



**ECSU Vikings Vote Action Plan**

**2022-2023**

## Executive Summary

Elizabeth City State University (ECSU), a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and constituent institution of the University of North Carolina System located in northeastern North Carolina (Pasquotank County), is roughly one hour from the Outer Banks and the Hampton Roads region of Virginia. The institution services approximately 2,054 students with 27 undergraduate and 3 graduate programs of study (as of Spring 2022 institutional data). 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. With a vision to develop leaders who will make a positive difference now and, in the future, ECSU will aim to increase student participation in the democratic process through voter education, registration, and mobilization efforts.

Members of the university community united to create a civic engagement work group that would institutionalize civic engagement at ECSU through an action plan. Lead by university leaders, to include faculty, staff, students, and community leaders, the civic engagement work group created *Vikings Vote*, a campus-wide plan dedicated to promoting democracy as cultural pride and civic responsibility. The *Vikings Vote* Civic Engagement plan aims to incorporate cross-campus collaboration and community partnerships by engaging ECSU faculty, staff, students, and nonpartisan community leaders in meaningful political conversations and to encourage electoral engagement as a priority throughout the campus community and beyond.

The work group utilized the 2014 & 2018 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Campus Report and previous civic engagement assessment data to inform the *Vikings Vote* Civic Engagement plan, most notably to connect students to civic opportunities, through voter registration drives, candidate visits to campus, debate watching parties, information sessions, etc. Previous programmatic efforts on campus provided valuable feedback for the workgroup to consider. In addition, the NSLVE report noted improvements in our registration and voting rates. Specifically, that our campus registration rate increased from 69.7% (2014) to 71.8% (2018) and our voting rate increased from 21.0% (2014) to 33.6% (2018). While the voting rate increased by 12.6, there was still work to be done.

The *Vikings Vote* Engagement Plan aligns with the university's Strategic Plan (2020-2025) to grow community-based experiences and develop opportunities for community involvement (Goal 2) and to prepare students for life through robust co-curricular and extra-curricular campus activities and cultivate and promote our unique Viking culture and pride (Goal 6). 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.

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 2022 presidential elections offer 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**

In the spirit of collaboration, the leadership team will consist of key campus and community members that most intimately include faculty, staff, students and community leaders that are passionate about democratic participation and social justice, and who work closely with our student body. These members are committed to nonpartisan democracy efforts:

**Student Ambassador - Jermonte Flemming\*\***

**Student Ambassador - Maya Hutchins\*\***

**Student Ambassador - Tyneal Outlaw-Owens\*\***

**Student Ambassador - Rachel Roundtree\*\***

**Student Ambassador - Uniququa Swain\*\***

**Student Coordinator – Melissa Harris\*\***

**Student Government – ShaNiya Moore (External Relations) \*\***

**Staff – Dr. Tiffany Hinton (Student Affairs) \*\***

**Staff – Dr. Tarsha Rogers (Academic Affairs)**

**Staff – Ms. Chanta Poyner (Student Engagement)**

**Faculty – Dr. Melissa Stuckey (History Dept.)**

**Faculty – Mr. Dwayne Ponton (Criminal Justice Dept.)**

**Faculty – Dr. Jennifer Brown (Physical Education & Health)**

**Community Member – Laura Martier (You Can Vote)**

**Community Member – Emma Tate (Pasquotank County Board of Elections)**

### **Community Member— Johnnie B. Walton (Fourth Ward/District for ECSU voters)**

\*\*These names are the primary individuals responsible for organizing campus-wide civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities for their peers. They will work closely with the remaining members to coordinate voter engagement collaborations and events. All remaining individuals will be delegated tasks, and simply work to aid the already established initiative.

\*\*Team Membership will be determined on an annual basis before the end of the spring semester. Transitions will be filled based on recommendations from the transitioning member.

This working group helps to execute the following events like the National Voter Registration Day, Vote Early Day, Voter Registration Drives, In Classroom and Virtual Presentations, Social Media promotion, and Debate Watch Parties.

### **Commitment**

#### **ECSU Mission Statement**

As a constituent institution of [The University of North Carolina System](#), Elizabeth City State University offers baccalaureate, professional, and master's degrees for a diverse student body.

**Our mission is to promote economic, social, and environmental progress for the people of northeastern North Carolina, the state, and the nation.**

We achieve our commitment to the highest quality education by maintaining a rigorous focus on academic excellence through liberal arts programs and using innovative and flexible technology-based instruction models to enhance our signature areas: integrating technology with education, improving human health and wellness, and advancing the natural and aviation sciences.

**Through teaching, research, and community engagement, the institution's rich heritage and its current multicultural student-centered focus provide a firm foundation for its endeavors. It serves the needs and aspirations of individuals and society; producing graduates for leadership roles and life-long learning.**

#### **ECSU Vision Statement**

Elizabeth City State University will be a premier public institution and **a leading partner for economic, social, and environmental progress. We will be a destination institution that develops leaders who will make a positive difference now and in the future.**

#### **ECSU Core Values**

ECSU is guided by a commitment to excellence, which is personified in the subsequent group of core values the university strives to demonstrate and maintain.

- Accountability – Administration, faculty, staff, and students will be responsible and transparent in their actions
- Commitment – Dedication to our students, community, and advancing the university will be our priority
- **Excellence – Unparalleled teaching, learning, and service to the university and community will be our measure for success**
- Collaboration – Teamwork and partnerships with our stakeholders will be utilized to achieve common goals
- **Inclusion – Diverse viewpoints, experiences, and backgrounds will be respected and welcomed**

The campus demonstrates its commitment to civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation through its hand-on approach in aiding the execution of the university’s [strategic plan](#) (2020-2025) which emphasizes the importance of community-based experiences, the development of opportunities for community involvement, and prioritizes prepare student development for life (civic) activities. Further, the university embraces, recognizes, and rewards excellence in civic engagement and is connected to several nonpartisan groups including NC Campus Engagement (formerly known as NC Campus Compact), Campus Vote Project, Common Cause, NC Black Alliance, You Can Vote, and others. These commitments aid in our efforts to increase student participation in democracy and provide more resources to support faculty, staff, and students who work to implement civic engagement commitments. Additionally, Chancellor Karrie G. Dixon values the importance of the student voice in all elections and commits her leadership and support to ensuring students are prepared and engaged, and active citizens.

## Landscape



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 midterm 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.

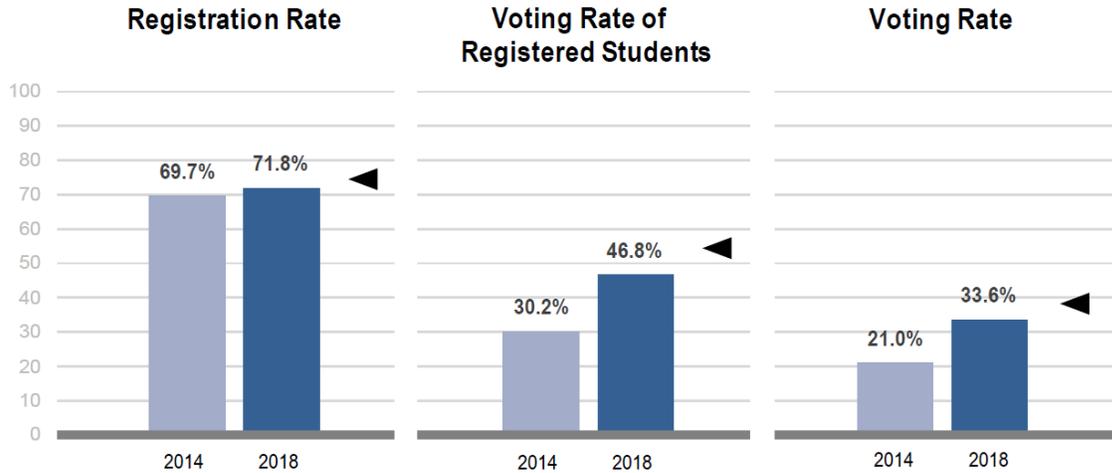
The NSLVE report issued September 2019 indicated that the voting rate increased by 12.6% in the 2018 Midterm Elections (compared to 2014). The registration and voting rates increased but we still have work to do with getting certain populations registered, as in 2018, our student enrollment decreased along with the total registered students. We also would like to continue to increase our early voting numbers and improve on the election day turnout. Another target approach to increasing student participation is to reach out to our graduate students to push them to register and vote. Per NSLVE, this population's participation has decreased from 2014 to 2018.

## 2018 Voting Rate

# 33.6%

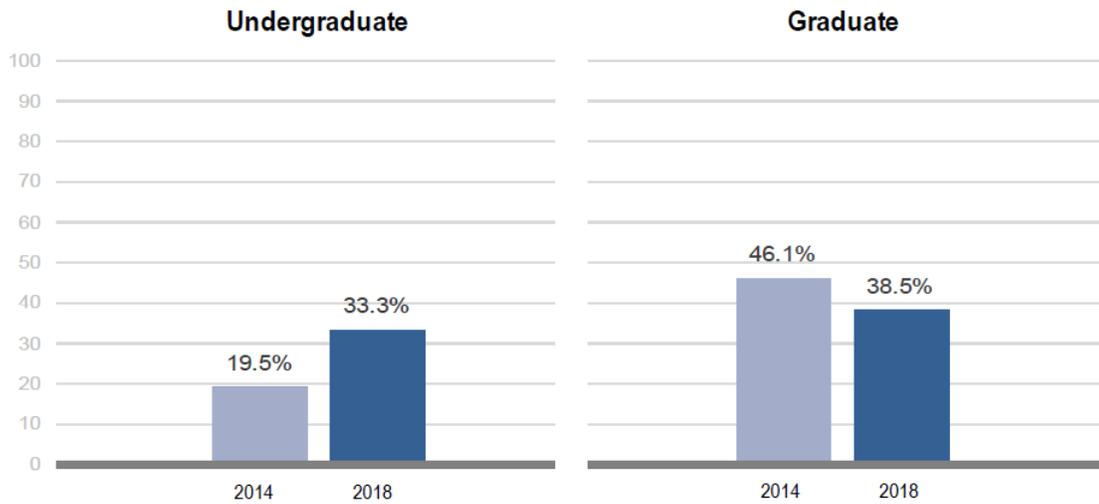
CHANGE  
FROM 2014  
**+12.6**

2018 VOTING RATE  
FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS  
**39.1%**



	2014	2018	Change
Total student enrollment	1,928	1,687 ↓	-241
Age under 18/Unknown	(28)	(57)	
IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens	*	*	
FERPA records blocked	*	0	
Total eligible voters	1,893	1,629 ↓	-264
Number of students who registered	1,319	1,170 ↓	-149
Number of students who voted	398	547 ↑	149
Registration rate	69.7%	71.8% ↑	2.1
Voting rate of registered students	30.2%	46.8% ↑	16.6
Voting rate	21.0%	33.6% ↑	12.6
Difference from all institutions	+1.3	-5.5	

	2014		2018		Change
	Voted	Rate	Voted	Rate	
Absentee	*	n/a	14	2.6%	n/a
Early Vote	113	28.4%	294	53.8%	↑ 25.4
Mail	0	n/a	*	n/a	n/a
In-Person, Election Day	275	69.1%	221	40.4%	↓ -28.7
Unknown	*	n/a	17	3.1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>		<b>547</b>		



	2014			2018			Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Undergraduate	1,784	347	19.5%	1,587	528	33.3%	↑ 13.8
Graduate	102	47	46.1%	39	15	38.5%	↓ -7.6
Unknown	11			*			

## 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%	206	68	33.0% ↑	13.9
Business, Management, and Marketing	261	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	56	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

## **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 fully match up when data was compiled for the report.

Furthermore, local elections traditionally lack the same excitement as national elections. It is our goal to inform, educate, and bring awareness to our local elections. In order to increase voter turnout in local elections, our programs, vigorous and hands-on events on campus will be implemented to increase student involvement. During the Fall 2021 semester, ECSU students encountered voter registration problems that resulted in a lack of online registrations. The issue that was encountered was students were unsure to put their home address or campus address when registering. The website YouCanVote.org provided an online registration portal for everyone to register to vote in a more rapid fashion. The issue was solved by obtaining the correct information regarding which address should be used for campus residents resulting in an increase in online voter registrations.

## **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:

Short Term:

- Increase new student voter registration by 20% from the previous year
- Offer local Board of Elections presentation at new student orientations
- Increase student voter participation in the 2022 Primaries and State General Elections

- Partner with local Board of Elections and nonpartisan groups (You Can Vote, Campus Vote Project, etc.) on voter registration, First Year Seminar classroom presentations, and poll worker recruitment and training
- Host monthly civic engagement programs (ie. teach ins: what's on the ballot, candidate/office duties, how to fill out a ballot, voter issues, etc.)
- Identify areas of improvement on the NSLVE report and create a strategy to increase voter rates among those populations (ie. graduate students, fields of study with less than 30%, etc.)

#### Long Term:

- Develop a voter engagement website to serve as a sustainable resource tool for civic engagement opportunities and information
- Increase campus and community alliances for civic engagement work (student orgs/Greeks, academic depts., community organizations)
- Develop democratic engagement branding that increases a sense of pride and responsibility

## Strategy

With a more dedicated collaboration between campus and community partners, *Vikings Vote* will thrive through registration trainings conducted by our nonpartisan campus engagement groups on the team (You Can Vote and Board of Elections), weekly voter registration drives in hot spots on campus (ie. cafeteria, student center, promenade, library, etc.) by the student leaders, and monthly programming and voter outreach activities by the work group, to include voter classroom and orientation presentations, and the celebration of national voter days, candidate forums, etc.).

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)
- Classroom Raps (class presentations beginning with First Year Seminar)

### ***Informational Forums***

- Candidate Forum
- Voter Suffrage events (highlights pioneers involved in civic rights movements)
- Pizza & Politics events (highlights social issues in our nation and community)
- Coffee & Conversations events (highlights voter 411 information—how to register, complete a ballot, local political leaders information, etc.)
- End of year cookout with voter registration and education opportunities

### ***Election Cycle Events***

- Rock The Vote Tabling
- Candidates Forum
- Pledge to Vote Campaign
- March to the Polls
- Election Results Party

## **Reporting**

Reporting/sharing the action plan and the results from its implementation will take place on multiple platforms. It will be shared with the workgroup, campus leadership, and national partners requiring the Democratic Engagement Plan. This plan will also live on the *Vikings Vote* webpage, accessible to internal and external campus constituents. Additionally, the NSLVE data will be shared with all stakeholders and partners upon request.

## **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 semester (at the beginning and end of a term). Annual updates to the action plan will be conducted as a result of these reviews.

The NSLVE report will serve as a main metric to evaluate the success of our democratic participation. While this data is helpful in identifying strengths and areas of improvement in voter registration, turnout rates, and other demographics, it does not track other civic engagement efforts, such as phone bank data, programming and training assessments, and pledges to vote

among the student body. As such, we will track these numbers and survey feedback separately through campus labs and other tracking databases (Vikings Engage).