

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

#HPU

VOTES

CIVIC ACTION PLAN

2022



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

High Point University is a “God, Family, Country” school, meaning that we believe in American ideals that bring people together to change the world. Voting is a fundamental action that joins people from an array of identities to achieve one common goal and to exercise their civic duty as American citizens. At HPU we are striving to encourage our community to express their vote in an unprecedented effort. Through these efforts, we hope to form habits among the community to stress the importance of voting and the impact that it will have on individuals and our broader communities.

Recent elections have seen a surge of participation at the national level. HPU's voting rates, however, have remained lower than the national average. As a university with approximately 5,600 students, we seek to increase voting rates and create an environment that fosters thoughtful participation. At the heart of this effort will be HPU Votes, housed in the Center for Community Engagement. Our efforts are thoroughly non-partisan and address the needs of our student community as well as encouraging students to engage in the world around them.

The HPU Votes effort includes a wide range of stakeholders, including clubs, organizations, and services around campus that amplify our message to encourage students to engage in this civic process. We also utilize tools such as TurboVote, an online platform, that can assist students in getting registered in North Carolina or in their home state and remind them to update their registrations and election dates. These tools will significantly aid us in making sure students actually register to and then vote after we engage with them.

To increase the voter registration and voter rates our key goals are to:

1. Incorporate voter information and TurboVote usage into the first-year experience
2. Partner with our stakeholders to encourage students to register and then vote
3. Organize National Voter Registration and Election Day events
4. Publicize efforts through social media engagement and campus advertisements

This action plan was completed at the end of the spring 2022 semester, and implementation will begin in the fall of 2022, with a key focus on the midterm elections in November 2022. At the conclusion of the Fall 2022 semester, our initiatives will be assessed for their effectiveness.



# LEADERSHIP

The members of HPU Votes are Grant Hines (You Can Vote Fellow), Tessa Webb (Democracy Fellow), Kema Leonard (Democracy Fellow), Nayasia Coleman (assistant director of the Center for Community Engagement) and Joe Blosser (Executive Director for the Center of Community Engagement). HPU Votes aims to create a group which is truly representative of the HPU community, to engage with a wide range of students, including traditionally under-represented groups, and create a coalition among different stakeholders.

We intend to involve members of groups that have been underrepresented in the past, such as ethnic minority groups on campus, specific majors, and undergraduate students. We also hope to target segments of campus that make up a large portion of the HPU population, for example, Greek Life and student athletes. By forming this group, we have integrated HPU Votes in all areas of campus life. The creation of this leadership group and partnerships with other campus organizations and individuals are intended to continue beyond the current group of fellows' involvement. For this reason, collaborators will be encouraged to involve their general organization members.

To begin this dialogue, a meeting was held on March 28th, 2022 which brought together a selection of these stakeholders. Student representatives from the Black Student Union, Panhellenic Society, Bonner Leaders, the Political Science Club, and more were in attendance. Faculty from the Political Science, Religion and Philosophy, and Communication departments, as well as administrators, including the Vice President of Student Life, were also in attendance and provided insights into the logistics of future initiatives.

The group attending the initial leadership meeting helped set goals and formulate strategies for moving forward. The future engagement of this group will be the responsibility of the Democracy Fellows and the Civic Engagement Chair of the Volunteer Center, who will ensure the group is brought together multiple times a year. They will also ensure that progress and updates are communicated with all stakeholders and collaborate with relevant organizations when necessary.



HPU Votes will also be continuing to work with NSLV, ALL IN-Campus Democracy Challenge, Democracy Works, Turbo Vote, and the Campus Vote Project throughout the course of this year as resources and organizational structures.

This organization intends to formalize processes established by Dalton Lucas during his time at HPU, and create structures and points of contact that last beyond the course of study for the current members. This includes nurturing the relationship with the North Carolina Board of Elections that Dalton created. To make this work sustainable, HPU Votes will include younger undergraduates and create resources and networks that provide frameworks for future efforts such as contact lists. This will allow this year's efforts to create a durable foundation for democratic participation at High Point University.

# COMMITMENT

High Point University is committed to a program of Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement for all of its students. The University executes this work in part through its Center for Community Engagement (CCE). The mission of the CCE is to cultivate the values, understanding, and relationships required for deep social change in pursuit of justice and the common good. Ultimately, the work of the CCE is to strengthen civil society by forming good citizens.

High Point University is a God, Family, and Country school that embraces both the potential of the free market to reduce poverty by growing wealth and the moral responsibility people bear toward their neighbors. As the Premier Life Skills University, HPU prepares students for the complex world they will inhabit. To meet these educational goals, HPU employs an experiential form of education that exposes students to the challenges they will face in the world. To form the whole student, they must be educated among a diverse peer group, and they need to see their education in its larger framework. They are part of the great American experiment. Their education is for their lives and families, but it also teaches how they can serve others and build up our democracy.



To live out this commitment, HPU uses a general education program that includes diversity and experiential learning requirements. The liberal arts core also requires all students to take a course in the “American Context.” These courses focus on structural justice issues in American history and politics, and they are a primary site for voter engagement.

Through the establishment of a Center for Community Engagement, High Point University further institutionalized its commitment to civic learning and its role as an anchor institution in the City of High Point. The CCE serves as the central hub for connecting university and community resources. It draws a diverse group of students into the university through scholarships and programmatic support. And it leads students, faculty, and staff into the community where their intellectual and human capital come alongside community members to promote asset-based community development. Through these efforts, the CCE is a catalyst for civic learning and positive community change.

The HPU Votes Project lives within the structure of the CCE. The CCE oversees the student-run Volunteer Center, which coordinates student service across multiple domains, like education, poverty, environmentalism, and voter engagement. The leader of the HPU Votes Project works within this structure to schedule events, get access to funding, and carry out their work. The HPU Votes Project is therefore supported by a large group of engaged students and the institutional structure of the CCE.

HPU currently has a You Can Vote Fellow and two Democracy Fellows. We also have a four-year contract with TurboVote. We work through North Carolina Campus Compact as well to ensure we’re well connected to the diverse group of organizations that are seeking to support non-partisan college student voter engagement.

High Point University is committed to voter engagement through its curriculum, co-curricular activities, budgets, and staffing. This work lies at the heart of an HPU education.



# LANDSCAPE

Currently, High Point University has a wealth of campus resources that can assist students in registering to vote inside and outside of the state of North Carolina and get them to the polls on election day. The voter registration initiative was recently moved from the Office of Student Life to the Center for Community Engagement where it is known as the "HPU Votes" team. Here we strategize and coordinate with different campus departments to inform students about how to register for upcoming elections. One of the biggest challenges in trying to register students to vote is that they think they are already registered at home, but maybe they are not, and they also may not vote at home even if they are registered because they are not there.

The second biggest challenge is that students don't think that they can vote in North Carolina because they only go to college here. To help remedy these problems, we've subscribed to TurboVote, an online program that assists students in registering to vote, helps them obtain the correct absentee ballots, and will remind them to update their registration, their polling location, and election dates. This program is instrumental in getting students to the polls on election day. Other external programs we partner with are:

## **North Carolina Board of Elections (High Point Office)**

- We have formed and will strengthen our relationship with the local Board of Elections so that they can process the student voter registrations as well as provide updates on the status of registrations.

## **You Can Vote (non-partisan voter engagement organization)**

- This organization registers and engages voters in North Carolina and employs fellows on HPU's campus each semester. The fellows hold their own events on campus throughout the semester that we can collaborate on and exchange promotion materials

## **Civic Nations**

- HPU is participating in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Program, and is seeking to be designated a Voter Friendly Campus

## **North Carolina Campus Compact**

- As a member of NCCC, HPU has access to all their national partners and guidance in the best practices and agencies that can support our campus work

## **National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement report (NSLVE)**

- This study led by Tufts University's Institute for Democracy and Higher Education gives colleges and universities across the country voter registration and voter turnout rates among our college population.



# STAKEHOLDERS

- **Campus Concierge**
  - Provides information to the HPU community about election dates, and polling locations, coordinates shuttles to polls with transportation, and also trained to register people to vote
- **Office of Student Success**
  - This office serves as advisors to first-year students and having them trained to register students early will more likely have more first-year students vote throughout their four years. They will have voter registration applications readily available in their office.
- **Office of Student Life**
  - This office is trained to register students to vote. They will hand out literature, including an invitation to sign up for TurboVote, during move-in so that first-year students know that they are able to vote in North Carolina
- **Center for Community Engagement (Volunteer Center)**
  - This is where the HPU Votes team is headquartered. This team initiates all voter engagement, education, and registration efforts on campus
- **HPU Votes Team:** Dr. Joe Blosser, Nayasia Coleman, Grant Hines, Tessa Webb, Kema Leonard
- **Service Learning and Bonner Leader Program**
  - Both run out of the CCE, these programs will help inform students about upcoming elections and voter registration information
- **Alpha Phi Omega Service Fraternity**
  - Our school's chapter can partner with the HPU Votes Team to organize events.
- **Student-Athlete Committee**
  - Student-athletes represent a large portion of our student population, and this committee includes one person from each Division I team.
- **Political Science and Political Communication Departments**
  - The faculty and students in these areas are invested in the voting process and have long supported non-partisan voter engagement.



- **College Democrats, College Republicans, and the Political Science Club**
  - As a political-based club, these are students that are most likely to engage in the civic process so engaging with them to spread our message is instrumental
  - This will be a strong base of students who can volunteer to work voter registration tables, and information booths, and spread the word on social media
- **SGA Vice President of Service and Philanthropy**
  - This person oversees all of the service and philanthropic efforts of the student body. They can also relay voter education and registration information to the entire Student Government Association Senate and Executive Council
  - SGA has office hours where students can register to vote from one of the trained EC members
- **Black Cultural Awareness and Black Student Union Clubs**
  - Having these clubs on campus will inform black students on campus to get involved in the voting process and give them a safe space to do so.
- **Panhellenic/Inter Fraternity Council/National Panhellenic Council**
  - These organizations represent around 1/3 of the undergraduate population and are a close-knit group. If one of them does something, then others are likely to follow.
- **General Education Curriculum**
  - Each first-year student will take a class that fulfills the “American Context” requirement in the General Education curriculum. Since voting is a fundamental part of being an American, spreading the voter engagement message this way is an excellent strategy to target freshmen and we hope this message will stick with them throughout their four years of college.
- **Office of Career and Professional Development**
  - Many students frequent the CPD center, and they employ peer career advisors to assist students. If another student approaches them about registering to vote, they are more likely to do it. Voter registration applications will be available in this office.
- **Office of Communication**
  - The HPU Votes team is partnering with this office to design, print, and publish literature and update the HPU Votes website.
- **Religious Life**
  - This office advises the Board of Stewards. Our chapel services are frequented by many students who can learn about voter registration information through service announcements.



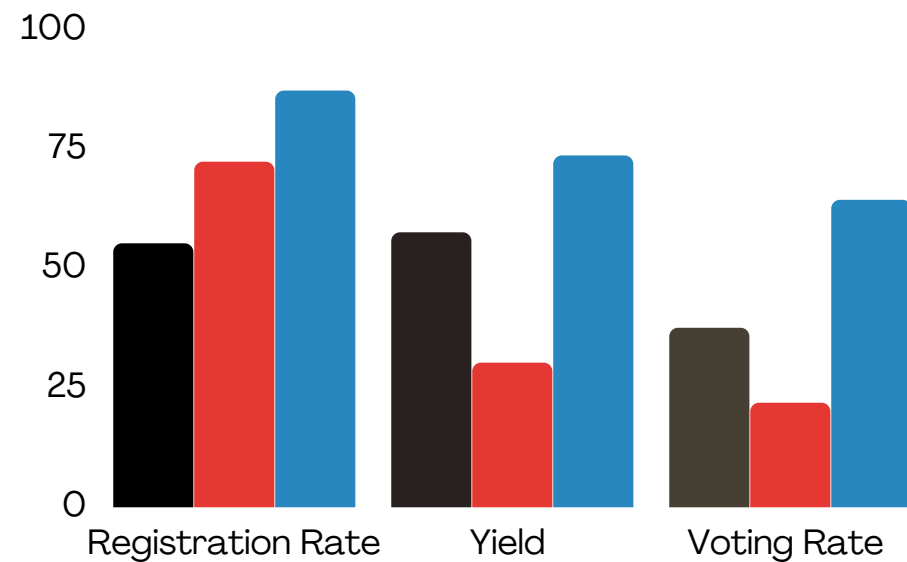


# NSLV DATA

This data was shared with the Student Senate at the SGA Meeting held on the 10th of March. It was also available to attendees of the stakeholders meeting on the 28th of March and leaders were encouraged to share this information with relevant students and groups.

## REGISTRATION, YEILD AND VOTING RATE

Yield: Percent of registered voters voting.



**2020 VOTING RATE:  
64.4%**

**+26.8**

**FROM 2016  
NATIONAL AVERAGE 66%**

### MAJORS WITH HIGHEST VOTING RATES:

- History
  - Literature
  - Sciences
  - Philosophy and Religious Studies
  - Education
- BIGGEST INCREASE... Physical Sciences  
39%**

### MAJORS WITH LOWEST VOTING RATES:

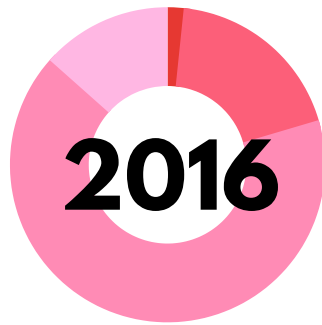
- Mathematics
  - Liberal Arts
  - Business, Management, and Marketing
  - Recreation and Fitness
- SMALLEST INCREASE... Mathematics  
and Statistics**



## VOTING METHOD

Unknown  
229

In person  
320

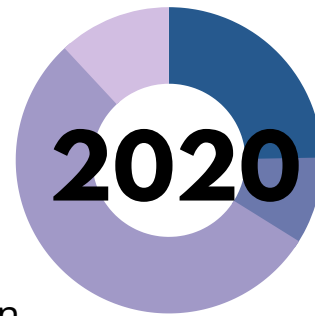


Not in person  
1127



Unknown  
413

Early vote  
856



In person  
317

Not in person  
1878

## ETHNICITY:

- The lowest voting rates were among Asian students (45%); however, this may be influenced by the higher proportion of international students unable to vote in this demographic.
- The voting rates of Black students is above average on our campus, at 72%. This may be influenced by this demographic's high proportion of graduate students.

## AGE GROUP AND EDUCATION:

- The voting rate increases with age across all years and this trend is also present in the midterms. Habit formation in voting is demonstrated by this trend.
- Gap between graduate and undergraduate voters is narrowing, from 27% in 2016 to 6% in 2020.
- Graduate students make up a much larger portion of the school population than in 2016, increasing from 289 to 963, due to the new Communication and Business Leadership Masters.

## GENDER:

- Females had a 29% increase from 2016 to 2020, to 68%
- Males had a 25% increase from 2016 to 2020, to 57%

## MAJORS

- Science's voting rate is increasing but still relatively low
- Communications and Mathematics are low
- Business and Computer Science had a significant increase but still the lowest
- Education students have remarkably high voting rates



**HIGH POINT  
UNIVERSITY**  
THE PREMIER LIFE SKILLS UNIVERSITY

# S.M.A.R.T.I.E GOALS

At a stakeholder meeting on the 28th of March lead by the HPU Votes team, different campus departments, organizations, and leaders strategized about how we can work together to increase campus voter engagement [see landscape for list of stakeholders]. It will take all of these entities to increase the number of active voters on campus and having the team centralized with the HPU Votes team streamlines the process. Below are the percentage rates that we collectively agreed on for registration, voting, and other specific areas.

## VOTER REGISTRATION RATES:

2022 Midterms = 85%

2024 General = 90%

Voting rates:

2022 Midterms = 40%

2024 General = 75%

## OTHER GOALS:

- Increase early voting to 35% of total voting
- Increase the traditional undergraduate voting rate to 25% by the 2022 Midterms



# STRATEGY

Our strategy starts with targeting first-year students, whom we want to know first that they are allowed to vote in the state of North Carolina as college students. By targeting freshmen we can let them know that they can register to vote as soon as they step onto campus for their first year. Working with the Office of Residence Life will allow us to place literature in their dorms before they get there so that is one of the first things they see when they arrive. We may even be able to place them inside of the welcome packets that they receive in the mail before they arrive on campus.

## First-Year Experience Build-In

- Welcome Week – info on TurboVote and registration in packet and at philanthropy table
- Student Success Coaches as advocates and trained to register students
- American Context courses
- Handing out postcards with TurboVote QR code during move-in
- Giving postcards to OSL to include in move-in packets

For the 2020 general election, the HPU Office of Student Life subscribed to TurboVote, an online service where students can check their registrations, update them, request absentee ballots, and fulfill other voting services, in any state. This service helps us to take a step further, by giving students voter resource access for their home states. When students are asked if they are registered to vote, they most likely answer with, “yes, but at home.” Incorporating a direct QR code with the link to TurboVote on our literature and social media graphics will streamline the process of getting students registered if they want to do so in their home state. We feel as if the less time it takes to go through the registration process the more likely students are to follow through with it. Having easy access to request absentee ballots will also make students more likely to vote if they are registered at home.

Most of all, we want to create a culture of voting on High Point University’s campus, a school that strongly values American ideals and models what it means to be an active citizen. Prospective students hear much more about this when applying to the university and we hope that our developing culture around the voting process becomes one of those selling points. We hope that future classes come into HPU knowing the importance of voting in elections, making it a part of the well-rounded college experience at HPU. Demonstrating to the state of North Carolina that college students are voting and should be taken more seriously as voters will hopefully make it easier for them to do so. We hope that this will also move HPU up in the list of schools with high voting rates, setting the example so that more college students are motivated to vote.



The next step is to target students in the classroom. High Point University has a required course in the new General Education Program called the "American Context" that all freshman are required to take. Incorporating a presentation in each class where a member of the HPU Votes team can go and talk to freshman will fit the theme of the course and be instrumental in getting our message out to first year students, so that the message resonates with them throughout college.

Below you will see our strategy planned out in the months leading up to the 2022 Midterm elections. During each month we are specifically targeting events that are nationally recognized that have been successful on our campus in past years, and that we anticipate will increase in size this year. Other planning logistics include: coordinating with different campus departments, voter registration training dates, poll shuttle times/locations, and literature design and distribution.

## CALENDAR:

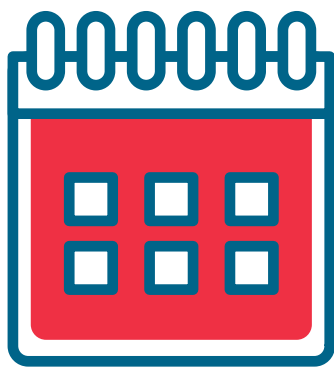
### June - July:

- HPU Votes team sets dates and locations for events (reserve spaces using '25 Live')
- National Voter Registration Day (September 20)
- Vote Early Day (October 28)
- Election Day Trolleys (November 8)
- Make a flagship flyer with QR code that will take people to TurboVote

### August:

- Confirm HPU dorm address precincts with the Board of Elections
  - Preferably in person at High Point Office (9325 E Russell Ave.; 336-641-3836; Linda) (send handwritten thank you notes)
- Procure voter registration forms
- Freshman Move-In (August 19-20)
  - Distribute during move in or have QR code flyers in freshman dorms when they arrive
- Train peer mentors to register students to vote
- August 26 - Involvement Fair
- Distribute voter registration forms to Campus Concierge locations, Student Success Office, Student Life Office, Office of Career and Professional Development, SGA EC and train them on how to register students
- Have them sent back to The Center for Community Engagement weekly
- **\*All forms must be turned in to the Board of Elections no later than two weeks from completion\***





### September:

- September 20 - National Voter Registration Day
- Get stickers and posters (ask OSL where to get them from)
- Host other registration tabling events and dorm storms
- Partner with stakeholders to host events and make classroom/club meeting appearances to register people to vote
- Host stakeholder meeting to assess progress on voting plan
- Notify faculty/staff that they can be poll workers
- Get active on the HPU Votes social media page
- Work with Global Studies to let students studying abroad know they can vote through TurboVote

### October:

- Send out early voting reminder
  - Add incentives like “you can avoid lines on election day”
- Multiple Mail in Ballot days at the mail center with notary on site
- Begin Early Voting shuttles (Date TBA)
- Have Campus Concierge or Office of Communications send out newsletter with TurboVote link and: information stressing that students can register and vote in North Carolina or register where you are most likely to be on election day. Include information on same-day registration and early voting and poll shuttles schedule

### November:

- November 8 - Send email on election day with polling place and shuttle reminders
- Reconvene stakeholder group to assess efforts after the election

### Events and Groups Voter Registration Outreach

- Political Science classes (American Politics)
- Fellows Programs
- Greek Week/Panhellenic Points
- Debate Watch Parties
- Food trucks
- HPUCAT and Multicultural Affairs

### Other Strategies

- Create HPU Votes, “I voted” stickers
- Asking people, “Are you registered to vote?”
- Use Instagram and social media influencers
- Food incentives at voter registration events

### Ongoing Through Election Day:

- Keep track of who and how many people we register to vote
- Follow up with the Board of Elections for make sure registrations are processed
- Establish HPU Votes Instagram
- Get not only students, but faculty/staff engaged as well



# REPORTING



This voting action plan will be made available to relevant stakeholders as detailed in earlier sections. Furthermore, it will be added to the HPU Votes homepage. The plan will be distributed throughout the administration with particular focus on heads of departments with lower voting rates. Access to the NSLVE report will accompany this information.

Facts and findings from the NSLVE report and voting action plan will be incorporated in future promotion and engagement activities organized by HPU Votes, and shared on a future HPU Votes social media account or the Center for Community Engagement account. This account is yet to be created but will be the basis of many campaigns. We hope to collaborate with other organizations to feature on Instagram accounts across the school community.

We will ensure that social media communications include information for students studying abroad.

We also hope to use our resources to inform faculty and students that they can be poll workers, and encourage and facilitate them to do so.

Key findings from the final plan will also be presented at the Student Government Association meeting in order to reach people from a wide range of campus organizations.

A press kit will be created for campus media such as Q News and HPU Vision to create election content for these student journalism organizations and provide another platform for HPU Votes' to share this information directly with students.

# EVALUATION

When evaluating the overall effectiveness of HPU Votes efforts, we will refer to the goals section. This provides the practical framework for our quantitative aims. This can be measured through NSLVE data and the TurboVote analysis. However, we will not receive the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement data for elections until the next election cycle.

Therefore, we need more immediate evaluation measures of our success.

- Focus group of student voters (or nonvoters), which will be hosted periodically in the lead up to the primary election in order to establish if HPU Votes' is meeting their needs in providing opportunities to engage. (Qualtrics survey of students on voting habits throughout HPUVotes' efforts)
- Debrief meetings of HPU Votes members after events at regular meetings.
- Engagement on social media through HPU Votes account or the Center for Community Engagement account.
- Meeting timeline goals
- Regular updates on the usage of TurboVote, based on their consistently updated data dashboard

These methods of evaluation attempt to provide feedback to the work we are doing in a timely manner in order for us to adjust if necessary. The aim is to have a maximum positive impact on voting culture at HPU.

