



**Federal Election 2019**

**Campaign Engagement Kit for  
Colleges, Institutes and Polytechnics**

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**For: Colleges and Institutes Canada**

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# College and Institute Campaign Engagement Kit Federal Election 2019

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## 1. Introduction and Purpose

Federal Elections are unique, in that they are the only time in the parliamentary cycle where politicians need you more than you need them. This campaign engagement kit has been prepared to help CIGan member institutions engage with candidates in a structured and effective manner. The kit is mainly intended for government relations and communications leads at member institutions to support their president and senior leaders in engaging during the federal election.

While each member college, institute and polytechnic<sup>1</sup> has its own objectives, and a culture that drives action and tone, this engagement strategy has been designed to augment those actions throughout the election cycle, putting the system in a positive light by highlighting the features, benefits and strengths of colleges.

## 2. The Political Landscape

The 2019 Federal Election is shaping up to be a more closely contested affair than perhaps originally anticipated. Current polling has the Liberals and Conservatives virtually tied, with the Green party nipping at the heels of the NDP. If the current positions hold, we are looking at a Minority Government, with the balance of power held by some combination of the NDP, Greens and the Bloc Québécois.

It should be noted that Minority Governments provide excellent opportunities for organizations to advance and influence policy. The relationship building that is done during the election will be leveraged throughout the next parliamentary mandate.

## 3. Strategic Considerations

- CIGan is well positioned for grassroots advocacy, with member institutions across the country
- Given the potential for a very close election, the mainstream parties should be courting support from all sectors
- Key political battlegrounds seem to be Ontario and Quebec, but every riding will be important to the electoral outcome
- Many retiring MP's leading to new entrants

## 4. Strategy

The principal strategy involves outreach efforts to engage candidates at the local level. Our objective is to highlight the local college, the system, the potential and the overall benefits that accrue to the country. This will be accomplished through a combination of communication products, meetings and campus visits.

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<sup>1</sup> References to "colleges" refer collectively to all publicly funded colleges, institutes, polytechnics and cegeps.

## 5. Key Messages

When discussing the features, benefits and strengths of colleges emphasize the following:

1. They provide post-secondary education for all Canadians
2. They have a key role in reskilling and upskilling in face of disruption
3. They have strong ties to business, industry and community
4. Partnered innovation is their research strength
5. They foster entrepreneurship
6. Indigenous education is a top priority
7. They are leaders in environmental sustainability
8. They support immigrants and refugees to integrate in Canada
9. Post-secondary pathways abound
10. They offer global perspectives and experiences

For more information on key messages and fact sheets to share with candidates, please consult the CIGan [Election Watch website](#).

## 6. Tactics & Tools

At the local level, our goal is to have candidates visit your campuses in order to provide them information and insight on the role of colleges in supporting community economic and social development. The CIGan [Election Watch website](#) includes a link to an electronic letter inviting candidates to visit your campuses and common hashtags to use and amplify through social media. We encourage you to share this with administration, faculty, staff, students and community partners. The more letters candidates receive, the more likely visits to your campuses will be a priority.

Your institution can then follow up with a more formal invitation requesting a visit and possibly a meeting (See Template Letter in Appendix 1). It will be important to clearly state the objective of the requested visit and meeting, in order to bring assurance that it will not become a policy debate, the timeframe needed, a single point of contact and proposed dates. Invitations should be sent to the nominated candidates of all registered parties in the riding, in order to avoid any perception of partisan activities.

Once you have determined the level of interest from a candidate, you can decide whether it should be a campus visit or a meeting.

Appendix 2 contains links to polling information, news and candidate twitter account links.

## 7. Party Platforms

As the parties release their electoral platform documents, they will be posted on their respective websites:

Liberal Party of Canada:	<a href="http://www.liberal.ca/">http://www.liberal.ca/</a>
Conservative Party of Canada:	<a href="http://www.conservative.ca/">http://www.conservative.ca/</a>
New Democratic Party:	<a href="http://www.ndp.ca/">http://www.ndp.ca/</a>
Bloc Québécois:	<a href="http://www.blocquebecois.org/">http://www.blocquebecois.org/</a>
Green Party of Canada:	<a href="http://greenparty.ca/">http://greenparty.ca/</a>

People's Party of Canada: <http://www.peoplespartyofcanada.ca/>

## 8. Identifying Candidates

As soon as candidates are nominated by registered political parties, they will be identified on the party websites.

### **Step 1:** Identify your electoral district (riding)

*Elections Canada, as well as most party websites, have a link that allows you to identify this using your institution's postal code. You can also examine historical election results to determine voting patterns in your area.*

<https://www.elections.ca/scripts/vis/FindED?L=e&PAGEID=20>

### **Step 2:** Find your local candidates

*Party websites have a link to 2019 Candidates, searchable by name and riding.*

Liberal Party of Canada: <https://www.liberal.ca/find-your-riding/>

Conservative Party of Canada: <https://www.conservative.ca/team/2019-candidates/>

New Democratic Party: <https://www.ndp.ca/candidates>

Bloc Québécois: <http://www.blocquebecois.org/candidats/>

Green Party of Canada: <https://www.greenparty.ca/en/party/find-your-riding>

People's Party of Canada: [https://www.peoplespartyofcanada.ca/our\\_candidates](https://www.peoplespartyofcanada.ca/our_candidates)

### **Step 3:** Take note of candidate bios and contact information

*The bio and contact information can be used for arranging meeting logistics, determining content and briefing participants.*

## 9. Communicating with Candidates

Federal election campaigns are very busy operations and the amount of time that candidates have for face to face meetings can be limited. Campaign staff will usually prioritize meeting requests that come in. To improve your chances at getting a meeting, it is important that your request be complete, concise, and compelling. Here are some helpful tips when requesting a meeting:

### Timing

*When reaching out to a candidate keep in mind their potential schedule. While some candidates are able to campaign all the time, others still have responsibilities like work or family that limit their availabilities. When requesting the meeting, try to be as flexible as possible. Offer a large*

*window of availability rather than narrow periods, as this will enhance your chances of securing a meeting.*

#### Provide background

*If possible, offer to provide your institution's and CIGan communications material ahead of the meeting. This will show you take the candidate's time seriously and may also help to convince the candidate to take the meeting.*

#### Follow up on your request

*If after a follow up call your request is not getting traction, move on to candidates that have expressed an interest. It is important that all candidates be given equal opportunity to engage, but the responsibility is on them to take advantage of it.*

### 10. Meeting Candidates

Arrive at least 15 minutes early for your visit/meeting and be prepared for it to start, as a candidate's schedule can frequently change and fluctuate many times a day. Make sure you bring copies of your supporting materials with you to support your conversation, but also to leave behind with the candidate and his or her team.

Every meeting is unique unto itself and depends on individual circumstances. With that in mind, here are some general pointers you can follow for your meeting:

- Prioritize the time of the president and other senior leaders such as the Vice-President External for these visits and meetings, in particular for high value and visible candidates. Key considerations when identifying who should lead the visit/meeting are: senior level staff who know candidates or have a connection; specific areas of interest to candidates.
- Choose where the visit/meeting will take place to showcase college assets, campus activities and students, including student-run restaurants, new green buildings, and Indigenous gathering spaces.
- Clearly state your objectives for this meeting, to help everyone be more comfortable with the potential topics but also to be more comfortable in general.
- Provide an overview of the role your college plays in meeting the postsecondary education and skills upgrading needs of people in your community as well as the R&D needs of small companies in the region. Also highlight enrolments, program offerings and employment numbers.
- Ask if candidates have any questions. It is important to leave time for open discussion, as sometimes candidates have questions for you that will help to better inform them of not only your issue, but other related issues.
- Encourage the candidate and the campaign team to communicate about their visit via social media promoting the common hashtags: **#ivisitedmylocalcampus or #CollegesAndInstitutes4MyCommunity**

- Take notes during your meeting, including of any questions you are asked. This will help to keep a record of your conversation and will help in any other meetings you have with other candidates.
- If you are asked a question that you do not know the answer to, offer to get back to them. It's perfectly fine not to have all the answers with you that day but do get back to them as soon as possible. Before leaving, verify who in the campaign office to contact with additional information.
- After the meeting, follow up with a thank you message to the candidate. In that message, reiterate the key points you were bringing to their attention.
- After the meeting, send a short note to CICan with your notes/observations about the meeting, and any further action or follow-up required. Please send these to Amélie Cantin at: [acantin@collegesinstitutes.ca](mailto:acantin@collegesinstitutes.ca)

## 11. Events and Protocols

If you have an incumbent Member of Parliament, they remain the Member of Parliament throughout the election campaign and should be addressed in that manner.

It is important that event opportunities are available for all candidates and the college is not put in a position of seemingly favoring one political party over another.

Candidates are always looking for content to use in their materials and social media platforms. If you are holding an event, or at an event, make sure there are opportunities for photographs and that the people in the pictures agree they will be used in promotional materials and conversely the candidate is aware the college will be using the photographs as well.

Leave any decisions regarding inviting media up to the candidate and their team. Our objective is not publicity, but rather a detailed briefing on the impact of your institution locally and the college system nationally.

Try to avoid situations where multiple candidates are at the same event, it creates a dynamic that runs counter to our objectives.

In terms of local All-Candidate Debates, if you want to submit potential questions to the organizers it is useful to provide the question and talking points to the candidates before the debate. The purpose of your questions would be to increase their knowledge of the college system and its contributions to social and economic development.

## 12. Use of Media

In many communities writing a letter to the editor or an opinion editorial (op-ed) for the local paper is a good way to share your message about the importance of the college system, and the local college specifically.

Check the paper's website or the editorial page of the print version for information about who to submit a letter to the editor / opinion editorial and the guidelines for publication. Every outlet is different. A submission that does not meet the guidelines may be substantially edited before publication or refused, which does not help getting your message out. Whenever possible use the online option to submit, as it will be quicker and will improve your odds of being published.

Keep it brief and to the point. Use any statistics or facts that you can quote, as it will improve the chances your piece gets published. Also remember that editors are less likely to print long letters.

Small-circulation newspapers in smaller, rural communities are more likely to print the letters they receive than letters sent to a major metropolitan newspaper. Those smaller papers are often short of content and will happily print your letter/opinion piece with very little editing.

Keep it local. Most local papers want to hear from local people talking about local issues; connecting your issue to how it affects you locally will help getting your piece published. Also note your years' experience, work in the community, and motivation for writing on this topic will add credibility to your letter.

### 13. Compliance with the Canada Elections Act

As an organization committed to working with all political parties, CIGan will not endorse specific parties or candidates. The activities outlined in this document are part of free and open democratic engagement. Elections Canada has confirmed that CIGan does not need to register as a third party under the new Canada Elections Act rules. If you have any concerns regarding your institution's activities and compliance, consult Elections Canada.



## Appendix 1

Candidate Letter template:

*{On College Letterhead}*

[Candidate Name]  
[Candidate mailing or email address]  
[Town/City, Province]  
[Postal Code]

Xxxxxxxxxx XX, 2019

Dear XXXXX XXXXXXXX

On behalf of XXXXXXXX College, I would like to congratulate you on being nominated to represent the XXXXXXXX Party in our constituency in the federal election.

As you may know, XXXXXXXX College, in addition to our role as a post-secondary educator, is a strong partner to local business and industry as well as the larger local community. To that end, we would welcome the opportunity to provide you with a briefing on our college and the Canadian system of colleges, institutes, cégeps and polytechnics.

We believe that this information will be invaluable, as you tour the riding and discuss the challenges and opportunities that exist here.

We will be contacting you directly to follow-up on this request, but should you wish to reach out and schedule a meeting, you can contact me through the information below.

Sincerely,

Xxxxxxx XXXXXXXXX  
Title  
College  
Address  
Phone  
Email

## Appendix 2

### 1. Polling Information

Nanos Research:	<a href="https://www.nanos.co/">https://www.nanos.co/</a>
EKOS:	<a href="https://www.ekospolitics.com/">https://www.ekospolitics.com/</a>
Campaign Research:	<a href="https://www.campaignresearch.ca/">https://www.campaignresearch.ca/</a>
Ipsos:	<a href="https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca">https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca</a>
Angus Reid:	<a href="http://angusreid.org/">http://angusreid.org/</a>

Seat Projection:	<a href="http://338canada.com/">http://338canada.com/</a>
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### 2. News Aggregator

National Newswatch:	<a href="https://www.nationalnewswatch.com">https://www.nationalnewswatch.com</a>
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### 3. Links to Nominated Candidate Twitter Accounts

<https://twitter.com/robroc/status/1160920647033348096>

## Appendix 3

### Scheduled National Debates

- 1) Date: September 12, 2019  
Sponsor(s): Maclean's and CityTV Toronto Debate (English)  
Topics: Economy, foreign policy, indigenous issues and the environment
- 2) Date: October 1, 2019  
Sponsor: Monk Debate (English)  
Topic: Canadian Foreign Policy
- 3) Date: October 2, 2019  
Sponsor: TVA Montreal (French)
- 4) Date: October 7, 2019  
Sponsor: Leaders' Debates Commission (English)
- 5) Date: October 10, 2019  
Sponsor: Leaders' Debates Commission (French)
- 6) Date: TBD  
Sponsor: CBC/Leaders' Debates Commission (English)  
Subject: Climate Change