**Civic & Democratic Engagement Action Plan - ALL IN Challenge 2020**

**Gordon State College**

**Executive Summary**

*Who developed this action plan? What is this action plan for and what does it seek to accomplish? Where will this action plan be implemented? Why was this action plan developed? How does this plan tie to broader institutional norms/ values/strategic plans? When does this action plan start and end? Is this an action plan focused on the short-term and long-term goals? When will it be updated? How will this action plan be implemented? Who's in charge? What unit/office/division will be facilitating the effort?*

This action plan was developed in collaboration with representatives from Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The Dean of Students is the primary contact. The other members of the working group consisted of student government, student activities, residence life, and career services, along with several faculty members.

The purpose of the action plan is to align the civic and democratic engagement activities of the various departments and offices across the college. Gordon State College is committed to assisting our students in developing the Highlander EDGE. Within this framework, we encourage students to be engaged innovators, dedicated scholars, gifted communicators, and ethical leaders.

As this is the first draft of a long-term action plan, it will be updated annually. A calendar of civic and democratic engagement activities will be developed in collaboration with student activities and residence life. From an administrative standpoint, the office of the Dean of Students will be facilitating the effort.

**Leadership**

*Who are the working group members and how are they involved? Who (individual and/or office) is coordinating and overseeing the institution's work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement? How is the working group inclusive of different campus and community stakeholders? Does the working group have the support of upper administrators who can help advocate on behalf of the working group? How often will the working group meet or communicate?*

The working group consists of representatives from across the college as mentioned above. Upper administrators are also in support of the efforts. Engagement with community stakeholders is part of the long-term strategy. For now, the working group will communicate through quarterly virtual meetings and email as needed.

**Commitment**

*How does the institution and its leadership demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement? Is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement a pervasive - part of institutional culture? What are the institution's overall civic, democratic, and/or political learning outcomes? Is there a process in place to ensure that outcomes are measured and met? How is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement included in the general education curriculum? How is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement included in the co-curriculum?*

Gordon State College's strategic plan and yearly goals involve elements that support civic and democratic engagement. For instance, service-learning is an integral part of this year's college-wide strategic plan. In addition to the yearly goals, Gordon State College is dedicated to assisting students to develop the Highlander EDGE, as detailed above. Graduating students who have the EDGE is a high priority.

We are in the process of creating a co-curricular program map, which will focus on the EDGE. Within this map, students will be able to see and track their progress toward attaining these vital skills. Data reflecting student progress toward the EDGE will be collected and analzyed. We are also in the process of creating a database to capture campus data related to civic and community engagement. Both of these developing efforts will provide information on the ways that civic learning and community engagement are present in the general education curriculum and the co-curricular opportunities.

**Landscape**

*Are civic learning and democratic engagement overall campus learning outcomes? What does assessment data show about the political climate and democratic engagement on campus? How does this data compare to that of peer institutions? How is civic learning and democratic engagement present in the curriculum? How is civic learning and democratic engagement present in the co-curriculum? What internal barriers (e.g., limited funding, staff resistence, lack of learship) prevent the institution from being successful? What external barriers (e.g., election laws, voter ID laws, lack of proximity to polling location) prevent the institution from being successful? What resources are available to help the institution be successful? What additional resources are needed to help the institution be successful?*

Civic learning and democratic engagement are a focus for Gordon State College, specifically related to the Highlander EDGE. We are at the beginning stages of gathering and analyzing data about civic and democratic engagement; however, our campus has continually been involved in voter registration and participation efforts. At this point, we are seeking to align our campus-wide efforts in the hopes of having a greater impact on student learning and engagement.

We are at the beginning stages of assessing internal and external barriers. Internally, there are many efforts foused on civic and democratic engagement; however, they are not consolidated. Externally, there are potential barriers related to residential students and being registered to vote at their home address, which could lead to a transportation barrier on election day. Fortunately, we have begun conversations on aligning our efforts and helping residential students develop a voting plan. In the future, more time for planning and coordinating efforts could lead to greater success.

**Goals: Long-term**

*What is the long-term vision the institution hopes to achieve? What knowledge, skills, and capacities (learning outcomes) does the institution want students to achieve and graduate with in order to be active and informed? What are the outcomes the institution wants to accomplish over the next 10 years? Are the goals S.M.A.R.T.I.E. (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, inclusive, and equitable)?*

Gordon State College would like to increase student engagement in the democratic process and knowledge about civic life. These goals are directly related to the Highlander EDGE. In order to achieve these goals, we need to develop a collaborative campus-wide plan for increasing civic literacy and encouraging democratic engagement. This plan is the first step toward that long-term goal.

**Goals: Short-term**

*What outcomes does the institution need to reach during the next three years to stay on track to reach its longer-term vision? What resources does the institution need to ensure its longer-term vision is within reach? Who does the institution need to involve in order to reach its longer-term vision?*

During the next three years, Gordon State College needs to work toward a collaborative campus-wide plan for civic literacy and democratic engagement. Several efforts are already leading in this direction, including the EDGE Task Force and the Community Engagement Initiative with Collaboratory. We seek to reach our long-term goals by aligning these efforts.

**Strategy: Short-term**

*What is the work? What are the planned activities and initiatives? Who is responsible for implementing each planned strategy and tactic? Who is the audience for each strategy and tactic? What methods will be used to make strategies and tactics accessible to diverse populations? Where will each activity occur on and off campus? When will the work happen and*

*what preparations are required beforehand to make it happen? Why is each strategy and tactic being implemented and what is the goal for each activity?*

At this point, the work involves continued conversations with internal and external stakeholders. We will also begin to explore the resources available through the ALL IN Challenge website and implement those that are readily accessible. Since we entered this work in October, we are not ready to solidify a detailed strategy plan. This action plan is the beginning of our work to align and amplify campus activities related to democratic engagement. As mentioned previously, the work has been happening in various areas across campus; however, we would like to align our efforts moving forward. For that to happen, the current work will involve communication and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.

**Strategy: Long-term**

*How would you describe a campus committed to educating for civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation? What would it look like and how would you know this commitment existed? How might your institution deepen capacity and competence related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in tandem with civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation? What will it take to build toward this vision of sustained commitment beyond a single election cycle (e.g., resources, curricular offerings, staffing)? Where does work need to happen in order to institutionalize this vision (e.g., faculty senate, student government, division of student affairs)? Who is responsible within your working group for catalyzing or leading each effort? One step further, how would you know that this commitment has been institutionalized? On what timeline will efforts to enact this vision occur? (Think in terms of years; e.g., in year one your institution will accomplish what? In year two your institution will accomplish what? And so on...).*

A campus committed to civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation would infuse these expectations across all areas, from the classroom to the sports arenas and everywhere in between. Students would know that they are expected to be active participants in the local communities and in the democratic process. They would be supported in this work by faculty and staff who provide them with educational opportunities as well as experiential opportunities. This would be in the form of workshops, guest speakers, hosted events, and service-learning activities. Students, staff, and faculty would work side-by-side to demonstrate their commitment to the community through action.

Diversity, inclusion, and equity are an integral part of this effort. Fortunately, Gordon State College has a Presidential Commission dedicated to fostering diversity, inclusion, and equity on campus. We are in the process on gathering data in preparation to write a detailed action plan.

Given that this election cycle ends in less than three weeks, we are writing this action plan as an effort to document our current actions and prepare for the future. By the next election cycle, Gordon State College will have a detailed action plan that has been systematically implemented across the college.

## Reporting

*How will the plan be shared, internally and externally? Please state where the plan will be shared. Keeping in mind to share the report with multiple stakeholders. This could take place by posting the report on your institution's website, sharing during departmental meetings, student organization gatherings, and with community partners. Will the plan be made public? If so, how? Will the data, such as your institution's NSLVE report, used to inform the plan be made public? If so, how?*

The action plan will be initially shared internally, starting with the EDGE Taskforce, Presidential Commission on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity, and the Community Engagement Initiative with Collaboratory. After that, we will share the plan with the larger campus, including all students, staff, and faculty. Once the internal audience is aware of the plan, we will expand our communications to external stakeholders. It is likely that we will not share an official action plan this year as there are only three weeks remaining in the election cycle.

## Evaluation

*What is the purpose of the evaluation? What does the institution want to know and be able to do with the information gathered? Who is the audience for the evaluation? Who will carry out the evaluation? Is there an Institutional Research office representative involved? Faculty who are already studying related research questions? Student Affairs educators carrying out programmatic and long-term learning assessments? When will the evaluation be carried out and completed? What impact is already being measured for other related initiatives, like the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement? What information (data, evidence) must be collected and how will it be collected? What are the performance measures and indicators of success? How will information (data, evidence) be analyzed?*

While we are not at the point of producing a detailed evaluation plan, we are certain that this evaluation will be part of the larger evaluations already occurring at Gordon State College. The EDGE Task Force is currently gathering data to develop a co-curricular transcript. The Dean of Students and Residence Life are developing a residential student curriculum. An Assistant Vice President is with working with a team to gather community engagement data through partnership with Collaboratory. Ongoing campus surveys are conducted to assess the use of high-impact practices. Through a combination of these data sources, we will assess whether we are moving in the direction of increasing civic literacy and democratic engagement.