

BUCS VOTE

Campus Voter Engagement Plan 2020

Christian Brothers University

Executive Summary:

The following action plan has been created by the Civic Engagement Committee (CEC) at Christian Brothers University (CBU) in Memphis, Tennessee with the purpose of galvanizing CBU students to become civically engaged, informed individuals. The plan centers on increasing voter registration with the anticipated result of increasing CBU student voting turnout to 75% by the 2020 presidential election. Through informative sessions, conversations on voting registration and absentee ballots, debate watch parties, and celebrations of the power of voting, CEC aims to foster student investment in participating in and shaping our collective democracy.

Though many CBU constituents support civic education and engagement, from politically active student organizations to advocacy-based courses, the campus has not previously developed a coordinated effort to guide the CBU community in civic awareness and action. A new (as of March 2020) and growing committee, the CEC has ambitious goals to make civic engagement programs and practices part of campus culture. However, to initiate that cultural change, the committee also recognizes the need to create a diverse coalition of CEC members and campus partners. Accomplishing this will take considerable time and effort but will establish ready campus networks for civic engagement programming beyond the November 2020 election.

An added constraint to laying the foundation for the CEC's work is the unfortunate timing and circumstances of the coronavirus crisis. For each programming element listed below, we have reimagined a virtual or remote version. At the time of writing this (7.17.20), CBU is anticipating a hybrid reopening that limits the number of students on campus and in each classroom, but in the event that the campus moves online for fall 2020, the CEC will be prepared to deliver virtual programming.

2020 Focus Area:

Increase voter turnout to 75% in the 2020 presidential election

Leadership:

The Civic Engagement Committee (CEC)

Dr. Leslie McAbee, Director of the AutoZone Center for Community Engagement (staff)

Mr. Scott Baietti, Associate Director of Residence Life (staff)

Dr. Mary McConner, Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Inclusive Excellence, Office of the President (staff)

Ms. Amy Siebenmorgen, Graduate Assistant of the AutoZone Center for Community

Engagement (graduate student)

The CEC will meet every month with additional meetings as necessary before planned events.

Internal Partners: The CEC plans to include the following CBU areas to either join the CEC or partner for specific projects

- Athletics and Athletic teams
- Marketing and Communications
- Student Government Association
- Student Activities Council
- Academic Services
- International Student Association
- Hola CBU
- Voices United Student Organization
- Honors Program
- Campus Ministry
- Gay Straight Alliance
- President's Commission on Social Justice

External Partners:

- Shelby County Election Commission

Commitment:

Founded in the Lasallian tradition, Christian Brothers University (CBU) is rooted in educational principals that value "respect for each individual as a unique person, a spirit for community, a life of service, and a quest for justice and peace." These principals are lived in the classroom, on campus, and in our many service projects that give back to our Memphis community. A Lasallian motto appears on our campus doors: "Enter to learn, leave to serve."

CBU has particularly emphasized their commitment to the service of Memphis and social justice through the development of the AutoZone Center for Community Engagement, which was formed to promote positive social change by collaborating CBU with local community organizations. To keep these values alive in the sense of civic action, the Center has spearheaded the creation of the Civic Engagement Committee (CEC) to inspire our CBU family to use these values to affect our local and national government.

Landscape:

CEC is a partner of NSLVE and the All in Campus Democracy Challenge. NSLVE data will not be available until September 2020.

CEC plans to soon partner with the Campus Vote Project, Democracy Works, Every Student Counts, President's Commitment, and Students Learn Students Vote.

Goals:

The CEC has two goals for the November 2020 Presidential Election and several short-term goals to support our focus areas. These short-term goals will build support for our long-term goals, in order to make everlasting work that extends beyond the November 2020 Presidential Election.

Focus Areas

- Increase turnout to 75% of eligible CBU students to vote in the 2020 Election
- Enhance resources to ensure students are fully informed of the issues and candidates on Election Day

Short-Term Goals:

- Invite campus constituents and politically active student groups to join or partner with the CEC
- A section of the university's website that includes information on upcoming elections, links to register to vote, and information on candidates
- Voting registration to be part of mandatory one-on-one meetings with freshman and transfer students
- An increase of on-campus or virtual events that cover education on voting, candidates, and policy statements
- Actively include students who are ineligible to vote in voter registration and participation programming

Strategies:

These include voting registration, voting education, and voting barriers

Voting Registration:

- Supply students with voting registration packets during mandatory meeting with library assistant.
 - Incoming freshman and transfer students are assigned a Plough library assistant to meet one-on-one as part of a mandatory class (CBU 101) on all things CBU. These meetings, while in the past only pertained to library resources, will now also be a conversation on voting registration. Students will be given a voting registration packet to take with them after this meeting ends. If needed, these meetings will go virtual and a digital copy of a registration packet will be sent to students.
 - Partner with Academic Services & Plough Library
- Constitution Day, Thursday, September 17th
 - As part of celebrating Constitution Day, a table will be set up in the cafeteria for students to stop by and receive pamphlets and information on voting registration and absentee ballots. We would like to partner with a student group for this event.

- Virtual Option: Students and faculty will be challenged to rap “My Shot” from the musical *Hamilton*, but change up the words to make it be what the constitution and the founding fathers means to them in 2020. On Constitution day, the CEC will release the top three winners.
- Virtual Option #2: We will partner with the creative writing staff, Dr. Karyna McGlynn and Dr. Karen Golightly, to host a creative writing contest asking the question “What does the Constitution mean to you in 2020?” The winner and the runner-up of the contest writing piece will be released in a mass CBU email on Constitution Day.
- National Voting Registration Day, Tuesday, September 22nd
 - As part of National Voting Registration Day, a table will be set up in the cafeteria to give students another chance to get information to register to vote and sign up for absentee ballots. We would like to partner with a student organization for this event.
 - The President’s Office will send an email with information on registration. This will include a link to campusvoteproject.org and TurboVote.
 - We will need to partner with the President’s Office and, if campus is open, a student organization such as the Student Government Association.
- Voting registration during sports events
 - A voting registration and information booth will be set up during sports games. We will have an announcement at the beginning, half-time, and end of sports games to encourage students to stop by and chat with us.
 - In August 2020, the Coaches’ Voter Engagement Playbook will be available on the All in Democracy Challenge website. To celebrate its release, CBU coaches will sign the Coaches’ Voter Engagement Pledge and release a video encouraging their athletes and other CBU students to register and get out to vote.
 - Virtual Option: each week the CEC will pick a CBU team to create a fun, social distanced Tik Tok that encourages their classmates to vote.
 - We will need to partner with the Athletics departments.
- #couchparty2.0
 - On this day, the CEC or another student group will have a large group of student leaders (already registered to vote) who will send out a mass text to all of their friends, peers, and classmates to encourage them to register to vote.
 - As a follow up, the student leaders will send another text asking if students had any questions about absentee ballots and registration. The student leaders will be on a one-on-one call to walk through the process if needed.
 - We would need to partner with a student organization, such as the Student Government Association or Honors.
- “Dorm Raids”
 - Student leaders will knock on dorm doors to having a conversation with students on civic engagement and hand out informative pamphlets.
 - If COVID-19 campus closures are in place at the time of this event, the activity will be canceled.
- Voting registration on CBU’s website by creating an election-related section

- This will be a section that includes easy to access information on state voting rules, deadlines, resources, polling stations, candidates, and issues. We will also promote these resources on social media.
- We will need to partner with the Marketing & Communications department
- National Vote Early Day (party!)
 - The CEC will be hosting a party on campus to celebrate National Vote Early Day! We will reserve a room which will be filled with music, food, photo booth, etc. We will include prizes for students who come wearing an “I Voted” sticker. CBU vans will also be provided to shuttle students to and from polling stations.
 - Virtual Option: in order to encourage students to vote early from a safe distance away, we will ask students to post a selfie on social media with their “I Voted” sticker. They will also be asked to use a hashtag that relates back to CBU such as #buccaneersatthepolls.
- Send campus-wide emails to encourage voter registration
 - This will be a series of five to six emails sent through the President’s office that will remind students of the importance of registering to vote and how it is a tool to create positive change in our communities. These emails will be sent according to various voting registration and absentee voter deadlines.

Voting Education:

- Share [Campus Vote Project](#) (in addition to TurboVote) as a resource for state voter registration and voting guides.
 - Shared from President’s Office via email and available on CBU website
- Community Engaged Learning Projects in Support of Voter and Policy Issue Education
 - Students in one or more CEL courses will develop projects that provide civic educational projects for the CBU community ahead of the 2020 National Election.
- Invite local candidates to speak at CBU
 - Candidates from the TN election will be invited to CBU campus to discuss how they got involved in politics and why local civic engagement matters. While they may discuss their beliefs on certain topics, it will not be a debate. Using YouTube Live, we will pivot this event to an online setting.
- Civic Saturday
 - In partnership with Shamichael Hallman of Memphis Public Libraries, CBU will host a Civic Saturday, likely as a virtual event, which will be a time for individuals in both the CBU and Memphis community to reflect and reconnect on the best practices to be civically engaged.
- National Debate Watch Parties
 - During the three scheduled debates, CBU will host a virtual watch party. Students will have the option of watching in smaller break-out groups hosted by a CBU faculty or staff member. In these smaller units, students can ask questions, share reactions and observations, and present information. CBU moderators for each small group will ensure that all exchange is civil and valid in terms of content shared.

Voting Barriers:

- DACA Students & International students who are ineligible to vote
 - The CEC invites students who are ineligible to vote in US elections (DACA, international, etc.) to share their voting experiences in another country and their perspective on their ineligible status and/or the importance of voting. Using YouTube Live, we will pivot this event to an online setting.
- *Rigged* Watch Party
 - The CEC will host a watch party for the *Rigged* documentary - a film that does a deep dive on voting suppression in the United States. We will partner with a student group to host the event on campus followed by a small group session in which students and student leaders discuss the film.
 - Virtual Option: students who sign-up for the event will receive a link to watch the documentary at home. Students will then join in a small group discussion led by assigned student leaders via Zoom.
 - We will need to partner with a student organization and, if possible, have faculty give students extra credit as a buy in for students to join the watch party and discussion.
- TurboVote
 - TurboVote is an online tool that sends voting registration reminders, directions on submitting an absentee ballot, and notifications when voting starts. This can be done through a student's mobile device or email. To encourage students to sign up for TurboVote, the CEC and a student organization will partner together to host a 90s themed computer party. Students will be asked to bring their "computer" (smart phone) and sign-up for TurboVote on their own or with the help of a student leader. Once they are signed up, students will be able to enjoy the provided food, 90s music, and a swag bag.
 - Virtual Option: the CEC will partner with faculty members to give students extra credit for signing up with TurboVote.
- *13th* Watch Party
 - The CEC will host a watch party for the Netflix documentary *13th* which highlights how the United States' racial justice system targets Black Americans and keeps these citizens from fully practicing their civic rights. This viewing will be followed by small group discussions led by assigned student leaders
 - Virtual Option: students will be able to watch the documentary either on a Netflix account or on YouTube for free. Students will then join in a small group discussion led by assigned students leaders via Zoom.
 - We will need to partner with a student organization and, if possible, have faculty give students extra credit as a buy in for students to join the watch party and discussion.

Reporting & Evaluation

This report will be shared with CBU administration, faculty departments, and relevant committees (i.e. President's Commission on Social Justice). This will be done with a hope that the administration see an increase of CBU students registering and practicing their voting rights due to the strategic actions of our committee.

In addition, CBU's faculty departments will receive data for the voter registration and voting rates of student majors. The CEC will work with departments to discuss strategies for advertising, celebrating, and/or improving students' voter registration and participation.

Finally, the report will also be available for public use on the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge website, a partner to the Civic Engagement Committee.

Timeline:

Fall 2020:

August:

- August – October: incoming students meet with library assistant and receive a registration packet
- CEC will meet with student groups to gain student members and interest
- Launch election section of CBU website
- #couchparty2.0
- Dorm Raids
- Start sending out campus-wide emails about voting registration
- *Rigged Watch Party*

September:

- Visit from TN government officials
- Civic Saturday
- *13th* Documentary Watch Party
- September – October: set up voting registration stand at sports games
- Sep. 17 – Constitution Day (set table in cafeteria to register to vote)
- Sep. 22—National Voting Registration Day
- Sep. 29 – Presidential Debate Watch Party

October:

- Policy Statement Event
- Oct. 15 – Presidential Debate Watch Party #2
- Oct. 22 – Presidential Debate Watch Party #3
- Oct. 24 – Vote Early Party!!! - use CBU vans to get students to the polls, if not limited by the coronavirus
- Absentee Ballot Party (provide stamps for students either free or with small purchase)
- Oct. 31 – Census 2020 Deadline

November:

- Nov. 3 – election day (#partyatthepolls) - use CBU vans to get students to polls, if not limited by the coronavirus