

2020 ALL-IN: Campus Action Plan

About Kennesaw State University

A leader in innovative teaching and learning, Kennesaw State University is one of the 50 largest public institutions in the country. KSU offers more than 150 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees to its nearly 38,000 students. With 13 colleges on two metro Atlanta campuses, Kennesaw State is a member of the University System of Georgia and the third-largest university in the state. The university's vibrant campus culture, diverse population, strong global ties, entrepreneurial spirit, and Division I athletics draw students from throughout the region and from 92 countries across the globe. Ranked a top choice for students by U.S. News, Kennesaw State is a Carnegie-designated doctoral research institution (R2), placing it among an elite group of only 6 percent of U.S. colleges and universities with an R1 or R2 status.

Overview:

The 2020 year will bring many challenges and opportunities with the oncoming primary election. With this, the Department of Student Leadership and Service is leading the charge in planning initiatives and educational programming to prepare campus for the 2020 election season. Our 2020 goals focus on preparedness, education, and engagement through:

Coalition:

The Action Plan will primarily be carried out by the Department of Student Leadership and Service in coordination with various campus partners from our previous Constitution Week Planning Committee, American Democracy Project (ADP) Coalition, and newly formed academic partners. These include:

1. Student Groups
 - a. Student Government Association
 - i. Promotion of voter registration drives and educational programming
 - ii. Host of Letter writing campaigns and Constitution Trivia nights
 - b. Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) Fellows
 - i. Recruited on campus and selected by the Campus Select Network
 - ii. Plan and implement voter registration and engagement initiatives
 - c. National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)
 - i. Volunteers for voter registration and education initiatives
2. Faculty
 - a. Marshal Chaifetz-CHSS Grants and Contracts Coordinator and Clinical Associate Professor of Public Administration and Law
 - i. Student Mock Senatorial Debate Collaborator for recruitment of student and faculty engagement

- b. Kerwin Swint-Director of the School of Government and International Affairs
 - i. Director of Owls in Washington Internship program
 - c. Carl Snook-Senior Lecturer of Political Science
 - i. American Democracy Project, Georgia Coalition Partner
 - d. Laurie Aycock- Director of Collection Development and Librarian Assistant Professor of Library Science
 - i. Library Programing including Constitution Con
- 3. Staff
 - a. Ryan Keesee- Assistant Director Civic Engagement and Service
 - i. Manage CLDE and ADP activity
 - b. Semline Delva- Coordinator of Civic Engagement
 - i. Planning and implementation of CLDE and ADP activity
 - c. Dr. Thomas Yanuzzi- Executive Director Student Leadership and Service
 - i. ADP, Georgia Coalition Partner
 - d. Dr. Ronald Lunk- Director of Student Life and Assistant Dean of Students
 - i. Program sponsor and management of student life programing
 - e. Nicole Phillips- Director of Student Advocacy
 - i. Program Sponsor- Speak-up series hosted during Constitution Week
 - f. Christina Ujj- Associate Director of Residence Education
 - i. Resident programing and cosponsor of Speak-Up Series
 - g. Sharon Brownlow- Director of Parent and Family Programs
 - i. Parent programing for voter education
 - h. Chelsea Craig- Student Services Associate
 - i. Parent outreach and communication
 - i. Sherida Austin- Advisor and Business Coordinator for Student Media
 - i. Student Media announcements and inclusion
 - j. Jennifer Wilson- Director, Office of Sustainability
 - i. Policy programing focused on sustainability and environmental protections
- 4. Community and National Organizations
 - a. Campus Select
 - b. All In Challenge
 - c. NASPA Lead Institutions
 - d. American Democracy Project
 - e. Students Learn Students Vote
 - f. TurboVote
- 5. Local Elections Offices
 - a. League of Women Voters
 - b. Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration

2019 Analysis

We utilized 2019 to continue the development and implementation of core programs focused around voter engagement and education. A highlight of Kennesaw State each year is our Constitution Week which spans from Constitution and Citizenship Day (September 17th) to National Voter Registration Day (September 24th). We utilize this week to conduct voter registration and education activities, host civil discourse programs, policy focused education sessions, and interactive experiences to engage students. During the 2019 Constitution Week, we were able to continue a new initiative called Field Trip Friday which hosts a trip to the Georgia State Capitol during the week of programming. As a new addition, we hosted an individual from the Cobb Board of Elections to educate students on employment and volunteer opportunities. An additional new element of this week was the Census 2020 Information sessions. These were prepared as a workshop available for instructors to request to provide an overview of the Census coming in 2020.

With the 2019 year being an off cycle for elections, many of the additional programming initiatives we conduct such as voting shuttles were not hosted this year but will be a part of the outline for 2020. Additionally, our resources such as personnel and funding provided for 2019 were not as robust as the 2018 year. Aside from these limitations, 2019 provided a year of preparation for 2020 in which we've further expanded our campus partnerships and plan in advance for 2020.

2020 Action Plan

The goals set out for 2020 are:

- Raise the Kennesaw State University voting rate 4% from 53.6% based on our NSLVE data.
- Develop a Civic Engagement Team (CET) to coordinate civic learning and democratic engagement initiatives.
- Increase student participation in civic engagement initiatives and actions

Voter Registration:

Kennesaw will continue to utilize our partnership with TurboVote to provide easy access to registration. The campus mailing system was updated during 2019 to centralize all mailing per

respective campus. With this, each of our two campuses have one single mailing address on-campus students will use to register. This adjustment will also influence the polling location for students which in turn makes providing transportation to the polls much easier. These addresses are preloaded in TurboVote to make it easier and increase accuracy, and provided these details to the county Registrar to ensure there were no accidental rejections due to address match errors. The Office of the Dean of Students hosts a dedicated Voter Registration and Education website with links to both TurboVote and the Georgia My Voter Page, and uses that page as a landing site to then direct visitors to other related activities. The direct link to that site is <http://deanofstudents.kennesaw.edu/resources/voter-registration.php> but given the length of the URL we created an easier “mask” site to auto-direct users, so for marketing purposes we promoted the site as vote.kennesaw.edu.

There was significant marketing of voter registration options, deadlines, and programming. In addition to the multiple dedicated blast emails sent by the Dean of Students to all students, employees, parents and alumni, multiple forms of social media were employed, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. There is also an automated message that populates when students visit the Owl Life Student Organization portal. Each message is tailored based on the time of distribution, with some promoting initial voter registration options, some reminding of upcoming deadlines, and some encouraging verification of registration, proper address, polling location, and/or how to request absentee ballots.

The CET group we plan to develop will help in establishing a schedule of Voter Registration and Education tables and will also provide more personnel to continue hosting roaming registrars throughout campus. This team will play a key role in marketing and dispersing voter registration initiatives.

Voter Education:

For 2020, we will continue our traditional efforts such as e-blasts and social media postings to guide students to TurboVote but will also increase our efforts in Voter Education programming earlier than our normal timeframe of September when Constitution Week occurs. Through the CET Team, we plan to continue hosting and host:

- What’s the Tea on Democracy?: Student hosted conversation hours hosted by our campus Democracy Walls.
- Census Information Sessions and Tabling
- Action Planning for Primary Elections
- Student Government Policy Poster and Letter Writing Campaigns: Posters that highlight specific policies of interest to students as well as templates for writing letters to local representatives.
- Constitution Con 2020: Hosted by the Sturgis Library, this event includes a panel discussion reviewing the important influence of the Constitution on our current systems, voter registration information, and pocket constitution booklets.

- Public Policy focused information sessions. In the past these have included examples such as the Deep Dive into the Public Service Commission.
- Speak Up Series: Partnership with Resident Life, Student Advocacy, and Cultural Community Centers. This program hosts a relevant topic for students to practice civil discourse.
- Voter Planning Cards: Business cards that students complete to develop their “voting action plan.”

All programming offered directly through the coalition and/or the Student Government Association was specifically designed to be nonpartisan. Other politically and socially affiliated registered student organizations were free to choose whatever programmatic approaches and/or content they wished, though most opted for nonpartisan approaches to engage a broader audience.

Ballot Access:

Through our partnership with TurboVote, there is an easy mechanism to request absentee ballots at no cost to students. This is promoted as a key advantage of signing up for TurboVote, and is particularly marketed to on-campus residential students who preferred not to register using their local on-campus address but would not be able to return home to vote at their designated polling location.

We also utilize the Georgia Secretary of State’s My Voter Page. Through this site it is easy to verify voter registration status, poll location, early voting locations, current elected officials, update registration information, request an absentee or provisional ballot, verify ballot status, and review a sample ballot for the upcoming election.

In the past we have invited the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration to bring their sample ballot machine but with the update in technology in Georgia we will be updating what this will look like so students are prepared to complete their ballot appropriately.

Voter Turnout:

The Dean of Students facilitates an email blast and social media postings to promote all of the voter registration, education, and awareness activities that ultimately reinforced the desired end goal: actually voting! Each election cycle there is at least one email blast with appropriate details and reminders. Knowing students do not always check their emails in a timely manner, all activities were also promoted through OwlLife, KSU’s online student activities portal, and other traditional promotion mechanisms were used (distributing flyers around the campuses, asking faculty to make announcements to their classes, encouraging student leaders to use peer-to-peer communication channels).

We also educate students about the ease and availability of absentee ballots, but more

importantly ensure they understand how polling locations are designated. A challenge we have faced in years past is students not realizing on election day they can only vote at their designated polling location and end up unable to vote because they went to the wrong location. To proactively address this issue we focused on an early voting campaign to encourage students who were not choosing an absentee ballot option to go to the advance voting locations designated for the county. Unlike on election day, the only restriction when choosing a location for advance voting is that the voters must choose a location within the county in which they are registered. Since the majority of our students are from the local area, mostly within the county in which the two campuses are located, this provided easily accessible locations with convenient hours across multiple days. The state also provided Saturday voting options. To further support early voting, we offer shuttles to the polling locations. Utilizing the new CET team we will be able to provide more vans to more locations as needed.

Increased Participation:

Our third goal for the 2020 year will be to increase the number of students we see participating in our programs focused on civic learning and democratic engagement. Participation in the past has been low but we believe by leveraging the resource that is our CET team we will be able to have more student to student connections to drive engagement. This team will also provide additional avenues and energy to our marketing and promotion of the events we host throughout the year. Overall, we hope to expand programing and engagement beyond Constitution Week so students are engagement much earlier in the year.

Evaluation:

The Coalition at KSU has sustained a member from our assessment team to provide guidance in evaluating student and program outcomes. We've received reasonable response to our programing that shows students are being influenced to become more engaged in the democratic process but we hope to increase the response rate we receive and begin to dive into deeper conversations with students. A noted trend is a loss of efficacy to influence change which can be linked to students involvement in civic learning and democratic engagement. We hope to measure the rate at which our efforts increase student efficacy in the democratic process.

In Conclusion:

We plan to continue the existing momentum at Kennesaw State University. We will be expanding our efforts beyond Constitution Week which will bring additional opportunities to engage students and create a more consistent programing throughout the academic year. We also hope the Civic Engagement Team will provide an outlet to increase student led initiatives around

civic engagement.