NSU VOTES - Game Plan

Executive Summary

- Should answer
  - Who developed this
  - The purpose of the plan
  - Where the plan will be implemented
  - The goals of the plan
  - The intended duration of the plan
  - How to plan will be implemented

Potential Student Orgs for Event Collaboration:

- Greek Life
- College Democrats
- NSGA
- Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature
- Model United Nations
- Resident Assistants
- American Democracy Project
- Association of Black Collegians
- President's Leadership Class
- Leftist Student Alliance
- Northeastern Activities Board

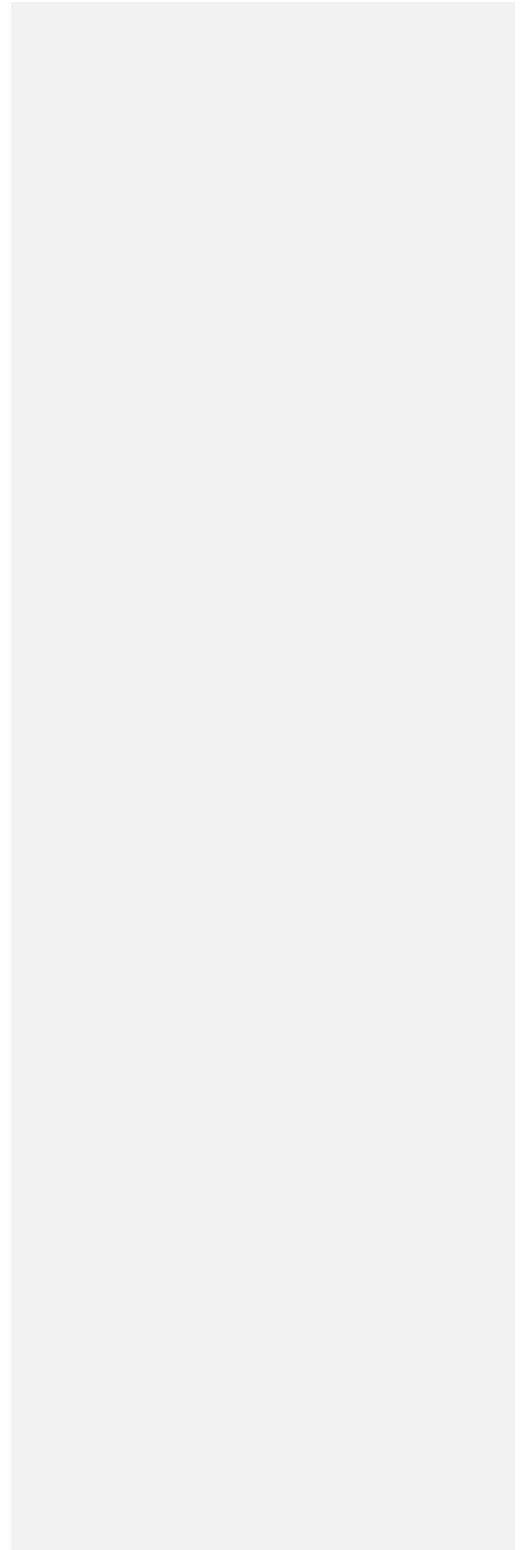## Potential Community Orgs for Collaboration:

- League of Women Voters
- Cherokee County Election Board
- Cherokee County Democrats
- Cherokee County Republicans

Leadership

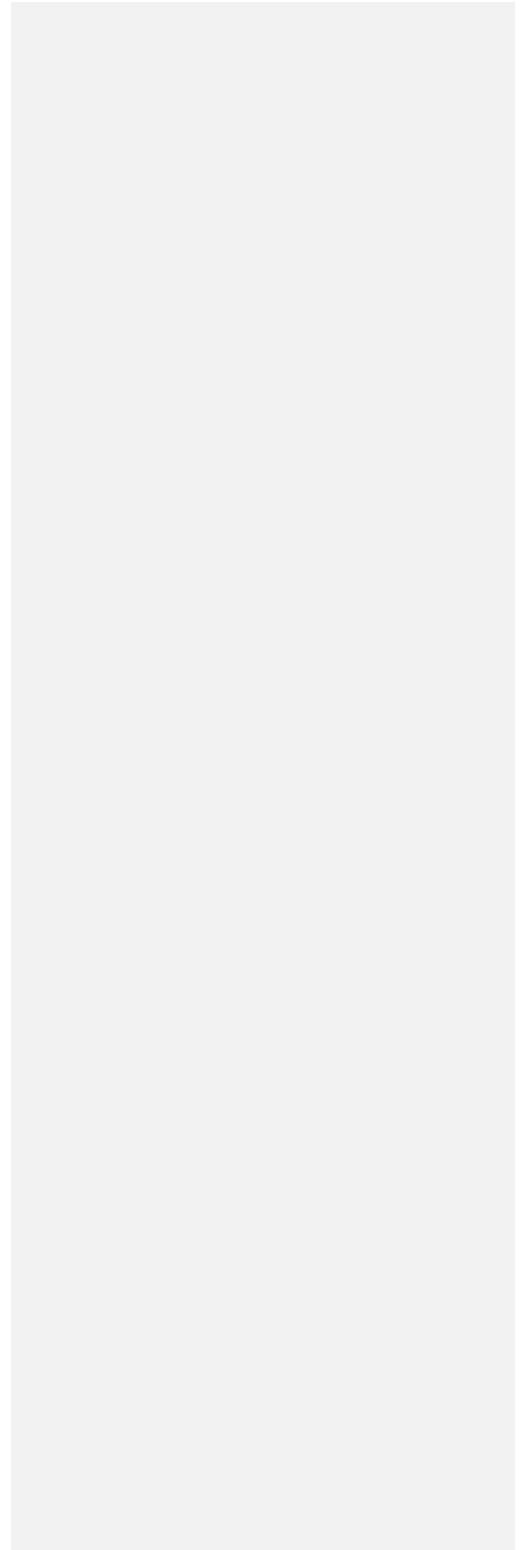- Alisha Fletcher - Graduate Assistant for Student Engagement

To collaborate with:
- American Democracy Project Committee
- Admissions and Recruitment

Our Commitment

- Should include
  - How we will create a culture that supports democratic engagement
    - Campus wide emails about engagement
    - Including engagement in mission statement
    - Having leadership/high profile persons on campus involved, setting an example
    - Social media campaigns around voter registration
    - Candidates visiting campus?

Landscape

We have made significant progress since 2014. Overall, we raised our campus voting rate 17 percentage points to 35.1%. This remains below the 2018 voting rate for all institutions, which is 39.1%.

In 2018, voting rates lagged behind among full time first and second year students and the age demographic of 18-21. Overall, undergraduate voting rates remain lower than that of graduate students. When sorted by race/ethnicity, our Asian students are voting at less than half the rate of other students. This is an area where great progress can be made by partnering with Asian student groups on campus.

When looking at the field of study of those who vote, STEM and physical science majors trail others, with the exception of Liberal Arts and Humanities students. Specifically, the only majors with voting rates below 30% are Engineering, Liberal Arts and Humanities, Mathematics and Statistics, Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies, and Physical Sciences. During Pledge to Vote Tuesdays, we can work to integrate these groups by partnering with faculty or student groups from their colleges. Another way to reach out to these students is to acknowledge their place on campus, physically. These students often take classes in the buildings most removed from the core of campus, where most of our outreach programs take place. Tabling in their buildings, on their turf, can help to bridge the communication gap and boost voter turnout.

Finally, when our students do vote, how are they doing so? Since 2014, we have facilitated a 14.2% jump in absentee voting. This is an area where we can continue building, as we have a large commuter population. In the past, we have put up posters and sent out the occasional email stating that students can fill out voter registration forms in the Student Engagement Office and sign up for absentee ballots online, but these efforts are few and far between. Ramping up our engagement with students, both in these traditional ways, and in new, interesting ways will help push more students towards voting.

In 2018, we also saw a .7% rise in early voting, which shows another area for growth. Both early voting and election day, in person voting require making a plan for how to get to the polls, so this is where we can focus our efforts in 2020.

Goals

Short term:
- Boost student turnout in 2020 election
- Assist students in 'making a plan' to vote
- Encourage nonpartisan voter registration, education, and turnout
- Integrate STEM majors into campus voting by partnering with STEM faculty and student groups during outreach
- Expand outreach programming across campus, not simply in the University Center or via email

Long term:
- Achieve a voting rate over 50%
- Establish a culture of voting as the norm
- Encourage deeper participation from offices across campus, including Admissions and Recruitment and faculty
- Empower student leaders
- Reduce ambiguity and uncertainty around voting

Strategy

How do we plan to engage faculty?
- Making long term efforts to include faculty stakeholders in planning processes

How do we plan to integrate admissions and recruitment?
- Making long term efforts to include Admissions and Recruitment representative in planning processes
- Potentially include voter registration and updating information in admissions packet

How do we plan to utilize technology?
- Utilization of social media for education and registration efforts
- Having laptops at tables for voter registration updates and absentee ballot requests
- Utilize QR codes to make accessing registration websites easy

How do we plan to build voter engagement into our current processes and systems to achieve full voter participation?
- Beginning discussion of registration, address updates, and participation during the admissions process and maintaining constant conversation throughout admission, enrollment, and student experience

Three tactical areas:

- Voter registration
  - Tabling at SOAR
  - AbsenTEA Party
  - Partner with studentslearnstudentsvote.org
  - Organization/Greek Life registration contests
- Voter education
  - Create voter information handouts and social media posts
  - Create ballot/candidate info handouts and social media posts
  - Host watch parties for debates
  - Partner with Housing to extend the reach of voter education
- Voter turnout
  - Create and hand out Commit To Vote cards at Be Seen in Green
  - AbsenTEA Party
  - "Pledge to Vote Tuesday" in October
  - NSGA Student Engagement social media takeover
  - Phone-banking on the day before election
  - "I Pledge To Vote" Banner
  - Shuttle to polls
  - Celebration table on election day handing out prizes to voters
- Establishment of voting culture and norm
  - Civic Engagement award at Student Org Awards
  - Attending Housing meetings to talk to students about their role as campus leaders and empower them to educate and encourage their residents

Phase 1: Warm-Up

2019:
- Discuss option of a few shirts being made for 5-6 most active volunteers to wear during tabling so we're visible and cohesive
  - NSU VOTES with stars around it?
- Discuss how to track registration
  - TurboVote?
- Are we going to work out of the community engagement email? Should we have a civic engagement email?

February 2020:
- Start having Commit to Vote (CTV) cards at Be Seen in Green each Friday

March 2020:
- March Madness - Greek Life Voter Registration Competition

April 2020:
- AbsenTEA Party W/NSGA
  - CTV cards, absentee ballot info requests, voter registration forms
- Give out Civic Engagement award at Student Org Awards

May 2020:
- Have voter registration table at SOAR Checkout

June 2020:
- Have voter registration table at SOAR Checkout
- Create or secure voting info FAQ's for tabling and email/social media communication
- Create or secure ballot info (candidates and state questions) handouts for tabling

July 2020:
- Have voter registration table at SOAR Checkout
- Register with studentslearnstudentsvote.org for free stickers, handouts, etc. for National Voter Registration Day in September
- Get or make "I'm Registered" stickers to have at tables

Commented [1]: league of women voters often put out a guide

Phase 2: The Home Stretch

August 2020:
- Have voter registration table at SOAR Checkout with laptops to update current registration if they choose

September 2020:
- AbsenTEA Party W/NSGA on National Voter Registration Day - Sept 22
  - CTV cards, absentee ballot info requests, voter registration forms
- Presidential Debate Watch Party W/NSGA
  - September 29
- Begin Organization Registration Contest
  - Org who registers the most people to vote by the end of the month wins a prize
- Have a representative attend Housing In-Service to talk to RA's about their role as campus leaders and give them the voter FAQ's to spread to their residents

October 2020:
- "Pledge to Vote" Tuesdays
  - Create a specific theme for each Tuesday to table and promote alongside registration
  - Maybe have a different student org host each Tuesday?
  - Have CTV cards at tables along with a large banner for students to sign
  - Have the big white board where students write why they commit to vote?
- Presidential Debate Watch Parties W/NSGA
  - October 15
  - October 22
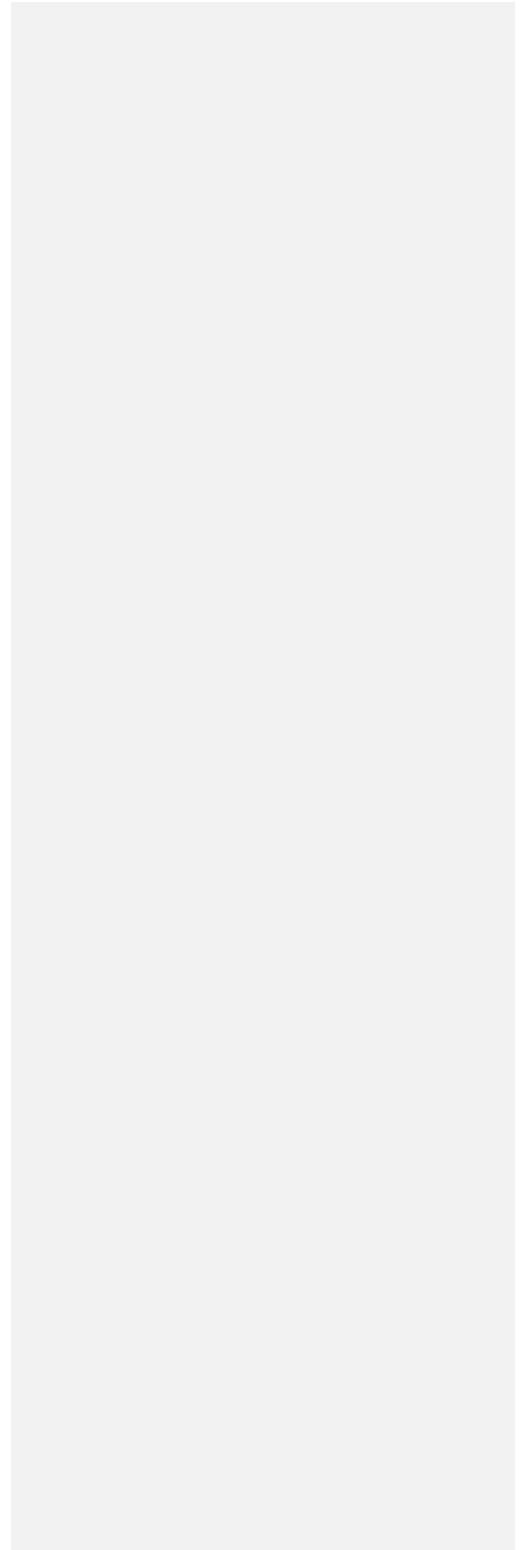
November 2020:
- Have NSGA take over the Student Engagement social media?
  - Or somehow otherwise showcase students who voted
    - Videos of students talking about why/how the process went, etc.
- Day before Election Day
  - Phone Banking
    - Call students who we registered to vote and create a plan with them to get to the polls
- Election Day
  - Have "I Pledge to Vote" banner up outside of the UC
  - Have a celebration table where students with "I Voted" stickers or other proof of voting can collect a prize

Commented [2]: oct 28 is the deadline to request an absentee ballot for the presidential election

- - - Maybe pizza?
  - Shuttle to the polls?
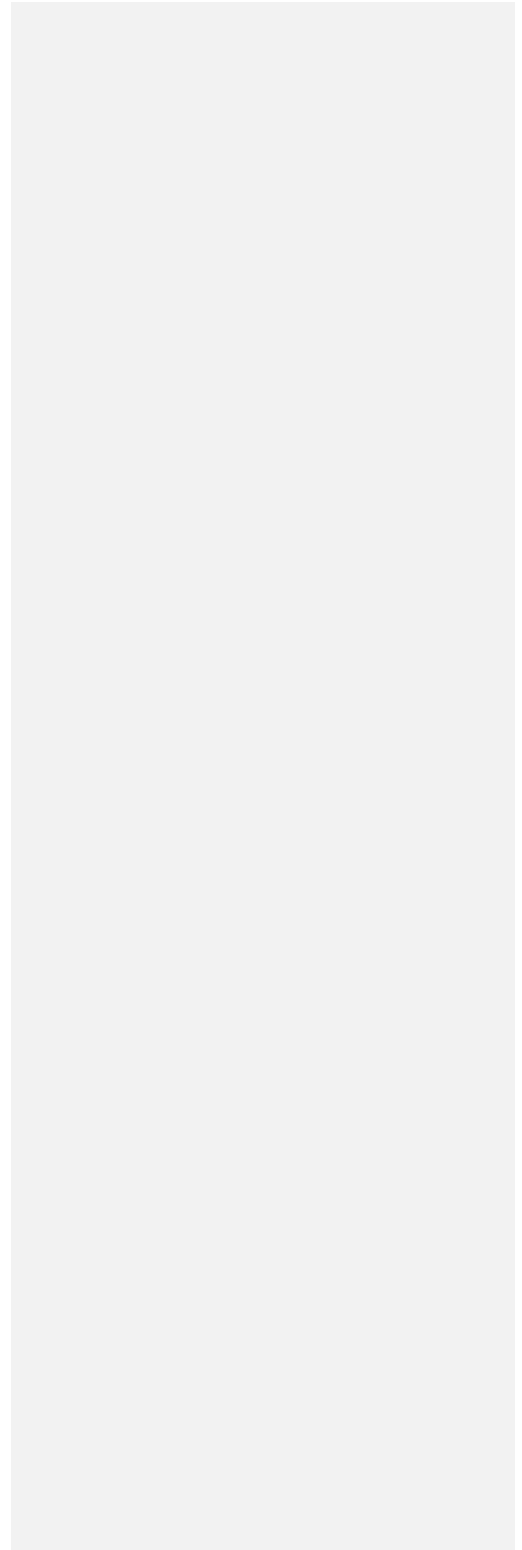
Reporting

Upon receipt of the NSLVE Report for 2020, the Graduate Assistant for Student Engagement will create an Institution-themed report in green and white, which makes the data easily digestible and highlights both areas of growth and areas where more work is needed. This will be sent out to students, faculty, and staff. This report will also be sent to The Northeastern, the student newspaper, and Tahlequah Daily Press, the city newspaper, for reporting. Additionally, the NSLVE Report will be distributed to the President's Office and to the required recipients for the data to be featured in Riverhawks Weekly, the weekly newsletter.

Evaluation

When NSLVE reports for 2020 are received, it will be reviewed by the American Democracy Project committee, which is made up of faculty, staff, and students appointed by the University President. Led by the Graduate Assistant for Student Engagement, we will evaluate the results and begin planning for the future.