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Students Disinterested in Voting Need to Smarten Up

By Alexandra Pittman

UCF Forum columnist

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My fellow college students have been abuzz with political stands and commentaries on Facebook and other social media – but I’m concerned that many of those same students will not show up to vote on Nov. 6.

They have been taking stands on abortion, gay marriage, health care and foreign affairs, but they’ll need to do more than just talk about them – they need to act.

With voter-registration tables scattered around campus, you would think more UCF students would be encouraged to vote this year. But when I broach the subject with many of my classmates, co-workers and friends, their surprising answer to voting in this year’s election is a resounding “no.”

Some say neither candidate really appeals to them, while others say they didn’t know how to register or don’t want to go through the process.

Some simply said they don’t want to vote.

Don’t want to vote?!?!?

Even though students seem to be discussing the political spectrum in classes or in conversations through social media, a recent Gallup poll showed the intentions of college-age students to vote this year has decreased 9 percent since the 2004 presidential election.

Students don’t seem to realize how important their vote – their voice – is in this year’s presidential election, and it is disheartening because they can easily make a stand and be heard. When all that is required is a simple click of the button to post a political

statement, it is disappointing that so many college students don't register to vote or participate in the process.

My generation soon will provide the senators, governors and White House cabinet members that will create new laws and ultimately shape our country's future.

But now we need a strong student participation to address the issues in this year's election, as well as future elections. On the way to do this, students need to focus on being more aware of their surroundings.

They need to turn down the talking dogs on YouTube and the incessant tweets to better focus on issues that matter, such as the presidential candidates' takes on various political issues that they are passionate about. Students also should be "in the know" about day-to-day news and take advantage of the free services that the UCF campus has to offer them.

UCF provides a variety of resources for students to get involved, get registered and get informed about this year's election – resources that many students seem to be taking for granted.

For example, the Student Government Association recently partnered with UCF's Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government to create the TurboVote Initiative, a program that focuses on voter registration and is designed specifically for students.

The campus also has College Democrats and College Republicans to support students interested in learning more about national politics. In addition, UCF offers registration tables at different areas around campus for those who have yet to register to vote, which is a quick process.

Registering to vote is an easy and simple process that takes just a few minutes, and voting on Election Day also can be quick if you know ahead of time how you're going to cast your vote, avoid the crowded periods, and head to the polls prepared with identification in hand. Voting is even quicker if you vote by absentee ballot or take advantage of early voting.

A single voice can change the course of the future, and I wish more college students would recognize how important they are in this process.

If all it takes is one vote to shape our history, why wouldn't you let your voice be heard?

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