ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Strategic Plan
Emory University – Oxford College Campus Campus
DRAFT: December 15, 2019

Background and Summary
In addition to being the largest segment of our population, adults ages 18-29 are the least represented group in any election (PEW 2018). Oxford College students are no exception. In recent years, the turnout rates for eligible Oxford students while improved have remained far below the national average for colleges and universities.

Set 35 miles from Atlanta in Covington, GA, Oxford College is the original Emory University campus. We are a small, idyllic campus, serving roughly 950 freshman and sophomores who complete their undergraduate work on the Atlanta campus. Set in a much more rural area, the vast majority of our students are from out of state, abroad, or closer to the metro Atlanta area. In some ways, the Oxford campus lends itself nicely to a greater community ethos though this has not translated into civic engagement and especially voting. Efforts in the 2018 midterm elections were almost exclusively run by campus life and interested students and faculty. The focus was on absentee voting and some efforts were made to register students locally and walk them to the local polling station just a block from campus. This effort did demonstrate that intense interest in the 2018 midterms could be harnessed to increase our participation rates from 4% in 2014 to 28% in 2018.

The experience of the 2018 election is reflective of the substantial efforts in the past in our community to make sure that voters are registered and that they are able to access their polling places. To leverage and coordinate the immense enthusiasm across the university for civic engagement, faculty, students, and staff from Oxford College joined the Emory Votes Initiative (EVI), detailed below, in April of 2019. Emory University joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in July 2019 and Oxford College, awarded a Bronze Seal of Excellence, joined in November of 2019.

The All in Challenge benefits for our campus in line with the university's recent strategic framework. Most immediately, increasing efforts to facilitate student engagement through voting and civic participation will enrich student experience and help to make Oxford an "academic community of choice," in line with Pillar 2 of the plan. It will also serve to amplify the voice and impact of the Oxford community in Oxford, Atlanta, Georgia, and the nearly 48 states and myriad countries reflected in our undergraduates. Finally, working to increase student engagement promotes the university's commitment to producing *critically-thinking, ethical citizens and nurturing future leaders in the public and private sectors*.

This document is in coordination with Emory Votes Initiative, and it outlines our strategy for increasing our campus turnout for the 2020 primary and general elections and beyond.

Organization and Personnel---EVI
The Emory Votes Initiative is "...dedicated to fostering a more civically engaged campus by increasing voter education, providing awareness programs, and empowering our community with informed political resources" (EVI Mission Statement, 2019 *draft*). This initiative began as a

decentralized working group of interested student, faculty, and staff volunteers, but by the spring of 2019, a formal university wide call to involve all divisions of the university in civic engagement and participation was launched. Emory students, staff, and faculty developed this non-partisan initiative to strengthen and centralize voting efforts on campus. Since its inception, EVI has received strong support from the Office of the Provost and the Office of Campus Life which has been critical in lending administrative and financial support to the group.

The group is led by a steering committee with representation from staff, faculty, and students on both the Atlanta and Oxford campuses. On the Oxford campus our representation includes: Rachel Ding (SGA President, **Oxford College**), Scott Foster (Director of Academic Technology, **Oxford College)**, Rhiannon Hubert (Assistant Dean and Director of Student Involvement and Leadership, **Oxford College**), Jordan Spires (EVI Intern **Oxford College**), and Katie Vigilante (Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, **Oxford College**).

What is more unique to Emory University, is the systematic and intentional work of EVI faculty members to encourage all faculty to play a more robust role in encouraging civic engagement education and democratic participation of their students. At Oxford College, we put in place a working group, which includes the steering committee members from Oxford, but in addition, several faculty members from across academic divisions of Oxford College (Catherine Bagwell (Professor of Psychology), Donald Beaudette, (Assistant Professor of Political Science), Brenda Harmon (Professor of Pedagogy of Chemistry), Margaret McGehee, (Associate Professor of American Studies and Dean of Oxford College Center for Teaching and Scholarship), and Nichole Powell, Associate Professor of Chemistry). A recent pilot of Oxford College Discovery Seminars (taught each fall and required for freshman) demonstrates the effectiveness of faculty across multiple disciplines to get their eligible students to register to vote (through Emory.turbovote.org). Some faculty intentionally included non-eligible students to encourage registration sign ups and promote registration to their peers.

Based on this work and the interest of political science specifically to improve its primary responsibility in promoting civic engagement education, the Division of History and Social Sciences at Oxford is in the process of creating the Civic Engagement Education and Democratic Participation program at Oxford College. The director of the program will be a lecture track position in political science.

Goals
Our specific goals for the 2020 election are:
- Voter registration rate of 85% among Oxford students
- Voter turnout rate of 50% among Oxford students

Our longer term goals are to encourage participation in all elections and value and promote the culture of voting and civic participation. In the longer term, we see our efforts as an integral part of Emory's commitment to educating civically engaged and ethical global citizens. Our students will go on to become leaders in the public and private sectors. In fostering a culture of civic engagement on campus, we can help our students to develop the skills to ensure their voices will be heard now and into the future.

Landscape

Oxford College has roughly 950 freshman and sophomore students. The table below lists the registration and turnout rates for Emory and all universities that participate in NSLVE.

Year	Oxford Reg. Rate	Nat'l. Reg. Rate	Oxford Turnout	Nat't. Turnout
2014	37.9%	64.9%	4.4%	19.1%
2018	70.2%	73.3%	28.2%	39.1%

Oxford's registration and participation rates in 2014 were significantly lower than the national average and the Atlanta campus. While 2018 saw dramatic increases in both registration and participation rates, we still fall well below the national and Atlanta campus rates. In fact, the Atlanta campus has also lagged well behind the national average with the exception of 2018. have been either near or above national averages. However, except for the 2018 midterm elections by a few percentages points, Emory's turnout rates have been consistently below the national average.

The 2018 NSLVE reports also provide additional insights that will guide our efforts moving forward about the state of voter engagement in the Oxford community:

- About half of students who voted in the 2018 midterm elections voted by absentee ballot and the percentage of in-student voting increased nearly 17% points.
- The lowest turnout rates were recorded among students studying computer science, mathematics, and the physical sciences.
- Asian and Latinx students had lower than average turnout rates while white and black students had higher than average turnout rates.

Support and Partnerships

The EVI is an initiative that is housed in the Office of the Provost and Campus Life and serves the entire university, including the Oxford campus. It has in the past and present received significant financial commitments from both as well as the Office of Community and Civic Engagement to fund its operations. The Civic Engagement and Democratic Participation program at Oxford College is beginning its financial development phase with our office of development and has received targeted support from Oxford Alumni in particular.

The academic administration beyond the Office of the Provost has also taken actions that materially support EVI's efforts. EVI has reached out to all of the academic deans across the university seeking their support for the initiative and their affirmation of support for faculty in their units that are engaged in EVI's work. This is particularly helpful to the Oxford Campus who served as a pilot to register nearly 30% of entering freshman in the fall of 2019 through Emory's partnership with Democracy Works and TurboVote (discussed below).

Student groups have also been important partners for EVI and play a crucial role at Oxford College. On the Oxford campus, the Student Activities Committee (SAC) helps support all student groups on campus, particularly in terms of programming. As such, through campus life,

we see faculty and staff working directly with SAC to include programming and competitions to sign up students with TurboVote. We plan to focus and expand our efforts to include a diversity of viewpoints and to including groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in civic engagement to help work with us in engaging the community.

The Plan

Technology: TurboVote

In July 2019, EVI with financial support from the Office of Community and Civic Engagement, contracted with TurboVote, a technology platform created by Democracy Works that facilitates voter registration, disseminates information about deadlines and polling places. Emory has a dedicated TurboVote portal (emory.turbovote.org) that allows members of our community to sign up. Since the launch of this Emory-specific portal, there have been over 700 sign-ups, 400 of these have been on the Oxford Campus.

We see TurboVote and its integration into our activities as central to the success of our plan. As the numbers from NSLVE suggest, the proportion of Emory students who are registered to vote is relatively high, and above the national average in every year for which we have data (though there is still clearly room for improvement). This is a testament to the successful past efforts at registering voters by student and staff groups.

However, there does appear to be a disconnect when it comes to actual turnout. This suggests there are other intervening factors between registration and turning out to the polls that lead registered students not to cast a ballot. We hope that TurboVote will help to bridge that gap, at least in part, through providing information that lowers the costs of voting. It is especially useful insofar as it provides reminders about absentee voting, including about deadlines for requesting ballots and information about how to do so, given that approximately half of Emory students use this method of voting. We also plan to conduct a field experiment on face to face voter mobilization techniques that have received some empirical support as part of Data-Driven Strategies to Promote Youth Turnout workshop at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the summer of 2021.

One goal that our group has is to seek out ways to integrate TurboVote into existing academic technology. A link to the portal has already been integrated into OrgSync, and we are exploring ways to further embed TurboVote into other student-facing platforms such as OPUS and Canvas. Doing so will give students greater opportunities to see TurboVote information as part of their normal academic activities.

Communications Strategy

EVI recognizes that communicating with the Emory community is key to achieving the goals we have set out, and as such this is an area where we are actively seeking to improve our efforts. Communications about the events we are having as well as how to become involved with the group itself are essential for ensuring that our community is aware of the opportunities for civic engagement that exist on our campus and why it is important for everyone's voice to be heard in the political process.

The EVI steering committee has identified a number of goals related to communications that we are seeking to achieve in advance of the 2020 elections that will make the group more effective by delivering our message to external audiences:

- We are currently working to develop an Emory-branded website that will serve as a central hub for information about EVI, events we are hosting and sponsoring, ways to become involved, and materials that will help our community participate in the political process.
- Our group has created social media accounts on a number of platforms, including Twitter and Facebook, that we plan to use to push out messages from EVI.
- Development of a short video or series of videos to educate the Emory community about the importance of civic engagement, the nuts-and-bolts of voting, and how to use TurboVote. Our plan would be to distribute these through multiple platforms, including a website and social media.
- Ongoing development of flyers and handouts that can be posted around campus to alert the community to the power of their voice, EVI events, and TurboVote. Several flyers have been produced already for the Atlanta and Oxford campuses, but we anticipate that these will continue to be created and adapted as we move into 2020.
- Advertising for EVI events and resources on electronic signage in buildings around campus. This will require designing and adapting existing materials to be used in this form.

Civic Engagement and Voting in the Classroom

Faculty have a unique role to play in fostering civic engagement that has largely been ignored and so extremely under utilized or seen as the duty of political science faculty alone. Yet, we know that students who are already more likely to be political engaged gravitate toward events about politics and the like. Yet, across disciplines, every faculty has a very common identity: students take our classes. Classes meet regularly and so they have multiple opportunities to rectly engage with students. Educating globally minded leaders in the private and public sectors is an essential pillar of Emory University's mission.

However, many faculty do not necessarily see clear connections between the work they do in the classroom and this goal of the university. While some faculty, for instance in political science, may see these connections readily in their teaching, they may be more difficult to make in some fields, particularly the natural sciences and mathematics. Indeed, a recent study found that only 18% of surveyed faculty at private and public universities around the country thought "teaching and encouraging students to become agents of social change – which explicitly involves issues of voting and civic behaviors like protesting and organizing" was an essential pedagogical goal.[1]

At Oxford, we have focused on several ways to engage faculty, including but not limited to: a repository of short modules that faculty across different disciplines can draw on to bring discussions about government, public policy, and civic engagement directly into the classroom. Other modules that we are developing include discussions of funding for scientific research, funding for the arts, the nature of scientific evidence used in the regulatory process, how census categories shape and reflect social and racial identities, and more. Our hope is that by creating

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[1] https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/04/25/civic-engagement-and-social-change-not-priority-faculty-members-opinion

these short modules, faculty will more readily see how they can integrate material about civic engagement and voting in the classroom and lower the barriers to doing so. This, we hope, will serve to make these themes more central to the Oxford academic experience. By the fall of 2020, we hope to have these modules posted on the EVI website, where they can be accessed both by Emory faculty and faculty at other institutions.

Second, our group is looking for ways more directly to incorporate TurboVote directly into the classroom and encourage faculty to have their students sign up. At Oxford, created a competition wherein the first-year discovery seminars that all freshman are required to take competed for prizes to see which class could have the greatest numbers of sign ups. This also proved to be successful, particularly when faculty dedicated a small amount of class time to allowing students to sign up for TurboVote and discussed the importance of civic engagement. Faculty leading seminars from biology, psychology, and economics signed up nearly 100% of their eligible students with TurboVote.

To this end, we see the Civic Engagement and Democratic Participation program as the operationalization of EVI on the Oxford campus by engaging key communities on Oxford's campus, including campus life (through the director of student involvement), technology (through the director of academic technology), co-curricular programs like Volunteer Oxford and the Mellon Humanities Pathways. The role would require Oxford faculty representation on both the EVI steering committee and faculty subcommittee to ensure the mission of EVI is implemented on the Oxford campus in various ways to encourage faculty to promote civic engagement and participation of their students and advisees. We see this role specifically as directing the education and training of faculty in individual (office and classroom visits) and in group contexts (lunch and learns, departmental visits, etc). Incentives[2] and recognition of faculty efforts to promote civic engagement and participation would be conducted around key deadlines like national registration day, registration and absentee ballot deadlines, and the like.

Engaging the Staff Community

Civic engagement in the broader staff community is also central to building our campus's culture of political participation. Students interact on a regular basis with staff all over the campus and view them as role models. By exemplifying Oxford's commitment to civic engagement and voting, Oxford staff can play an integral role in increasing voter turnout throughout our entire community. The steering committee has identified a number of opportunities that may serve to increase voting among staff members:

- We hope to encourage Transportation and Parking Services to stock voter registration forms in their offices. All staff and faculty that park on campus interact directly with this

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[2] For example, by overseeing and conducting contests of student engagement and participation. Such a contest was conducted on a pilot basis in the fall of 2019 around the September deadline for National Voter Registration Day in Oxford College Discovery Seminars. Several faculty had their students sign up and register to vote through Emory.TurboVote.org with the top 3 signing up all or nearly all their eligible students. Faculty from diverse disciplines (Economics, Biology, Psychology, Political Science, American Studies, Mathematics, and the like) led the way in signing up students.

office, so this is an ideal place to have information about voting and how to register to vote.

- Signs at the student center, library and dining hall and in building common areas that have information about TurboVote and voter registration as well as QR codes that allow people to easily access links with more information
- Campus Life now offers all new hires a brief orientation program and runs training in the summer for all student leaders before students return or come to campus for the first time. Training in TurboVote and effective mobilization will be offered to these leaders.
- Presentation to the Board od Counselors, Oxford Alumini Board and the like have been extremely positive and will help garner their support for civic engagement and turnout efforts

Orientation and Residence Hall Events

We plan to replicate and extend our involvement in orientation programs in 2020. This past fall, our orientation efforts focused primarily on having an active tabling presence at undergraduate events during the orientation period. This allowed us to help new students get registered for the first time, update their registration, or learn about the process of registering. We are also planning to have additional events that are tied to residence halls in advance of big voter registration deadlines in February and September (for the primary and general elections, respectively).

Transportation

As our NSLVE report suggests, there is a relatively large drop off between our registration and voting rates. One effort that we first undertook in 2018 was to walk students to the polls. We are hoping to operate a similar set of routes on Election Day 2020. We are also contemplating doing a transportation even during the early voting period. Of course, we are a school who plans to encourage participation across elections and the use of absentee ballots and election specific information is crucial. We see transportation and Oxford mail service as providing opportunities to "get your vote in" through a walk, a shuttle, or the mail.

Outreach to Student Groups

We also are hoping to plan a number of events in the coming year that are geared toward students that inform them about voting, how to register, and remind them of important deadlines for the coming year. A central goal of these events is to inform students about TurboVote and encourage them to sign up:

- We want to make presentations in all of the residence halls in advance of the primary election that provides information to students about how to register to vote, important deadlines, and how to request absentee ballots. This latter point is important because about half of Emory students have voted via absentee ballot in past elections. Helping them to understand the ways that process differs and giving them access to information about deadlines and ballot request forms is essential to our efforts. The residence halls are an important way to reach students because many first- and second-year undergraduate students live there.
- We are planning to reach out to other student groups to ask to make short presentations at their meetings to increase awareness about EVI, the ALL IN Challenge, and the resources available to students to increase student engagement. In the past, members of EVI have

presented at various student meetings, including Greek organizations, residence advisors, and the College Council. We also hope to use these outreach efforts as a way to make contacts with students that have been underrepresented in civic engagement (or at least in voting) on our campus based on the NSLVE reports.

- We plan to continue tabling efforts throughout the school year to reach students at different events, including Wonderful Wednesday. At these events, we will have voter registration materials available, encourage students to sign up on TurboVote and check or update their voter registration status, and work with them to create individual voting plans.
- We are planning other potential events that might more generally increase civic engagement and be an opportunity to reach students throughout 2020, including events where students can come to access materials to request absentee ballots, debate-watching parties, and others. These types events can help add a social or "fun" element to voting and civic engagement that may encourage people to participate.
- Finally, we are planning to have a number of communications and events centered on the 2020 Census. We hope that we can integrate broader themes of civic engagement and voting into those, though we recognize that the audience for the Census communications is broader than for voting.