

10-12-2017

Promoting Civic Engagement Through Academic Library Outreach Programs

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Recommended Citation

Shuyler, Kristen S.; Chenevey, Liz; and Winfree, Ryan, "Promoting Civic Engagement Through Academic Library Outreach Programs" (2017). *Libraries*. 98.

<http://commons.lib.jmu.edu/letfspubs/98>

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PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH ACADEMIC LIBRARY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

GOAL AND CONTEXT:

At James Madison University, civic engagement is one of three key components of the university's vision. The libraries at JMU therefore try to support and promote civic engagement through our outreach to the campus and community.

We wanted to learn more about how other libraries in our state promote civic engagement. We were also interested in exploring the connections among civic literacy, information literacy, and library outreach.

METHODS:

Compiled a list of all 38 universities and colleges in Virginia.

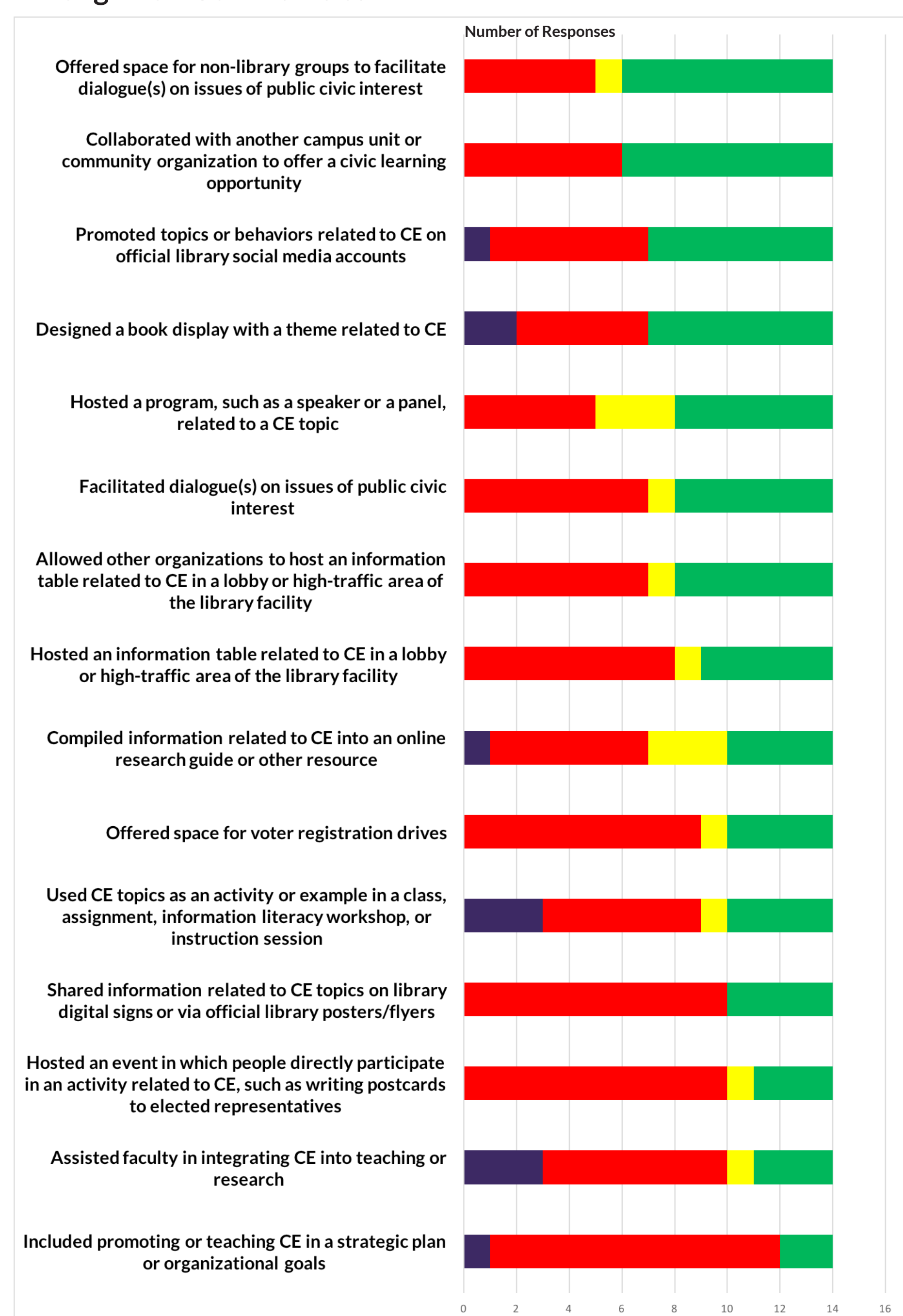
Emailed IRB-approved survey to each library's outreach manager or similar position (or, if no such position existed, to a library director, dean, or associate dean).

14 respondents (37% response rate) completed the web-based survey.

Summarized quantitative data in bar charts. Examined qualitative data (answers to open-ended questions) for themes.

RESULTS:

Virginia Academic Libraries' Activities to Promote Civic Engagement (CE) Among Their Communities

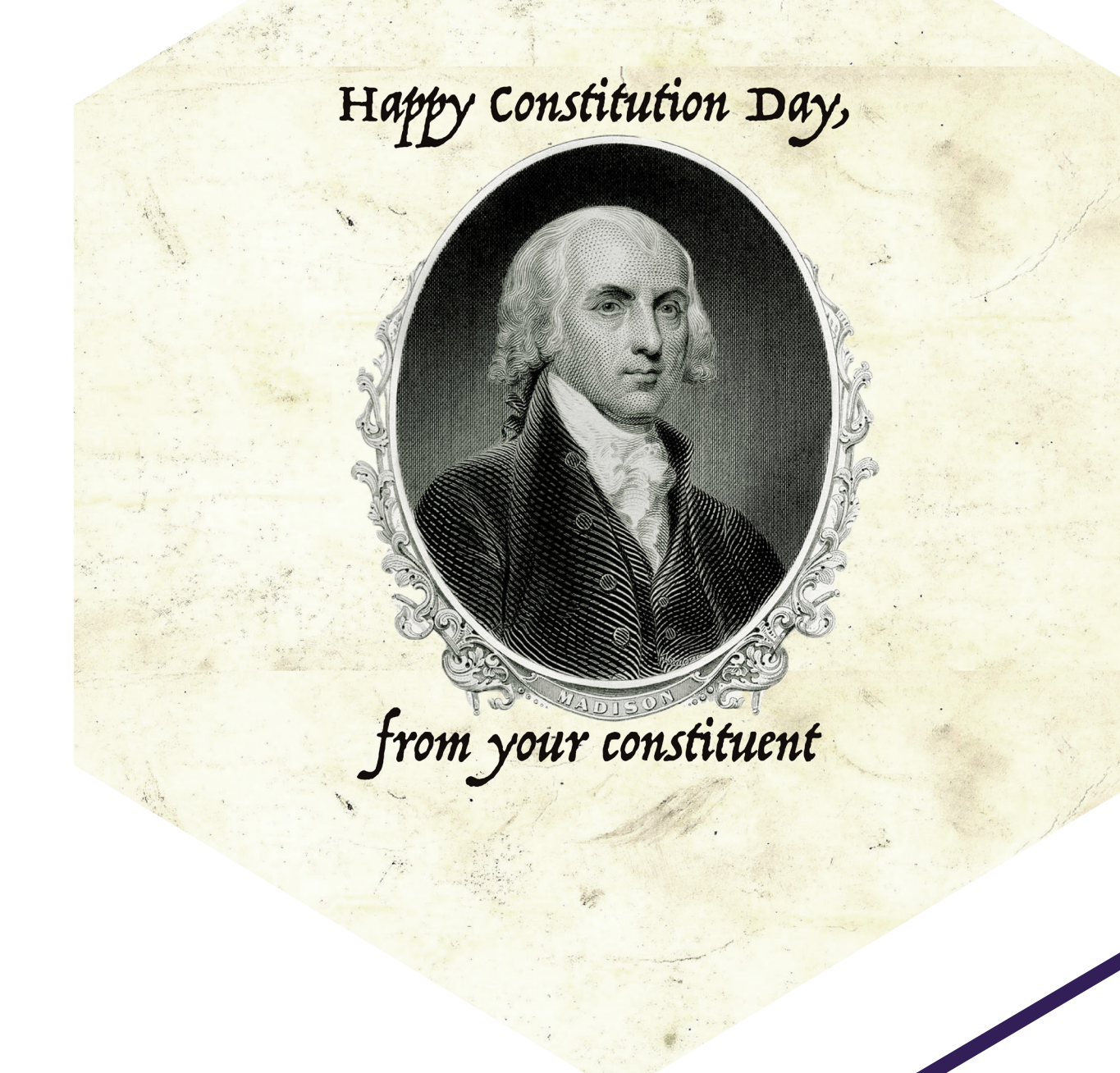
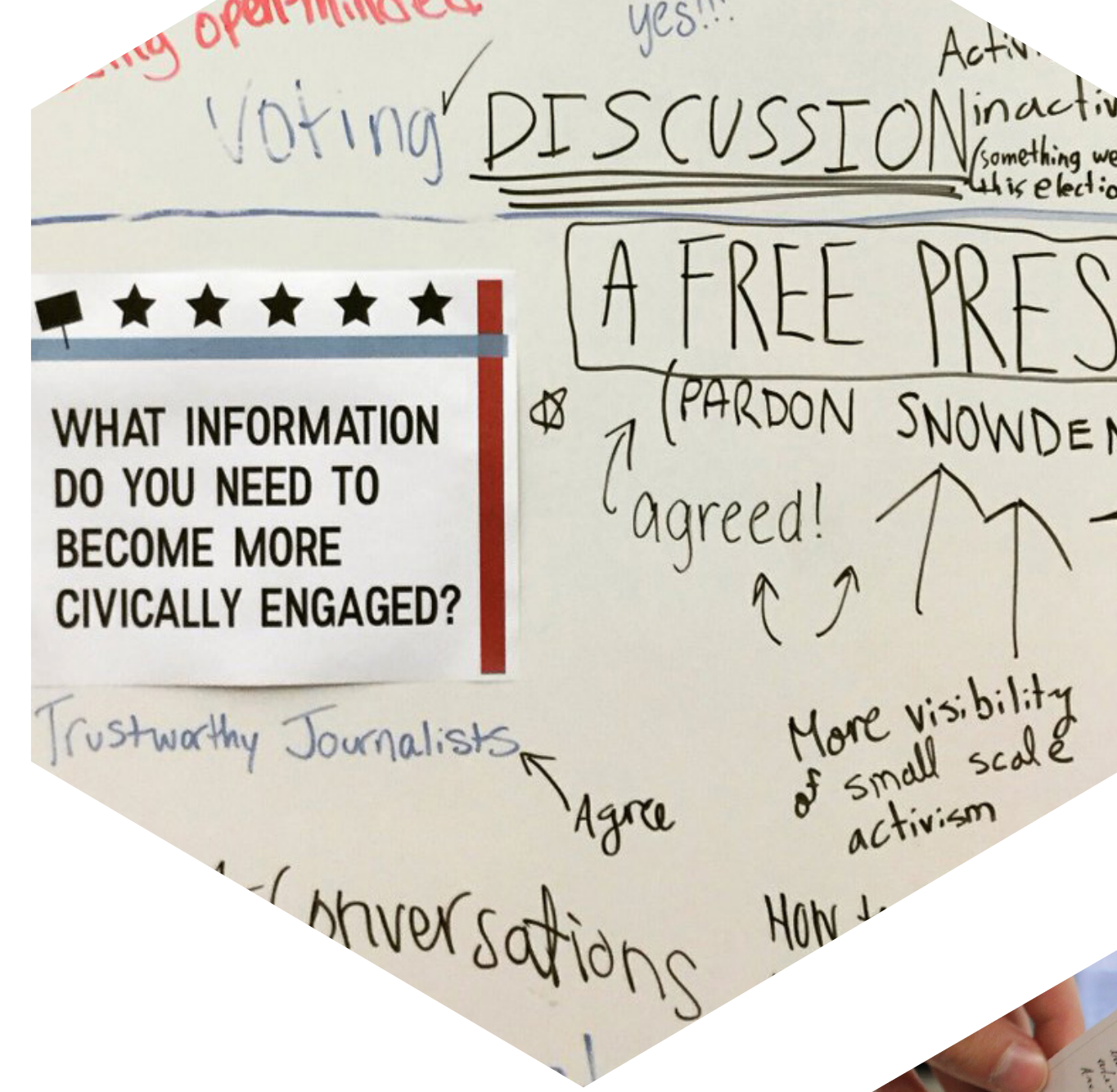
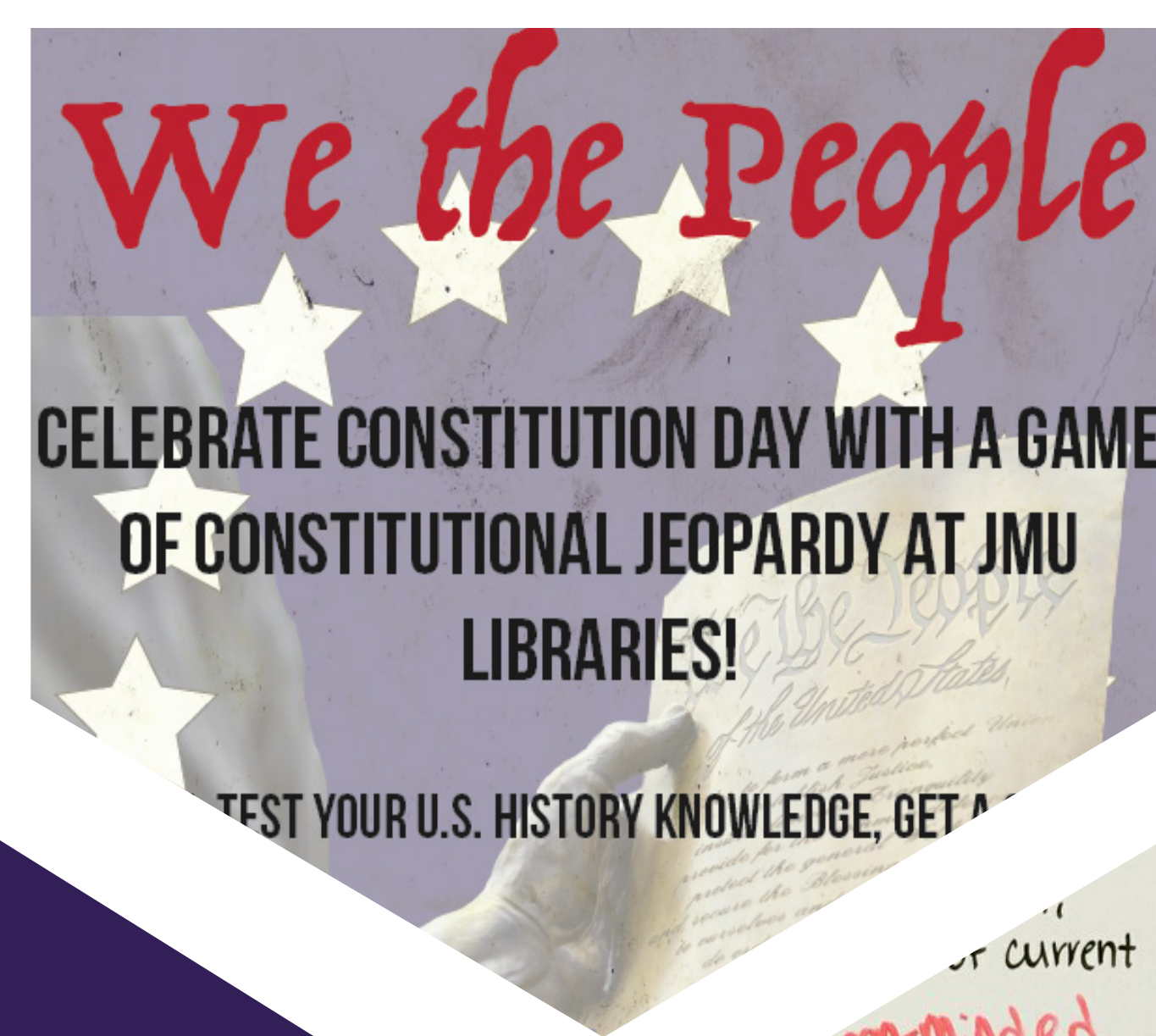
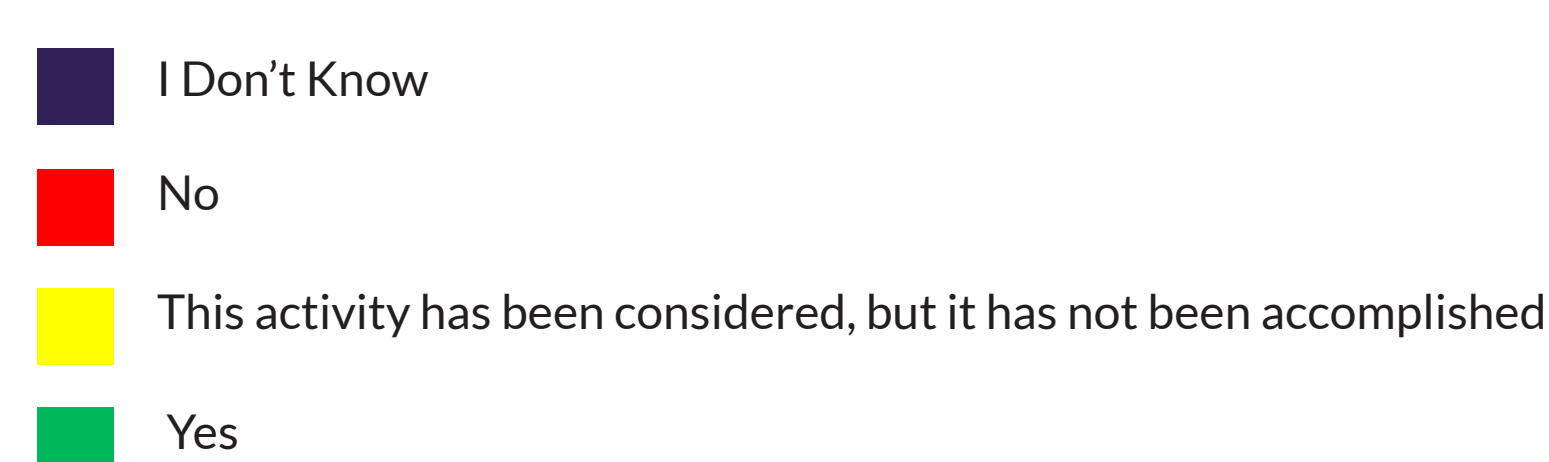


12 out of the 14 academic libraries have interest or have participated in hosting civic engagement events.

The lack of resources and library space has been a recurring problem.

Partly because of these challenges, most of the libraries surveyed have collaborated with other school-sponsored civic organizations, or permitted these groups to use library space, to help engage with their patrons.

Notable challenges our surveyed libraries faced were associating civic engagement with their library and deep partisanship among their patrons.



JMU LIBRARIES' CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS PICTURED ABOVE:

- Constitutional Jeopardy game in library lobbies
- Panel discussion on the media & civic engagement
- Book display featuring works by and about immigrants and refugees
- "What is Civic Engagement?" white board
- Table for students to send a valentine to their elected representatives
- "Drawing on the left: Ben Shahn and the Art of Human Rights" art exhibit, which was featured during an event on art, activism, and civic engagement

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Ashley Lindquist, Poster Design
Rachel Reynolds, Poster Design

