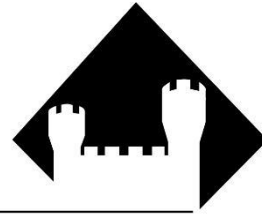


Civic Engagement & Volunteerism Office



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY™

Eastern Illinois University is a primarily undergraduate teaching institution located in east-central Illinois. EIU has 50 undergraduate degree programs and over 150 major and minor options, 36 graduate programs of study, and both face-to-face and online learning opportunities. Our institution serves students as close as our city of Charleston, the surrounding region, and around the world. Our campus strives to maintain an inclusive community that is welcoming to our significant number of underrepresented groups, as first-generation college students, as non-traditionally aged students, or as students with disabilities.

The Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteerism was opened in 2008 to help our students understand they have the power and the responsibility to give back to whatever community they are a part and to make the world a stronger and brighter place. The programming and the intent of the office has evolved as the needs of our students has shifted. Initially the office was focused solely on providing ways that our students could get connected to local non-profits and give back with their energy and time.

Over the past 4 years, the focus of what our students need have shifted again. While our programming continues to include over 200 service opportunities per semester, we have added a strong push for service learning experiences to compliment what students are learning from faculty, educational programs about local poverty/food insecurity issues and what can be done about them and most recently focused programming on Civic Engagement.

This past fall we implemented the Chasing the American Dream Series to offer a safe space for all students to learn about issues and challenges we were/are facing in the United States. The intent of this program is to help our students to think critically about what is important to each of them, to get registered to vote, and to have a clear understanding that their voice, and their vote matter. This program started in the fall of 2019 and will conclude in the fall of 2020. Our signature monthly event for this program is our Panther Fire Side Chats. These events have three related topics, and each speaker was allotted 10 minutes to present. One of the topics for the Panther Fire Side chats was as follows; A history of voter suppression, Gerrymandering- What is that? and What does it mean to be an active voter. As part of the Chasing the American Dream series we have also held voter registration drives, offered i-civics interactive game nights, and hosted educational tabling events across campus.

We knew that as we moved closer to the 2020 Presidential election that we were going to need to offer a program that would complement the Chasing the American Dream series with a sole focus on getting students registered to vote, educated on current issues, and then turning out to submit their ballot on election day. Based on the data we have from the past two National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement reports the number of students at Eastern Illinois University who have registered to vote, and who have then actually cast a ballot has continued to rise over the past two Presidential election cycles. While the trajectory is heading in a positive direction, we still have work to do to reach students where they are at, and then move them to be engaged with this piece of their civic responsibility.

Although our voting rates have increased in the past two Presidential election cycles, our department has done little effort to help with this increase or to educate our students. We plan to offer intentional education programming not only around current election issues, but provide students with a clearer understanding of the registration and voting process regardless of what town or state they are from. We want to make it easy for the students to complete their civic responsibility and do so equipped with as much honest information as possible. Specifically, we have two goals. The first is to increase the registration percentage to 80% of our students. And secondly of those who are registered we want to increase the voting rate to 60% of those students.

To meet our goals, all of our programming will fall under one of 3 major pillars; Voter Registration efforts, Voter Education efforts, and Voter Turnout. Staying focused on these three pillars will ensure that we are moving students throughout the process and get them to the polls in November. The following is our action plan to help us achieve these goals.

Our first step is to build the **Operation EIU Votes Coalition**, of key stakeholders and leaders from across campus. This group will be a non-partisan group that will come together to engage with all students to help ensure that our message and our call to action is being heard by everyone. The group will meet monthly beginning in August to ensure that we have one message to share with the students we each interact with, and to ensure that all programming (regardless of who is heading it up) is given the same amount of energy and publicity. Civic Engagement and Volunteerism will lead this group and will be inviting a representative from the following groups to join us:

New Student and Family Programs

Student Life

Fraternity and Sorority Programs

EIU Student Government

EIU Black Student Union

EIU Latino Association Student Organization

EIU PRIDE Student Organization

EIU College Democrats Student Organization

EIU College Republicans Student Organization

EIU Progressives Student Organization

Representation from Academic Advisors, Political Science, History, Women's Studies, Residence Hall Councils, and other interested campus parties

City of Charleston Election Committee member to help ensure we are educated on the process, possibly trained if needed to register students to vote, etc.

Representative from the League of Women Voters

As stated earlier in this report, our programs will fall under one of three efforts. Please see below for a broad look at what type of efforts we will be using to engage with the student body to increase participation in the democratic process based on the intention of each effort.

Voter Registration

- Voter Registrations will be a part of New Student Orientation programs, Welcome back to campus activities, the Student Involvement Fair, Family Weekend, and the Womxn Up Conference
- Roving Registration Table events that will happen weekly in a variety of locations on campus from the Student Union, to Dining Halls, to Athletic events
- Partnering with Fraternity and Sorority Programs to "Greek out the Vote"
- Social Media campaign highlighting all voter registration efforts to include D2L and Panther Life (EIU's Student engagement app)
- National Voter Registration Day campaign
- FAQ's and a full list of voting focused events will be shared on our website

Voter Education

- Create and widely distribute a How to get Registered in Illinois FAQ that will include dates and where to get specific information
- Voter Registration FAQ in our Good Neighbor packets (created by our office)
- Voter Registration FAQ provided by academic advisors (created by our office)
- Presentations and Registration in our Foundations 1111 class which helps Freshman transition successfully to campus as well as other courses
- Chasing the American Dream series, including the Panther Fire Side Chat events
- A roving voting booth that will move around campus so that first time voters know what to expect when they enter a voting booth for the first time.
- Post Card Parties- students come together once a month and send postcards to state or federal representatives/senators to share issues they are passionate about.
- Yard Sign Campaign
- Social Media campaign highlighting all programming

Voter Turn Out

- A strategic and coordinated transportation of students to the polls for November 3, 2020
- Social Media campaign highlighting voting locations, including on campus options
- Social Media challenge with possible prizes for after students vote
- Promote on campus early voting option
- Create and promote an early EIU student voting day

As we are submitting this in May of 2020, we all know that we are living through a global pandemic, and that what life on college and university campuses will look like this fall is still unknown. We are planning for 3 particular scenarios and will adapt our plan according to the safety protocols in place in 3 months. The first plan is if we can be on campus, but not in groups larger than 10 people. The second is if we are on campus, but not in groups of more than 50. And the third, is if we need to do all programs remotely. Regardless of parameters our programs will be happening this fall!

SEPT 2020

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

01

02

03

04

05

Student
Involvement Fair

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

Social Media:
Thank You to
Iraqi & Afghan
War Veterans

Panther Fire Side
Chat: Climate
Change Theme

Remembrance w/
Student Veterans
of Eastern

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

Social Media:
Future American
Dreams

Postcard Party!

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

Social Media:
Climate Change
& Need the Bees

National Voter
Registration Day
Event

Voter
Registration Drive

27

28

29

30

Social Media:
Voter
Registration

OCT 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
					01	02	03 HOMECOMING
	04 Social Media: Voting Importance	05	06	07 Panther Fire Side Chat: Understanding Fake vs Real News Theme	08	09 Voter Registration Drive	10 Womxn Up Conference
	11 Social Media: Election Information	12 American Dream Flag Tabling	13 American Dream Flag Tabling	14	15 FALL BREAK	16	17
	18 Social Media: Voter Registration	19	20	21 Real News Event w/ W-EIU	22	23	24
	25 Social Media: Election Information	26 Panther Fire Side Chat Voter Rights Theme	27	28	29 Postcard Party!	30	31

Nov2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
	01 Social Media: Importance of Voting	02 ELECTION DAY Election Information Tabling	03	04	05	06	07
	08 Social Media: Social Justice	09	10	11 Panther Fire Side Chat: After a Presidential Election- now what?	12	13	14
	15 Social Media: Native Recognition Month	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22 Social Media: Thanksgiving & Indigenous Recognition	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30					

All efforts will be to see if we were able to reach our target goals of increasing the student voter registration rate to 80% of our students, and to then increase the voting rate to 60%.

We will use the following measures of evaluation to track our progress and to influence future programming efforts. Operation EIU Votes team will meet throughout the fall, as well as having a debriefing meeting afterwards to assess the effectiveness of all the programs we have offered. EIU will continue to participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement to track the student registration and voting rates to have data to assess to see if our programs were effective.

Regardless of the outcomes, if we can increase the awareness of the responsibility to participate in the democratic process during the upcoming Presidential election, we will consider that a success.