

# Kutztown University Voter Friendly Campus Engagement Plan

## I. Executive Summary

This action plan is developed by Leah Cassellia in the Office of Student Involvement at Kutztown University. Leah M. Cassellia, director of Student Involvement at Kutztown University will be managing this effort. Her contact information is [casselli@kutztown.edu](mailto:casselli@kutztown.edu), 610-683-4867. The Office of Student Involvement enriches the student experience by providing engaging co-curricular opportunities in areas of intellectual, cultural, social, personal, civic and leadership development in the KU community.

The document serves as a guide and blueprint for our activity related to voter education and voter engagement of Kutztown University students, staff and faculty. As a result of our previous participation in the Voter Friendly Campus initiative, and achievement of the inaugural designation, we have reaped the benefits of planning for the success of this important work. As we move forward, we plan to integrate insights gained from the NSLVE reports and past initiatives and combine them with the best practices shared by various institutions. The action plan will be implemented through the engagement of stakeholders, using direct and action oriented communication related to the importance of voter participation.

## II. Leadership

The Office of Student Involvement will take the lead role in overseeing Kutztown's work to increase civic learning and engagement. Leah Cassellia serves as the chair of the working group, as this compliment of people represents all campus stakeholders and will each have responsibilities.

- Vote Everywhere Ambassador Team: These students are responsible for spearheading initiatives on campus via a supported program through the Andrew Goodman Foundation. \*\*These are the key students we look to for this initiative.\*\* <https://andrewgoodman.org/vote-everywhere/>
- Information Technology: They are working towards integration for Voter Registration that is hosted on our Desire To Learn (D2L) site. <https://desire2learn.kutztown.edu/>
- Student Organizations: The Political Science Club has been interested in partnering with voter registration and voter engagement Initiatives. They frequently table across campus and engage students in the process.
- University Government Relations Liaison: The former Kutztown borough mayor is now on staff here at KU and will be a critical member of the team.
- University Library Staff: The library staff keeps up to date resources for students, including a LibGuide.
- Web Development Staff: The Web Development staff works in concert with us to make sure that our campus website remains up to date. The site includes voter resources, KU Faculty and Staff Resources, Election Resources and Voter FAQs.
- Student Affairs Staff: The student affairs staff at KU is an important part of our efforts here at KU. This initiative is lead by our Dean of Students, Donovan McCargo.

- Student Government Board: This organization provides financial support for our TurboVote partnership. They also host voter registration drives and advocacy for student rights in accessing the polls.
- Select Faculty Members: There are several faculty members interested and invested in our students becoming educated and informed voters.
- Community Organizations: The League of Women Voters have been invested in presenting and engaging with our campus community. The Kutztown Community Partnership will also be supportive in the education of our campus community on issues related to the democratic process.

### III. Commitment

Kutztown University is committed to increasing civic learning and democratic engagement. The strategic plan has four goals, the second of which is “Community Engagement”. The third objective, “Increase the participation of members of the University community in the wider community” speaks directly to the importance of demonstrating good citizenship and social responsibility. Being an educated voter is critical to the success of that goal!

The Mission, Vision & Purpose statements of the University reflect this commitment, as well. The statements are as follows:

- I. Our Mission: Kutztown University's mission is to provide a high quality education at the undergraduate and graduate levels in order to prepare students to meet **lifelong intellectual, ethical, social, and career challenges**.
- II. Our Vision: Kutztown University aspires to be a regional center of excellence providing opportunities for advanced academic, cultural, **and public service experiences**, within a caring community, designed to promote success in a global society.
- III. Our Purpose: Grounded in regional history and focused on innovative futures through the colleges of Business, Education, Liberal Arts & Sciences and Visual & Performing Arts; Kutztown University: offers a contemporary liberal arts education as the foundation for inspiring and **challenging students to grow intellectually, professionally, ethically, civically, and socially**; provides support for students to reach their unique potential; **commits to access and diversity**, drawing upon international, national, regional, and community partnerships to **prepare new generations of global citizens**; values the life experiences of students, faculty, and staff to create a caring community on a beautiful campus; **cultivates opportunities for students to engage the world** and pursue meaningful lives and careers through collaboration, mentorship, and intentional working relationships.

Student Government Board has renewed their commitment to the use of TurboVote, used as our go-to site for voter registration processes.

## IV. Landscape

At the time of the development of this plan, there is plenty of good work to be done about increasing the level of campus involvement in the conversation about educating voters and urging students to get to the polls. As we continue to educate all constituents, provide resources for reference and become more engaged in local, state and national initiatives, our campus involvement will surely increase. The NSLVE reports from 2012, 2014 and 2016 are solid indicators that the work being done is impacting engagement in a positive manner. We will continue to monitor the statistical information provided in the reports to ensure we are trending in a positive direction. We will continue to evaluate our partnerships with TurboVote, the Andrew Goodman Foundation, Campus Vote Project and Voter Friendly Campus programs.

## V. Goals

Short Term Goals include:

- We will sign up an additional 1,000 KU students, faculty and staff for TurboVote services between August 1 and October 1, 2018.
- We will update voter registration information on the KU website.
- We will provide two programs per semester that focus on engaging in the voting process.
- We will fulfill our obligation and commitment to the Vote Everywhere Program.
- We will share student voting rates by areas of study with the deans and chairpersons of each department.

Long Term Goals include:

- We will increase the student voting rates of registered students by 10 percentage points from 2016 by 2024.
- We will increase the registration rate of students by 10 percentage points from 2016 to 2024.

## VI. Strategy

We will continue to use our promising practices, making adjustments to enhance the effectiveness as we assess each semester.

- Voter Registration
  - We partner with TurboVote/Democracy works and have worked toward institutionalizing the voter registration process. The widget is on the front of our D2L site, we have social-norming messages that we provide to students indicating that KU students register, become informed and vote.
  - Student Government Board hosts a Voter Registration drive on National Voter Registration Day.
  - Any student wishing to participate in our elections for Homecoming King and Queen must be signed up for TurboVote services.
- Voter Education

- Our campus website has valuable information, including voter resources, KU Faculty and Staff Resources, Election Resources and Voter FAQs.
- In addition to our 4 part, campus-wide poster campaign, we provide resources on our web page with suggestions on how Faculty and Staff can encourage students and colleagues at KU to get registered to vote. The list includes:

**Wondering what you can do to encourage your students and colleagues at KU to get registered to vote? Read on.**

**1. Add a tagline to your email signature.** *"Register to Vote! Voter Registration Deadline: Tuesday, October XXX. Get registered, vote by mail, and get reminders by email and text so you do not miss the elections! Visit <http://kutztown.turbovote.org> today! More voter information can be found here: [www.kutztown.edu/vote](http://www.kutztown.edu/vote)"*

**2. Send an encouraging email message to students.** *Perhaps include this text in your email:*

*Voting is not only your right; it's your responsibility. Kutztown University has partnered with the national non-profit, non-partisan organization TurboVote, to provide an easy online portal for you to register to vote or request an absentee ballot. It only takes a few minutes to submit your information and our goal is to get 100% of the student body registered to vote before the upcoming Tuesday, October 11, 2016 voter registration deadline!*

*Please take a few minutes now to register to vote or request an absentee ballot and make sure you are eligible to vote in November:*

*Visit: <http://kutztown.turbovote.org> today! Also, here is a link to some information about voting that may be helpful: [www.kutztown.edu/vote](http://www.kutztown.edu/vote)*

**3. Distribute information about TurboVote at an information table.** *If you are having an event and are willing to set up an information table, contact Student Involvement. You will be provided with a kit that includes a tablecloth, flyers, and information.*

**4. Distribute information about TurboVote in your classroom.** *If you are willing to distribute informational flyers, contact Student Involvement. You will be provided with flyers for distribution.*

**5. Include key dates for the 20XX elections on important emails and on the boards in your classrooms.**

- *Tuesday, 11/XX/20XX: Election Day*

- **Ballot Access:** TurboVote provides prompts regarding absentee ballots, as well as reminders. Our Student Government Board provides transportation to our local polls to students registered to vote in our local voting location.
- **Get Out the Vote:** Since our polling place on campus was relocated after the 2012 election to an off-campus location (5 miles from campus), our Student Government Board has provided van transportation to the polls.
- **Resources Available to Us:** We participated in a research study that gave us valuable information related to integration into electronic systems. We have that data and those reports. We have

our TurboVote data and statistics. We have the Andrew Goodman Foundation resources. We have Democracy Works Resources. We have All In resources.

## VII. Reporting

The plan will be shared with the implementation team, including the Andrew Goodman Foundation Vote Everywhere Ambassadors. They will be empowered to share the plan as appropriate with various constituencies as they work to gain support for achievement of goals.

## VIII. Evaluation

We gather data through our use of the NSLVE report and our TurboVote statistical information.

It is our plan to learn what groups and demographics of students are engaging in voter registration and voter education activity. We will then have better data to utilize while we reach out to our faculty and staff requesting their engagement in the educational process.