

From ACI-member North Central College: Democracy through the eyes of students

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A professor of political science and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at North Central College in Naperville, Ill., led a group of high school and college students to both 2016 political party conventions. Below are the professor's reflections:



As a political scientist and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at North Central College in Naperville, Ill., I attend one or both national party presidential nominating conventions every four years with a group of students from across the United States. This year, I spent two weeks in Cleveland with college students through The

Washington Center, and a week in Philadelphia with high school students from the Junior State of America program. Students participate so that they can be guided through the experience by college professors who provide context, offer insight, and model critical thinking throughout. As always, I learned as much as they did.

The experience of a national party convention is much broader than the activities inside the conventional hall and what's reported through the media. Each city engages in months of planning to keep participants and residents safe and to ensure an engaging experience for all. Major media outlets such as *The Washington Post*, *Politico* and *The Atlantic Monthly* rent space for the week, hosting events and parties that are free to attend (but require advance registration) and offer more intimate settings with political movers and shakers. [Read more](#)