

The Rappaport Everyday Ethics grant supported two activities in my Electoral Politics (PSC 268) class in Fall 2008.

First, Professor Paul Herrnson, from the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland, gave a public lecture on campus entitled “Campaign Ethics: Views from the Campaign Trail.” In this talk, he reported on findings from surveys of candidates, political consultants and citizens regarding their attitudes toward campaign ethics. The surveys were conducted by the Center for American Politics and Citizenship, which Herrnson directs. After this talk, he visited my class where he and the students engaged in a lively discussion of many issues related to the 2008 elections, including ethical behavior.

Second, I integrated a campaign ethics component into the simulated presidential election component of this course. For this simulation, students conduct a simulated election whereby candidates run for the office of SimPres. For the first time this year, I added a Fair Campaign Practices Committee to the simulation. Students on this committee met with two women who serve on the Fair Campaign Practices Committee of the Capital Region to learn how their committee operates. After the meeting, the students designed procedures for their fellow students to report cases of unfair campaign practices then held a workshop on campaign ethics to train their classmates about this topic. Throughout the term, the students on the committee monitored the simulation campaign activities to ensure that ethical campaign practices were followed. The addition of the Fair Campaign Practices Committee ensured that all students in the class thought about and took seriously ethical campaign practices throughout their participation in the simulation.