

# CAMPUS ACTION PLAN

## CORNELL VOTES

A PROJECT OF THE  
CORNELL PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER



**2019-2030**

# CORNELL VOTES!

EVERY PERSON EVERY VOICE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

26TH AMENDMENT OF THE UNITED STATES

In 2018, a team of students, Andrew Goodman Foundation Vote Everywhere Ambassadors and staff advisor, successfully increased voter registration by 25.2% and participation by 27.5% from their 2014 statistics. The effort was supported by various on-campus partners and a coalition of student organizations.

With this increase came greater visibility for our work and we were invited to submit a proposal to the administration on how to best continue the success with the goal of institutionalizing voting as part of the Cornell culture, and students' educational experience. In Fall 2019, the proposal was endorsed by the Vice-President of Student and Campus Life, Dr. Ryan Lombardi. The following Campus Action Plan is a modified version of that proposal - developed to guide the effort for the next ten years.

### 2018-2019

- 25% increase in registration rate
- 27.5% increase of voting rate of registered students
- 25% increase in voting rate

*\*\*Data is compared to 2014 (NSLVE)*

### 2019-2020

- Designed Cornell Votes branding
- Established fellowship for increased student involvement
- Formalized Student Coalition and created Advisory group of staff, faculty, and off-campus partners

### 2020-2021 GOALS

- 90% Registration rate
- 65% Voting rate of registered students
- 50% Voting rate

### by 2030

- Integrate into various university systems and processes
- Host on-campus polling location
- Establish on-campus "Civic Hot Spots" as voting resource hubs.

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# BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

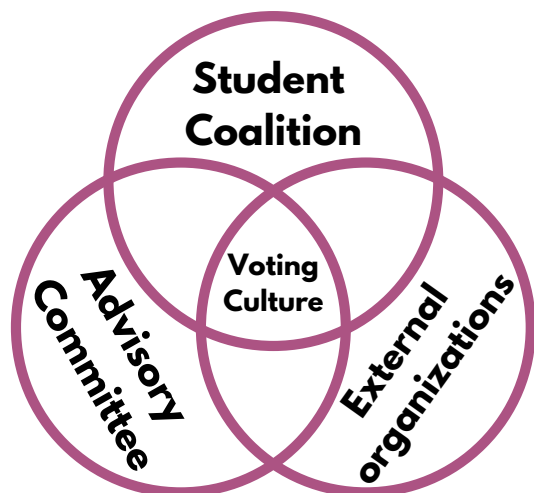
Cornell's main campus resides in the land of Cayuga Nation, Gayogohó:nq' also known as Ithaca, in New York's Tompkins County. We serve 24,000+ graduate and undergraduate students and have additional campuses in New York City, Geneva, NY, Washington, D.C., Doha Qatar, and Rome, Italy.

## Civic Engagement

As New York State's land-grant institution, Cornell University values community and civic engagement and prides itself on promoting active citizenship and engagement with communities through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular offerings. Since 2014, The Public Service Center has been actively working with students on-campus to register students and to turn out the vote. As a result, this effort led to an increase in participation in the recent midterm election. In addition to Cornell students taking the lead to actively engaged with their peers on voter registration and civic engagement, faculty members, like Dr. Bruce Monger, have also been engaging students and fellow faculty members regarding the importance of voting.

## Coalition and Capacity Building

Cornell Votes adopted coalition and capacity building as the framework for our voter engagement efforts. We build on the legacy of Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner (Cornell class of '61), and other freedom fighters and civil rights activists by facilitating coalition building. As such, it is imperative to engage with on- and off-campus partners to accomplish our goals. We do this through:



### Cornell Votes Student Coalition:

Student Assembly, Panhellenic, Interfraternity Council, Multicultural Greek & Fraternal Council  
Cornell Dems, Cornell Republicans, Cornell Libertarians, Varsity and Club Athletic Groups  
Other Student organizations

### Cornell Votes Advisory Committee:

Faculty and Staff representation from across campus (including Residential Life, Greek Life, New Student Program, Human Resources, Community Relations, Communications, etc.) as well as local community partners

### Partnerships with external organizations:

Upstate New York Vote Everywhere Coalition, Andrew Goodman Foundation, All In Democracy Challenge.

# Landscape

*Change life through public engagement.*

Through the work of Institutional Research and Planning, Cornell University has participated in national surveys such as PULSE, and now it is Cornell University Experience (CUE) survey. From these surveys, we are able to get a sense of students' participation in community service or community-based learning opportunities in curricular and extracurricular forms. We are then able to compare this data to other Ivy League and peer institutions. Additionally, these surveys provide the data needed to understand students' interests in engaging politics that will assist with programming needs.

Since establishing our partnership with Andrew Goodman Foundation in 2014, the Public Service Center has worked actively to increase voter registration and participation. The National Study of Voting, Learning and Engagement (NSLVE) report showed an increase in both voter registration and participation from the 2012 Presidential Election to 2016 Presidential Election. The most increase came in the 2018 Midterm Election when the overall voting rate increased from 8.6% in 2014 to 33.7% in 2018. The results received from the NSVLE report have informed the development of this Action Plan.

## LEARN MORE:

**In 2011, Cornell University was designated by Carnegie as the 'Institution of Community Engagement'**



# LEADERSHIP

## University Wide Support

Cornell Votes is a program of the Public Service Center, celebrating 30 years of engaging students, faculty, and alumni with off-campus community partners.

The PSC mission is to empower students through campus and community collaborations to create a more just and equitable world.

### **CORNELL VOTES FELLOWS**

Tolani Aliyu, David Bromberg, Chelsea Butkowski, Chesney Collyer, Rober Gao, Michael Golden, Tori Healey, Keelin Kelly, Dana Karami, Patrick Mehler, Grace Ogden, Jenna Oliver, Tamara Palms, & Henley Schultz.

### **PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER STAFF**

**Amy Kuo Somchanhmavong,**

Associate Director, Community-Based Learning and Partnership

**Sage Alia Clemenco,**

Community Initiatives Program Associate

### **ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

**Jason Cole,** Associate Vice-President, University Relations

**Margherita Fabrizio,** Director, Carol Tatkon Center

**Eveline V. Ferretti,** Public Programs and Communication Administrator, Mann Library

**Gina Giambattista,** Director, Office of the Assemblies

**Jeff P. Godowski,** Assistant Dean, Flora Rose House, West Campus Housing System

**Patricia Gonzalez,** Assistant Director, Student Development Diversity Initiative

**Linda Mikula,** Strategic Communications

**Kara S. Miller,** Director, Greek Life

**Dr. Bruce Monger,** Senior Lecturer, Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

**Julie Paige,** Director, Co-ops and Off-Campus Housing

**Krista Saleet,** Director, Public Service Center

**Ethan Stephenson,** Director, Faculty Living-Learning Program

**Kate Supron,** Campus-Community Liaison, office of Community Relations

**Reginald White,** Director, Human Resources, Cornell Research Services

**Patricia Wynn,** Assistant Vice-President, Student and Campus Life



# GOALS Overview

## Short Term

**2019-2021**

### 2019-2020 Goals:

- Commitment from university and off-campus stakeholders,
- Commitment from various offices and departments to promote voting,
- Establish and promote Cornell Votes branding,
- Establish and solidify coalitions, needed networks to reach 2020 voter registration and participation goals:
  - Cornell Votes Student Coalition
  - Cornell Votes Advisory Committee
  - Upstate New York Vote Everywhere Coalition

### 2020-2021 Goals:

- Increase voter registration and participation:
  - 90% Voter registration rate
  - 65% Voting rate of registered students
  - 51% voting rate
- Strengthen existing coalition and connections with various organizations on and off- campus
- Establish Registered Student Organization

## Long Term

### Planning for the future

The long term vision for Cornell Votes to be folded into the institutional culture of Cornell University. We aim to create a cultural shift by which democratic learning and civic participation are a part of each students' everyday lives.

### Institutionalize voting.

There are a number of concrete steps that need to be taken in order to reach a threshold where every student, staff, and faculty member has the opportunity to be part of the electoral process.

- Integrate voter registration into administrative processes that every new community member takes part in:
  - Move-In Day
  - New Student To-Do List
  - Class Registration/Registrar
  - Hiring/Onboarding/Human Resources
  - Campus Groups & Student Orgs
- Advocate for Early Voting Polling place on campus
- Coordinate Campus Recognition of Election Days

### Voting Culture.

Through the coalition work that we have undertaken, we strive to build new social norms that hold up participation in democracy as part of the Cornell experience. We aim for each student to embrace voting and civic participation as part of their everyday habits.

# GOALS

## Focus Areas

"If people don't vote, everything stays the same. You can protest until the sky turns yellow or the moon turns blue, and it's not going to change anything if you don't vote."

**DOLORES HUERTA,**  
AMERICAN LABOR AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

### Voter Registration

Thanks to the NSLVE report, we were able to see an increase in voter registration and participation during the first 4 years of our initiative (2014 to 2018). Given the substantial gain for the recent midterm election with the support of Andrew Goodman Foundation, we set a goal of having 90% of our overall student population registered to vote in 2020.

Through the support of University Administration and campus colleagues, Cornell Votes will be working to register students during the Move-In days and New Student Orientation. Additionally, we will be working with Residential Halls, and off-campus communities to reach our registration goals.



### Voter Education

Our goal for voter education aims to become a reliable resource hub for election information that is accessible to all students, staff, and faculty members. With planning and networking, we look to develop programs with coalition members to engage student voters in conversations on U.S. voting history, voter suppression, the electorate college, and so forth.

Cornell Votes looks to create a comprehensive nonpartisan voter guide to help students gain more information on presidential candidates as well as State and local candidates.

With the recent efforts in solidifying the Cornell Votes Student Coalition, we are looking to support various programming to bring more awareness around voting, candidates, and social issues plaguing our nation. One way that we have begun to do this is through a joint newsletter in collaboration with Student Government.

### Voter Turnout

The NSLVE report demonstrated that college students' participation in voting during the General Election had been steadily increasing. With the support of the university's administrative leaders and existing foundation, Cornell Vote is moving forward with more ambitious voter registration goals and a jump in voter turnout as well. In addition to the partnership with Andrew Goodman Foundation, Cornell Votes has joined the Ivy League Challenge, which is supported by the All In Democracy Challenge in an effort to motivate campus initiatives and increase voter participation.

To do this, we are planning more activities that would encourage students and help remove barriers to voting. This effort would include:

- Early voting and Election Day shuttles
- Absentee Ballot Clinics
- Advocating for an on-campus Polling place during the Early Voting period.
- Encouraging easier access to absentee voting and voting by mail.



# STRATEGY

## Voter Registration

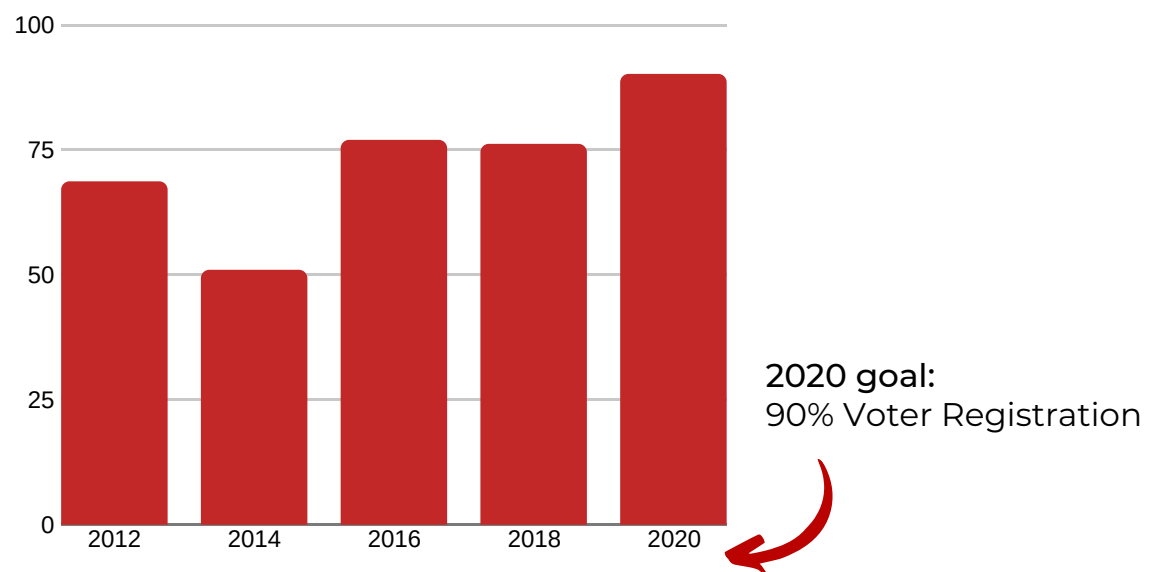
"Students must have initiative; they should not be mere imitators. They must learn to think, and act for themselves - and be free."

**CÉSAR CHÁVEZ,**  
AMERICAN LABOR RIGHTS AND CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Given the substantial gain for the recent midterm election with the support of Andrew Goodman Foundation, we set a goal of having 90% of our overall student population registered to vote in 2020. Cornell Votes will coordinate a university-wide effort through the support of University Administration and campus colleagues. All the programming efforts intend to meet the short- and long-term goals of building institutional culture and infrastructure that support civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation.

- Register students during the Move-In days, New Student Orientation, Club Fest, and so forth
- Present voting information in coordination with Residence Life Staff during the first weeks of the semester in residential dorms
- Table in strategic locations on campus to increase voters that are majoring in the STEM area
- Collaborate with University Relations on mass messaging on voting.
- Present or provide materials available for large lecture classes. Engage faculty members to promote voter registration and participation
- Develop a texting platform, supported by the Andrew Goodman Foundation

**voter registration rate**



# STRATEGY

## Voter Education

"Consciousness is power. Consciousness is education and knowledge. Consciousness is becoming aware. Tomorrow's world is yours to build."

**YURI KOCHIYAMA**  
AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

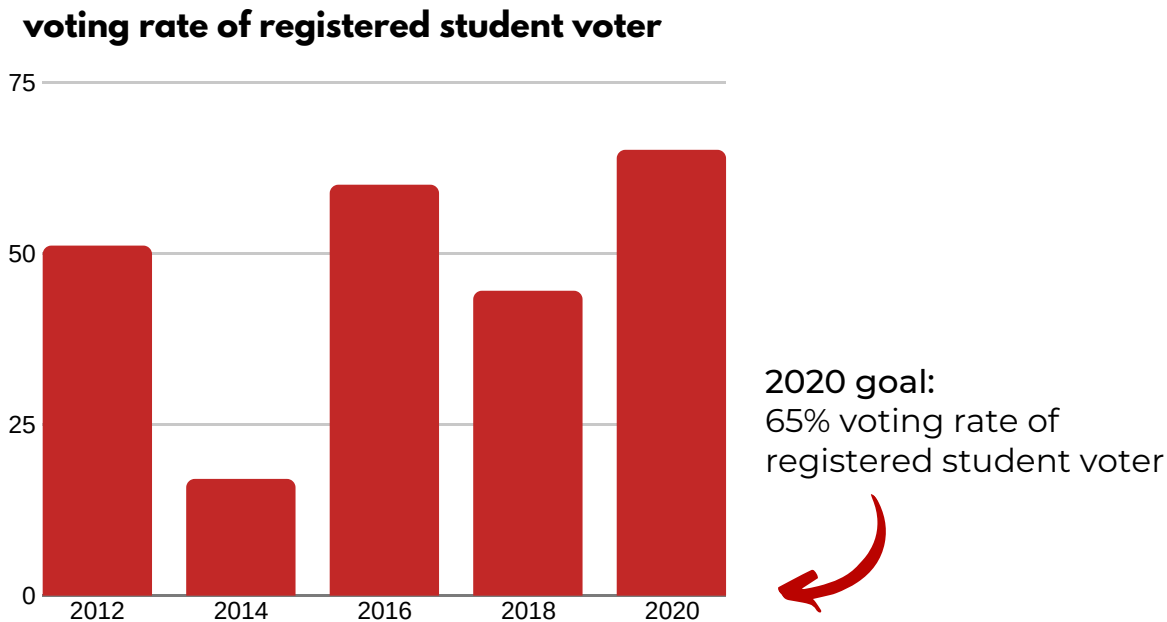
Our goal for voter education aims to become a resource hub that is reliable for and accessible to all students, staff, and faculty members, relating to the elections. With planning and networking, we look to develop programs with coalition members to engage student voters in conversations on US voting history, voter suppression, electorate college, and so forth.

- Create a comprehensive non-partisan candidate guide
- Create a student-centered voting guide
- Develop a student-centered absentee ballot guide
- Lunch-In Series around voting
- Support programs and events hosted by Student Coalition Members and Residential Halls

### Proposed Activities for AY '20-'21:

- Civic engagement series in collaboration with the Carol Tatkon Center for First Year Students
- Civic Dialogue Series with Office of Engagement Initiatives

When it comes to national, state, or local elections, we will continue to work hard to ensure students are educated about candidates and issues that will appear on those ballots. We also aim to provide a comprehensive list of candidates and issue resources, events, and opportunities for students to vote early on campus.



# STRATEGY

## Voter Participation

"Voting is the foundation stone for political action"

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**  
AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Cornell Votes is looking to increase voter participation which involves removing barriers and making voting more accessible and more manageable for Cornell students.

We are focusing on 3 areas to get out to vote:

### Absentee Ballots:

- **Awareness.** Demystify absentee ballot process through education and support
- **Resource.** Make stamps and envelopes available for students to request for ballots
- **Accessibility.** Establish on-campus hot-spots with various conference services and offices where students can pick up stamps and envelopes and drop ballots to be mailed

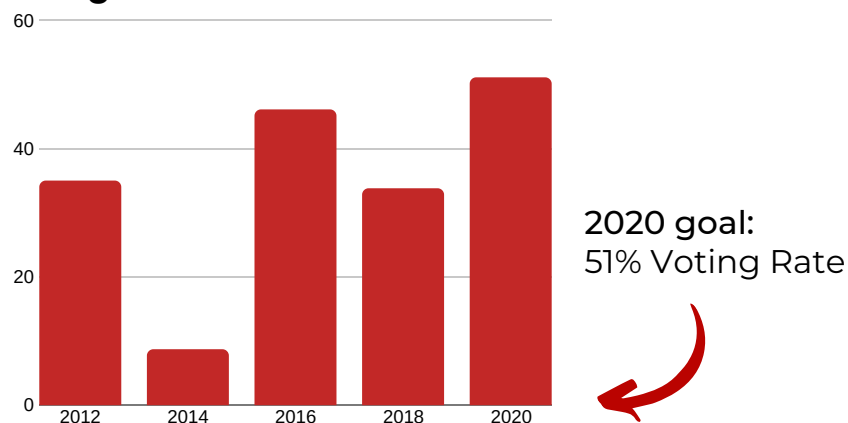
### Early Voting:

- **Early Voting Weekends.** Work with other units and departments across campus to bring excitement for the general election and awareness of early voting hours
- **Transportation.** Work with public and private transportation services to provide reduced or no fee transportation for folks to cast their votes throughout the voting period
- **Celebrity voting.** Use the social media platform to promote Cornell celebrities that participated in the voting
- **Campus polling location.** Host on-campus polling location(s) during Early voting period

### Election Day

- **Voting Shuttle.** Free shuttle service to get student voters to the appropriate polling location
- **Promotion.** Posters are displayed around campus and on Social Media. Get out the Vote Campaign on Facebook, Instagram, and other popular platforms to get folks out to vote
- **Voter Holiday.** Encourage faculty members to offer a shorter session or cancel classes so that students can cast their votes

**voting rate**





# REPORTING



Nobody's free until everybody's free

**FANNIE LOU HAMMER.**  
AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

This Campus Action Plan serves as a tool for Cornell Votes to continue to engage with its Advisory Committee, Student Coalition, and external partners who directly support our efforts to institutionalize voting and contribute to a campus cultural shift.

## **Internally, within the Campus.**

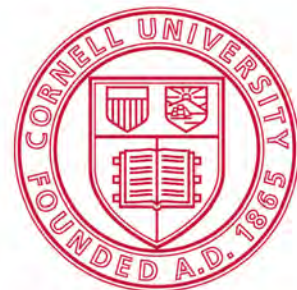
The Campus Action Plan, the NSLVE reports, and periodic updates will be shared consistently with:

- Cornell Votes Advisory members
- Cornell Votes Student Coalition members
- Public Service Center staff
- Cornell Votes Fellows
- Campus and Community Engagement departments
- Upper administration.

## **Externally, outside of campus supporters.**

The Campus Action Plan, the NSLVE reports, and periodic updates will be shared consistently with the following external partners and supporters:

- Andrew Goodman Foundation
- All-In Democracy Challenge
- Ask Every Student
- Dorothy Cotton Institute
- Ivy-League Challenge
- League of Women Voters, Tompkins County
- Rejoice the Vote
- Tompkins County Board of Election



**Cornell University**  
**Public Service Center**

# EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

There are three areas of interest for this section that will be completed in phases. The data collection of civic participation, program evaluation, learning, and impact assessment will support us with the following efforts:

- enhance students' civic participation
- adjust programming and resource needs
- integrate students' civic learning as part of their lifelong skills and habits
- build stronger coordination for civic engagement effort
- continue to advocate for this work to become a University-wide priority that is supported with continuing institutional resources.

## Civic Learning

Assessment of students' learning, experience and impact.

## Civic Participation

Numerical data on voter registration and participation.

## Civic Life

Cultural shift in which democratic learning and participation become institutionalized in everyday engagement.

## CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Cornell Votes Student Leadership Team and Student Coalition will assist in leading the evaluation process, building on what we have already learned over the last six years of work. We plan to gather information throughout the process and make adjustments to programming and outreach based on the data as we go along.

- Collect attendance information at events or programs
- Collect the number of students who participated in early voting
- Collect the number of students voted on the election date
- Gather and analyze the survey data from events and programs
- Gather web and social media analytics on the number of clicks

We will also do an overall evaluation with all data after the 2020 elections, and use this data along with the information we receive in our next NSLVE report to evaluate our success in meeting the short term goals we have set out in this plan. The information gathered will be shared with all stakeholders, to upper administration, and to social media and University news outlets as appropriate. The updated 2020 NSLVE reports will also be made available on the Public Service Center's website when available.

## CIVIC LEARNING

Cornell Votes Student Leadership Team and Volunteers have the option to enroll in the 1-credit course toward the Leadership Minor.

Through this course, we would be able to capture students' learning experience, a shift of dispositions, skills, and knowledge gain through their experience in registering and getting their peers out to vote.

## CIVIC LIFE

Cornell Votes hopes to work with other departments such as the Office of Engagement Initiative on gathering data and analysis on the civic engagement learning outcome, and Institutional Research and Planning on the Cornell University Experience (CUE) survey formerly known as the PULSE survey.

One of the questions asked is beyond voting relating to political and civic engagement. "Which of the following have you already done or do you plan to do during your time at Cornell? - Participate in politics beyond voting." The previous years' data, including 2019, provides the baseline for the assessment effort.

"Because of them I now can live the dream.  
I am the seed of the free, and I know it. I  
intend to bear great fruit."

**SOJOURNER TRUTH**  
AMERICAN ABOLITIONIST &  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST

