

# Furman University's 2020 Democratic Engagement Plan

## Executive Summary

Dins<sup>1</sup> Vote is Furman University's voter registration and mobilization effort. This organization is student-led and student-organized. Voting and registration rates have been increasing at Furman at impressive rates. We hope to continue this momentum in 2020. Our action plan includes a new central Furman voting website and the allinvotes.org platform to track our progress and provide students with accurate voting information.

Our 2020 Democratic Engagement Plan was created under the auspices of Dr. David Fleming, faculty advisor to Dins Vote. Previous Dins Vote student leaders include Katherine West (2018) and Sulaiman Ahmad (2016).

## Commitment & Landscape

Furman University is committed to full democratic participation of all of its students, staff, and faculty. We believe that Furman's efforts should be student-led and student-organized. This allows students to take ownership of Dins Vote and provides important leadership opportunities. Further, the actions of Dins Vote can be seen by the student body as more "authentic," rather than another marketing effort by the university administration. Our commitment to student involvement and leadership of Dins Vote creates challenges for our efforts. Student leadership and participation necessarily change from year-to-year which limits continuity and institutional knowledge. This is particularly difficult for general elections in the fall, which occur early in the academic calendar. We hope that the Dins Vote student leaders will be able to use this action plan to successfully achieve the goals of the organization.

Based on data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, Dins Vote has been effective in registering and mobilizing voters in previous elections. Members of Dins Vote successfully sued the Greenville County Election Commission in 2016 to bring down voting barriers for college students in the county. Because of the changes in voting regulations and the efforts of Dins Vote, the student voting rate increased by 14 percentage points from 2014 to 2018. We hope to continue these efforts in 2020.

## Goals

The voting rate for Furman students increased significantly from 2014 to 2018. We hope to continue this trend in 2020. Our goals for 2020 include:

- Achieve a voting rate equal to the 2016 NSLVE average: 50.4%
- Increase turnout among student populations that are below Furman's historical average (e.g., first-year students, male students)

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<sup>1</sup> Furman University's mascot is the Paladin.

## Strategy

### Voter Registration Drives (Tabling Events)

- Important dates include Furman's Activates Fair at the beginning of the semester and National Voter Registration Day

### Access to Forms

- Provide hard-copy Voter Registration Forms and instructions across campus (Student Center, Library, Politics & International Affairs Department)

### Targeted Registration

- Conduct registration drives with Greek Life, the Athletics Department, and other organizations on campus to encourage their members to participate

### Training

- Work with members of COVE (Community Voters Empowerment) to provide registration training to Dins Vote members

### Publicity

- Include registration and voting information to all students via an email from President Davis
- Post flyers throughout campus with information on how to register
- Send flyers to all Department Assistants for all majors to be distributed to students via department listservs
- Use social media to promote events and registration
- Distribute Dins Vote stickers
- Partner with other campus organizations including College Republicans, College Democrats, the Riley Institute, and the NAACP student group

### Events

- Host an event through Furman's Cultural Life Program targeted at informing Furman students about voter registration
- Participate in debate watches throughout the campaign

### Data & Information

- Pilot the use of [allintovote.org](https://allintovote.org) to track Furman's registration efforts
- Create a website that will explain the registration and voting process for Furman students

### Shuttles

- Coordinate Election Day shuttling with the Student Government Association

## Reporting & Evaluation

As in previous years, our NSLVE will be widely distributed. First, it will be shared with all members of Dins Vote and campus administrators. The results of our 2020 report will also be part of a Cultural Life Programming event open to all students, staff, and faculty. We will evaluate our 2020 goals by using the data from the NSLVE report. Further, we will use these data to create new goals for 2022 and beyond.