

# 2020 CAMPUS ACTION PLAN

FOR CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dalton State's Campus Action Plan for Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) is coordinated by the Office of Student Life under the direction of the Assistant Director for Leadership and Civic Engagement. Dalton State created an inaugural Campus Action Plan for 2019 to help establish a formalized and intentional plan to increase civic learning and democratic engagement by encouraging all Roadrunners (aka Dalton State students, faculty, and staff) to become civically engaged, politically engaged, and democratically engaged.

Civically engaged Roadrunners will become:

- Aware of personal identities and how they influence civic values, assumptions, and responsibilities;
- Engaged in civic opportunities on and off campus;
- Educated on social and civic issues.

Politically engaged Roadrunners will become:

- educated on the local, state, and national political process;
- aware of local legislators and politicians;
- active in the local, state, and national political process.

Democratically engaged Roadrunners will become:

- active and registered voters;
- better educated on the importance of voting;
- knowledgeable on where and how to vote;

actual voters for local, state, and federal elections.

After reviewing the results of the 2019 Campus Action Plan, we were able to see increased participation and engagement across campus resulting in a 28.9% voting rate, increased volunteerism rate of 312% from the previous year, and a 64.22% participant increase for CLDE programs hosted on campus.

Therefore, we have opted to further these initiatives by developing a second campus action plan helping our team to keep CLDE work a priority for Dalton State. We hope that by strengthening and expanding collaborative efforts with academic affairs, this action plan will be able to help students connect and extend knowledge (facts, theories, etc.) from their academic study/field/discipline to civic engagement and one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government. The 2020 Campus Action Plan will be implemented January 2020 through December 2020.

## LEADERSHIP

The coalition is staffed by SAVE Leaders (Students Advocating for Volunteer Efforts) who are committed to enhancing campus life by developing and executing programs and initiatives designed to advance campus and community engagement, provide civic-based learning opportunities, and create opportunities for powerful partnerships that foster positive social change.

There are four committees focused on the various components of community engagement and civic-based learning opportunities:

- Advocacy and Education
- Alternative Breaks
- Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement
- Community Engagement and Outreach

Each committee is staffed by a team of student leaders who have been through an application, interview, and selection process. Student Leadership positions run from May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Each of the committees and their objectives are outlined below. All committees are advised by the Assistant Director for Leadership and Civic Engagement, Heather Williams.

Other partners and resources include:

#### Community Partners

- [Whitfield County Board of Elections](#)
- [League of Women Voters - Dalton, GA](#)
- [Daughters of the American Revolution - Chatsworth / Dalton, GA](#)

#### Additional Resources

- [All In Campus Democracy Challenge](#)  
This organization strives to change civic culture and institutionalize democratic engagement activities and programs on college campuses by supporting colleges and universities in developing action plans to increase student's democratic engagement, identifying and sharing best practices for increasing democratic engagement and voting rates, and recognizing participating colleges and universities for making a commitment to increasing student voting rates and helping students form the habits of active and informed citizenship.
- [Campus Election Engagement Project \(CEEP\)](#)
- [Voter Friendly Campus Designation Program](#)  
This organization started through the partnership of Campus Vote Project and NASPA in 2016. The goal of the program is to help institutions develop plans to coordinate administrators, faculty, and student organizations in civic electoral engagement.
- [The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement](#)  
This organization offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates and, for interested campuses, a closer examination of their

campus climate for political learning and engagement in correlations between specific student learning experiences and voting.

Dalton State also uses resources and support provided by Campus Democracy Challenge, Campus Vote Project, and NASPA.

#### ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

The Active Citizenship committee strives to raise awareness and educate fellow Roadrunners on social issues and the impact they have on communities through awareness campaigns, experiential learning, and immersion experiences that require students to reflect on how that knowledge and those experiences inform values and life choices.

Responsibilities of this committee include oversight of Social Issue Awareness programs including, but not limited to:

- Hunger & Homelessness Week
- Other Social Issues Programs I.e. Immigration, Education, Environment, etc.

These learning experiences provide students with foundational knowledge on important social issues often helping students identify a preference or opinion regarding the proper government response. When students are knowledgeable on social issues, knowledgeable on candidates' positions, and able to cast their vote based on these three considerations it helps them to become a more engaged and educated voter.

#### Team Membership:

Savannah Upton, Program Manager (Selected Spring 2019)

Brenda Gonzalez, Student, Committee Member (Selected Spring 2019)

LeeRoy Gembe, Student, Committee Member (Selected Spring 2019)

Mariela Vazquez, Student, Executive Director for SAVE

Heather Williams, Staff Advisor, Assistant Director for Leadership & Civic Engagement

#### ALTERNATIVE BREAKS

Alternative Breaks strive to connect and sends groups of Dalton State students to engage in affordable community-based service projects during college breaks, providing opportunities for students to learn about the problems faced by members of communities with whom they may otherwise have had little to no direct contact. This immersion in diverse environments enables students to experience, discuss, and understand social issues in a significant way encouraging them to take action in their own communities.

Responsibilities of this committee include:

- Fall Break Trip

- Spring Break Trip
- Summer Trip

Dalton State is a chapter member of Break Away. Break Away: the Alternative Break Connection, Inc. is a national nonprofit organization that supports the development of quality alternative break programs by providing training and information primarily to colleges, universities, and nonprofit organizations interested in creating lifelong active citizens through these intensive service-learning programs.

Team Membership:

Logan Huggins, Student, Program Manager (Selected Spring 2019)

Brice Burris, Student, Fall & Summer Site Leader (Selected Spring 2019)

Roxanna Lopez, Student, Fall & Summer Site Leader (Selected Spring 2019)

Becky Clinton, Student, Spring & Summer Site Leader (Selected Spring 2019)

Trini Huijon, Student, Spring Site Leader (Selected Spring 2019)

Mariela Vazquez, Student, Executive Director for SAVE

Heather Williams, Staff Advisor, Assistant Director for Leadership & Civic Engagement

#### CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

The Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) committee promotes engaged citizenship through democratic participation and social responsibility by creating awareness campaigns, educational programming, and professional development that provide fellow Roadrunners with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to make a difference in their communities. The CLDE committee will plan and execute projects, events, and initiatives to meet all aspects of the Campus Plan for Democratic Engagement.

Responsibilities of this committee include:

- Overseeing, implementing, and assessing the campus engagement plan
- Constitution Week Programs
- Voter Registration, Education, and Engagement

Team Membership:

Cody Oglesby, Student, Program Manager (Selected Fall 2018, Returned Spring 2019)

Elizabeth Crawford, Committee Member (Selected Spring 2019)

Paola Gonzalez, Committee Member (Selected Spring 2019)

Eduardo Meraz, Committee Member (Selected Fall 2020)

Mariela Vazquez, Student, Executive Director for SAVE

Heather Williams, Staff Advisor, Assistant Director for Leadership & Civic Engagement

This committee has several programs throughout the year where they rely on faculty participation and collaborations.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The Community Engagement and Volunteer Relations committee will focus on community engagement and volunteer initiatives that will help create and maintain a culture of community engagement at Dalton State College. This committee's primary responsibility will be recruiting, training, and connecting student volunteers to local agencies in need.

Responsibilities of this committee include:

- Serve as student administrators to the RoadrunnerServe Volunteer Management Portal
- Day for Dalton Events (Fall & Spring)
- 9/11 National Day of Service and Memorial Ceremony (Fall)
- Community Action Days (Coordinated Service Projects)
- The Big Event (Spring)

Team Membership:

Alvaro Cortez, Student, Program Manager (Selected Fall 2018, Returned Spring 2019)

Grecia Herrera, Student, Committee Member (Selected Spring 2019)

Jaden Chapman, Student, Committee Member (Selected Spring 2019)

Diya Patel, Student, Committee Member (Selected Spring 2019)

Nancy Vazquez, Student, Committee Member (Selected Fall 2019)

Mariela Vazquez, Student, Executive Director for SAVE

Heather Williams, Staff Advisor, Assistant Director for Leadership & Civic Engagement

## COMMITMENT

This action plan will directly support the institution's Strategic Plan Goal III: Colleges are a vital part of their communities. Dalton State College will continue to enhance its engagement with its region and beyond by providing leadership, ideas, innovation, and diverse viewpoints to support its service area. This plan is shared publicly on the Dalton State Website.

- 3.1 Dalton State College will enhance and coordinate partnerships with the Technical College System of Georgia, K-12 systems, local and state agencies, nonprofits, and businesses, as well as institutions that promote economic development and entrepreneurship.
- 3.3 Dalton State College will commit to service that has mutual and educational benefits through service learning and volunteerism involving students, faculty, and staff.
- 3.4 Dalton State College will contribute to the vibrancy of the community by providing a variety of events, programs, and activities while encouraging collaboration and shared resources.

In addition to the Institutional strategic plan, Dalton State exemplifies a commitment to increasing civic learning and democratic engagement through the following ways:

Institutional Commitment:

- Authorization to participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)
- Collaborative initiatives involving faculty & staff across campus
- Dedicated student life staff member to advise and support student leaders serving on the coalition

Student Commitment:

- Committed and dedicated group of student leaders to lead the initiative and enact the campus plan - SAVE Leaders.
- These students will initiate and foster collaborations with other constituents on and off campus.

Community Partners:

- Various community partners who provide community engagement opportunities to students, faculty, and staff.
- Partnership with local board of elections to provide updated list of candidates and sample ballots prior to each election.
- Partnership with Women League of Voters to assist with voter registration drives.

## LANDSCAPE

Dalton State's current landscape in regard to civic learning and democratic engagement on campus:

Curricular: All students are required to complete learning goals under the institutions core curriculum. Two of the core curriculum learning outcomes include:

- "Students will articulate an understanding of major forces and events, influences, or ideas that have shaped history and society."
- "students will articulate the constitutional principles and governmental processes fundamental to American democracy and political participation."

Co-Curricular: Student Life promotes students to become civically, politically, and democratically engaged by participating in a series of co-curricular opportunities including:

- Ongoing voter registration opportunities including a Voter Registration Campus Takeover on National Voter Registration Day
- Annual Constitution Day Event(s)
- A "Meet the Candidates" event for local and state elections

- Community Action Days and Days of Service are held to encourage and promote civic engagement on a regular basis

The only data Dalton State is currently utilizing to track and share democratic engagement on campus is gathered through the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Here is a snapshot of Dalton State's most recent NSLVE data on voting and registration rates:

- Voting & Registration Rates 46.8%. +28.9 change from 2014
- Voting Method: 38.1% Absentee and 61.3% In-Person Election Day
- Voting by Age Group:
  - 18-21 (44.5% +30.0 from 2014)
  - 22-24 (46.2% +29.4 from 2014)
  - 25-29 (46.7% +29.1 from 2014)
  - 30-39 (47.2% +24.2 from 2014)
  - 40-49 (57.6% +22.7 from 2014)
  - 50+ (74.5% +13.9 from 2014)
- Voting by Enrollment Status:
  - 46.2% full time +29.3 from 2014
  - 45.3% part time +26.7 from 2014
- Voting by Gender:
  - 47.7% Women +30.8 from 2014
  - 47.8% Men +29.6 from 2014
- Voting by Race/Ethnicity
  - 14.9% Asian
  - 26.5% Black +18 from 2014
  - 49.6% Hispanic +40.2 from 2014
  - 50% White +29.4% from 2014
  - 34.8% Two or More Races

## GOALS

### SHORT TERM

1. Add voter registration (local and out-of-state) information to our institutional website.
2. Institutionalize the practice of sending a letter to all students every semester about the importance of being civically engaged and participating in elections.
3. Build a relationship with the local Board of Elections and identify ways for students to become more involved in the election process i.e. serving as a poll worker, etc.
4. Create opportunities for student to become more aware and educated about key issues appearing on ballots for their designated voting precinct.
5. Collaborate with faculty to establish a series of events encouraging conversations across difference in relation to civic, political, or democratic engagement.
6. Host a Skills Workshop through Better Angels at Dalton State to help students, faculty, and staff develop skills needed for having respectful conversations that clarify

differences, search for common ground, and affirm the importance of having better conversations with people on the other side of the political aisle.

#### LONG TERM

1. Increase student voter registration by 10 percentage points from 2018 NSLVE data to 2020 NSLVE data.
2. Increase student voting rates by 10 percentage points from 2018 NSLVE data to 2020 NSLVE data.
3. Identify and utilize additional assessment methods for civic learning and democratic engagement beyond NSLVE.
4. Identify ways to promote and implement ease of access to voting by providing details and transportations to local voting sites and researching the feasibility of students living on campus being able to utilize the on-campus polling site - they are currently assigned to an off-campus site.

Please see the Executive Summary for additional learning outcomes related to Dalton State's Campus Action Plan. Strategies to achieve these goals will be discussed in the next section.