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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

Campus Vote Project Fellow - Kaiya Smith

Campus Vote Project On-campus Supervisor - Russell Haddad

Student Government Association (SGA) - Jimmy Chambers

Campus Activities Board (CAB) - Antoinette Griffin

Alpha Phi Alpha - Ahmad Taylor

Royal Court - Nyasia Luke

ROTC - Diamond Vann

Vivid Modeling Agency - Anya Lawrence

Social Work Club - Quadajah Flythe

History Club - Eryicka Johnson

City Council - Darrius Horton (unconfirmed)

Pasquotank County Board of Elections – Emma Tate

NENC League of Women Voters – Terra Fox (unconfirmed)

NAACP - Keith Rivers (unconfirmed)

Republican Party – George Hague (unconfirmed)

Democratic Party- David Boone (unconfirmed)

Add member of the County Commissioners and/or City-County Community Relations Commission?

**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.

For on-campus representatives of the Leadership Team, particularly student groups, there will be secondary members who be trained for succession purposes. Membership will be determined on an annual basis before the end of the spring semester.

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.



Chancellor Karrie G. Dixon commits her leadership and support to higher education stakeholders to ensure all students learn about and participate in elections.

1. The responsibility of higher education institutions to prepare students to be informed and active citizens;
2. the importance of the student voice in all elections (local, state, and presidential); and
3. the need for both curricular and cocurricular experiences to shape and support the development of college students into becoming lifelong voters and engaged community members.

Landscape

ECSU, an 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.

Elizabeth City is located in Pasquotank County and has a population of 39,639, according to the 2018 U.S. Census Bureau Estimates. About 59% of the county's population is White/Caucasian and 36% Black/African-American. The third largest population is Hispanic/Latino is roughly 5%. As one of the poorest regions in North Carolina the median household income is \$47,264 with an 18% poverty rate. A total of 86% have at least a high school diploma, but only 20% have a bachelor's degree or higher (2017 U.S. Census Estimate).

Currently, there are 666 registered voters on ECSU's campus. 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, ECSU students encountered voter registration problems that resulted in election day confusion at the polls. Poll workers asked students for identification due to incomplete registrations, which students and university staff and faculty were unaware of. The infrastructure, remediation steps, and events prescribed in this plan should result in better data gathering and greater engagement both on and off campus.

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:

- Resolve returned voter registration cards by mail issue
- Activate social media awareness campaign
- Create local Board of Elections presentation at orientations
- Partner with local Board of Elections on voter registration and poll worker training
- Collaborate with First-Year Experience faculty to develop democratic engagement curriculum
- 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%
- Locate early voting station on campus
- Increase alliances with democratic engagement organizations
- Add certain data points to the National Student Clearinghouse information



NSLVE NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT

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.

Challenges/Opportunities

The NSLVE report exposed gaps in the various populations across campus that the institution can do a better job reaching, demographically and programmatically. Those identified challenges pose significant opportunities to not only increase voter registration and voter turnout, but institutionalizing democratic engagement at ECSU.

For instance, much of the data for By Field of Study was sketchy and for many of the areas no comparison between 2014 and 2018 was available. This partially could be attributed to changes in academic program during that period of time that did not full match up when data was compiled for the report.

YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | MIDTERM ELECTIONS

By Field of Study*

* Your students' data broken down by field of study. To provide more accurate voting rates, students ineligible to vote because they were too young, students whose age data was not reported to the Clearinghouse, as well as records that were FERPA blocked are removed from this table. Please note that we are not able to adjust these voting rates by removing non-resident aliens, resident aliens or undocumented students. The green and red highlighted values below represent your campus's top three and bottom three voting rates by field of study.

	2014			2018			Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	152	29	19.1%	208	68	33.0% ↑	13.9
Business, Management, and Marketing	281	44	16.9%	230	69	30.0% ↑	13.1
Communication and Journalism	64	*	n/a	40	12	30.0%	n/a
Computer and Information Sciences	64	10	15.6%	54	18	33.3% ↑	17.7
Education	327	88	26.9%	158	68	43.0% ↑	16.1
Engineering and Engineering Technologies	70	*	n/a	58	15	26.8%	n/a
English Language and Literature	54	10	18.5%	24	*	n/a	n/a
Health Professions	82	12	14.6%	0	0	n/a	n/a
History	21	*	n/a	32	14	43.8%	n/a
Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Protective Services	208	45	21.6%	135	42	31.1% ↑	9.5
Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Humanities	40	*	n/a	76	30	39.5%	n/a
Mathematics and Statistics	50	16	32.0%	25	*	n/a	n/a
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	0	0	n/a	65	36	55.4%	n/a
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies	23	*	n/a	140	37	26.4%	n/a
Physical Sciences	47	15	31.9%	16	*	n/a	n/a
Psychology	78	10	12.8%	104	31	29.8% ↑	17.0
Public Administration and Social Service Professions	80	22	27.5%	78	30	38.5% ↑	11.0
Social Sciences	93	29	31.2%	18	*	n/a	n/a
Transportation and Materials Moving	47	*	n/a	70	25	35.7%	n/a
Visual and Performing Arts	113	21	18.6%	87	25	28.7% ↑	10.2
Other	13	*	n/a	*	*	n/a	n/a
Unknown	10	*	n/a	*	*	n/a	n/a

Further opportunity areas are the following:

- By Undergraduate Class Year data not available
- By Race/Ethnicity data for Hispanics is not available

Adding this information to the National Student Clearinghouse will allow ECSU to better track student voter trends more comprehensively than in the past. Consistency is the key to comparing election cycles, and generally that is the greatest area of opportunity for improvement. Once that is achieved, more targeted efforts may take place to increase voter registration and ultimately voter turnout.

Strategy

With a more dedicated collaboration with the local Board of Elections, ECSU will develop a plan that strengthens and imprints democratic engagement on campus. Through ongoing dialogue with BOE officials, we jointly acknowledged several historical barriers to student democratic engagement and discovered openings specifically geared to provide better understanding of the voting process for students. They include:

- Investigate returned mail issue relating to voting problems
- Activate social media awareness campaign in conjunction with BOE
- BOE orientation presentation and material distribution
- Schedule BOE voter registration trainings, poll worker trainings, and voter record lookup
- Prepare possible BOE presentations as part of Freshmen Seminar curriculum
- Student workers at BOE Office

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 Fall and Spring semesters.

Weekly Voter Registration Events

- Voter Registration Drives on Tuesdays (During 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. breaks)
- Voter Movie Nights (with registration tables) every other Thursday

Informational Forums

- Voter ID Laws Pizza & Politics
- NSLVE Report Pizza & Politics
- Bowling & Ballots

Election Cycle Events

- TurboVote Party (Students will be given the opportunity, starting from the beginning of the semester, to sign up for TurboVote. Those that choose to do so will gain admission to the party.)
- Candidates Meet & Greet
- Candidates Forum
- Debate Watch Parties
- 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.)
- Early Voting Ride to the Polls
- March to the Polls

- Election Day Watch Party

Annual Events

- Constitution Day Program
- National Voter Registration Day Cookout

Reporting

Reporting/sharing the action plan and the results from its implementation will take place on multiple platforms. Social media accounts dedicated to “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. The student and employee list moderators, which are systems which provides students, faculty, and administrators with email updates, can be utilized to provide current news as well. 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 during the aforementioned informational forums.

We plan to utilize campus-operated media and technologies to inform, track, and report activities, further institutionalizing democratic engagement. These services are as follows:

- ECSU radio and TV
- Vikings Engage app
- Viking Volunteer Corps portal (Galaxy Digital)
- Print materials such as flyers, issue information sheets, and election info sheets

We would also employ our community partners - such as the League of Women Voters, Pasquotank County NAACP and Board of Elections - to disseminate information regarding the action plan and data related to democratic engagement.

Evaluation

The Leadership Team mentioned earlier in this plan would have the responsibility to review all aspects of campus democratic engagement. The reviews would take place at least twice during the academic area. Annual updates to the action plan would be conducted as a result of the reviews. Specifically, success would be evaluated based on the following:

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