

# North Carolina Central University

Voter Friendly Campus  
2022 Voter Engagement Action Plan

## Executive Summary

This action plan was developed in July 2022 by the working group to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at NC Central University. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over the next nine months on and around our campus in Durham, North Carolina. This plan will be implemented by students, staff, faculty, non-partisan organizations and alumni recruited by the Civic Engagement Working Group (CEWG) to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize NC Central University's commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections.

North Carolina Central University in Durham was the first state-supported liberal arts college for African American students in North Carolina, opening its doors in July 1910. Since its inception, NC Central has been faithful to its motto of "Truth and Service," with service to others consistently underpinning the education of its students. NC Central students are our leading engagement ambassadors. In 1996, NC Central was the first college in North Carolina and one of the first HBCUs in the nation to implement a service requirement of 15 hours per semester for undergraduate students. From a curricular perspective, students have access to over 125 service-learning course offerings. Graduating seniors who excel in service during their enrollment at NC Central and who achieve 250 or more hours of impactful service are eligible to apply for recognition at the University Honors Convocation and Commencement Services.

North Carolina Central University values and respects the efforts and impact that our students, staff, faculty, and community demonstrate throughout the year. Awards are given to those who have demonstrated leadership qualities of compassion, service, and empathy in our communities. By allowing NCCU to simply share your commitment and dedication to social issues and causes of the community, the qualities that lead to making a difference as "change makers" are demonstrated.

## Leadership

### **Coordinator**

Maya Jackson

Assistant Director of Student Engagement

Office of Community Engagement and Service

### **Student Leadership**

The Civic Engagement Working Group ambassadors, along with other student organizations, will work together to organize campus wide civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities to keep their peers informed about voter information and build alliances with on and off campus groups doing similar work. We will also work closely with the Political Science Department, Office of Community Engagement and Service (OCES) and Student Engagement and Leadership (SEAL) offices to coordinate events.

## North Carolina Action Plan: Civic Engagement Working Group

Jerome Boyce: VREM GOTV Student Lead  
Sheena Dean: Student Dialogue Ambassador  
Devin Freeman: Precinct 55-49 Chair

The 2022 coalition is being created with invites to various stakeholders on and off campus. Charged by the provost's commitment, the objective of the coalition is to unite students, faculty staff, alumni, and community organizations with mutual vested interest in student democratic engagement. The desire of the CEWG is to operate as an advisory board, providing support and direction for coordinated efforts and supporting the strategic initiatives to inform, educate and engage students around voting. The CEWG will hold virtual bi-weekly meetings to make sure everyone has an opportunity to stay connected, ask questions and offer ideas/ suggestions.

In our ongoing efforts to build and ensure diverse and inclusive representation, invitations are being extended to the following campus constituencies:

- Men's Achievement
- Student Organization and Fraternity/Sorority
- Student Engagement and Leadership Division of Student Affairs
- Women's Center
- SOAR
- Campus NAACP
- Political Science Department
- SGA PACE
- Athletics

### **Local and National Partnerships**

- NCCU Alumni Association Civic Engagement Advocacy Committee
- You Can Vote
- Common Cause
- NC Campus Engagement
- NASPA Voter Friendly Campus
- Ask Every Student
- Durham CAN
- Durham County Board of Elections

Since institutionalizing campus voting requires maintaining consistent and ongoing democratic engagement, a succession plan does not currently exist to address when students, staff, and leadership leaves the team. Members of the team have not yet been provided a directory of important partners' contact information. Additionally, groups on campus will receive copies of our action plan (and NSLVE data is easily accessible to others on campus).

## Commitment

Civic learning, democratic engagement, and developing lifelong informed and engaged citizens is the cornerstone of NC Central University's student experience. Our campus mission statement mentions "prepares students to become global leaders and practitioners who transform communities...", our students enhance the quality of life of citizens...".

NC Central University Vision Statement: To be recognized as one of the region's leading public universities, known for academic excellence in a diverse cultural and educational environment.

NC Central University Core Value: Inclusiveness- a culture of respect for all forms of diversity that permeates throughout the campus, promotes civic engagement and upholds shared governance among faculty, staff, administration and students.

### Strategic Plan: "Charting a New Landscape for Student-Centered Success", 2019-2024.

- STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Provide opportunities for college access for students with historically limited access to higher education while growing enrollment.
- STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Create a campus-wide Student Success Plan which integrates students' overall campus engagement to increase degree attainment.
- STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Invest in initiatives that promote global immersion for the campus community.
- STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Develop new local, national, and global strategic partnerships that increase faculty effectiveness and engagement; diversity and student success.
- STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: Increase and sustain university-wide resources to support and advance institutional priorities.

As part of our ongoing and growing commitment to civic engagement, we've participated in national initiative Ask Every Student, on campus polling location for over 10 years, campus leaders promoting voting, civic holidays more than two decades, political clubs, student fellowship opportunities with non-partisan organizations and voter registration tables. We've also hosted town halls, marches to the polls, voter registration drives, National Voter Registration Day events, political speakers, and get out the vote rallies.

## Landscape

The 2022 Civic Engagement Working Group plan is informed by the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement report. The research is intended to assist institutions in creating strategies that increase student participation in the democratic process. The following

report contains data about NC Central University voting patterns in key elections from 2016 – 2020, as well as the percentage change during that time.

**NC Central University**

<b>Brief Summary</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change</b>
Number of students registered	83.0	86.6	90.0	7.0
Number of students who voted	59.1	47.3	77.1	18.0
Voting Rate of registered students	71.2	41.0	69.4	-1.8

**Challenges:**

What the CEWG has observed is that the need for a campus cultural shift to not simply have high/improving voter registration numbers, but greater voter turnout rates. By focusing on a holistic student education that includes civic engagement as part of the academic and community culture, and voter education to keep students informed about the candidates and issues, we anticipate improved voter turnout.

COVID-19 from 2020 played a major role in the types of events and effective high-touch activities that could be held; such as “dorm storms”, door hangers, dorm competitions, poll parties, and other activities involving close contact or large crowds were eliminated. Having early authorization or permissions for events is required moving forward, and ensuring that vendors meet the university requirements.

**Strengths:**

Utilizing the framework and methodology described above, we shall implement plans to ensure high student voter participation during Early Voting and on Election day. We shall do the following:

- Cross-collaborate with other student civic engagement groups and programs to streamline processes, increase outreach, and awareness;
- Continue to target students who are not registered or need to update their registration via text and email using data;
- Promote Voter education through student completed research and research completed by non-partisan partner organizations, and maintain healthy communication between NCCU CEWG and other participating institutions to share ideas and knowledge to increase the effectiveness of student engagement strategies.

# Goals

## Short term goals

We have to connect in a way with this generation that is meaningful and on their terms to reach them. Our focus in the upcoming academic year will have to support building the foundation of this program to ensure that students understand the importance of their vote on why they should vote. This means education and outreach in September 2022 and February 2023 from the Office of Community Engagement and Service, and collaborating across campus to ensure the most effective outreach, to avoid duplicating programming. We intend to revamp the CEWG to ensure that the right students are in the program and have the capacity to give their 100% commitment to the program. We will work closer with non-partisan partner organizations in the 2022-2023 academic school year, utilizing text, email, and social media platforms to increase awareness and engagement.

<b>NCCU Civic Engagement 2022-2023 Implementation</b>			
	<b>Mid-Term</b>	<b>Presidential Election</b>	<b>Off Season</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	Planning & Preparation (March-July)	Planning & Preparation (March-July)	Planning & Preparation (March-July)
<b>Phase 2</b>	Voter Registration (Aug-Sept)	Voter Registration (Aug-Sept)	Voter Registration (Aug-Sept)
<b>Phase 3</b>	Voter Education (Sept-Oct)	Voter Education (Sept- Oct)	Voter Education (Sept- Oct)
<b>Phase 4</b>	Voter Empowerment (Oct)	Voter Empowerment (Oct)	Voter Empowerment (Oct)
<b>Phase 5</b>	Get Out the Vote (Oct- Nov)	Get Out the Vote (Oct- Nov)	Get Out the Vote (Oct- Nov)
<b>Phase 6</b>	Civic Learning & Engagement (Jan- April)	Civic Learning & Engagement (Jan- April)	Civic Learning & Engagement (Jan- April)

## Long term goals

By 2028, the institution will increase student voting rates by 23 percentage points over 2016 turnout.

- Institutionalized voter engagement
- Achieve 100% voter registration amongst the student population
- Increase student turnout in all primary and general elections
- Build student confidence in voting and develop the habit of voting as soon as students are eligible
- Build student leadership and increase student involvement in their communities
- Become a resource for clear impactful student voter education
- A sustainable proven programmatic blueprint framework that can be tailored based on the interest of students and the political climate (Creative, intentional, adaptable).

These events and activities are slated for the current academic year. As we move to institutionalize civic engagement and student participation, we are continuing with programming that has been documented to be effective as well as implementing new activities that will be evaluated to determine effectiveness at our institution.

### Year Round: Eagles Engage Program

Purpose: This civic engagement educational workshop series is designed to educate students on the importance of Community and Civic Engagement and Services.

- To increase students of awareness of community engagement service opportunities
- To feature 3 to 5 NCCU community partners leaders who will share information about their organizations and what drove them into their field
- To increase students engagement with the service and engagement platform

### **Topics:**

Community Organizing & Leadership

Battle of the Ballot-Women's Right to Vote

Knowing & Protecting Your Rights

Power to the People: The impact of community-based organizations

The Power of Media Literacy

The Future is Yours: How to Run for Office

### August: NCCU Civic Engagement Ambassadors (2022-2023)

Purpose: Work to engage with community partners (including, but not limited to, community organizations, corporations, surrounding colleges and universities, etc.) with tasks to include:

- Register students and community members to vote
- Voter Education and Awareness
- Reaching out to community organizations for event collaborations

## North Carolina Action Plan: Civic Engagement Working Group

- Requesting donations from community partners
- Identifying institutions/organizations with similar goals, visions, or work such as the Women's Center (and connect for engagement)

### Aug: 1st Year Student Welcome Breakfast

The CEWG will be hosting a welcome event once students return to campus. This event will serve as an opportunity for the CEWG to directly connect with students and listen to what they want/ care about.

### **September:** Constitution Day 9/19

Purpose: Constitution day is a yearly event hosted by NCCU Law School. This year, the Law School will host constitution day. At this event, our goal is to register all freshmen under the NCCU school address so that they will be advocates for the issues that impact NCCU and the Durham community.

### Sep: National voter registration day 9/20

Purpose: This will serve as our last big registration push since the registration deadline is Oct 14th. We are hosting a social media campaign to raise awareness of the day. We will have a registration table that will be an opportunity to register students and engage in social justice conversations with a reflection discussion at the end of the movie.

### Eagles Got Game event 9/24

Purpose: This event will be an opportunity to continue the voter registration for students, (and community) attending the game.

### **October:** Stroll to the Polls/ (15th - 31st Early voting)

Purpose: The Greek Letter organizations will host the "strolls" to the polls, which is a traditional student-led event that encourages students to register to vote, and voter participation.

### Eagles Got Game event 10/13

Purpose: This event will be an opportunity to continue the voter registration for students, (and community) attending the game.

### Conversational Series Fall 2022 10/15

Purpose: This event is hosted by the OCES and the MLK Committees in Durham and the Triangle to share the voices of youth regarding civic engagement. We will have youth panel speakers, including the Student Government Association President and Mr NCCU as an opportunity for students to ask questions from the perspective of students as a university. We will have a choir, food, and Miss NCCU will give a youth call to action.

### **November:** Party at the Polls on General Election Day

Purpose: This event is hosted by SGA PACE and supported by non-partisan organization fellows as an opportunity for students to party at the polls as a university. We will have a DJ,



food, pep band, and cheer squad will lead the march as everyone walks to Precinct 55-49, located in the campus-based university Law School building to vote.

#### Election Reflection

Purpose: The CEWG will have a virtual discussion for everyone to reflect on the potentially good, bad, and or ugly results of the election. This will be an opportunity to vision forward and contemplate how to stay connected to the elected officials so that we can hold them accountable for their commitment.

## Reporting

The plan will be an open document and shared with any party interested. Including the campus, the coalition, and community partners relevant to the Democratic Engagement Plan. The coordinator will provide a mid-year and end of year status report that reflects the level of progress for the voter registration, voter education, voter mobilization and voter participation.

Additionally, the NSLVE data will be shared with all stakeholders and partners upon request. This data will be compared with the data collected locally by the institution, in order to continue to tell our story - from our perspective. This data will be shared on the website for the university as well as on social media and with community partners and leadership.

## Evaluation

We are looking forward to having our plan evaluated annually to determine if goals are being met or progression towards the goals are being accomplished. We will also be utilizing our ambassadors and fellows to conduct their own evaluation on how student centered they feel the plan is.