



## **Boston College 2020 Action Plan**

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### **Executive Summary:**

Boston College believes in educating the entire person in promoting learning, health, leadership development and community engagement with all students. One area of focus is on civic engagement. Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation through both political and non-political processes. Because of this commitment, we are working on becoming recognized as a Voter Friendly Campus, and have outlined a plan that would bring others together in striving for this important and meaningful educational opportunity for our students. Throughout the semester we have focused on voter registration, education, and turnout through marketing, advertising, and in person opportunities as permitted. We have created a coalition of individuals around campus whose areas support one of these three pillars.

### **Leadership:**

Our leadership team includes the following:

Student Affairs Civic Engagement Committee  
Katie Dalton, Director of the Women's Center  
kathryn.dalton@bc.edu

Kyle Neary, Assistant Director Office of Student Involvement, Student Programming  
kyle.neary@bc.edu

Maura Montgomery, Staff Assistant, Student Affairs

Lisa Berasi, Senior Associate Director, Office of Marketing and Communications

Julianne Smith, Associate Director of Education, Career Center

Shannon Poppe Zaruba, Resident Director, Office of Residential Life

Joana Maynard, Senior Assistant Director, Bowman AHANA and Intercultural Center  
Boston College Civic Engagement Coalition

The coalition would bring together committed entities of campus and streamline communication processes, initiatives and goals. This coalition's job would be to combine and streamline previous efforts, and work collaboratively on creating a larger action plan that focuses on Voter Registration, Voter Education, Ballot Access, and Voter Turnout.

### **Campus Partners**

Create a robust list of partners from some of the following places. Academic Affairs - Clough Center for Constitutional Democracy, Political Science Department, Boston College Lowell Humanities Series, Boston College Law School, Center for Teaching Excellence, Library Services. We will be reaching out for additional connections and support throughout the summer.

Student Affairs - Campus Ministry, Eagle Political Society, BC Dems, BC Republicans, Americans for Informed Democracy, BC Law Democrats, BC Law Republicans, Model United Nations, Young Democratic Socialists of America

These organizations all have been invited to participate and support in various capacities ranging from tabling, to sharing of information, being highlighted in our monthly newsletter, or offering support for various events.

Community Partners and Commitments  
NASPA Voter Friendly Campus  
Every Vote Counts  
All In Challenge  
Boston Votes Initiative  
DemocrACCy  
Every Vote Counts

### **Commitment:**

Our campus has signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Our campus has used the following methods to communicate with students about the election:

By email, By posting on institutional social media channels, In person tabling, residential life programming, etc. As recommended by the Campus Vote Project, the Student Affairs Civic Engagement Committee will spearhead the creation of a Civic Engagement Coalition. This coalition will be made up of students, administrators, and faculty at Boston College, and will utilize the support of community partners for resources and guiding best practices. Connect with Community Partners for Resource Development - each community partner has their own valuable resources and target. Utilizing multiple community partners to create multiple touch points will ensure students will have multiple opportunities to engage with student democracy. Community Partners have been communicated with, and are sharing events and resources Departments are cross promoting opportunities, and providing expertise (ex: library is offering literature around voter history). Turbo Vote Implementation into MyBC (Campus Labs Engage Module) - in the month of June, Boston College will be migrating to the Campus Labs Engage platform. This platform has an integrated TurboVote feature which would prompt users during their login period to sign up to receive information and reminders from TurboVote Plan/execute Civic Engagement Events to support pillars (below) - each pillar will require different attention. The Civic Engagement Coalition can work collaboratively to ensure each pillar is of Student Democracy is supported. Boston College President Fr. Leahy, SJ has committed to the President Commitment for the All In Challenge, and our Athletics Department has been working with Coaches to make the Coaches Commitment.

### **Landscape:**

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Landscape Reviewing the data from the NSLVE report for the past 8 years, we see our undergraduate students are registering at around 80% but only about half are turning out for non election years. During election years our voters who turn out are around 60%. Additionally, from the data we do have, we know that many of our students vote in absentee ballot format, which requires them to know individual state guidelines, and register and oftentimes vote well ahead of election day, so our push needs to happen earlier. We have about 6 politically based student organizations, but many of our students who are civically engaged work with local organizations or governments. This year in particular there is a lot more dialogue around the election, the importance of voting and having a voting plan early. Traditionally, we have a high registration rate - the past 2 elections was above 80%, however, the voting rate of our registered students was lower than 50% We would like to get this number above 65%, which would make 2020 the highest rate of registered voters possible. Voting at Boston College Eligible Voters Registered Registration Rate Voters Voting Rate of Registered Students 2012 12732 10131 79.60% 5878 58% 2014

12551 8705 69.40% 1889 21.70% 2016 12727 10447 82.10% 6755 64.70% 2018 12766 10246 80.30% 4922 48.00% 2020 We also saw that very few of our students vote in person, due to the nature of our student body's primary homes. Because of this, we focused significant effort on marketing and communicating ways in which to find their state's voting guides.

### **Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

#### Short Term

Our goal is to increase our number of registered voters, and significantly increase our voting turnout. Additionally, we are hoping to engage students with understanding the importance of voting and performing civic duties, while engaging interested students in volunteer opportunities to keep this conversation and action items as part of their regular lives.

#### Long Term

By developing and creating intentional connections and partnerships, we hope to create a visible coalition that focuses on voter registration, education and turnout each and every year, not just election year. We hope to increase our work with students to continue the conversation. For 2022 and beyond we hope to make voter registration a fundamental part of joining the Boston College community, and continue to provide external communication on ways for students to get involved locally and nationally.

### **Strategy:**

Our campus has used the following strategies and organized the following events:

In-person voter registration drives, In-person voter education events (e.g. film screenings, debates, lecture series, etc.), Virtual voter registration drives (e.g. Couch Party text banking events), Virtual voter education events (e.g. film screening, debates, lectures series, etc.), Pledge to Vote drive, Voting Plan swag (tshirts, masks, etc.) for students with a voting plan.

#### Voter Registration

TurboVote Integration into MyBC, continual marketing campaign from move in through the election Newsletter emails/updates as students return to campus in the fall urging them to register and vote

Absentee Ballot "how to" instructions emailed and provided by TurboVote

Engaging involved students in tabling efforts to promote voter registration

Couch Party Initiative utilizing the All In Challenge's technology

Offering 1 on 1 voting support opportunities through various committee members, as well as daily tabling through the month of October to assist students in their individualized

#### Voter Education

Connecting within the Coalition to have faculty/staff create information that could help educate student voters

Host non-partisan events that focus on issues

Support student organizations who are hosting events and promoting them through our channels

Focusing on nonpartisan speakers and journalists in understanding and critically evaluating news media

Created a sign campaign around statistics associated with voting and voter turnout.

Creating an on-campus photo opportunity with the letters VOTE

#### Ballot Access

Create access points for absentee ballot pickup in Maloney Hall

Providing transportation to local venues for students who register in Massachusetts

Clearly identifying mail drop boxes and advertising them around campus.

### Voter Turnout

Create an event/process to celebrate students who voted

Ask for feedback from students formally/informally about their experience voting for future benchmarking

Tabling for 3 weeks up to the election to review voting plan with students and providing incentives for students who are willing to share their voting plan.

Review NSLVE Data

Passing out buttons, stickers, masks, and tshirts for students to celebrate their participation.

### **NSLVE:**

Boston College has authorized NSLVE.

### **Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

We'll have two points of evaluation - the first will be the weeks post election (likely winter break) we will revisit the various work we did and highlight the most successful parts anecdotally of our work.

We'll revisit with our colleagues at the university to ask them for their reports of their events.

Long term, we hope to see our NSLV data and be able to follow up with the community for their registration and turnout.

The "who" would be led primarily by the Civic Engagement Committee, but would undoubtedly be worked in with the Coalition from colleagues around campus.

### **Reporting:**

We will report our campus action plan and NSLVE reports in the following ways:

Our action plan will be posted on our campus website and shared with the campus community. Our campus NSLVE reports will be posted on our campus website and shared with the campus community.