

Students Energized by Ideals, Candidates

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Academia traditionally has been a fount for political thought — breeding grounds of theory and hotbeds of debate. This characterization rings true for Katelyn Eads and Bryan O'Neill, two of many students on campus who have staked out their political turf and are actively engaged in electioneering through volunteerism.



Students Bryan O'Neill, left, and Katelyn Eads are political activists with opposite views but they agree on one thing — involvement in the election process is a civic duty. (Photo by Claire Barry)

Eads, who is planning to major in political economy, international relations and philosophy, has been a Democratic volunteer since high school, when an inspirational civics teacher challenged her to form her own political views. The first-year student describes herself as “a full-on liberal” who believes “there should be high taxes and then high levels of government programs.”

O'Neill, a sophomore business and history major, is a staunch social and fiscal conservative who developed his abiding love of politics from his family. He supports “extremely small government” and is as equally opposed to government

subsidization of health care as he is to the expense incurred in expanding military operations overseas.

Despite their contrasting views, these students share the belief that apathy has no place in civil society. Most of O'Neill's volunteer efforts have been in support of the campaigns of incumbent candidates Sen. David Vitter and Rep. Ahn "Joseph" Cao. Eads, in turn, is working for the campaigns of Rep. Charlie Melancon and Cedric Richmond, who are respectively running against Vitter and Cao.

As volunteers, both have canvassed neighborhoods, worked phone banks and handed out literature.

Eads says that this year, she's motivated "mostly [by] fear of Tea Partiers," and references in a television ad by Vitter in which, she says, the senator "heavily implied that people should vote for [him] because they're afraid of Mexicans."

O'Neill says he believes it is a civic duty to be involved in politics, adding that "if you don't vote, you can't complain" and we complain all the time."

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