

Clark Votes!

Clark University's Voter Friendly Campus Plan

I. Executive Summary

Clark University believes in the power of collaboration. Our vision of community engagement is a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources. We build knowledge by collaborating across academic disciplines and reaching beyond academia to learn from leaders and thinkers in our communities. Together, we can build structures of shared decision-making that promote mutual well-being. Civic engagement is a pillar in this work and mission.

The Office of Community Engagement and Volunteering (CEV) serves as a campus-wide partner in supporting community and civic engagement from various areas around campus including internships, community-based federal work study, faculty driven research and projects, curricular and co-curricular engagement. Each year the CEV Office celebrates Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day by partnering with the student club, Clark Democrats, and Clark's Political Science Department. This has looked like tabling for voter registration, guest speakers such as Senator Robyn Kennedy, Representative David Leboeuf, and Congressman Jim McGovern. All the aforementioned elected also host a number of Clarks students as interns throughout the year.

For previous elections, Clark University has facilitated and promoted several programs around campus centered in civic engagement under the name "[Clark Votes](#)." In 2022, this included ongoing voter registration drives, walking students to the polls to get out the vote (GOTV), "Cocoa and Chat with Deans" to debrief events related to the election, and "Unpacking Election Day 2022" which consisted of a community-wide dialogue with Political Science Professor Robert Boatright about the major forces at play leading into the election, the election's outcomes, and what it means for each of us as engaged citizens. Additionally, the Clark Votes website provides resources for voter registration deadlines and information on how to vote by mail, voting early, and where to vote. The CEV Office also believes that civic engagement is not solely tied to voting around larger election cycles, and for this reason promotes voter registration through office hours daily and civic engagement and community engagement workshops during orientation and ad hoc throughout the academic year per request from faculty members.

This year, leading up to the federal 2024 presidential election, the CEV Office will embark on a campus-wide strategy that promotes voter registration and voter turnout. This will consist of a planning group with stakeholders including the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, student affairs,

faculty, the Political Science Department, residential life and housing, Clark's Office of Identity Student Engagement and Access (ISEA), athletics, and student groups. This kick-off for this effort started with this year's Alternative Spring Break Worcester program, facilitated by the CEV Office, under this year's theme of community organizing and civic engagement, where 23 students learned about organizing in solidarity, creative organizing, grassroots organizing, and civic engagement.

Clark's top three goals as a Voter Friendly Campus are to:

1. Coordinate and promote all civic engagement related events under "Clark Votes!"
2. Engage students in critical discourse around meaningful community engagement and civic engagement, centering restorative practice to build trust, repair tense relationships and foster civic responsibility.
3. Strengthen the relationship with the local Worcester community by demonstrating deep campus engagement in local political issues, including food security, housing justice, reproductive justice, the opioid crisis, and more.

II. Leadership and Coalition Building

"Clark Votes!" is made up of various campus-wide partners as well as the engagement of community partners. They include:

- The Division of Student Success:
 - Community Engagement and Volunteering
 - Student Leadership and Programming
 - Residential Life and Housing
 - Identity, Student Engagement and Access
 - First Year & Sophomore Year Experience

- Additional Campus and Academic Partners:
 - Office of Diversity and Inclusion
 - Clark Athletics
 - The Office of Government and Community Affairs
 - The Department of Political Science
 - Marketing & Communications
 - Sociology Department
 - Global Engagement
 - Higgins School of Humanities

- History Department

- Community Partners
 - The League of Women Voters Worcester Area
 - Worcester Interfaith
 - The City of Worcester
 - Black Families Together
 - The Village/ OurHistory Edutainment
 - Racism Free WPS
 - The YWCA of Central MA

III. Description of Work

Voter Registration

- In partnership with the League of Women Voters Worcester Area (LWVWA), each incoming first year will receive Voter 411 cards in the orientation bags.
- The Office of Community Engagement and Volunteering (CEV) will hire 1-2 Democracy Ambassadors through the community-based work study program to table during orientation with voter registration papers and information. These positions will be posted over the summer.
- The CEV Office will coordinate two info sessions during orientation: Civic engagement, which utilized a presentation created by a former Clark intern for the LWVWA, and a second on community engagement as a framework.
- Clark Democrats (Clark's active political party club) will coordinate outreach events into the student body to promote voter registration throughout the early weeks of the semester. CEV and SLP will collaborate to connect with them and build their schedule.
- "Clark Votes!" website will be updated with information on voter registration deadlines, voting by mail information, and where to vote information.
- The annual CEV Fair (which engaged 700+ students), will host voter registration tabling and conduct a raffle where students are entered to win Clark Votes! Swag if they check their voter registration status in front of the Democracy Ambassador.

Voter Education

- Voter registration posters will be hung up throughout campus and circulated on the informational digital televisions around campus.
- Constitution Day will be coordinated by the CEV Office and Political Science Department to host guest speakers, TBD.
- Clark Votes Instagram page will be created specifically for voter engagement/education and will be monitored/utilized by our Democracy Fellow
- RAs will distribute voter location and local issues information
- Publish a Clark Votes! Voter guide in Clark's student-run newspaper, the Scarlet.
- "Politics with our Provost" will be scheduled leading up to voter day to encourage students to engage in conversation with Clark's Provost, who is a Political Scientist.
- Democracy Fellows to visit classes for civic engagement info sessions, ad hoc.
- Student newsletters and ongoing communications will remind students about voting deadlines, checking their voting status, and developing a voting plan.
- During the first year experience course in the fall semester, a week of curriculum will connect students to voter resources.

Voter Turnout

- Students will write their "I vote because..." commitments which will be on display in the University Center to encourage commitment and turnout.
- Democracy Ambassadors, the CEV Office student workers, and Peer Mentors will lead students to the polls.
- The CEV Office will promote on Clark Votes! And Clarkies in the Community poll worker opportunities.
- The CEV Office will add various voter events on Engage and utilize GivePulse registration to push reminders and track impacts.
- Clark University student organizations will host an Election Day party.

IV. Timeline

- July to Mid-August
 - The CEV Office will distribute to working group members: shared calendar for Clark Votes! Events
 - The CEV Office will get all events listed on Engage and Givepulse
 - The CEV Office will push reminders to working group members throughout the summer in order to solidify all events for Clark Votes! Promotion by MarComm.
 - MarComm to update Clark Votes! website

- Late-August
 - Democracy Fellows will begin on-campus duties
 - The CEV Office will coordinate orientation activities including info sessions, voter registration, and Voter 411 cards distribution
 - Orientation sessions about being a member of the community, service, and getting engaged/civic education
- September:
 - The CEV Fair
 - Constitution Day
 - National Voter Registration Day
 - Civic Engagement focus during Clark's First Year Experience programming
 - Residential Life & Housing voting programming
- October- November:
 - Execute voter education programming with ongoing tabling
 - GOTV/Voter Turnout events, walking students to the polls
 - Election Day party
- November-December:
 - Assess efforts
 - Continue ongoing meaning making and education events in partnership with faculty
 - Prepare for fall semester

V. Goals

We hope to increase student voter participation and education, for both domestic and international students. This includes utilizing data from National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. Approximately 85% of our voting eligible students were registered to vote in 2020. We would like to increase this number to be able to increase our complete voting rate, which was 74% in 2020, 45% in 2018, and 21% in 2014. We are particularly interested in expanding voting across identity, and how we support students in filing their documents according to deadlines since a large percentage of our students did not vote in person in 2020.

We also hope to educate our large international undergraduate and graduate population about United States political structures, democracy processes, and global impact.

Because this is Clark's first Voter Friendly Campus plan, the execution of all events with student participation data will be instrumental in creating a baseline for future efforts. Utilizing

GivePulse for election day will also align with the CEV Office's overarching plan to track community and civic engagement.