

Voter Engagement Plan 2022

Piedmont Virginia Community College

Summary

As we emerge from a pandemic driven world, it's important we use the lessons we learned over the past two years in our future work. From historic turnout in the 2020 General Election and uptick in registration rates, to unprecedented challenges in the event planning space, there were many lessons both positive and negative we can use to further our incredible engagement footprint here at PVCC. Heading into the Fall we hope to build upon these lessons in the ways highlighted in this report.

While there are several plans for the Fall semester and upcoming midterm elections, there are a few specific aspects of our engagement which we think could use immediate improvement. The first area of focus is further institutionalizing our engagement on campus. While we take a lot of pride in our engagement work at PVCC, we know there could be work put in to ensure future generations of Piedmont students have the same access to engagement opportunities. By further institutionalizing our engagement work we can make this a reality.

Next, we think it's important that we diversify our engagement work at PVCC. We want to make sure our work is representative and accessible to all students on campus, and it's on us to be sure we provide these opportunities without any barriers. By partnering with more diverse organizations both on campus and in the local community we hope improve in this regard.

While overlap between these areas is expected, we recognize that each goal requires specific attention and planning.

This report was put together by PVCC Civic Sense in collaboration with Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellows.

Areas of Focus

- Institutionalizing engagement
- Diversifying engagement
- Making engagement more engaging

Our Current Partners

Campus Vote Project



Campus Vote Project is a non-partisan voter engagement organization apart of the Fair Election Center. Through our partnership with CVP we're able to maintain two student interns that spearhead a lot of the engagement on campus.

All In Campus Democracy Challenge



All In is an organization that helps foster civic engagement on college campuses across the country. By providing tools to help institutionalize engagement All In serves as an integral partner for any campus looking to cater to the engagement space.

Students Learn Students Vote Coalition



The Students Learn Students Vote Coalition is a network of nonpartisan groups working to increase voter engagement with college students. By fostering connection between campuses and community organizations they help ensure there are equitable engagement opportunities for all student voters.

Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society



Phi Theta Kappa is the international honors society that serves two-year institutions. PTK offers access to numerous scholarship opportunities, as well as a reliable pool of motivated volunteers.

Institute for Democracy and Higher Education



The Institute for Democracy and Higher Education is a project created by Tufts University with the goal of tracking voting data from college campuses across the country. We receive our ever-important NSLVE data from this project, and it is essential to our work on campus.

Future Partnerships

While we already have a number of incredible partners in our coalition and greatly value our relationships, we'd like to continue building our network of connections at PVCC. By expanding our outreach, we hope to include the resources of more diverse organizations, more community led organizations, and continuing to expand our list of national partners. Below is a list of organizations we hope to initiate relationships in the future.

Local registrars' offices

- By partnering with local registers offices, Piedmont can ensure students have access to up-to-date information about upcoming elections. It may also be helpful to hear from employees with experience as election workers.

League of Women Voters

- The League of Women Voters is a bedrock in the civic engagement space. Partnering with the LWV would provide a number of incredible useful resources for PVCC students in their engagement work and could offer helpful tips for programing around important dates.

Black Led Organizations

- Our coalition needs to invite the voices of Black and Brown students and community members, and in doing so we need to build partnerships with

Black and minority led organizations. Local NCAA chapters and the Black Student Alliance on campus would be good starts.

Virginia Civic Engagement Table

- The Virginia Civic Engagement has access to countless organizations through their partner's page. Partnering with the Civic Engagement Table could open the door to a number of future partnerships with a wide range of backgrounds.

Turnout Data – Past Midterm Elections

Student Voting Rates for Piedmont Virginia Community College 2014 and 2018

At Piedmont we're consistently proud of our available NSLVE data. Throughout our time tracking voting and registration rates we've continued to see an upward trend, and we don't plan on slowing down. Below we've listed voter data from past election cycles, we also highlight demographics we'd like to make progress with going forward. Heading into the 2022 midterm elections, we think setting a goal of 78% students registered would be more than doable. We'd also like to see an increase in the voting rate closer to 60%.

We saw some pretty recognizable increases between the 2014 and 2018 election cycles at Piedmont, below are voting and registration rates from both years courtesy of our past NSLVE reports.

2014 Voting Rate – 24.7%

- Our lowest available voting rate
- Slightly above the average voting rate of all institutions (19.7%)

2014 Registration Rate – 69.8%

- Our lowest available registration data

2018 Voting Rate - 50.8%

- Up 26.1% from 2014
- The Average Voting Rate for all institutions in 2018 was 39.1%

2018 Registration Rate - 74%

- Up 4.2% from 2014

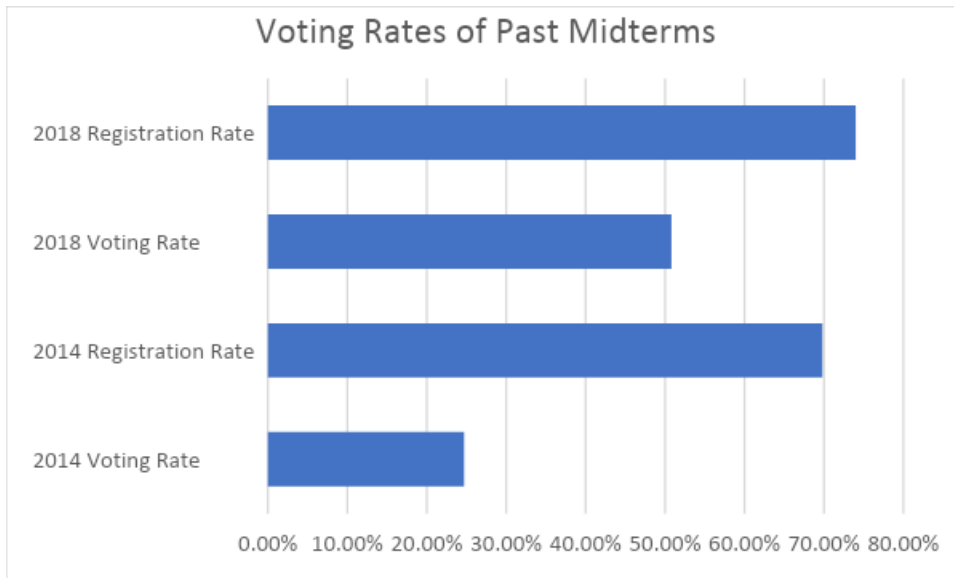


Figure 1.

All age demographics at PVCC saw an increase in voting rates from 2014 to 2018, this increase can be seen clearly in the 18-21 and 22-24 categories (27.9% and 32.9% increases respectively).

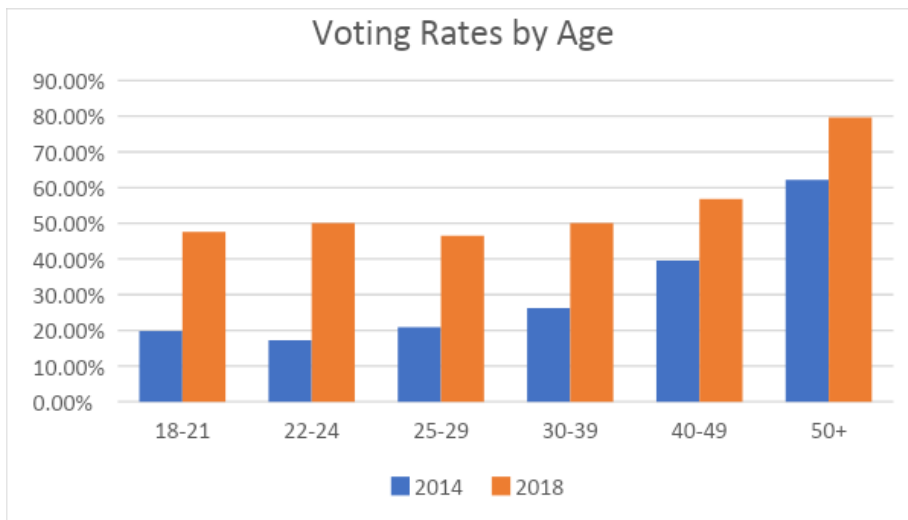


Figure 2.

Past data suggests that some fields of study have lower voting rates than others, below we highlight some of those disparities.

Overperforming majors

Education

- 63.2% voting rate
- Well above the national average (39.1%)

Visual and Performing arts

- 61.3% voting rate
- 40-point increase from 2014

Underperforming majors

Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Protective Services

- 42.4% voting rate
- Only slightly above the national average

Personal and Culinary Services

- 42.4% voting rate
- Our smallest represented major

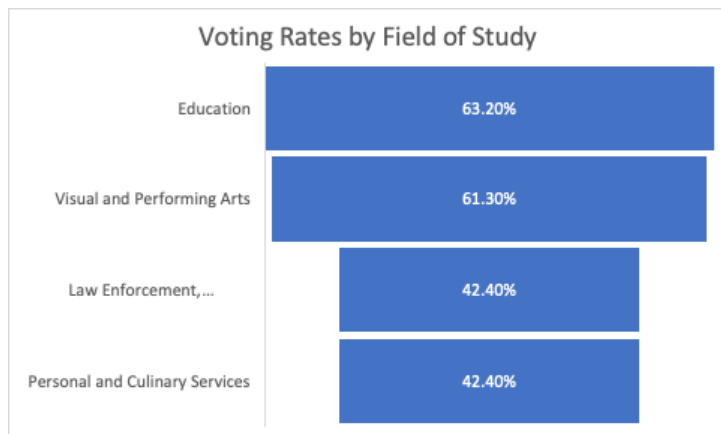


Figure 3.

Plans For the Fall Semester

Deliberative Dialogue

Towards the beginning of every spring and fall semester, PVCC should host a Deliberative Dialogue. Students would have lees on their plates around this time, which may make them more likely to attend. This event would help establish conversation on campus surrounding important topics. Providing food afterwards would be a good idea because it is polite and provides incentive. On campus organizations like CVP, PTK, and SGA, should be responsible for running this event. One teacher or faculty member who has helped with the event in the past should be responsible for overseeing and coordinating these three groups. The main obstacle is convincing faculty and professors that this event is applicable and beneficial to their fields. Once faculty is fully onboard, we can focus on how to reach more students.

Themed Tabling

Themed tables are great at bringing attention to voter registration, engagement opportunities and events, and important voting deadlines. Seasonal tables, and tables that celebrate days of political importance are especially effective. These tables require food, decorations, and merchandise, to draw the most interest.

Merchandise

Merchandise is an important piece of tabling, and the cooler and more relevant the merchandise, the more people will be drawn to it. We do not want to hand out things people won't use because that defeats the purpose of handing out merchandise, free advertising. Items like shirts, notebooks, cool stickers and pins, stress balls, fidget toys, and hats, are some of the most useful pieces of merchandise. It might be a good idea to try and sell some higher quality merchandise, reinvesting the money earned into our budget.

What is Working?

Quality Enhancement Plan

Our Quality Enhancement Plan at PVCC is integral to the engagement work we do on campus, offering a concrete blueprint to ensure effective collaboration on

campus. By providing students a set of learning outcomes, our quality enhancement plan ensures graduating students are prepared for civic life beyond PVCC.

Encouraging Alternative Voting Methods

There is an increasing demand for early voting, early registration, and voting by mail, and it is our job to be sure students on campus are aware of these alternatives. Celebrating days dedicated to voting like National Voter Registration Day and Vote Early Day will help send the message that early voting is important. Planning fun events that celebrate early voting, or even making Vote Early Day a school holiday, meaning no class, might be a good way to encourage and facilitate opportunities to get out and vote early.

Keeping Election Day a School Holiday

Giving students a day off from class on election day is an easy way to ensure they're able to make it to the polls. Continuing this practice would be beneficial going forward.

Access to Food and Snacks

Food is an effective tool for getting people to linger at the tables, so it'd be incredibly helpful to put together a food and snack budget.

Tabling

Tabling weekly with a clear agenda on the days that get the most foot traffic is highly effective. But switching up the time, day, and location of the table is important. This way we will reach as many new students as possible.

Classroom Voting Presentations

Classroom presentations are successful, but we need to reach more of the online students. Reaching out and encouraging professors to send Canvas announcements to their classes about important voting deadlines might help.

Nonpartisan Voter Guides for Local Candidates

Our annual nonpartisan voter guide is a helpful tool for students on campus during the election cycle, but it may be more effective if the student body received it during the early voting period. This could help maintain enthusiasm for early voting and up until election day itself.

Canvas and Email announcements

Continuing to encourage professors and IT faculty to send Canvas announcements and emails to the student body will help remind student of upcoming dates and events. It might be helpful to encourage professors to include relevant dates and info into the class syllabus.

What Needs Work?

Involving Disengaged Majors

According to our available NSLVE data, there are several majors, including Liberal Arts and Culinary Arts, that are turning out to vote at comparatively lower rates. We need to pay special attention to these majors and devise creative and relevant ways to get them involved in civic engagement. One idea would be to loop the art department into the design process for some of our marketing projects. This may also be a good extra credit opportunity, which would help incentivize students.

Collaboration With on Campus Clubs and Organizations

Intertwining civic engagement with club life is crucial for creating a campus culture where most students get out and vote, we need to make voting a community expectation. Two ways of accomplishing this could be training club leaders to both facilitate deliberative dialogues, and to give voter presentations. Clubs could require that club leaders give a voting presentation to their members once a semester. This would be more successful towards the beginning of the semester, maybe at one of the first club meetings since that is when clubs usually have the highest number of active members.

Contact Information

PVCC Civic Sense

Connie Jorgensen
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Civic Engagement Coordinator
Piedmont Virginia Community College
501 College Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434.961.5359
www.pvcc.edu