

*Class of 1939*

# Clemson University Campus Democracy Plan 2022

A BROAD-BASED, NONPARTISAN EFFORT AIMED AT IMPROVING THE  
DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT OF OUR STUDENT POPULATION –  
GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE.

THIS STRUCTURE IS DEDICATED TO THOSE DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
WHOSE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDENT BODY, THE SCHOOL, AND THE COMMUNITY  
HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THEIR PEERS AS MERITING THIS THEIR HIGHEST HONOR:

*"THE CLASS OF '39 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE"*

## ROLL OF HONOR

1989 - DIXIE GOOCH GOSWAMI  
1990 - JOEL VINCENT BRAWLEY, JR.  
1991 - JOHN L. IDOL, JR.  
1992 - RAYMOND C. TURNER  
1993 - ASHBY B. BODINE II  
1994 - CECIL OATES HUEY, JR.  
1995 - FRANCIS ANTHONY MCGUIRE  
1996 - R. LAWRENCE LAForge  
1997 - CHALMERS MCNAIR BUTLER  
1998 - LARRY LEE BAGER  
1999 - JUDITH MARY MELTON  
2000 - CLIFTON SCOTT MILLER EGAN  
2001 - JERRY ALAN WALDVOGEL  
2002 - ALFRED P. (HAP) WHEELER  
2003 - DOUGLAS KINLY STURKIE, III

2006 - DONALD M. MCKALE  
2007 - ALMA BENNETT  
2008 - WILLIAM T. PENNINGTON, JR.  
2009 - WEBB MORROW SMATHERS, JR.  
2010 - MELANIE M. COOPER  
2011 - RICHARD STEPHEN FIGLIOLA  
2012 - WINDSOR WESTBROOK SHERRILL  
2013 - JOHN BALLATO  
2014 - FRANCES CATHERINE MOBLEY  
2015 - JUNE J. PILCHER  
2016 - ANTONIS KATSIYANNIS  
2017 - TERRY M. TRITT  
2018 - LISA C. BENSON





Logo credit: Ashley B. Jones, 2020 (B.A. Political Science & Communication 2022)

## Quick Hits: Data & Info

Are Clemson students registered to vote? Do they turn out to vote? Are there differences based on major course of study? Check out our reports below.

[Clemson University 2020 NSLVE Campus Report](#)

[Clemson University 2014 and 2018 NSLVE Campus Report - Midterm Elections](#)

[Clemson University 2012 and 2016 NSLVE Campus Report - Presidential Election Cycles](#)

Are you a student and want to know more about student voter registration and education?

Campus Vote Project - 50 state info specific for college students

What's on your ballot and where to vote

Are you a faculty or staff member and want to incorporate voter education in your work?

We have a weekly blog for that!

I.) Executive Summary for this Plan





**Who are we?** This action plan was developed over the fall 2021/spring 2022 semesters at Clemson University through our "Clemson Votes" coalition. We are students, staff, faculty, and community members on the leadership group, also connecting to and working with our local election board of Pickens County, South Carolina with the common goal of improving student demographic engagement. This plan goes through the primary and Nov 2022 elections, and we will continue to revisit, revise, adapt, and set new goals in spring 2023 and after.

[Clemson Votes - working membership list](#)

[Link in TigerQuest \(internal\)](#)

**What do we seek to do?** We seek to initiate and sustain broad-based, nonpartisan efforts aimed at improving the democratic engagement of our student population - graduate and undergraduate.

**Where do we seek to make an impact?** Our main campus of Clemson University is in the Upstate region of South Carolina, and the majority of our students are connected in face-to-face educational activities here. Through training, curriculum, co-curriculum, programming, and collaborative messaging, we aim to also reach the smaller numbers of students embedded in our innovation campuses throughout the state.

**Why now?** Clemson Votes started in 2018 to improve student democratic engagement in a more intentional and concerted way. Using our NSLVE and institutional data helps us to identify areas to address.

**When will we make an impact?** IN 2019, we established short-term goals and long-term goals. Our Clemson Votes leadership coalition adjusted and updated our goals for 2022 to more accurately represent continued areas for growth and improvement.

**How?** Our co-leaders from academic and student affairs will facilitate the continued coalition meetings during the implementation phases of our campus action plan. Leaders from individual offices and units will accomplish their tasks according to our strategies outlined below. We will be working short-term and long-term.

## II.) Coalition and Leadership - How did we develop this plan?





Clemson Votes consists of students, faculty, staff, and community members comprising a diverse cross-section of the Clemson University community and surrounding area. We communicate regularly with the elections board of Pickens County, Georgia on our shared aims and opportunities. The co-convenors of Clemson Votes are academic Associate Dean Dr. Bridget Trogden and student affairs Director for Student Leadership & Engagement Kate Radford, together with our undergraduate Clemson Votes student interns - currently Bri Bowen and [open position to be filled in F22].

The coalition includes students representing the organizations of Clemson University Undergraduate and Graduate Student Government, Council on Diversity Affairs, Social Justice Council, Middle Eastern Student Association, Black Improvement Association, fraternity and sorority life, departmental clubs and organizations, campus interns, student affiliates of national parties, and the Pearce Center for Professional Communication.

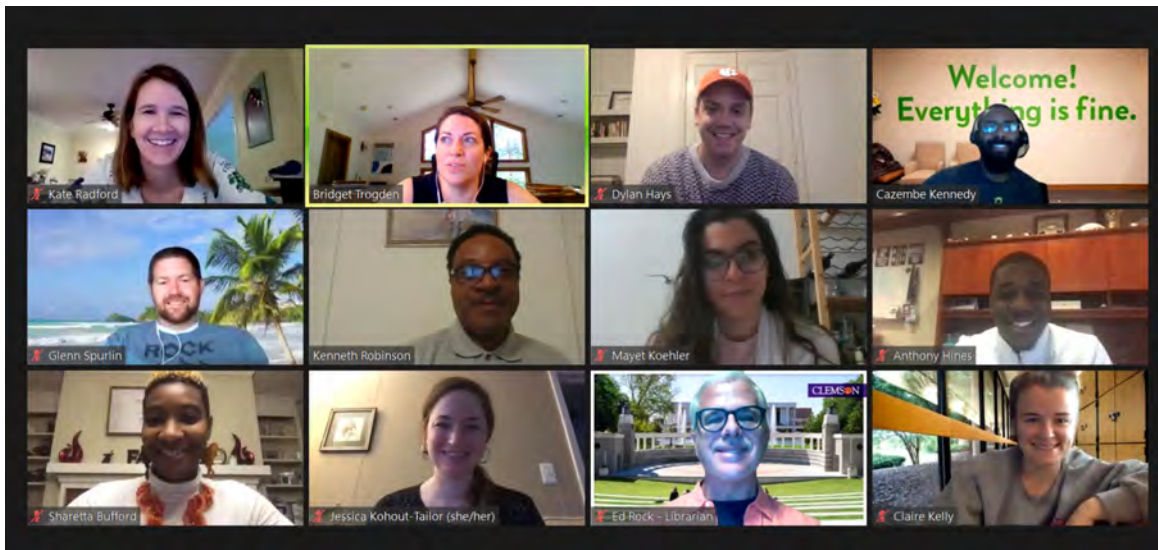
Faculty representatives come from disciplines of political science, sociology, English, economics, science, business, women's leadership, mathematics, and University Libraries. The Director of the Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation provides coalition input, and faculty teaching in the Clemson Honors College and in the courses fulfilling our state-wide mandate for American founding documents are dedicated to including voter engagement in their courses.

Staff and faculty representatives from the Clemson Home unit, the Gantt Multicultural Center, the Center for Student Engagement & Leadership, the Office of Student Transitions, College advising centers, and Student Athlete Development are part of the coalition. The faculty and staff on our coalition are advisors for student organizations. They teach classes. They are involved in community organizations and have a dedication to diversity and inclusion. They are leaders on and off campus.

Furthermore, we feel especially fortunate to have the support of the Pickens County NAACP and the local League of Women Voters with specific representation on our coalition. Our community experts provide much depth and breadth of experience to our first ever campus plans and have established connections with the local elections board and elections officials.

To create this plan, we had a series of three focused meetings over the spring of 2022 for vetting and sorting ideas into strategies. These strategies were then used to create our short-term and long-term goals.

[Want to use Votes & Ballots in your own work? Link is here!](#)



Some Clemson Votes coalition members at our last meeting before the November 2020 election!

### III.) Commitment of the Institution





Clemson University is a public-land grant institution. Our founding and values are inherently related to the concepts of citizenship, with a mission where "Our primary purpose is educating undergraduate and graduate students to think deeply about and engage in the social, scientific, economic, and professional challenges of our times."

We are currently in an era of unprecedented growth and demand, along with a recent Carnegie reclassification as a Doctoral University - Very high research activity (R01), up from an R02 less than five years ago. Many things are changing. Examining our institutional landscape helps us to continue to grow and serve our students' needs.

We would describe our institutional commitment in two ways: through positional leader support and through structural support. Positionally, our Provost/Chief Academic Officer and our Vice President of Student Affairs are both aware of and in support of our democratic engagement initiative.

Furthermore, Provost Jones helped to champion the creation of the DemocrACCy challenge and learning community with all of the ACC-AC (Atlantic Coast Conference-Academic Consortium) Provosts in the fall of 2019, a challenge that Clemson continues to co-lead. In terms of our structural support, building our Clemson Votes coalition was not difficult; we have multiple campus leaders who are "all in" for democratic engagement initiatives. As a large campus, our biggest challenge to the coalition is in coordinating across units, but we are committed to doing so and working toward our goals and strategies outlined in the sections below.

## IV.) Landscape of the Institution

Clemson University employs a multi-year, nationally normed survey schedule as one form of indirect assessment for the learning experiences of our student population and for assessing our campus climate. This institutional data is a valuable tool for measuring our students' growth over time and comparing to peer institutions.

- National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE): Deployed in spring 2021 and on a three-year cycle thereafter. The NSSE, administered to first-year and senior students, collects and compares information on how undergraduate students spend their time and what they gain from attending college.
- Multi-institutional Study of Leadership (MSL): Deployed in spring 2019, spring 2022, and on a three-year cycle thereafter. The MSL provides information on the development of socially responsible leadership across several research-based parameters.
- HERI surveys - Your First College Year (YFCY) and College Senior Survey (CSS): Deployed in spring 2023 and on a three-year cycle thereafter. These surveys are given to both first-year and senior students in order to assess academic and personal development.

Click here for a comprehensive look at the data and outcomes that inform our work

Many of the questions and disaggregated data within the surveys are appropriate indicators of Clemson University's democratic engagement climate and point to areas where we need to improve. We have specifically outlined the questions that we will be tracking as part of our democratic engagement landscape. Data can be available to on-campus and off-campus stakeholders as needed. Email Dr. Bridget Trogden (trogden@clemson.edu) with a request.

To-date, we do not have institutional student learning outcomes around democratic engagement and civic learning. We have set this as a long-term goal and will work toward implementation and assessment, using the AAC&U Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric to guide our work.

## V.) How will we use NSLVE data?

Did you know that the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement provides this information to campuses? Link here to their site.





We are glad to have the opportunity to make our NSLVE data public. (Links are at the very top of this document.) Prior to the 2018 midterms, Clemson had never acquired the NSLVE data. In both our Clemson Votes coalition meetings and in talking with stakeholders, we see the value of this data to help us better understand our students, their habits, and where we should focus our efforts.

We found our data to be surprising in some ways and not in others. With regard to the 2018 midterms, a large number of our students are registered to vote (78%). However, of those who are registered, not quite half (49.6%) actually voted. In the 2020 election, we saw a larger registration rate (nearly 89%) and a yield rate of 81%. We believe - based on this data and evidence from the literature - that focusing our efforts on voter turnout and voter education will be most important for our students, along with providing students with accurate and reliable information on

registering to vote either in our local precinct or at their permanent home addresses.

We explicitly utilized our NSLVE data in setting our goals and will explicitly use our NSLVE data in measuring our progress on those goals.

Because of how our National Student Clearinghouse data is reported, we could not extrapolate from the NSLVE reports much meaningful data on a number of student demographic variables, including race and gender. However, we found the voter breakdown by discipline/major to be quite enlightening. Clemson student data seems to follow national trends: students studying education, history, and public service professions vote at the highest rates. STEM students vote at the lowest rates, which is especially problematic at a school such as ours where these fields constitute a large percentage of our student population.

As one result of analyzing this data, our coalition has developed strategies specifically aimed toward improving the infusion democratic and voter engagement in our courses. We are in the midst of curricular revisions (general education revision, high-impact practices and engaged learning), and using our NSLVE data as both an indicator and a lever provides an opportunity for preparing better citizens.

## VI.) Goals

**Goal 1. Voter registration.** In 2022, we intend to increase student voter registration rates to 89%+. This will be measured through the institution's participation in NSLVE. (2020 registration rate: 88.6%, 2018 registration rate: 78.5%, 2016 registration rate: 81.5%)

**Goal 2. Voter turnout.** In 2022, we intend to increase the voting rate of registered students to 60%+. This will be measured through the

institution's participation in NSLVE. (2020 yield rate: 80.7%, 2018 yield rate: 49.6%, 2016 yield rate: 71.6%)

**Goal 3. Voter education.** In 2022, we intend to improve voter education at Clemson University through intentional strategies related to a.) curricular connections, b.) collaborative programming, and c.) enhanced communication strategies. We will track and measure our improvements in voter education through our working sheet of strategies regularly updated by coalition members and by our performance on our end-of-year report with the DemocrACCy Challenge.

**Goal 4. Long-term goal.** Create University-level democratic engagement and civic learning student learning outcomes by 2024. Work toward implementation strategies for these outcomes such that all students are reached by 2027.

## VII.) Strategies

[Click here to view our working sheet of strategies](#)





## Strategies for Goal 1

Orientation : a.) Student Orientation Ambassadors are trained about the importance of registering to vote and how-to for sharing with new students. b.) Clemson Votes UPIC intern and/or leadership will have table and materials about voter registration at student orientation resource fairs (summer and January). c.) Incorporate voter registration information into University-level graduate student orientation.

Technology and support: a.) Create website as one-stop-shop for all voting information.

Involvement pathways: a.) Voter registration and education tables at Tiger Prowl campus involvement fair held every semester. b.) Voter registration tables at all Center for Student Leadership and Engagement service

events. c.) Develop and deliver student organization presentations and registration challenges with student voting ambassadors.

## **Strategies for Goal 2**

Reducing barriers: a.) Incorporate absentee ballot/making a voting plan module into study abroad pre-departure orientation. b.) Work with faculty & staff taking University-sponsored trips over fall break to prepare absentee ballot/making a voting plan information. (Background information: election day is a no-school holiday in South Carolina, as per state statute. However, Clemson University moves fall break back to accommodate election day every two years, so many social and academic trips are held over fall break.) c.) Share the institution list of notaries to students from states where their absentee ballot must be notarized.

GOTV education: a.) Relay state-specific information to students about registration and absentee ballot/making a voting plan during Welcome Week, with residence hall meetings. b.) Publicize the LibGuide from Clemson Libraries that has information about voter registration, elections and candidates, and media literacy.

## **Strategies for Goal 3**

Curricular strategies: a.) Update and deliver CU 1000 voting module for new students. b.) Promote the Voter and Democratic Engagement module from Canvas Commons for any faculty to incorporate into their courses. c.) Share weekly Clemson Votes features in the Teaching Newsletter. d.) Voter education assignments in REACH Act courses.

GOTV communication: a.) Develop clear and consistent messaging about voter education through our PR platforms. b.) Implement our social media plan, including student Instagram and TikTok take-overs.

Resources for student organizations: a.) Share the manual for student organizations of guidelines for bringing political candidates to campus. b.) Share the packet for student organizations to guide programming and democratic engagement activities. c.) Create debate watch guides for students and student organizations.

Cultural programming and diversity emphasis: a.) Voter registration & education during cultural months with Gantt Center, with emphasis on issues impacting specific populations (Black History Month, Women's History Month, Pride Week, Latinx Heritage Month, Asian American/Pacific Islanders Month. b.) Feature social and democratic engagement issues through Clemson Libraries displays. c.) Develop democratic engagement night series at Barnes Center. d.) Work with Student Athlete Advisory Council for student athlete specific-events and All Vote No Play initiatives.

## **Strategies for Goal 4**

Collaboration: Start working toward this goal through alignment of current initiatives.

## VIII.) Reporting





We have intentionally used this Adobe Spark Page format for creating our campus plan, not only for the visual appeal, but also because it allows for:

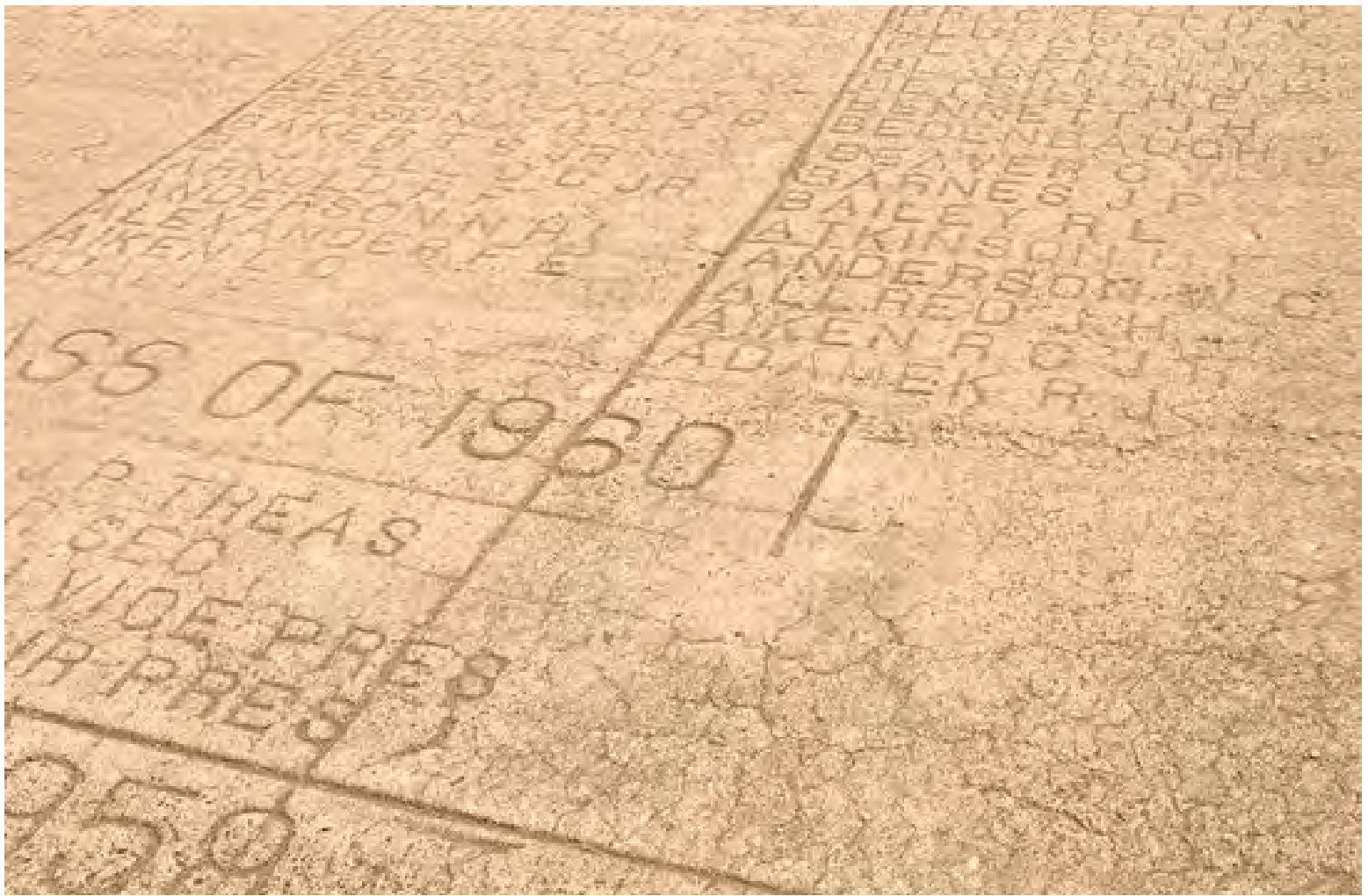
- The use of URLs for public posting of our NSLVE and institutional data related to democratic engagement.
- The inclusion of our strategy tracking sheets and key contacts.
- Continuous updating as we determine what works for us and what tweaks need to be made to our action plan over time.
- Tracking of unique views. (For example, between March 2019 and May 2022, this page has been viewed by over 2,500 unique IP addresses.)

(Are you reading this as a pdf and don't know what Spark is? [Click here for our live site!](#))

Furthermore, we have:

- Established Clemson Votes as a group within our student organizations database (Tiger Quest) so that the coalition is searchable and trackable.
- Created a blog for faculty on sharing resources.
- Co-created a reporting mechanism within the DemocrACCy Challenge for collecting and reporting our annual activities. The form not only helps Clemson Votes to identify strengths and areas for improvement, but it is also used by all ACC institutions for reporting and elevating our collective work.

## IX.) Evaluation



Information is collected and analyzed as we receive NSLVE data (Goal 1 and Goal 2), carry out voter education strategies (Goal 3), and create our long-term outcomes (Goal 4). The three institution-wide surveys discussed in Section IV also guide our work and provide data on areas where we will establish action.

We believe that our short-term goals all fulfill the SMARTIE (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timebound, inclusive, and equitable) recommendations.

In addition to constantly updating and tracking our progress on our working strategies sheet, we will evaluate our progress on goals on an annual basis. We have regular check-ins three times each semester (beginning, middle, end) with our Clemson Votes leadership coalition to make sure we are on track with our strategies that contribute to the success of our goals.

Our long-term goal is more comprehensive. As we work on institutionalizing goals 1-3, we will be laying the groundwork for goal 4. As mentioned in the commitment section, much strategic planning and change is currently underway at Clemson University, especially as we come out of pandemic and re-commit to our institutional mission. Rather than starting an entirely new area for democratic engagement and civic learning student learning outcomes, we will be working toward aligning this goal with other strategic initiatives.

*Thanks for reading. Want to talk more? Contact  
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