



**ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge
Action Plan
Drake University**

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Overview

Drake University has been a local, state, and national leader in student engagement. Located in Des Moines, IA, Drake is ideally situated as an institution that integrates civic engagement into every facet of our student experience. Over the past decade, Drake has intentionally institutionalized policies and practices to grow student participation in community and political affairs, including the ongoing work of the Political Visitor Team that organizes and coordinates implementation for dozens of candidate, party, and media events (totaling nearly 50 events over the year preceding the 2020 Iowa caucuses), expansion of the Office of Community Engaged Learning (CEL) within the Academic Affairs division of the Provost's office, the creation of a Civic Engagement Senator as an appointed representative of Student Senate, the permanent relocation of the national headquarters of Vote Smart to the Drake University campus, collaborative meetings of students, faculty, and administrative staff to identify and solve institutional challenges to student voter registration and voting and regular collaboration with the Iowa Secretary of State's office, the Polk County Auditor, and Campus Compact. In 2018, Drake's NSLVE Report indicated that 81.3% of students are registered to vote and 51.8% of Drake students voted; Drake was pleased to be recognized for the most improved turnout of all Iowa 4-year private institutions and the highest voter turnout among all Iowa 4-year private institutions.



Drake receives awards from ALL IN

Various individuals and offices at Drake have reflected upon our 2018 successes and the extraordinary campus environment in 2019 to evaluate best practices and continue our efforts to fully institutionalize and integrate student initiatives, administrative practices, curricular and co-curricular events, and routine collaborative conversation as we prepare for the 2020 general election. Drake will engage in expanded efforts to reach student populations that have lower voter turnout, will intentionally integrate voter registration, voter education and turnout efforts into existing curricular and co-

curricular initiatives, and will continue to institutionalize these efforts through a new student position within the Office of Community Engaged Learning. The leadership team, which is

composed of faculty, staff, student, and community organization representatives and represents a wide variety of ideological perspectives, will assess progress on a regular basis.

Leadership

Civic and citizen engagement is a vital part of several initiatives at Drake, including the Office of Community Engaged Learning, the Donald V. Adams Leadership Institute, the Ray Center, the Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement, the Department of Political Science, the Engaged Citizen Area of Inquiry (part of Drake's general education requirements), the Civic Engagement Senator (appointed within Drake Student Senate), and numerous others. In the past, this has led to some fragmentation, as each institutional entity has different goals, policies, and habits of practice. Put simply, citizen engagement efforts can become so pervasive that the endeavor lacks coherence.

Reflecting on the high rates of voter engagement (registration and turnout), several individuals have come together to form a collaborative working group to advance voter registration and voter turnout in 2020, and to enhance the student experience over the long-term. These individuals include:

- Jerry Parker, Dean of Students
 - Tony Tyler, Associate Dean of Students
 - Rachel Paine Caufield, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Iowa Caucus Project
 - *Adam Koch*, Student Body President
 - *Matt Deike*, Civic Engagement Senator
 - Amanda Martin, Office of Community Engaged Learning (a division of the Provost's office)
 - *Daniela Silva*, Community Engagement Peer – Voter Engagement Coordinator in the Office of Community Engaged Learning (a new student position)
 - *John Altendorf*, *Riley Swanson*, *Kody Craddick*, *Benjamin Broadkey*, and other members of the Drake Political Action Committee, a collaborative student organization representing student leaders of politically-minded registered student organizations
 - Walker McKusick, Executive Director of Vote Smart
- (names in italics are current Drake students)

This team will meet regularly to share information, identify challenges, and develop ongoing priorities that reflect the progress of shared goals. A variation of this group (accounting for changes in student leadership) has been meeting since 2017, which has helped to solidify a sense of shared purpose and comradery. Each individual brings established relationships and institutional memory to the table. For example, the Office of Community Engaged Learning has a long relationship with Campus Compact and the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP); Professor Caufield, as advisor to Drake Democrats and College Republicans, has worked with the Iowa Secretary of State's office and the Polk County Auditor to organize satellite voting on campus for the past six general election cycles; Dean Parker worked with the Office of Residence Life to ensure students had the necessary lease documents under a new voter ID law in 2018.

The group has also grown to allow for more cohesive integration of civic engagement across multiple dimensions of the student experience. The creation of a new student position in the Office of Community Engaged Learning will allow for greater organizational communication and focused student outreach. Professor Caufield's First Year Seminar (titled "Vote Smart!") includes a student internship with Vote Smart and has been restructured to allow students to develop a campus voter guide. Student Senate has reorganized the Civic Engagement Senator position to facilitate regular work on voter registration, education, and turnout efforts, including candidate forums, debate watch parties, and student outreach.



Drake University Live Mascot
"Griff" at the Iowa State Capitol

Commitment

Taken as a whole, we are confident of our ability to continue the efforts undertaken thus far, realizing the promise of the Drake University mission statement: "Drake's mission is to provide an exceptional learning environment that prepares students for meaningful personal lives, professional accomplishments, and *responsible global citizenship*" (emphasis added).

Several inter-related programs and initiatives specifically highlight this commitment.

- The Drake curriculum, which must be completed by all Drake undergraduate students, includes the "Engaged Citizen" Area of Inquiry. All Drake students must complete at least one course that focuses attention on effective participation in democratic processes and "challenges students to critically reflect upon the social, economic or political institutions and issues that shape the choices they will face as citizens."
- Each spring, the Office of the Provost organizes the "Global Citizen Conference" focused on a single theme that reflects course themes; related co-curricular programming allows for continued student engagement with the theme.
- The Iowa Caucus Project seeks to provide experiential opportunities for students to directly engage with candidates, political parties, activists, and media organizations during an Iowa caucus year as well as throughout the electoral cycle.
- The Political Visitor Team coordinates logistics and facilitates events on campus, allowing students to meet and question elected officials and political candidates, attend and intern for national media events (like the CNN 2020 Democratic presidential debate), and works with student groups to organize speakers and events related to elections and issues of national prominence (including, most recently, a Free Speech Forum collaboratively presented by Young Americans for Freedom, College Republicans and Drake Democrats), Lindsay Graham and Guy Benson (programs by College Republicans).
- The Office of Community Engaged Learning works with faculty to design and implement service learning and community engagement activities within the classroom. The Office

also coordinates the Engaged Citizen Corps (an intentional service year with a local community organization), the Sprout Garden (a learning garden for urban youth), the Food Recovery Network, the Little Free Pantry Project, and IRIS (where students read the news for those who are visually impaired).

- Vote Smart, a national organization that collects and disseminates reliable information about candidates and elected officials, relocated its national headquarters to Drake three years ago and hires nearly 40 students as interns each semester.
- The Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement hires 10-15 interns each semester, engages in public policy research, organizes three high profile public lectures each year, and offers opportunities to learn about a variety of policy issues, including labor, health and wellness, retirement security, and disability rights, through symposia, speakers, and other programming.
- A new American Politics major in the Department of Political Science is designed to specifically integrate experiential opportunities for internships, volunteer activities, advocacy, and practical political skills-based and problem-based learning.

Other programs also commit to a wide-variety of student-based learning about political, social, and economic decision-making and citizenship skills. These programs will continue to offer a unique, vibrant, and diverse array of opportunities. The leadership team will enhance these offerings through targeted attention to voter participation.

Landscape

Drake has a unique environment that can be harnessed for the purposes of civic and citizen engagement activities. Located in a state capital that hosts the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses, institutional efforts to embrace strategic opportunities have yielded considerable success (some of these successes are noted above). Among students, a fair proportion are introduced to Drake's reputation for vibrant political participation prior to arriving on campus, and the Politics major (an existing major that will continue alongside the new American Politics major) currently has a very large number of admitted new students for the 2020-2021 academic year. In 2019-2020:

- Drake students committed 230,000 hours of service to the local community.
- 68% of Drake employees are involved in service activities, including membership on nonprofit boards, in local schools, and community organizations.
- Drake received 4 awards from Iowa and Minnesota Campus Compact for civic leadership and innovation.
- Drake is responsible for \$413 million impact on central Iowa.
- Drake hosted every major presidential candidate during the 2019-2020 caucus cycle (many came to campus several times) and held 6 candidate forums. Students were able to receive tickets to these events



Meredith Hall leading up to the 2020 caucuses

based on a random lottery, and more than 80% of all Drake tickets were allotted for students.

- Drake had the highest student voter turnout of any campus in Iowa in 2018.

The University routinely administers a student survey that provides information about the campus climate. In 2018, 68% of undergraduate students reported that their experiences at Drake had contributed to their “openness to having [their] views challenged” “quite a bit” or “very much,” and 66% believed that their Drake experiences contributed “quite a bit” or “very much” to their “ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues.” Among graduate students, responses were 62% and 61% respectively. Asked about the general education requirements at Drake, 66% of undergraduate students said that the curriculum had provided “knowledge of how to participate effectively in the democratic process” (interestingly, students in the School of Journalism and the School of Education were significantly more likely to acknowledge this outcome at 82% and 86% respectively). Of all undergraduates, 71% indicated their Drake experience had increased their ability to engage with people who had different political views than their own.

Like most campuses, the survey results did demonstrate that Drake continues to grapple with concerns about ideological and viewpoint diversity, with several conservative students indicating that they wanted a more robust presence on campus. Since that time, there has been considerable attention to this issue. The Donald V. Adams Leadership Institute’s Sussman Leadership Conference in 2018-2019 was dedicated to the topic of “leading across the divide,” including a special lecture by Zachary Wood. A Free Speech Forum was collaboratively organized by Young Americans for Freedom, College Republicans, and Drake Democrats. In addition, Drake was able to secure outside financial support for College Republicans to sponsor speaking events by Guy Benson and Lindsay Graham. Finally, Drake hosted President Trump and Vice President Pence on January 31, 2020.

As we approach the 2020 general election cycle, we remain mindful that some student populations have more interaction and interest in community and civic affairs, and we have built a leadership structure that intentionally spans the ideological spectrum.

Goals

In the context of our ongoing efforts to institutionalize a vibrant atmosphere of civic engagement on Drake’s campus, our goals for the 2020 cycle should represent another step in the evolutionary track – put simply, our goals for this cycle build upon what has come before and will provide a framework for what is to come. Our goals are:

- Ensure that every first-year student is exposed to voter registration information at least three times during the first three weeks of the fall semester.
- President Marty Martin has joined the Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation and Drake has joined the “Ask Every Student” effort.
- Create special outreach efforts for graduate and online students.

- Organize at least 6 campus-wide voter registration events through the Voter Engagement Fellow in the Office of Community Engaged Learning.
- Maintain voter registration at over 80%.
- Increase voter turnout to at least 55% among all students.
- Host on-campus satellite voting with the Polk County Auditor's Office.
- Organize at least 4 Student Senate events aimed to educate students about the campaign, local candidates, and current events, to be led by the Civic Engagement Senator.
- Students in FYS 040: Vote Smart! will compile and distribute a Drake student voter guide.
- Hire a new Voter Engagement Fellow (a current Drake student) in the Office of Community Engaged Learning.
- Build voter registration efforts into Welcome Weekend and every First Year Seminar and "Bulldog Foundations" course offering.
- Work with the Crew Scholars and Flight Programs to provide strategic outreach to students of color and first-generation college students.
- Design and implement ongoing campus communications schedules that provide updates and information about how students can register and vote as well as any volunteer or internship opportunities in local or state government, non-profit, and advocacy organizations.
- Establish a regular "meet the candidates/elected officials" event sponsored by Student Senate, to include local, state, and national candidates and elected officials.
- Institutionalize outreach to all Business and Health Sciences students in first-year professional seminars, as well as graduate and online student populations.
- Continue to work with Campus Compact and the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) to plan and execute events on campus.
- Engage in outreach to fraternities and sororities as well as athletic organizations.



Satellite Voting Location in Olmsted Center in 2018

NSLVE

The 2018 NSLVE report indicates substantial gains in voter turnout (compared to 2014) across every student population at Drake. In 2018, 81.3% of students were registered to vote, and of those students, 63.7% turned out to vote, for an overall voting rate of 51.8%. This is significantly higher than the average voting rate for every type of institution.

The report does indicate, however, that there is additional work to do. The voting rate is lowest among undergraduate students ages 18-21, and for first-year students, it is only 38% (though this is still an increase over 2014 voting rates and is on par for the national average of institutions participating in the NSLVE). Similarly, among students of color (African-American and Asian students), the voting rate hovers in the low- to mid-30% range (32.4% and 34.6% respectively). Voting has increased for every area of study, with the highest gains made in the School of

Journalism and the lowest voting rates among students in Business, Health Sciences, and Computer Science. Interestingly, in-person and absentee voting has decreased slightly, with mail-in voting increasing nearly four-fold. This may indicate that students are more likely to participate in elections in their home state or county rather than re-registering and participating in their precinct at Drake.

Strategy

Our strategies reflect attention to those subsets of the Drake community that have the lowest rates of voting. Specifically:

- Ensure that every first-year student is exposed to voter registration information at least three times during the first three weeks of the fall semester.
 - This is specifically designed to ensure that all first-year students are familiar with and have access to the process of voter registration.
- Build voter registration efforts into Welcome Weekend and every First Year Seminar and “Bulldog Foundations” course offering.
 - Every first-year student is required to (a) participate in Welcome Weekend; (b) enroll in a First Year Seminar (FYS); and (c) enroll in a one-credit section of “Bulldog Foundations.” Including information about registration and voting within these curricular and co-curricular points of contact will guarantee contact with first-year students.
- Work with the Crew Scholars and Flight Programs to provide strategic outreach to students of color and first-generation college students.
 - The Crew Scholars and Flight Programs are institutionalized support networks for students of color and first-generation students, with regularized interaction between students, faculty mentors, administrative staff, and peers. Disseminating information through these networks will allow for focused outreach to these students.
- Institutionalize outreach to all first-year Business and Health Sciences students in first-year professional seminars, as well as graduate and online student populations.
 - Every student in the School of Business and the School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences is required to enroll in a first-year professional seminar. In the past, there have been sporadic presentations to the first-year business seminar; a more robust voter education effort can be built into these seminars.
- Students in FYS 040: Vote Smart will compile and distribute a Drake student voter guide.
 - First-year students in the Vote Smart FYS will collect information (via their Vote Smart internship) on the process of registering and voting, as well as local candidates. This information can be distributed via peer-to-peer networking and affinity groups on campus, as student-driven efforts often gain more traction than administrative initiatives.

Reporting

Drake has always made our NSLVE report publicly available, and we will continue to do so.



Evaluation

The leadership team will meet every 3 weeks from late August through early November to remain apprised of collaborative opportunities and developments. Meetings will review progress toward our established goals and will allow for agile response to any immediate challenges that emerge.

- The Voter Engagement Fellow will record all outreach efforts as well as the total number of new students registering to vote during those events.
- Drake will track the “click-through” rate of all communications about voting.
- All programs organized by Student Senate will be livestreamed; the total number of viewers (live and recorded) will be tracked.
- Drake will track, with the Polk County Auditor, the total number of students who vote during on-campus satellite voting.

In the weeks following the November 2020 general election, the leadership team will meet to review all available evidence and evaluate the effectiveness of our campus engagement efforts.