

# Democratic Action Plan

## New College of Florida

### Overview

In the 1960's New College was founded to be a campus focused on a rigorous curriculum to enhance individualism, pluralism, flexibility, freedom and excellence. These ideas, combined with the college's approach to liberal arts education is summarized in our mission:

*New College offers a liberal arts education of the highest quality in the context of a small, residential public honors college with a distinctive academic program which develops the student's intellectual and personal potential as fully as possible; encourages the discovery of new knowledge and values while providing opportunities to acquire established knowledge and values; and fosters the individual's effective relationship with society.*

New College recognizes the opportunity laid out for democratic engagement as a key component of fulfilling its mission and enhancing individual's role within society. This year is the inaugural year that New College has participated in the All In Democracy Challenge and as a NASPA Lead institution; New College is using this opportunity to continue developing engaged citizenship through campus wide collaborations.

*The goals for spring 2018 through fall 2018 are to:*

1. Encourage students to be civically and politically engaged;
2. Provide student development opportunities to support leadership roles in on and off campus activities
3. Provide information and resources to encourage faculty, staff and students to participate in political processes
4. expose faculty, staff, and students to the political processes and relevant issues

The goals above are broad, overarching themes that will be supported through specific programs and initiatives laid out below.

## **Voter Focused Initiatives**

### Registration Drives

We will host voter registration drives during Orientation programming (Civic Engagement Night in the Library), at our annual Constitution Day event, and on National Voter Registration Day. Registration collaborators include the League of Women Voters, the library, Democracy Matters, and NCF Democrats.

### National Register to Vote Day, September 27.

The registration team will encourage absentee ballots in order to increase student voting, as well as offering in person voter registration during meal hours in the dining facility on campus. The event will be registered with [nationalvoterregistrationday.org](http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org), and will utilize a poster campaign and passing out stickers in celebration of the day.

### Pre-Election Events

In the weeks prior to elections, the Office of Student Activities and Campus Engagement will do information events and campaigns to ensure that students are aware of what they need to vote and how they can utilize campus resources. During meal times there will be staff tabling with information about poll locations and ID requirements. Additionally, emails will go out with information about campus shuttles to the polling place. The office will also work to create a social media campaign for to raise awareness about voting and the election.

## **Voter and Issue Education**

Annually, New College of Florida hosts events around Constitution Day and Banned Books Week in our library. Moving forward into the 2017 midterm elections there will be opportunities to tailor the conversations to voting, addressing ballot issues, setting the stage for productive issue-based dialogues, and exploring constitutional rights.

A number of faculty and staff will be going through a three day Inter-group dialogue training and will be tasked with utilizing those skills to facilitate conversations that enhance cultural competence and support a diverse democracy starting in spring 2018 and carrying forward into fall 2018 focused on the midterm elections.

New College has never done an official event series focused on Free Speech Week (October 17-23), but plan to build upon intergroup dialogue trainings and the 2018 elections to do programming focused on free speech and the first amendment.

### Additional Considerations and Collaborations

Though the Office of Student Activities and Campus Engagement will serve as the primary hub for coordinating these activities, there are student groups, faculty members, and

library staff all committed to supporting democratic engagement and will be directly involved in the second phase (Fall 2018 programming).

## Programming Overview and Timeline

### Spring 2018

#### February

- Intergroup Dialogue training for faculty and staff
- Call for official steering committee (representatives from student groups and academic departments)

#### March

- Steering committee meetings
- Intergroup Dialogues on various topics

#### April

- Intergroup Dialogues on various topics
- Steering committee makes final recommendations to supplemental events to raise awareness about Democratic Engagement

### Fall 2018

#### August

- Civic Engagement Night at the Library
- New College Cares
- New College Student Alliance (student government event)

#### September

- Constitution Day event
- National Voter Registration Day events ('Turn Out for What?!')
- Know the candidates, Know the issues (collab with faculty and Democracy Matters)

#### October

- Mock election (vote on carved pumpkins, set up polls through supervisor of elections)

November

Voting Q and A (with faculty)

Social Media campaign (voting locations, and day of guide)

Tabling during meal times (voting locations, and day of guide)

Shuttle to polling place on election day

## **Data Collection and Assessment**

New College participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report and will use that information as a baseline for moving the campus forward. Additionally, short questionnaires will be provided to attendees at events to gain information about campus needs and what is effective for promoting democratic engagement.