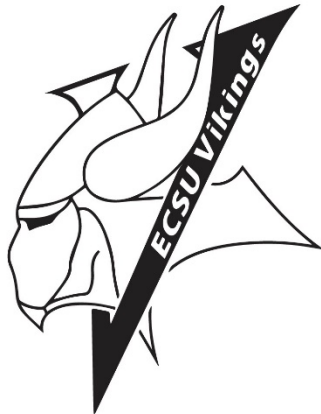


Elizabeth City State University

# Vikings Vote Engagement Plan

All In Challenge Voter Friendly Campus



Kaiya Smith and Jasmine Roundtree  
12-15-2019

## **Executive Summary**

During the 2018 mid-term election, Elizabeth City State University experienced significant voter engagement both in terms of both voter registration and turnout.

The Vikings Vote Engagement Plan aligns with the university's One CaUSE: Community and University Social Engagement Civic Action Plan. Specifically, this plan shares the vision that ECSU's students will embrace, recognize, and reward excellence in civic engagement that embodies a series of commitments. These commitments will be infused into existing curricular and co-curricular programs to foster a campus culture that translates them into practice, to provide more resources to support faculty, staff, and students who work to implement these commitments, and to enhance the University's capacity to track community engagement activities.

The Vikings Vote Engagement Plan aims to further institutionalize democratic engagement through a series of events that produce more registered students, deliver consistent awareness, and higher voter rates. The 2020 presidential elections offers an opportunity to maximize ECSU's sustainable engagement with students now and into the future.

The overarching purpose of Vikings Vote Engagement Plan is to expand access to the democratic process to as many people as possible.

### **Vikings Vote Leadership Team (working name)**

**Campus Vote Project Fellow - Jasmine Roundtree - confirmed**

**Campus Vote Project Fellow - Kaiya Smith - confirmed**

**Campus Vote Project On-campus Supervisor - Russel Haddad - confirmed**

SGA - Jimmy Chambers - confirmed

CAB - Antoinette Griffin - confirmed

Alpha Phi Alpha - Ahmad Taylor - confirmed

Royal Court - Nyasia Luke -confirmed

ROTC - Diamond Vann - confirmed

Vivid Modeling Agency - Anya Lawrence - confirmed

Social Work Club - Quadajah Flythe - confirmed

City Council - Darrius Horton -

History Club - Eryicka Johnson

Republican Party -

Democratic Party-

Pasquotank Board of Elections -

League of Women Voters – Terra Fox -

NAACP - Keith Rivers -

\*\*The three bolded names at the top of this list are the primary individuals responsible for the carrying-out of this action plan. All remaining individuals will be delegated tasks, and simply work to aid the already established initiative.

### Are specific people needed or just organization names in the plan?

#### Commitment

The campus demonstrates its commitment to civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation through its hand-on approach in aiding the execution of the voter events. As it goes, several club and organization leaders have already pledged to help with things such as food, entertainment and prizes, social media promotion, poster and flyer promotion, improvement management, and more. All in all, there has already been a well-rounded group confirmed on campus, who are all devoted to the success of this voter initiative that has been set in place.

ECSU's commitment to voter and democratic engagement is outlined in the One CaUSE Civic Action Plan:

- **Commitment #1:** We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world.
- **Commitment #2:** We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.
- **Commitment #3:** We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.
- **Commitment #4:** We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.
- **Commitment #5:** We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

### Is a statement of institutional commitment needed (for example, statement and/or letter from chancellor)?

#### Landscape

ECSU, a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and constituent institution of the University of North Carolina system located in northeastern North Carolina, is roughly one hour from the Outer Banks and the Hampton Roads region of Virginia. The institution services approximately 1,400 students with 28 undergraduate and 4 graduate programs of study. ECSU offers degrees in aviation and natural sciences, business and economics, teaching and

administration, visual and performing arts, mathematics and computer science, social and behavioral sciences and other select professional and pre-professional areas.

ECSU is the most affordable academic success university in North Carolina. Our intimate class sizes afford our student body a small, yet challenging learning environment. We teach train and mold our students into an environment representative of today's global economy. ECSU continues to be a leading partner in enhancing educational and cultural opportunities and improving the economic strength in the region. A diverse and highly-qualified faculty educates and leads our students to become productive members of an increasingly interdependent society.

Today's student population is approximately 72% African American, 17% Caucasian and 11% other, including 3% Hispanic. Currently, 89% of the students are full-time, 52% reside on campus, and 48% commute. About 57% are female and 43% male.

Elizabeth City is located in Pasquotank County in northeastern North Carolina and has a population of 39,909 based on the 2016 U.S. Census Bureau Estimates. About 59% of the county's population is White/Caucasian, and 37% Black/African-American. The third largest population is Hispanic/Latino at almost 5%. This is one of the poorest regions in North Carolina where the median household income is \$45,750 with a 17.4% poverty level. Only 18% of persons have a Bachelor's degree or higher (2013 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)).

Currently, XXX number of students are registered to vote (get figure from Pasquotank Board of Elections through November 2019). We had limited success registering students in Fall 2019, compared with efforts during Fall 2018, primarily due to a compressed and early election schedule along with two back-to-back elections were enormous challenges. We had a special election for a Congressional seat right on top of the local election. They were held September 19, 2018 and October 8, 2019, respectively. Because of the different schedules, many were confused on what election they were registering for and when they could vote. The confusion dramatically reduced participation.

Additionally, local elections traditionally lack the same excitement as national elections. But as the campus gears up for 2020 presidential election, and with North Carolina being a battleground state, expectation is the energy exhibited in the Fall of 2018 may be recaptured. Our efforts will be aided by local, state and national media coverage that should escalate interest.

Furthermore, the events listed later in this plan are expected to lead to overall improvement in programming, and student engagement. The evaluations prescribed in this plan also should result in better data gathering for continued success.

## **Check data to make sure it is up to date?**

### **Goals**

ECSU's general goals are to increase voter registrations, increase awareness of issues relating to voting, and increase voter turnout. Specifically, ECSU aims to achieve the following:

- Increase student registration rate to 75%
- Maintain a minimum attendance of 30-50 students per major event held on campus
- Increase student voting to 40-49%

### **National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE)**

NSLVE is a signature initiative of the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education (IDHE) at Tufts University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life. IDHE is an applied research center focused on college and university student political learning and participation in democracy. IDHE researchers study voting, campus conditions for political learning and discussion, closing equity gaps in participation, and increasing student agency and participation. We accomplish our goals through research, resource development, assisting institutions and the higher education community, and advocacy. ECSU participated in the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement for the first time during the Fall 2018 semester which coincided with the 2018 mid-term election.

According to the NSLVE campus report for ECSU, the number of students registered took a decline from 2014 to 2018, going from 1,319 students to 1,170 students. Yet, when taking into account that the total number of eligible voters also decreased, going from 1,893 students in 2014 to 1,629 students in 2018, this statistic is unsurprising.

Moreover, through the NSLVE report, it was also found that the number of students who voted increased from 2014 to 2018, as it jumped from 398 to 547 in number. Registration and voting rates, once again comparing 2014 to 2018, went up as well, increasing from a 69.7 percentile rate to a 71.8 percentile rate, and a 21 percentile rate to a 33.6 percentile rate, respectively.

## **What challenges/opportunities did the results present?**

### **Strategy**

The strategy outlined in this plan is heavily focused on events designed to enrich, educate, and entertain students on the importance of registering to vote and following through on voting. Enclosed is a detailed schedule of events we plan to host for the Spring and Fall 2020 semesters.

## **Should the strategy be two-tiered with the Spring focusing on the March NC primary and Fall focusing on the November general elections in the intro paragraph?**

***Weekly Events (Both Semesters)***

Voter Registration Drives on Tuesdays (During 3:30 Breaks)

Voter Movie Nights (with registration tables) - every other Thursday starting February 13th)

***Spring 2020***

February 12th (Wednesday) - Voter ID Laws Pizza & Politics (Informative Forum)

February 19th (Wednesday) - NSLVE Report Pizza & Politics (Informative Forum)

March 3rd (Tuesday) - North Carolina Primary (Tentative) - T-Shirt Handout and Voters March

March 6th (Tentative) - TurboVote Party

\*\*Students will be given the opportunity, starting from the beginning of the semester, to sign up for an app named TurboVote. Those that choose to do so will gain admission into a party which will be held on the date listed above.

April 15th (Wednesday) - Debate Forum (Topic TBD)

May 6th (Wednesday) - Final Exams Midweek Break/Presidential Election Catch-Up

\*\*This event will be used to give ECSU students a break from studying and finals, as well as a way to “catch them up” on the milestones taking place within the presidential election.

***Fall 2020***

September 17th (Thursday) - Constitution Day Voter Registration Drive

September 23rd (Wednesday) - National Voter Registration Day Cookout

September 29th (Tuesday) - First Presidential Debate Watch Party

October 7th (Wednesday) - Vice Presidential Debate Watch Party

October 12th - 16th (Monday-Friday) (Tentative) - Freshman Seminar Presentations

\*\*During this time frame, we will visit the freshman seminar courses and speak with the students. We will talk with them about the importance of voting, how they can become more involved with voting initiatives around campus, and how they can register to vote themselves (if they have not already done so).

October 15th (Thursday) - Second Presidential Debate Watch Party

October 22nd (Thursday) Third Presidential Debate Watch Party

November 3rd - Election Day Watch Party

November 11th - What Can I Do Now? Pizza & Politics (Informative Forum)

TBD:

Candidate Forums

\*\* We are also in the process of working to get a voter station on the ECSU campus. **This may be a goal and may need an explanation of the rationale behind needing an on campus voter station.**

### **Reporting**

Reporting/sharing the action plan and the results from its implementation will both take place on two different platforms. These platforms include social media, and the student list moderator, an existing campus service to broadcast important information. To elaborate further, we are in the process of making social media accounts for “ECSU’s All In Challenge”, which once it is followed by the ECSU students, can be used to give them vital stats and details regarding what has been taking place. Not to mention, the student list moderator, which is a system which provides students, faculty, and administrators with email updates, can be utilized to provide current news as well. On another note, as far as sharing the NSLVE data, this has been set to take place February 19th, as a part of a Pizza and Politics information forum. During this event we will be detailing the gathered statistics, explaining what it all means, and notifying students on how said data can be improved in the future.

**Use of ECSU radio and TV services?**

**Use of Vikings Engage app?**

**Use of Viking Volunteer Corps portal (Galaxy Digital site)?**

**Print materials such as flyers, issue information sheets and election info sheets?**

### **Evaluation**

- Surveys
- # of Groups
  - On Campus
  - Off Campus
  - Departments
- # of Volunteers
- # of Collaborative Events
- Sign-in sheets and membership lists (events, information sharing)