



# **Voter Engagement at Florida Gulf Coast University**

Voter Friendly Campus  
Action Plan 2020

## CONTEXT

At Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) community engagement is featured in our mission, guiding principles, and strategic plan and we use this vision to guide how and what we do.

FGCU's mission acknowledges the importance of community engagement. In this mission we state that our institution "nurtures community partnerships, values public service, [and] encourages civic responsibility."

One of the University's primary guiding principles elaborates on these elements of our institutional values: ***Informed and engaged citizens are essential to the creation of a civil and sustainable society.*** The University values the development of the responsible self-grounded in honesty, courage, and compassion, and committed to advancing democratic ideals.

Given this foundational mission piece, we have a designated Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement that supports the work of multiple constituencies on FGCU campus including students, faculty & staff.

As the Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement, we are working to engage a number of key stakeholders on campus to revitalize the shared goal of voting and civic engagement. We are currently in the process of determining and implementing new events on campus to get student access to voting registration information and non-partisan information regarding upcoming elections ballots.

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## IMPLEMENTATION

### **Florida Gulf Coast University- Political Engagement Coalition**

Starting in January of 2020, The Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement coordinated a group of Political/Governance Registered Student Organizations, Key Political Science Faculty Members and offices within Student Involvement including Multicultural and Leadership Development (MLD) Center & Student Government to gather and determine what current activities or other events were happening around voter education & engagement at FGCU.

## **Political Engagement Faculty/Staff Champion**

To be a cohesive community focused on civic responsibilities, FGCU needs a full community approach - student leaders working alongside faculty and staff leadership. The Political Champion position is needed to help connect faculty and staff to the political engagement goals of the FGCU community while motivating and engaging them individually and through their respective roles with students. The Political Engagement Champion in this position will work in partnership with the Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement (SLCE) to complete the following:

- Co-facilitate monthly political coalition meetings
- Plan and execute an educational event related to political engagement (*preferably in collaboration with other offices/organizations on campus*)
- Recruit faculty/staff participation in voter registration and voter engagement efforts and events across campus
- Provide connections, updates, and resources to faculty and staff to help integrate voter registration and voter engagement efforts into their courses or the work of their offices (including promotion of campus political engagement events)
- Work with SLCE to communicate the FGCU voter engagement and voter registration goals and efforts to faculty and staff across campus
- Assist SLCE as much as possible in achieving national designations such as Voter Friendly Campus and All In Democracy Challenge
- Track and report weekly efforts and accomplishments throughout each semester

## **Partnership with Campus Election Engagement Project**

Our partnership with CEEP and placement of Fellows on-campus and virtually through the Fall semester will enhance our efforts for voter registration as well as voter turnout. CEEP Fellows objectives are as followed:

- Develop and implement the Voter Engagement Action Plan in order to improve democratic engagement.
- Increase student-voting rates
- Help students form the habits of active and informed citizenship.

Each opportunity that CEEP Fellows have to connect with students on FGCU Campus will be centered in achieving a 15% of RSVPs captured should be registered to vote.

## ASSESSMENT

FGCU participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) coordinated by Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University. Overall, results have been positive. The student voting rate was 53.2% for the 2016 Presidential Election, We experienced a 3.2% increase compared to the Voting Rate For All Institutions was 50.4%.

Below are listed our goals for 2020 based on past years NSLVE Reports:

	2012	2014	2016	2020 Goals
Total Number of Enrolled Students	13,192	14,045	14,420	15,046
Registration Rate of Enrolled Students	10,631	10,311	11,463	12,000
Voting Rate of Registered Students	6,402	2,832	7,450	8,000
First Year Student Voter Turnout	NA	440	1,497	2,000
Sophomore Student Voter Turnout	NA	396	1,441	2,000
Upperclass Student Voter Turnout	NA	1,547	3,759	4,000

*\*Data pulled from NSLVE Report.*

## **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

All events will provide the opportunity to get students registered to vote.

### **August**

**Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) Fellows Event partnered with Housing & Residence Life** - A tabling event hosted by our CEEP Fellow to engage students within the different residential halls at FGCU. CEEP Fellows plan to encourage students to write commitment notes to themselves about why it's important to be registered to vote and to get to the polls.

*Coordinated by Campus Election Engagement Project Fellows*

### **September**

**Vote Fest 2020 on Constitution Day September 17th-** This event will serve as a virtual nonpartisan resource fair allowing students to get registered to vote & gain relevant information about the upcoming election, and other information as it relates to civics, voting, and democratic engagement. The university president, mascot, and SG president will be featured (among others) to garner student involvement.

*Coordinated by Office of Government Relations, Student Government and Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement*

### **Partnering with Students Learn Students Vote for a Campus Takeover on September 22nd-**

Our CEEP Fellow will lead the charge in getting students together to package informational signage and swag to be distributed to on-campus partners in different areas such as but not limited to Housing & Residential Life, Campus Rec, Academic Buildings, etc.

*Coordinated by Campus Election Engagement Fellow & Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement*

### **October**

**Basement Series featuring "Knock Down the House" October 6th-** This event will be held in partnership with the Multicultural and Leadership Development (MLD) Center. The movie series will help students make the connection to running for office as young leaders, the importance of being an informed voter and knowing who their candidates are and what those candidates beliefs are.

*Coordinated by MLD & Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement*

### **November**

**Rides to the Polls on Nov 3rd Election Day-** An all hands on deck activity to support students getting out to the polls and voting.

*Coordinated by: Political Coalition*

### **Ongoing**

**Monthly Political Engagement Coalition Meetings**

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## **CONTACT**

Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement

Email: [ServiceLearning@fgcu.edu](mailto:ServiceLearning@fgcu.edu)

Shallyn Sims

Program Assistant

Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement

Email: [ssims@fgcu.edu](mailto:ssims@fgcu.edu)

Justin Fitzgerald

Director, Community Engagement

Office of Service-Learning & Civic Engagement

Email: [jfitzgerald@fgcu.edu](mailto:jfitzgerald@fgcu.edu)