

Crush the Vote: 2020 Election Action Plan



CAMPUS DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE

Prepared by Tara Karaim, MA, Community-Based Learning Coordinator
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Executive Summary

The Crush the Vote: 2020 Election Action Plan for Johnson County Community College (JCCC) was prepared by Tara Karaim, Community-Based Learning Coordinator. The mission of the Community-Based Learning department is as follows:

Aligned with JCCC's mission to transform lives and strengthen communities, the office of Community-Based Learning is dedicated to supporting teaching strategies that utilize service-learning, community involvement, and real-world learning opportunities to encourage civic engagement in our students in addition to improving our community as a whole.

The purpose of this plan is to outline the goals and strategies for engaging students with the 2020 elections. It will be disseminated to students during our programming, to major stakeholders, and to JCCC at large.

This plan will be implemented on campus and virtually. We will predominately reach students through on-campus events, collaboration with clubs and organizations, and through faculty involvement in the classroom. This plan was originally drafted in December of 2019, with the intention of lasting through the spring and fall semesters of 2020. During the spring semester, many events needed to be adjusted or cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Accordingly, this draft documents those changes and includes new additions to our strategies and event list that have occurred since the last draft was submitted.

The plan will be implemented as a group effort by all members of the leadership team.

Leadership

Community-Based Learning will collaborate with staff, faculty, student groups, and administration in order to reach as many students as possible in the Crush the Vote campaign.

- Staff:
 - Tara Karaim, Community-Based Learning Coordinator
 - Cassie Fulk, Manager of Student Activities
 - Anne Turney, Manager of Student Life and Leadership Development
 - Callie Woods, Social Media and Content Coordinator
 - Nellie Schuckman, Honors and Community-Based Learning Administrative Assistant

- Faculty:
 - Terri Easley-Giraldo, Ph.D., Communications
 - Andrea Vieux, Ph.D., Political Science
 - Anne Dotter, Ph.D., Director of Honors and Community-Based Learning

- Students and Student Groups:
 - Honors Student Association: Cambre Morrow, Secretary
 - Phi Theta Kappa: Ashley Hooley, Vice President of Service

- Political Engagement Leadership Alliance: Michael Stonebarger, President; Kate Boyer, Secretary; Chris Roessel
 - Student Senate : Ankeet Prasai, President (spring 2020) and Sam Riddle, President (summer and fall 2020)
- Trustees: Greg Musil and Angeliina Lawson
 - Organizations:
 - League of Women Voters: Debbie Kitchin, Becky White, and Julie Lester
 - Loud Light: Anita Austin
 - The All-In Democracy Challenge: Catherine Fish and Ryan Drysdale
 - National Voter Registration Day

Commitment

Electoral engagement aligns with Johnson County Community College’s mission to “inspire learning to transform lives and strengthen communities.” The Crush the Vote team aims to strengthen communities through empowering students to enact change by learning about and engaging with the election.

This programming fits into our institutional learning outcome of Social Responsibility, which states: Be prepared to practice community engagement that reflects democratic citizenship, environmental responsibility, diversity, and international awareness.

In 2018, Community-Based Learning received a grant from The Democracy Commitment to utilize towards midterm election programming. That year JCCC was also recognized by the All in Democracy Challenge with a Gold Seal for reaching a 50% voter rate.

Not only are JCCC’s mission and institutional learning outcomes supportive of electoral engagement efforts, but this year we also have two trustees and more student leaders helping with the effort. This shows that a commitment to electoral engagement is woven into the culture of JCCC and is continuing to grow.

Landscape

Johnson County Community College is an esteemed institution in an affluent suburb of Kansas City, MO. The college was established in 1969. Our enrollment hovers around 18,000 students.

JCCC has consistently provided events to support electoral engagement like Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day.

The struggles our leadership team faces are similar to many community colleges. JCCC is a commuter campus and we do not have any required orientation courses or widespread college events. So, one challenge we face is trying to reach every student through one method. To reach all students, we typically have to explore multiple avenues of communication and various types of events. Our strategy reflects this.

Goals

Our major focus of this election plan is events and programming around the 2020 Elections. However, through developing this plan and maintaining a high level of visibility to our students and community, we will continue to foster a culture of civic learning and democratic engagement. It is important to note that all of our efforts will remain nonpartisan, which is aligned with college policy.

Short term:

1. **Voter Education:** Educate and reach at least 9,000 students on the importance of voter registration and voting, the importance of democratic citizenship, the logistics of the electoral process, and the specifics of election issues through in-person events and virtual methods by Election Day (November 3rd, 2020). We will keep track of the number of students reached. We will measure their level of understanding of these concepts from surveys given to students who participate in Crush the Vote programming.
2. **Voter Turnout:** With a more educated student population, we aim to increase voter registration by 15% from 2016 and increase voter rate by 20% from 2016.

Long term:

1. To continue to foster a culture of civic learning and democratic engagement at JCCC. This will be accomplished through continually documenting our processes so that progress towards our goals is constant and can happen more efficiently with each election year and in between.

NSLVE

- **Voting and Registration Rate**
 - 2012 Voting Rate: 48.8%; Registration Rate: 74.4% (65.6% voting rate of registered students)
 - **2016 Voting Rate: 51.9%; Registration Rate: 70.6% (73.5% voting rate of registered students)**

- **Voting Rate by Age Group:**

<u>Age</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2016</u>
18-21	43.6%	46.4%
22-24	39.1%	42.1%
25-29	38.6%	46.1%
30-39	50.1%	52.1%
40-49	61.3%	63.7%
50+	79.8%	86.1%

In summary, our NSLVE data shows that about 70% of our students were registered to vote in 2016 and about 50% made it to the polls. Our goal is to increase our voter registration rate by 15% and our voter rate by 20%. We will target our younger students, as our highest voting rates are for students ages 30 and above. This will be achieved through the types of events planned and the methods of communication. For example, social media will be used strategically throughout our efforts.

Strategy

Our short-term strategies are two-fold. The first is constant communication with students, staff, and faculty via Infohub (our main information distribution center), email, and social media about election dates, information on voter registration, and logistics of voting. The second short-term strategy is election-related events and are as follows:

1/24/20 – Crush the Vote Town Hall

All stake holders invited to discuss the master calendar of Crush the Vote events. Discussed learning objectives, logistics, and varying perspectives on how the campaign should be run.

4/24/20– Last Day to Register to Vote for the Primary

Due to Covid-19, on campus events related to this date were cancelled. Community-Based Learning Coordinator made sure to update students, staff, and faculty about the last day to register to vote and how to register to vote. Information was sent via Infohub, email, and social media.

5/2/20 – Kansas Democratic Primary

Information about the Kansas Democratic Primary and mail-in voting was sent out to students, staff, and faculty via Infohub, email, and social media.

6/17/20-8/4/20 – Summer Crush the Vote Challenge

Over the summer, a virtual electoral engagement challenge will encourage students to engage with the election and will include prizes and other incentives. Weekly videos, games, and articles will be sent out for students to learn about the importance of democratic engagement, election issues, and the logistics of voting and voter registration. Students will be encouraged to create their own videos and art as well as recruit their peers to join. The challenge will end with a virtual party on August 4, the day of the Primary Election.

9/17/20 – Constitution Day

Every year Student Life hosts an event for Constitution Day. Students can come pick up a constitution and participate in a themed Kahoot trivia game. We will have voter registration and election information available.

9/22/20 – National Voter Registration Day – Tabling/Virtual Event

Typically, tables would be set up in a high traffic area of campus for the League of Women Voters, Loud Light, and student volunteers to register people to vote and hand out information about the election. This year, depending on the current state of the pandemic, this may need to become a virtual event. Our team will work with the National Voter Registration Day organization to make this a reality. This will also be a time where we will include information on the logistics of voting: locations of polling sites, what to bring the day of, what a ballot looks like, etc.

9/29/20 – Debate Watch

Professor Terri Easley-Giraldo will host a debate watch party. Students will watch the live broadcast of the debate and participate in a group discussion. Students will also fill out a survey about their experience. This event can occur via Zoom if need be.

October – Candidate Meet and Greet

Professor Andrea Vieux and the Political Engagement and Leadership Alliance plan to contact candidates to set up a meet and greet for students.

10/13/20 – Last Day to Register to Vote – Tabling Event

This will look the same as the National Voter Registration Day set-up.

11/3/20 – Election Day Party

We will host an event (virtual or in-person depending on the pandemic) celebrating election day.

Our main long-term strategy is foster a culture of civic learning and democratic engagement. A secondary long-term strategy is to use the attention around the election to elicit a new method for all students to register to vote. Some suggestions have included: using the college's mass communication network to alert students of voter registration deadlines, making it so students are asked if they're registered to vote before they register for classes, or having a course in our Learning Management System about election engagement. This will take cooperation from administration and support from the student body to be put into place.

Reporting

News about Crush the Vote will be shared with the college population through various channels. Monthly updates will be sent out via the President's Report, a report sent to the President and Board of Trustees. This action plan will be added to the Crush the Vote Blog and be sent out via InfoHub. In addition, updates about reaching our goals will be sent out after we receive our NSLVE report.

Evaluation

At each event we will be collecting students' names and emails to send them a survey about their experiences. The questions will reflect our above-stated goals and learning objectives. The office of Community-Based Learning will collect the data from the surveys throughout the year and after Election Day. The faculty involved will be surveying students and analyzing data at their events and the staff of Student Activities will assess events as well. All data will be shared among the group and reported to administration. We will use this data to make sure the information we provide to students and the methods we use are reaching our goals. We will be analyzing the data to improve our events and information as the year progresses and for the next election year.

We will also track how many students attend events and participate in our virtual challenges. Data will be collected about how many students we register to vote at each event. Finally, we will rely on the upcoming NSLVE report to assess if we reached our goal of increasing voter registration and voter turnout.