



College of DuPage COD Votes
Democratic Engagement
Action Plan: 2022-2024

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Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Stephanie Quirk, Coordinator of Student Life in partnership with students in the Student Leadership Council and members of the COD Votes team to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at College of DuPage. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2024 Academic year, on and around our campus in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

The following groups will be leading this work at College of DuPage to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Undergraduate Students
- Faculty from a variety of disciplines
- Student Affairs Staff and Managers

The mission of our initiative is:

- The COD Votes team is a cross-institutional group of College of DuPage students, staff, faculty, and community members working to increase nonpartisan civic learning and engagement in the democratic process.

The All In Campus Democracy Challenge action plan is a summary of the collaborative effort to unify and coordinate civic engagement activities at the College of DuPage. Our institution has a long history of serving students and the surrounding community with a focus on being a center for excellence in teaching, learning, and cultural experiences. It does this by championing the values of integrity, honesty, respect, responsibility, and equity. This action plan continues our ongoing commitment to make plans and to take action to increase nonpartisan student civic learning, political engagement, and – especially – voter participation.

Here we formalize our commitment to:

- Establish a team dedicated to increasing nonpartisan civic learning and engagement in the democratic process
- Ensure College of DuPage has an annual plan with short and long-term goals for increasing voting rates among the student body.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for College of DuPage students who wish to fulfill service-learning requirements through the civic engagement of their peers

At the heart of this action plan is the goal of educating, empowering, and supporting students, faculty, staff, and community to become active participants, seek to appreciate and understand other perspectives, and make conscious decisions to have a positive impact on their communities.

Leadership

Stephanie Quirk, PhD, Coordinator of Student Life will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They work collaboratively with the COD Votes Student Leadership Team:

- Ayesha Shafiuddin - Student Leadership Council President
- Angel Hernandez - Student Leadership Council Officer
- Zohaib Quadri - Student Leadership Council Officer
- Emily Kesler - Student Leadership Council Representative
- Shahid Khatib - COD Votes Student Assistant, Office of Student Life

COD Votes Advisory Team:

- Chuck Steele - Manager of Student Life, Student Leadership Council Co-Advisor
- Shamili Ajgaonkar - Biology Faculty, Global Education Faculty Chair
- Maureen Heffern Ponicki - Political Science Faculty
- Kacy Abeln – Speech Communication Faculty
- Jim Allen - English Faculty, Learning Communities Faculty Chair
- Annie Knight - Paralegal Studies Faculty and Program Chair
- Rebecca Harrington - Project Manager, Career Services Center
- Christine Kickles - Reference Librarian, Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society Co-Advisor
- David Swope, Sr. - Manager of Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion
- Joan DiPiero - Community Relations, Marketing Department
- Dave Evans - League of Women Voters, Glen Ellyn, IL
- Jenifer Bystry - League of Women Voters, Glen Ellyn, IL
- Thomas Armstrong - Just a Foot Soldiers Journey Inc., Naperville, IL

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, different perspectives and areas of expertise, trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy, and leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus into our work. We also have established a relationship with the DuPage County Elections Division and have the support of the Deputy Clerk to continue developing opportunities to enhance civic engagement and learning on campus.

To ensure continuity of leadership, Stephanie Quirk's job description was updated in 2023 from "Coordinator of Student Life, Leadership" to "Coordinator of Student Life, Leadership and Civic Engagement". The Office of Student Life also created a "COD Votes Student Assistant" position with primary responsibilities to support the Student Leadership Council COD Votes student committee and COD Votes advisory committee work. The Student Leadership Council continues to commit to appointing one student officer position and one student representative position to lead the COD Votes student committee work which is renewed annually.

The Student Leadership Council's COD Votes student committee meets weekly. Our COD Votes advisory team meets quarterly for all-team meetings at the College of DuPage and faculty and staff convene monthly for working meetings as a civic engagement community of practice. We also partner with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus: All In Campus Democracy Challenge, National Voter Registration Day, and Democracy Works: Turbo Vote and we are active members of the Community College Campus Compact group.

Commitment

College of DuPage's institutional philosophy is clear: we are wholly committed to facilitating and supporting student success in learning and we affirm our role as a catalyst for promoting dialogue and tolerance on issues supporting the common good. An institutional-level commitment to civic engagement sends a message to all students and the campus community that Chaps live out the core values of integrity, honesty, respect, responsibility, and equity when they are civically engaged and vote. Dr. Brian Caputo, the President of College of DuPage, has signed the Presidential Commitment of the All In Challenge, showing his dedication to promoting civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- On-campus polling place
- Voter registration tables
- Protests/rallies/walkouts
- Signage promoting Election Day

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events
- Constitution Day
- National Voter Registration Day
- National Voter Education Week
- Vote Early Day
- Deliberative dialogues
- Participation in a state-wide advocacy day
- Campus leaders inviting student leaders to participate in legislative visits

We are continually seeking additional opportunities to increase the emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement on campus.

Landscape

The Student Leadership Council and Office of Student Life have a long history of encouraging students to become civically engaged. The Three Tenets of Leadership Philosophy, developed in the Office of Student Life in 1991 speaks directly to this effort to align our definition of leadership with a positive impact in the community. The three tenets are:

- Active participation in life and communities
- Appreciation and understanding of multiple perspectives
- Conscious decision-making

Practicing these three tenets to have a positive impact in the community is leadership and is how civic engagement is centered in the work of Student Life and the Student Leadership Council.

In addition to these efforts, several other areas of the college facilitate programming, host co-curricular activities, and teach faculty courses with learning outcomes aligned with enhancing students' civic literacy and encouraging civic and political engagement. Although great work is being done across campus, there is room for improvement and this plan can serve as our commitment as we look to expand on-campus programs and partnerships with the community.

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from Fall 2023 when our total student enrollment was 23,216.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part-Time
100% (23,216)	0%	31% (7,142)	69% (16,074)

Residency by Headcount:

In-District	Out-of-District	Out-of-State	International Students	Commuter
78% (18,199)	19% (4,335)	0% (93)	3% (589)	100% (23,216)

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Unknown
45% (10,560)	53% (12,241)	2% (415)

Age Demographics:

18 & Under	19-24	25-54	50+
29% (6,729)	41% (9,597)	26% (6,067)	4% (823)

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black or African American	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races	Unknown	Non-resident
11% (2,518)	0% (40)	7% (1,589)	29% (6,680)	0% (32)	43% (9,985)	3% (727)	7% (1,049)	3% (596)

Student Type by Headcount:

New	Continuing Previous Semester	Returning	Other
24% (5,522)	42% (9,662)	8% (1,770)	27% (6,260)

Our institution also gathers data through the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, however, we do not currently use this data for action planning related to COD Votes. This is a future opportunity for our team.

Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we considered the following information. We know our campus faces the following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan do not specifically mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
- We don't currently have processes for registering large percentages of our students.
- Our organization's respective webpage does not contain a streamlined and structured layout to display the following:
 - Voter Statistics
 - Encouragement for students to register to vote
 - Available opportunities for civic learning and engagement

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We hold routine convenes to discuss strategies for student outreach and involvement.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our student body.
- We ensure consistent annual provision of programming on our campus to encourage civic engagement and voter registration efforts.
- We use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We continue to host a variety of nonpartisan voter engagement efforts to garner involvement.
- We are able to engage student leaders for leadership opportunities and for the fulfillment of our initiative.
- We have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic responsibilities and democratic engagement.
- We collaborate with nonpartisan organizations to fulfill mutual goals of raising awareness regarding civic duty.

Year 1 Goals

With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year (2023-2024):

1. Ensure that 75% of all incoming students enrolled in the First Year Experience course are registered to vote if eligible.
2. Increase our overall 2022 registration rate from 5% to 72%
3. Increase our overall 2022 voting rate from 5% to 44%

Year 5 Goals

We have also set five goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years (2024-2027):

1. Integrate voter registration and education into the First Year Experience course curriculum by fall 2024
 - a. Connect with First Year Experience faculty members to verify student voter registration and track registration rates.
 - b. Introduce surveys to collect feedback on students' experience related to civic engagement within the First Year Experience.
2. Develop a Poll Worker Project on campus in partnership with our local elections division and recruit 50 student participants
3. Achieve voter parity across racial and ethnic groups, with students of color voting at the same rate as white students.
 - a. 2020 data indicate White students are voting at a 64% rate and there is a gap of 22% for Asian students, 8% for Hispanic students, and 6% for Black students.
4. Increase our overall registration rate from 15% to 88%
5. Increase our overall voting rate from 15% to 73%

Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years. These are tactics that we **already completed** in the **short term** (since 2021):

Spring & Fall 2021 Programming

MLK Day of Service - Conversation Circle: For Whom Are We Responsible? – January 18

Living Leadership Program, Stephanie Quirk, Ph.D., College of DuPage
Jules Lloyd, Louis University

Constitution Day 2021 - September 16

Constitution Day Panel Discussion: Voting Laws: Suppression or Avoiding Fraud?

Voting Rights Music Friday Faculty Spotlight - September 17

Julia DiLiberti (Humanities Faculty) Listen to My Rights: Music, Social Justice and Voting Rights

National Voter Registration Day 2021 - Sept 28

Hosted by Student Leadership Council & COD Votes! Register to vote in Partnership Hall with the League of Women Voters, Glen Ellyn.

Voter Registration Table – November 18

Hosted by Student Leadership Council & COD Votes! Register to vote in Partnership Hall with the League of Women Voters, Glen Ellyn.

Fall 2021 State and Local Government Speaker Series

- 10/21 - Municipal Governance with Julia Geenen Schwarze, Carol Stream Village Clerk
- 10/26 - Metropolitan Governance with Jerry Bennett, Mayor of Palos Hills, the President of the Southwest Conference of Mayors and founding Chairman of the Board of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)
- 11/4 - Election laws and getting and staying on the ballot with Attorney Ed Mullen
- 11/11 - The state of state media with Bill Wheelhouse, General Manager at WUIS public radio and former reporter Statehouse Bureau Chief for NPR Illinois, and former president of the Illinois Newsbroadcasters Association
- 11/13 - The importance of infrastructure with Sara Hunn, the Director of DuPage County Stormwater Management.
- 12/8 - Understanding the Illinois Judiciary with Peoria Circuit Judge Chris Dosotch

Spring 2022 & Fall 2022 Programming

MLK Day of Service - Conversation Circle: Who is in Your Community? - Jan 2022

Attendance: 10

Living Leadership Program, Stephanie Quirk, Ph.D., College of DuPage

Unify America Challenge: College Bowl - Feb 2022

Attendees: 55

The Unify Challenge College Bowl is a guided video conversation with a student from another university who's different from you. Let's show the nation how student conversations can make a big difference in our country.

Paint Party Event - What Brings You to the Polls? - April 2022

Attendees: 30

A relaxing art-centered paint party event where students will be provided materials. Centered on creating something that represents why we vote/participate in the democratic process - "what brings us to the polls?"

COD Votes: Prize Wheel Wednesday - April 13

COD Votes hosts Prize Wheel Wednesday with COD mascot Chappy! Stop by to win prizes and learn about COD Votes and our upcoming events!

Voter Registration Table - April 19

Register to vote in Partnership Hall with the League of Women Voters, Glen Ellyn.

Voter Registration Table - May 4

Register to vote in Partnership Hall with the League of Women Voters, Glen Ellyn.

New Student Orientation - August 2022

Student Leadership Council hosts a table featuring TurboVote promotion to encourage new students to register to vote, update their registration, or get election reminders.

Popcorn Wednesday – Constitution Day & National Voter Registration Day - Sept 14

Popcorn promotion raising awareness about the Constitution Day event and encouraging voter registration. Hosted by the Student Leadership Council.

Constitution Day: The Supreme Court: The Final Word? - Sept 15

Attendees: 23

Have you ever desired to be in the room where it happened? On September 17, 1787, meeting in a secret room in Philadelphia, the signers of the United States Constitution finalized the creation of Article III, the judicial branch of our government, and a Supreme Court of the United States. Join us to hear more while enjoying free food and giveaways.

Livestream Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THnALkvnwBo>

National Voter Registration Day - September 20

Hosted by Student Leadership Council & COD Votes! Register to vote in Partnership Hall with the League of Women Voters, Glen Ellyn.

Unify America Challenge: College Bowl - September 27, 28, & 29 & Oct 4, 5, 6

Attendees: 50

The Unify Challenge College Bowl is a guided video conversation with a student from another university who's different from you. Let's show the nation how student conversations can make a big difference in our country.

"Decision 2022: Get Engaged" Alumni Panel & Info Session - Oct 24

Attendees: 16

Hear from former COD students about how and why you should get involved in politics, check your voter registration, make a plan to vote, and find out more about the upcoming midterm elections!

"Bridging the Divide" Workshop with Braver Angels - Oct 25 & 27

Attendees: 49

In our current polarized political environment, many people avoid or dread political conversations with friends or family members whose politics differ from their own. Braver Angels Skills for Bridging the Divide Workshops teach skills for having respectful conversations that clarify differences, search for common ground, and affirm the importance of the relationship. They also give participants a safe environment to practice those skills.

Popcorn Wednesday: GET OUT THE VOTE - Nov 2

Popcorn promotion raising on campus early voting, taking the pledge to vote, and election day. Hosted by the Student Leadership Council and Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Society.

Student Leader Tabling: GET OUT THE VOTE - Nov 3

Raising on campus early voting, taking the pledge to vote, and election day. Hosted by the Student Leadership Council and Phi Theta Kappa International Honors Society.

Advocacy 101 Workshop - Dec 1

Attendees: 23

Leadership is about having a positive impact and advocating for real change - but HOW does that happen? Join the Living Leadership Program for an interactive and engaging leadership development workshop on the topic of ADVOCACY. Led by the Restore Justice Foundation organization, in this training, you will learn about the legislative process in Illinois and how a bill really becomes a law, develop skills to navigate the legislative process in Springfield where lawmakers gather and build support for issues that matter to you. All students from all majors and all levels of leadership experience are welcome!

Spring 2023 & Fall 2023 Programming

College Leadership Summit – Feb 3

Attendees: 12

The College Leadership Summit is a free, one-day summit to engage college students in critical reflection on the topics of social justice, human rights, and inclusion. Students will focus on community building by participating in a variety of breakout sessions throughout the day, reflecting on their responsibility as citizens, and discussing how they can create a positive environment in their communities. Through inspirational keynote speakers and breakout sessions, students will leave with tools to be a leader and an advocate for social justice issues that are important to them.

An Activist for Peace - Ken Nwadike Jr. – Special Guest Speaker

Attendees: 19

Ken E. Nwadike, Jr. is an American documentary filmmaker, motivational speaker, and peace activist popularly known as the Free Hugs Guy. Ken is the founder of the Free Hugs Project, which gained popularity as he made major news headlines for his peacekeeping efforts and de-escalation of violence during protests, riots, and political rallies. Ken was featured in Google's 2016 Year in Search video as a highlight among some of the year's most defining moments and he has made many appearances on news programs, including CNN, USA Today, Good Morning Britain, and BBC News.

Freedom Riders - "My Life as a Foot Soldier for Civil Rights" - Special Guest Thomas Armstrong

Attendees: 38

Born in Silver Creek, Mississippi, Thomas Armstrong as a student at Tugaloo College, got involved in civil rights work. He organized black Mississippians to register to vote, despite threats on his life. And in 1961 he and three other Tugaloo students took part in the Freedom Rides, a campaign to integrate interstate buses. Come and hear his courageous story.

Unify America Challenge: College Bowl - Feb 21, 22, 23, Feb 28, Mar 1, 2

Attendees: 98

The Unify Challenge College Bowl is a guided video conversation with a student from another university who's different from you. Let's show the nation how student conversations can make a big difference in our country.

"Bridging the Divide" Workshop with Braver Angels - April 3 & 5

Attendees: 35

In our current polarized political environment, many people avoid or dread political conversations with friends or family members whose politics differ from their own. Braver Angels Skills for Bridging the Divide Workshops teach skills for having respectful conversations that clarify differences, search for common ground, and affirm the importance of the relationship. They also give participants a safe environment to practice those skills.

Constitution Day - Sept 14

Attendees: 86

Help students gain a better understanding of how the U.S. Constitution shapes our lives during this interactive exploration of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution, which says: Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted. Representatives from the Restore Justice Foundation will share stories, explain how a bill becomes a law, and teach participants how to build support for issues and work with legislative representatives.

National Voter Registration Day Tabling - Sept 19

Attendees: 37

Join the Student Leadership Council, COD VOTES, and the League of Women Voters Glen Ellyn to celebrate National Voter Registration Day. Get registered, check your registration, and sign up to get election reminders 24/7 at cod.turbovote.org
Chaps Get Registered. Chaps Vote!!

Unify America Challenge: College Bowl - Sept 26, 27, 28, 29

Attendees: 98

The Unify Challenge College Bowl is a guided video conversation with a student from another university who's different from you. Let's show the nation how student conversations can make a big difference in our country.

"Bridging the Divide" Workshop with Braver Angels - Oct 24 & 26

Attendees: 54

In our current polarized political environment, many people avoid or dread political conversations with friends or family members whose politics differ from their own. Braver Angels Skills for Bridging the Divide Workshops teach skills for having respectful conversations that clarify differences, search for common ground, and affirm the importance of the relationship. They also give participants a safe environment to practice those skills.

COD Oxfam Hunger Banquet - Nov 15

Attendees: 52

When guests arrive at an Oxfam Hunger Banquet event, they draw tickets at random that assign each to a high-, middle-, or low-income tier—based on the latest statistics about poverty around the world. Each income level has a different experience. A master of ceremonies (MC) and student facilitators guide participants through this interactive experience. Finally, guests come together to share their thoughts and take action after the meal.

Creation of Voter Education Materials

- Faculty-created voting primers
- Student-created graphics and marketing materials
- Social media campaign on IG @cod.votes

Short-Term Tactics

These are tactics that we **plan to initiate** in the **short term** (in the next year):

- Creation of a COD Votes brand identity
- Creation of social media campaigns each semester leading up to the 2024 election
- Spring / Fall Voter Registration Drives
- Additional Voter Education Events working with programming partners

These are tactics that we **hope to accomplish** in the **short term** (in the next year):

- Apply for funding to have an AmeriCorps VISTA to support civic engagement work on our campus.

Long-Term Tactics

These are tactics that we **are already enacting** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

- Establish a Community of Practice (CoP) through Academic Affairs to craft a broader approach to civic engagement on campus.
- Hired a paid Student Fellow to support the ongoing coordination of campus volunteers.
- Conducting classroom presentation visits to educate and increase civic engagement.

These are tactics that we **hope to bring about** in the **long term**:

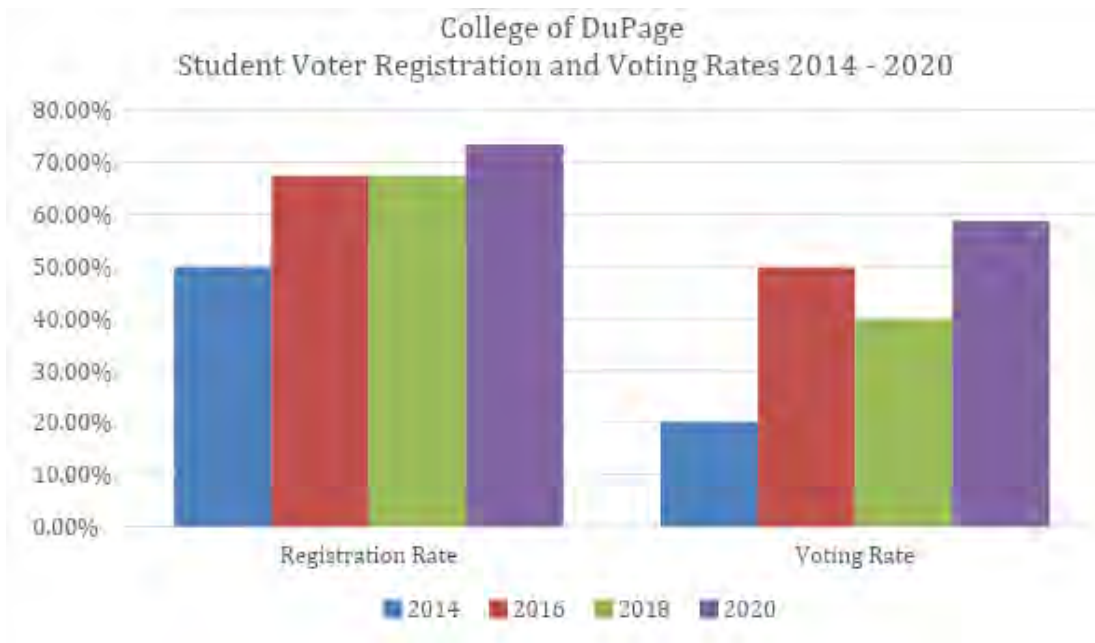
- Propose a Center for Civic Engagement at our institution.

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for the 2020 presidential election. In 2020 our registration rate was 73.4%. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 58.7% and our voting rate among registered students was 80.1%. During this year, our voting rate was lower than the national average.

Our campus also has access to our NSLVE data for the 2018 midterm election. In 2018 our registration rate was 67.4%, our voting rate was 39.8% and our voting rate among registered students was 59%.



Since the 2016 presidential election, the most significant gains in voting rate were in our 18-29 age groups. The 18-21 age group increased their voting rate by 12%, the 22-24 age group increased by 10%, and the 25-29 increased by 10%.

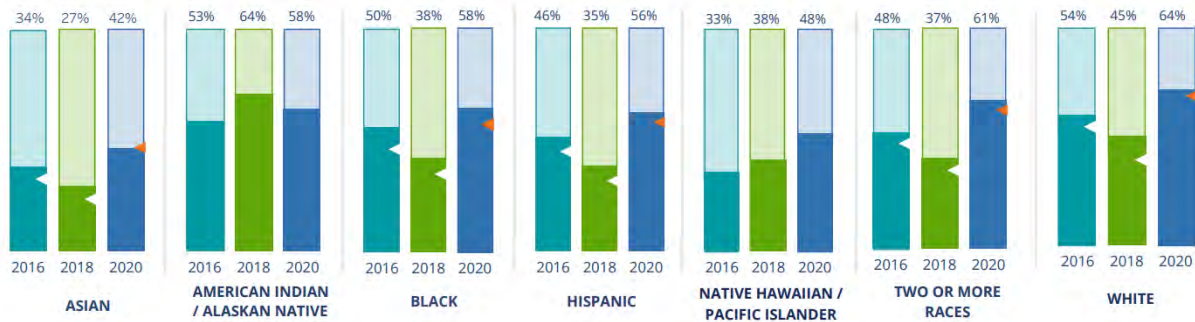
Voting by Age Group

	2016	2018	2020	Increase
18-21	47%	37%	59%	+12
22-24	47%	37%	57%	+10
25-29	44%	36%	54%	+10
30-39	51%	37%	58%	+7
40-49	64%	54%	66%	+2
50+	78%	74%	81%	+3

Estimated Voting Rates by Racial/Ethnicity (2020):

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black or African American	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
42.00 %	0.00%	58.00%	56.00%	0.00%	45.00%	61.00%

By Race / Ethnicity



Reporting & Evaluation

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by emailing to members of our campus coalition and we will share the Action Plan externally when it is complete by posting on the campus website at www.cod.edu/codvotes. We also plan to incorporate the infographics from this Action Plan directly onto the campus website.

We will collect feedback on this plan by regrouping with our campus coalition to debrief, reflect, and integrate feedback collection into individual campus efforts.

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year
- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly.