus. You can learn about Associated Student Government [on their website](#). You can access the Budget Committee's documents from [this page](#). Click through some recent agendas and minutes. From the home page, explore some of the events that ASG is sponsoring.

So, you have now experienced two different ways of deciding how money should be spent on campus. One was by talking about it with your classmates in the Part I assignment. The second (which you have been doing all along) was by letting your elected representatives decide.

Reflect on the process of deciding with your classmates. Did you feel more invested in the process of allocating resources? Did you think more about what issues the (student) government should prioritize? Do you believe that money would be spent differently, better, or more equitably if it were allocated by students talking about it (as you did in the previous assignment) instead of representatives deciding? What drawbacks would there be to using a participatory form of democracy for Saddleback's student government?

Write one paragraph sharing your thoughts on this. You can answer the questions above or share whatever other thoughts you have about this.