



Civic Engagement Action Plan 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Civic Engagement is being examined on modern college campuses, Black Hills State University in Spearfish, SD is continuing to take action to combat new and young voter ignorance by inspiring the student population to become registered, educated, and engaged members of their community. Getting young people civically involved continues to be a challenge in recent elections; this lack of engagement is something that has plagued both presidential and midterm elections for some time showing that it may not be a generational issue, but rather how low youth engagement is tackled could make all the difference. There are many groups around the country including higher education institutions that have stepped up and taken on this problem, fearlessly trying new ideas to increase the rate at which students actively participate in and contribute to the community they utilize. Black Hills State University is a campus full of passionate leaders and energetic students that have potential to be highly engaged with their community and democracy. The functionality of a democracy depends on the participation of the people, and we must do all that we can to encourage and facilitate involvement. Each and every student will be encouraged to and presented with opportunities to register to vote, request an absentee ballot, and be educated on early voting and ballot candidates and issues.

We, the Black Hills State University Student Senate is excited to take on this Civic Engagement Challenge as we enter the 2020 elections. Below we have outlined a timeline of what we would like to accomplish this year. We will work to ensure that the basics of this Civic Engagement Initiative are met and that every BHSU student has the opportunity to become an informed voter this November.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COALITION MEMBERS

Dr. Pam Carriveau, Vice Provost and Political Science Professor
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Dr. Jane Klug, Dean of Students
Student Government Association

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ACTION PLAN

Social Media Outreach

Given the uncertain times of social-distancing and quarantining, we will work to boost our media outreach efforts from the 2018 committee work. Below is a rough outline of posts that will be made to our Student Association's media platforms throughout the year.

1. Basic Information/Voter Registration
2. Voter Registration Week
3. US Senate Candidates: Mike Rounds, Daniel Ahlers
4. State House Candidates: Brooke Abdallah, Scott Odenbach, Mary Fitzgerald
5. State Senate Candidates: Timothy Johns
6. Other ballot initiatives (state and local)
7. Absentee ballot information, how to request, where to vote, when to vote
8. After election, inform students of the outcome of the election, both candidates elected and if issues passed or failed

Timeline of Events

September

- Assist with education and events for Constitution Day on 9/15
- Early voting begins on 9/18 in South Dakota
- Host registration events for National Voter Registration Day on 9/22 and 9/23
- Reach out to local candidates to potentially host a debate on campus
- Create posts on basic registration and election information

October

- Acquire and share sample ballots for state general elections (SD, WY, CO as majority of our students are from these areas), and District 31(country where the university is located)
- Any speakers/debates that we have on campus will take place sometime in October. We will be working to effectively and efficiently advertise this to the campus and Spearfish communities.
- Contact professors about voting day and suggest/ask that they make voting a part of class or give the day off for students to vote
- Last day to register in South Dakota is Oct. 19
- Collaborate with the Residence Hall Association to host presidential debate watch parties in a dorm lobby

November

- Make sure students who did not early vote are aware of polling hours, location, and ID regulations
- Election Day is 11/3, work with RHA to hold an election watch party event in a dorm lobby

- Post about local, state, and national election results so students are aware of candidate and issue outcomes