



# Furman University Democratic Engagement Action Plan: 2022-2023 Academic Year

## I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by the Dins Vote Student Organization. This Democratic Engagement Plan serves to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Furman University. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2023 Academic Year, on and around our campus in Greenville, South Carolina.

The following groups have been leading this work at Furman University in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Undergraduate Students

We want to make changes so that undergraduate students are not the only members of the Furman community who are dedicated to making changes to our civic learning and democratic engagement.

The mission of Dins Vote is to gather Furman students together in order to provide all relevant information, facilitate meaningful discussion, and consider all opportunities that would allow their fellow peers to be informed voters in American society. This includes providing students resources on voter registration, absentee ballots, deadlines, candidate information, and through group events such as voter registration events, voter information events, CLPs with experts, posting QR codes around campus, and more. We hope to continue this momentum in 2022. Our action plan includes a new central Furman voting website with tracking of student use, the creation of a Dins Vote Fellow, integration of voter registration into freshman orientation, and the establishment of a new voting precinct for Furman students.

## II. Leadership

Advisor Dr. David Fleming and student leaders in Dins Vote will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus.

Dins Vote has led Furman University's initiative to vote since students sued the City of Greenville in 2016 to allow students to get voting rights. Since then, Dins Vote students and Dins Vote Advisor, Dr. David Fleming, have organized student programming and events in order to increase student registration and voter participation. In the future, Dins Vote hopes to make these initiatives priorities of Furman University staff, especially those who are heavily involved in freshman orientation.

This coalition is diverse and inclusive:

There is representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership and organizations that support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy

Our group plans to meet Every Other Tuesday at 4:00 | Johns 105

## III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement.

On-campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- Voter registration tables
- Protests / rallies / walkouts
- Signage promoting Election Day

On-campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Town halls
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Deliberative dialogues

## IV. Landscape

We do not have access to comprehensive demographic information about our student body at this time.

This is something we want to change.

We believe that we should have access to some demographic information so that we are better able to measure change and target our efforts.

## V. Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration.

We know our campus faces the following challenges internally when it comes to GOTV efforts and registering voters:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan do not mention civic learning and democratic engagement
- We don't have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus
- We don't use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus
- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding
- Voter engagement is politicized, resulting in administrative reluctance to engage

We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to GOTV efforts and registering voters:

- We don't have a working relationship with our local election office
- We don't have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students
- We have sustainable or consistent funding
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan
- We are able to engage student leaders for the leadership of our initiative

With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

- Register 50% of incoming students to vote during orientation
- FDOC Voter Registration Event
- Dins Vote Website with information on MyFurman

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

- Precinct on Campus
- Election Day- No Class
- Voting rate of 50% in 2024 election

## VI. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- Voter Registration Drives (Tabling Events)
- Important dates include Furman's Activates Fair at the beginning of the semester and National Voter Registration Day
- Tabling in the Dining Halls on campus
- Access to Forms
- Provide hard-copy Voter Registration Forms and instructions across campus (Student Center, Library, Politics & International Affairs Department)
- Post QR codes to Vote.org across campus and get Student organizations to post across Instagram
- 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
- National Voter Registration Day Event

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- Coordinate Election Day shuttling with the Student Government
- Pilot the use of allintovote.org to track Furman's registration efforts
- FDOC (First Day of Class) Registration Event
- Partner with other campus organizations including College Republicans, College Democrats, the Riley Institute, and the NAACP student group

- Include registration and voting information to all students via an email from President Davis
- Conduct registration drives with Greek Life, the Athletics Department, and other organizations on campus to encourage their members to participate
- Create a Dins Vote Fellow who can work with University contacts over the summer and facilitate voter registration training with
- Create a Dins Vote Website with links to registering to vote, absentee ballots, etc. with step-by-step guides created by Furman students that tracks how many students have used the website
- Create a more accessible precinct for Furman students (Daniel Chapel, PAC, Younts)

These are tactics that we **are already doing** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

- Voter Registration Tabling National Voter Registration Day Event QR Codes Recruitment from interested majors and other clubs for succession

These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

- FDOC registration event
- Furman Dins Vote Website and put on MyFurman
- CLP Series with collaboration between civic engagement groups

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- No Class on Election Day
- Voter Information Session in Freshman Orientation
- Precinct on Campus

## VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was **41%**. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was **33.5%** and our voting rate among registered students was **83%**. During this year, our voting rate was **lower** than the national average.

## VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Share with University Administration
- Post on SyncDin

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Discussing with administration

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year
- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly