



Durham Technical Community College Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Iesha Cleveland, Director, Campus Student Services

Executive Summary:

Durham Technical Community College's mission ensures that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to be successful in college, work, and life. As a part of this mission, we fully acknowledge our responsibility to our students and surrounding communities to educate and provide the resources necessary to become engaged and informed citizens. With a new college President, a new strategic plan, and a renewed focus on elevating our level of service to our community, Durham Tech is committed to being a guiding light for our students as they navigate the social, economic, and political landscape in 2022 and beyond.

Recent changes to staff roles have delayed our efforts to establish a framework to engage students and our community. However, with new appointments and a renewed focus on equity and inclusion, this plan will be shared widely with prospective students, current students, alumni, and our surrounding communities to encourage voter education and participation. With support from campus leadership, we will endeavor to create a voter education and engagement plan that will stand the test of time and will be a resource for our students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. We intend to embed voter education and engagement within our college's culture.

The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout. Specifically, the goals for Durham Technical Community College are:

Short-Term:

1. **To promote early voting to students, faculty, and staff through campus messaging via email and social media.**
2. **To identify fellows to be trained in civic engagement for future programming expansion.**
3. **To establish a campus group of students, staff, faculty, and administrators to begin the development of a program for Student Voter Engagement - 2024.**

Long-Term:

1. **To establish a web presence (webpage) to house all information and resources about voter registration, early voting, and elections.**
2. **To establish a group of students, staff, faculty, and administrators to plan events and activities for voter engagement.**

Leadership:

Our current leadership team includes the following groups and individuals:

- Mr. Abraham Dones - Vice President, Chief Student Services
- Ms. Iesha Cleveland, Director, Campus Student Services
- Student Government Association (SGA)
- Staff Association
- Faculty Association
- Campus Vote Project

As we continue to develop a program for voter engagement, our team will grow to include representatives from external organizations.

Commitment:

Durham Tech is committed to establishing a culture of civic engagement that encompasses voter education, the promotion of active participation in the electoral process, and the provision of information and resources about voting in Durham and Orange counties.

There is currently an effort underway to develop and establish a program at the college to support all activities related to civic engagement that includes, but is not limited to, creating a working campus group/team to develop a plan and timeline of activities leading up to the 2024 election cycle. Initially, this group will only include members from the student body as well as staff, faculty, and administrators. As we develop and expand our efforts, we will include external partners. For now, the focus will be on creating a framework from which all other activities can be developed.

In preparation for the 2024 election, this group will meet regularly to discuss, plan, and execute activities that will support voter engagement. For example, a campus Open-House event in spring, 2023 will include a table with information about voter registration, early voting, and the election. In addition, periodic email reminders will be sent to students providing information about voter registration, for example. These are just two examples of plans to begin ongoing activities to remind the student population of the 2024 election.

For first-time voters, there will be an effort to ensure that there is an educational component embedded in the curriculum to promote awareness of our civic responsibilities as citizens. There are many layers to civic engagement and as a community college, Durham Tech is committed to ensuring that multiple resources and critical information are shared with our community. Our community will know why, where, when, and how to vote!

To further demonstrate our commitment, our President, Mr. J.B. Buxton, has signed the Higher Education President's Commitment.

Landscape:

Durham Technical Community College is a growing institution in North Carolina, serving more than 18,000 students annually across seven campuses in Durham and Orange counties while also providing various online courses. The college is accredited and offers more than 100 associate degrees and certificates for students seeking university transfer or immediate employment. The College has opportunities for eligible North Carolina high school students, international students, veterans, and adults looking to complete their high school educations.

Durham Technical Community College is a public community college and is a Minority Serving Institution.

NSLVE

Our campus demographic and voting data for 2020:

- Durham Tech 2020 Voting Rate: **69.5%**
- Total eligible voters 2020 3,507
- Total students registered 2020 2,980
- Total students who voted 2020 2,437

By Race/Ethnicity - 2020

- Asian - 58%
- American Indian/Alaskan Native - 71%
- Black - 70%
- Hispanic - 63%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - N/A
- Two or more races - 64%
- White - 76%

By Sex - 2020

- Female - 69% (Enrolled: 2,279; Voted: 1,575)
- Male - 70% (Enrolled: 1,228; Voted: 862)

By Age Group - 2020

- 18-21 72%
- 22-24 64%
- 25-29 62%
- 30-39 71%
- 40-49 72%
- 50+ 82%

Durham Technical Community College has authorized NSLVE.

Goals:

As we continue to develop a framework for civic education and engagement, Durham Tech will converse with our students, staff, faculty, and community partners to identify existing areas at the college that are already engaged in this work. Bringing these pieces together will allow us to:

1. Identify and recognize existing courses, programs, and individuals who are currently engaged in this work
2. Establish a Durham Tech program (ex. **DT Votes**) to expand and continue the work of voter education and engagement; and
3. Share information and resources broadly with stakeholders.

Non-partisanship is important and we will ensure that our college focuses on *fundamental* voter education efforts with the aim to develop students who are capable of understanding and navigating the political terrain.

Short-term:

1. Voter Registration: We aim to increase voter registration for 2024 by **5%**
2. Voter Turnout: We aim to increase voter turnout for 2024 by **6%**

Long-term:

1. To create a coalition of civic-minded individuals to create a program (ex. **DT Votes**) that will be a hub for all information and resources about voter registration, education, and engagement. This hub will be identified as a place where any person can go to get information, support, and resources related to democratic engagement. This program will grow and improve over time as our college begins to embed civic education in our culture. We do not want this program to only be an election year event, but to be a place where students, staff, faculty, and our surrounding community can learn about civic matters and access the information they need to become informed global citizens.

Strategy:

Durham Technical Community College will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

- Collaborate with Student Government Association (SGA), student clubs, and student services areas to plan, promote, and provide information to students about voting
- Participation in campus events and activities to promote voting (ex. Open House)
- Participation in National Voter Registration Day events, Constitution Day, and other national and local events
- Guest Speakers will be invited to campus to speak to students about democratic engagement

Note: As we gain additional members to our planning team, we will brainstorm activities and events to include in a calendar that will be posted on our website. Leading up to the 2024 election cycle, we would like to have monthly planned activities.

Evaluation:

In collaboration with our Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Planning department, we will develop surveys to assist in determining the effectiveness of our program. As we develop a program focused on civic engagement, we want to be sure that our efforts are having a real impact on students. Surveys are one way that we can assess the effectiveness of our program, both pre and post election. We will actively seek feedback and suggestions from students to improve our program. Continuous improvement is a priority at our institution.

Our team will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

- We will revisit our stated goals and examine whether or not we have met them.
- We will track participation in events and will track students that we have assisted with voter registration.
- We will analyze the data that we gather to improve our voter engagement program.

Reporting:

Our campus activities related to voter engagement will be shared broadly with stakeholders, using as many available media as possible. We plan to create a webpage dedicated to civic education that will include the results from NSLVE, for example. As we continue to develop our program, we will explore other avenues to communicate our efforts with students, for example, using the college's new CRM system that has a chat function. Further, our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/durham-technical-community-college/>.

