

ON THE RISE

POLITICS TREND ON CAMPUS AND NATIONWIDE

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Political interest on campus is increasing this year as the 2016 presidential election is quickly approaching. Both the Augustana Democrats and the Augustana Republicans have seen growth in their respective clubs.

According to Chairwoman Kylee Kettering, the attendance at Augie Republican monthly meetings and events have jumped from roughly 15 to 20 students last year, to an average of 30 to 35 this year.

The Augie Democrats have seen an even more dramatic growth this year; an average of 6-9 people usually attended meetings and events last school year, Treasurer Lizzie Davis said, but this year anywhere from 30 to 40 people show up to most events.

With the lack of political interest on campus ending, executive members from each club agree the upcoming election is a big contributing factor.

“We know that the upcoming election is the main reason interest is up on campus,” Davis said, “and we’re using that to our advantage.” Kettering said she finds it much easier to plan activities people want to come to with the election nearing. “We had a hard time coming up with interesting activities to keep people involved last year,” she said.

Both groups on campus have hosted debate watch parties this school year, which have been successful and popular among students from both parties.

Augie Democrat Luke Praeuner has gone to debates hosted by both clubs. “Being around people of the opposite political party helps me to make a more informed decision on whom to vote for next year,” he said.

Baily Kramer agreed despite belonging to the Republican Party. “Politics and government affect everyone whether we acknowledge it or not,” she said, “and I think everyone should try to stay as informed as they can be.”

Putting partisanship aside, both the Augustana Democrats and the Augustana Republicans are glad to see political interest on campus rising.