



HART Program
Houston Action Research Team
Engaged Research Opportunity
Spring 2020

Evaluating Harris County's New Countywide Voting System

Harris County began operating Election Day Vote Centers (EDVCs) during the May 2019 Joint election. EDVCs allow voters to cast ballots at any location rather than only their voting precinct and have been used widely in other states with significant benefits to both voters and election administrators, including shorter lines and wait times to vote, more locations where voters can cast their ballots, increased opportunities for voting among underrepresented populations, increased efficiency and reduced overall cost of voting for county governments. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is necessary in order to determine the effectiveness of EDVCs in the Houston area, and is required by the Texas Secretary of State's Office in order for Harris County to be able to continue operating their EDVC program. The Harris County Clerk's Office has asked for a Houston Action Research Team to conduct this evaluation for the May 2019 and November 2019 elections.

During Spring of 2020, this HART (Houston Action Research Team) will:

- Use data from the Harris County voter rolls, real-time line length data, as well as exit polls and polling place evaluations conducted by Rice students
- Model and identify which polling place attributes are related to factors of voter satisfaction and experience, such as length of lines, time to vote and ballot completion
- Hypothesize and test explanations for how voters choose when and where to vote
- Measure the turnout effects of offering voters alternative days, times and locations at which to vote
- Complete a written report and oral presentation of findings and recommendations for the Harris County Clerk's Office

This engaged research opportunity is available to Rice undergraduate students for Spring of 2020. An interdisciplinary team of four students, each of whom will bring different, but equally important, skills, knowledge, and experiences, will undertake this project. Team members will each work approximately 10 hours per week on this project between January 13th and May 6th under the guidance of Dr. Bob Stein (Political Science) and CCL staff and will receive \$10/hour for their project work. Work time will be flexible, although team members must attend weekly meetings and must coordinate time to work with other team members on the project as needed. Undergraduate students from **all fields of study** with interests and/or skills in at least some of the following areas are encouraged to apply:

Voting, elections, political science, research design, data analysis, public policy, statistics, professional writing, public presentations, teamwork, community engagement

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE November 24, 2019
To inquire or apply contact Dr. Alan Steinberg, steinberg@rice.edu
For more about Rice's HART Program, visit: <http://ccl.rice.edu>