

Proposal for an Early Polling Location on the Arizona State
University Tempe campus

Submitted by the Undergraduate Student Government at ASU
Tempe to the Tempe City Clerk, Maricopa County Elections
Department and Tempe City Council

October 8th, 2009

PROPOSAL:

The Undergraduate Student Government (USG) is proposing an early polling location on Arizona State University's Tempe campus.

NEED:

The ASU Tempe campus is an ideal site for an early polling location due to its central location and the large population it serves. In addition to the 50,397¹ students who attend the Tempe campus (with 10,366² students living on the campus), there are also over 10,400³ faculty members who work on the campus.

ASU is in the heart of the Tempe community that surrounds it. An early polling location on the Tempe campus would not only serve the students, faculty and administration of ASU, but the growing Tempe community.

An early polling site on ASU's campus would also alleviate the stress on other polling locations. The 2008 election saw unprecedented voter turnout, and all signs point to a continuing trend. USG is prepared to host this site in perpetuity, and in looking forward to national and presidential elections, another early polling location will allow more voters to cast a ballot without having to wait in long lines.

LOGISTICS:

USG is proposing that this site be held in the Safety Escort office in Palo Verde West, located on University and College. The office is owned by USG, which ensures that this site could be used in perpetuity.

The site is located right next to a major parking structure, providing easy access for voters, especially those in the greater Tempe community who do not attend ASU. 10-12 parking spaces would be roped off and reserved for voters. At least one of these spaces would be a space reserved for disabled persons.

The office is large enough to accommodate an early polling location and can be closed off so no one can wander in. Both the site and the parking structure meet ADA requirements. There would be a security guard present during the voting hours.

The space would be cleared out for the three weeks of early polling and the Safety Escort Service would operate out of its South campus office during this time, so the room would only be used for early voting during those three weeks.

¹ Data from Spring 2009 Quick Facts <http://uoia.asu.edu/quick-facts>

² Data from the Residence Hall Association

³ Arizona State University Institutional Analysis Department

A safe would be rented to lock the ballots at night, and the safe itself will be kept inside the locked office to ensure the ballots will be protected.

Because the office is located within a residence hall that requires a proper ASU Sun Card to enter, a greeter will stand at the door to let the voters in. This greeter will be a volunteer from USG.

BUDGET:

\$4500 – personnel
\$1815 – Cost of security guard
\$600 - Cost to validate parking for 300 voters
\$2.45 – Cost per voter to the city

The cost to the City of Tempe will be \$0. USG is prepared to cover all the necessary expenses, approximately \$15,000 per election cycle, in perpetuity.

The funds to cover the expenses will come from USG's budget. The student government's budget comes from a \$50 student fee that is collected from each member of the Tempe campus.

MARKETING:

Because this would be the first early polling site at this location, we would use all the tools at our disposal to promote it so that voters can take advantage of it.

As the student government, we work closely with the ASU administration and have access to every student's inbox via a University-wide e-mail, as well as MyASU, a homepage that every ASU student has.

We will also reach out to the larger Tempe community, by working with the Tempe City Council and City Clerk to promote the new early polling site. An example of this would be providing transportation, through our Safety Escort vans or other means, to make it easier for those in the Tempe community to get to the early polling site.

USG is willing to cover the costs of all marketing.

CONCLUSION:

An early polling site on ASU's campus would increase voter turnout and make it easier for all Tempe residents to vote with virtually no cost to the City of Tempe.

Early polling sites at other college campuses, such as the University of Arizona, have been hugely successful in not just turning out student voters, but voters from across their respective counties. The University of Arizona's early polling site had the highest voter turnout in Pima County in 2004, 2006, and 2008.⁴ We have the opportunity to do the same on ASU's Tempe campus.

An early polling site located on ASU's campus will have tremendous benefits for the Tempe community. It has the potential to make regular voting a habit for over 50,000 ASU students. Creating more life-long voters, along with easier voting access for all Tempe residents, will increase voter turnout in local elections and benefit the entire Tempe community.

⁴Statistics from the Associated Students of the University of Arizona

