

University of San Diego
All In Challenge
Action Plan 2018

Executive Summary

This action plan has been developed by a team that includes students, faculty, student affairs staff, and administrators. It lays out USD's initial action plan for the 2018 midterm election, as required for participation in the All In Campus Democracy Challenge. This team will lead the implementation, in part by recruiting the aid of the many other supportive individuals at USD. It will be implemented between June and November of 2018, with most of the work focused in August, September, and October.

Leadership

The Working Group is composed of volunteers from the College of Arts and Sciences, Student Affairs, Residential Life, and other Administrators. The Working Group will come up with the initial plan, but part of the Group's work will be to recruit and incorporate other campus units into the implementation of the plan. The Working Group will meet when necessary, and otherwise coordinate through email. As of May 2018, there are at least five distinct groups of leaders who will be responsible for overseeing USD's effort to increase voter turnout and democratic engagement.

The umbrella organization under which voter engagement efforts take place at USD is called USD Votes. It is led by faculty in the Department of Political Science and International Relations. USD Votes plans educational programming around elections, recruits and advises the affiliated USD Votes student group, maintains the www.sandiego.edu/vote website, ensures voter education is accurate and responsible, and helps coordinate other actors on campus. The de facto leader of this group is Casey Dominguez, an associate professor of political science, but a number of faculty in the department support and contribute to this effort. Elsewhere in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Communications Studies Department and the Humanities Center have also promised to contribute programming to help inform new voters.

USD Votes is also the name of a student-led organization that will be instrumental in planning outreach to students and will be critical to leading peer-to-peer student education and registration campaigns. This group does not yet have one student leader, but rather a team of Political Science students who will take charge of different aspects of the outreach campaign.

In Student Affairs, Residential Life will take a leadership role in helping to see that students who live on campus are encouraged to register to vote and informed about how to do so. The Changemaker Hub and the Women's Center are also leaders on the Student Affairs side.

The University of San Diego is committed to civic engagement broadly, and we want to encourage all members of the USD community, including faculty and staff, to be informed citizens. We are working to establish relationships with the Committee on Human Resources to reach out to non-student employees of the University.

Working Group membership:

Casey Dominguez, Department of Political Science and International Relations

Mike Williams, Director of the Changemaker Hub, Associate Professor, PS/IR

Luke LaCroix, Residential Life

Tyler Crisman, Residential Life

Erin Lovette-Colyer, Women's Center

Mandy Womack, Student Affairs

Michelle Rohde, Human Resources

Commitment

The University of San Diego's Catholic social mission, public purpose, and commitment to the liberal arts — to foster compassion, active citizenship and to fashion a more humane world — is conveyed in the attitudes, skills and knowledge fostered among its students through myriad curricular and extracurricular activities that range from community engagement and immersion to field-based courses to undergraduate research to social venture design. As one of a few campuses in the world that have earned both the Ashoka Changemaker Campus and the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, USD has demonstrated a sustained and meaningful commitment to civic engagement over the last thirty years. Through the Changemaker Hub, the Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness, and Social Action, and University Ministry, just to name a few, USD provides students with many co-curricular opportunities to engage on and off campus.

Building on our mission to “advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community and preparing leaders who are dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service,” USD adopted a new strategic plan in 2016 - *Envisioning 2024* - which creates more opportunities for the campus to be involved with community and civic engagement. *Envisioning 2024* commits USD to dedicating its resources to addressing the world's most urgent challenges both on and off campus. The USD Votes initiative aligns with the mission and the new strategic vision of the campus.

In 2017, USD implemented its revised Core Curriculum that requires students to demonstrate how to integrate knowledge in order to address social, political, economic and environmental issues. Providing students with the opportunities to understand how political knowledge and civic responsibilities intersect with a variety of issues is one of the goals of the integration learning outcomes.

With our commitment ongoing commitments to changemaking, community engagement, and the liberal arts, as well as the revisions to our Core Curriculum, USD is dedicated to creating a culture that values democratic engagement.

Landscape

Current democratic engagement efforts: For many years, voter education efforts have been focused around elections and have included campus-wide parties on election nights and various informational panel discussions. In 2016, for the first time, there was a sustained effort to register and turn out voters. As we move forward, we hope to consider how to extend voter education through the electoral off-years.

Voter Turnout in prior years: USD participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, which analyzes voter turnout rates at campuses across the United States. Our NSLVE reports indicate that in the last two presidential elections, our voter turnout was slightly above average for all colleges, and in the last midterm election, our voter turnout was slightly below average. In 2016, USD for the first time mounted a coordinated voter registration campaign, which probably had a small effect on the increase in our voter turnout rate from 2012 to 2016. As is typical for voters nationwide, older students and graduate students vote at higher rates than younger and undergraduate students. A majority of our students vote by mail. Nearly 80% of our students registered, but only $\frac{2}{3}$ of those voted in 2016. We will use this information as well as other information in our NSLVE report to inform and target our 2018 efforts.

Curriculum and voting: The Core Curriculum does not require students to specifically learn about American politics, history, or democratic political theory. It has a social justice focus in relation to the Catholic nature of the institution. Its goals are to teach critical thinking and expose students to different modes of inquiry. There is also an opportunity - through the integration learning outcomes - for students to understand and apply issues related to democratic engagement.

Internal and external barriers to voting: Our students mostly come to USD from out of the area. So there are a variety of logistical hurdles for our students to either navigate voting at home, or come up to speed about San Diego politics. Those facts increase the information we must be prepared to provide in support of their electoral engagement. Internally, our student culture has historically been apolitical. Changing that culture will be the biggest challenge.

Resources available: USD's faculty and staff are committed to civic engagement and are used to working with each other on co-curricular, student-focused efforts. If money and manpower are needed, they can probably be acquired.

Resources needed: There are four types of resources needed to increase voter turnout among USD students.

- 1.) Information. We need to be able to direct students to accurate information about how to register, how to vote, and how to inform themselves about the decisions they confront as voters. For students voting out of their home area, it may help to make them aware of deadlines for requesting and returning their ballots.
- 2.) Student volunteers. Students will be most engaged if information comes to them laterally through their peers than through a top-down campaign. That effort requires that many students be recruited into the

USD Votes campaign and equipped with accurate information and mobilizing messages that they can share.

3.) Various types of financial resources. Money for pizza, stickers, balloons and flyers will be needed to supplement the broader campaign as we go along.

4.) Staff and administration support. We will need permission to engage in various parts of the campaign--to be part of the move-in weekend activities, to speak to classes, to send bulk emails, to reach students through official channels.

Strategy

The Working Group as currently composed cannot set institutional goals beyond voter turnout and education in this election cycle. Promoting active and informed citizenship more broadly should of course be important to USD, curricular and other strategic decisions about student outcomes need to be made at a higher level.

The short-term goal of this campaign is to focus on voter turnout and electoral engagement. In 2018, we hope to get voter turnout over the 20% mark, and in each subsequent election over the next decade, to increase student voter turnout incrementally. Through plans like this one, we hope to develop institutional mechanisms for keeping students registered to vote and helping to keep them engaged and thinking about their responsibilities as democratic citizens. The easy part of this effort, in some respects, is preparing to physically help students register. The harder part is to change the institutional norms and culture so that students do this with less institutional prodding.

Planned activities: Fall 2018

Note: While we are actively planning the following events and activities, the information below is subject to change. Final plans will be worked out over the summer of 2018.

Registering new students

Ole weekend

Who: USD Student volunteers, others

What: Inform students that they have a series of decisions to make about voting and point them to resources to help them do so; possibly actually tabling and registering voters

When: Move-in weekend

Where: TBA

Why: Best practices indicate that this is a time when students are a captive audience and it is a great time to get them registered. (USD students also report that this period is an overwhelming flood of information, so we have to figure out how best to fit voter registration into this picture.)

Targeting out of state students

- Who: USD Votes Student Group, with Admissions
- What: The student USD Votes group will be working this summer to compile information to have on hand about each state's voter registration and absentee ballot rules. They will make state-specific flyers to have on hand in fall. They will work with out of state student "ambassadors" to provide out of state students with information specific to their home state.
- When: July-August
- Where: Move-in weekend out-of-state-students' ice cream socials; ongoing ambassador contacts in September
- Why: Students who are new to California face special obstacles to deciding where to Cast a vote. Out of state students who want to vote absentee need specialized information to do so, and help managing deadlines for getting ballots returned to their home state. We can help them reach a decision about which state to vote in and how to vote at home.

Ole Weekend events--bbqs and social events

- Who: USD Votes student volunteers
- What: Tabling to register voters; announcements about initiative
- When: Campus bbq on last day of move-in weekend; Dive Into Changemaking events; LGBTQ+ & Allies Social
- Where: TBA
- Why: A mostly captive audience, potentially a great opportunity to register voters and/or get student volunteers for USD Votes

LLC competitions after school begins?

- Who: LLC Community Directors/Resident Assistants/LLC faculty/Scholastic Assistants
- What: USD has five living-learning communities for first year students, plus one for transfer students. They are composed of students who live in the same area and who take classes that touch on a theme. If logistics can be worked out, a competition among the LLCs to register the most voters could be a great motivator for voter registration.
- When: Logistics need to be worked out in summer; implementation in September
- Where: Residence Halls/classes
- Why: To create a culture of engaged citizenship and develop the habit of voting; to register first year students

LLC events?

- Who: USD Votes student volunteers; potentially Scholastic Assistants; potentially faculty in the LLCs
- What: Set up voter registration tables at LLC parties/social events
- When: October

Where: Various locations

Why: Living Learning Communities are students' home communities in their first year on campus. These events are places where large groups of students gather and where social pressure to register and vote might be applied.

Registering (and re-registering) returning students

Because returning students have very different paths through campus and interactions with campus units, reaching these returning students will require broad, student-centered outreach.

Alcala Bazaar and on-campus volunteer tabling

Who: USD Votes Student group

What: Arrange for USD Votes to be incorporated as a student group under the AS umbrella, to get USD Votes some tabling space at the Alcala Bazaar, and to schedule tabling events in front of the UC on a regular basis in the fall.

When: August-September

Where: Central campus locations

Why: To be a visible campus presence, to recruit volunteers, and to register voters.

On campus sophomore and upper division residence life

Who: Residential life staff/RAs/USD Votes student volunteers

What: Discussions and programming on Torero Tuesdays and other events informing students about voting with accurate information and help specific to each student's voting situation

When: September

Where: Upper division and sophomore residence halls

Why: To develop peer social norms and positive messages about voting, and to spread accurate information about voting, and to facilitate registering to vote

Student-led groups including those associated with the UFMC

Who: USD Votes volunteers

What: Will reach out to each student group on campus (especially groups of which our volunteers are members) and offer to make a presentation about why and how members of that group should register to vote

When: September

Where: various locations

Why: To develop peer social norms and positive messages about voting, and to spread accurate information about voting, and to facilitate registering to vote

Departments, classes, and majors

- Who: Political Science faculty will compose emails and flyers specific to each department and academic unit. USD Votes student group will coordinate student visits to classes upon faculty request.
- What: Target NSLVE information to departments and areas. Create emails and flyers informing faculty what they can do to encourage their students to register and vote. Faculty in each school can be provided with an informational email at the start of the fall semester telling them about the All In Challenge and what they can do to inform their students. Department chairs in the college can also be encouraged to include specific voter mobilization messages in the mass emails that go out to their majors.
- When: August, before the semester begins.
- Where: Email, faculty-to-faculty outreach
- Why: Students listen to personal appeals from their professors, and often identify and socialize with others in their major. Creating department-specific messages might encourage some students to register that are not otherwise active in campus groups.

Commuter students

- Who: Student USD Votes group
- What: Create a display for commuter student lounge about voting in San Diego county
- When: Early September
- Where: Commuter student lounge
- Why: To inform students who live in the area how they can register and vote.

Sports teams

- Who: USD Votes student group
- What: Reach out to coaches and team members in athletics to try to register whole teams
- When: September
- Where: On campus
- Why: Athletes spend a lot of time together and might be able to be registered as a group. They are also sometimes seen as student leaders and their engagement might spread to other students that way.

Greek life

- Who: Members of USD Votes student group
- What: Reach out to Greek life student leadership, try to encourage competition among fraternities and sororities to register the most voters
- When: September 2018
- Where: various
- Why: To develop peer social norms and positive messages about voting, and to spread accurate information about voting, and to facilitate registering to vote

Student-led, major-specific clubs / honors societies / fraternities

- Who: Members of the USD Votes student group
- What: Will reach out to each student group on campus (especially groups of which our volunteers are members) and offer to make a presentation about why and how members of that group should register to vote
- When: September
- Where: various group meetings
- Why: To develop peer social norms and positive messages about voting, and to spread accurate information about voting, and to facilitate registering to vote

Informing new voters

Events on campus: National Voter Registration Day, Election Night Party

- Who: Faculty associated with the Department of Political Science and International Relations and faculty and students associated with the Humanities Center
- What: To celebrate voting with games, food, and other fun activities
- When: September 25, November 6
- Where: On campus, still in the planning stages
- Why: To create a fun community experience around elections.

Events on campus: Humanities Center events

- Who: Faculty in the college, organized by the Humanities Center
- What: A series of discussions about why and how to vote
- When: September-October
- Where: The Humanities Center
- Why: To inform USD students about how to cast an informed vote and why to do so

Events on campus: Politifest

- Who: The Voice of San Diego and the College of Arts and Sciences
- What: A half-day festival of panel discussions and speakers about local and state issues
- When: October 6
- Where: Shiley theater, KIPJ
- Why: To inform members of the San Diego community including students at USD

Events on campus: Changemaker Hub events

- Who: Faculty and students, organized by Changemaker Hub
- What: A series of discussions about why and how to vote
- When: September-October
- Where: Changemaker Hub
- Why: To inform USD students about how to cast an informed vote and why to do so

Turning out on-campus students

- Who: USD Votes students and Residential Life staff
- What: Specifically inform students HOW to actually cast their ballot in person on campus, and also how to cast an absentee ballot, including deadlines for mail in votes in their own state specifically.
- When: Late October
- Where: Residence halls
- Why: Our voter registration rate is much higher than our voter turnout rate, and most students vote by mail, many out of state. At a very busy time in the semester, students need extra reminders to cast their vote

Turning out off-campus students

- Who: USD Votes students, Political Science faculty with help from administration
- What: Campus-wide advertising on screens, by email, and with on-campus signage
- When: Mid-late October
- Where: all over campus and digital campaign
- Why: To remind students that now that they are actually registered, they need to spend a couple of hours (be honest about the time commitment!) deciding how to vote and actually voting

Creating a norm of civic and voter participation

Branding

- Who: Everyone
- What: Use the USD Votes Logo and report events to Dr. Dominguez for posting on the USD Votes webpage so that there is an omnipresent message that “USD Votes”
- When: Throughout the campaign
- Where: Everywhere
- Why: Coherent and consistent messaging.

Digital awareness campaign

- Who: Political Science faculty and others
- What: Put voter registration button on the main student portal; do a campus email blast
- When: The month before the CA registration deadline
- Where: Online
- Why: To promote general awareness, signal campus support, and give students the very easiest link to voter registration in California.

Social media

- Who: USD Votes student team
- What: Manage Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and other accounts to spread Social media package (Profile pic/Banner/Instagram) with civic engagement information and voter registration information on webpages and social media feeds used by students.

When: Summer and Fall

Where: The internet

Why: Students spend a lot of time online, and to be part of student culture, we must have a social media presence.

Employee Engagement

Employee campus committee

Who: Community of Human Resources Committee (CHR)

What: Help promote USD Votes to departments across campus, recruit volunteers to support student participation and disseminate information

When: Fall

Where: Via email, flyers and information sessions

Why: Encourage USD campus community participation in the in the voting process as support for USD Votes

Reporting and Evaluation

We will post this plan, as well as the campus NSLVE reports, to the sandiego.edu/vote webpage and share the links with administrators and faculty as widely as possible. This plan will inevitably evolve as we find new partners on campus and as we cast aside some initial plans in favor of others. All participating individuals and campus units will be requested to share attendance numbers, voter registration numbers, and planned events with the USD Votes leadership (Dr. Dominguez) so that the campaign can be fully documented and evaluated.

As volunteers help students to register to vote, we will keep a running tally of the number of students newly registered, so that we can know for the future which events are most effective at increasing registration rates. The USD Votes campaign, which will be primarily responsible for peer-to-peer student outreach, will keep track of how many students are registered at sponsored events and canvassing sessions. Residential life will keep track of how many students are registered by its staff and RAs, and if a competition is put into place, how many students are registered by each LLC. For final data, of course, we will look forward to the NSLVE report to see whether our overall efforts have taken us not only over the benchmark 20%, but whether we have moved further than similar institutions. Political Science faculty will be primarily responsible for keeping track of these data and analyzing the effectiveness of each aspect of the campaign. A post-election effectiveness report will be posted to the USD Votes website and shared by email with members of the Working Group and others who express an interest in the campaign.

This plan, its modifications, and data on its effectiveness, will be shared with the new and old team members who will be organizing for the 2020 USD Votes campaign.