

Shaw University

Center for Racial and Social Justice

2022 Voter Engagement:
Bears to the Ballot and Beyond
(A Sustainable Working Model for Campus Voting Engagement)

The Executive Summary

Shaw University, located in Raleigh, North Carolina, is the first historically Black institution of higher education in the South and among the oldest in the nation, having been founded in 1865. Shaw University's history of leadership, activism and service is well documented, with the establishment of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960 as just one example. Shaw produces outstanding professionals who contribute to the advancement of American society. Shaw graduates include the founder of North Carolina Central University and the first presidents of Elizabeth City State and North Carolina A&T Universities.

The Center for Racial and Social Justice (CRSJ) is leading Shaw's collaborative effort to increase voter participation on campus. The focus of the CRSJ is to effect meaningful social change by supporting student engagement around civil and human rights, spiritual formation, discernment, and social justice. Through lectures, workshops, seminars, certificate programs, forums, and advocacy work, the CRSJ offers a space for and supports the development of bold, visionary leadership. The CRSJ is a robust ecology of students, faculty, staff, alumni, community leaders, corporate and private partners to address urgent societal issues related to race and racism, environmental and climate justice, social inequities, health, violence, and broader issues of human differences. For more information, [view the launch video here](#).

The 2022 Voter Engagement Plan: Bears to the Ballot & Beyond is a baseline blueprint for the Shaw University Student Democratic Engagement Action Plan (DECAP) Model. The goal is to build upon this plan over the next 4 years (the average student lifecycle) with the intention to not just get students to vote but to inform and connect them to voting resources, educate them on the topics that matter most, and engage them to take action through voting. This dynamic plan takes on a systems-thinking outlook towards uniting the campus's democratic efforts through a strategic ecosystem building approach.

Given that the CRSJ is a budding center our efforts will be heavily focused on student engagement through recognition, recruitment, and retention. Recognition: making sure the campus recognizes us as a leader and a resource when it comes to voting on campus. Recruitment has a dual approach with regards to (internal) coalition engagement and (external) participation engagement. Retention will focus on providing real world experiences both on and off campus. All aspects engaging students, faculty, staff, administrators, Alumni, and nonpartisan community collaborators.

The 2022 Voter Engagement Plan: Bears to the Ballot & Beyond is influenced by the data from the 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLV) reports; as well as the assessment of previous programmatic efforts, student needs, and desired

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impact. The framework of the plan is developed with a 4-year student life cycle in mind but will be refined yearly. The first cycle of this plan began in March 2022 and will be effective until December 2023. However, the development of this plan will extend beyond this election and ideally beyond the time students spend at Shaw.

Leadership

Co-Chairs

Dr. Erin H. Moore

Executive Director

The Center for Racial and Social Justice

Ms. Jasmine Timmons

Project Coordinator

The Center for Racial and Social Justice

Student Leadership

The CRSJ Ambassadors / Fellows work together to organize campus wide civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities for their peers. They work together to keep the student body informed with current voter information and develop meaningful alliances on and off campus. We work closely with the Office of Engagement and Office of Student Retention to coordinate event calendars. All students will be compensated generously based on a standard amount per position/ hours worked.

Ms. Zaid Steele - CRSJ Ambassador

Ms. Jameliah Pinder - [Common Cause Fellow](#) (tentative)

Mr. Tyreese Perry- Senior Class President, 2022- 2023

The 2022 coalition is being created with invites to various stakeholders on and off campus. Charged by the president'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 Shaw coalition is to operate as an advisory board, providing direction for coordinated efforts and support the strategic initiatives to inform, educate and engage students around voting. The CRSJ will hold monthly check-ins to make sure everyone has an opportunity to stay connected, ask questions and offer ideas/ suggestions.

Invitations have been extended to the following campus constituents:

- Shaw University President – **Dr. Paulette Dillard**
- Office of Engagement – **Dr. Moore, Ms. Timmons (CRSJ)**
- Office of Student Retention – **Ms. Jalesa Sutton**
- Student Affair – **Mr. Christopher Withers**
 - Student Government Association
 - Royal Court
 - Greek Life
- Shaw University Honors Program – **Dr. Paul-Arthur Pierre-Louis**

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- Key Shaw Faculty
 - School of Arts, Sciences, and Humanities – **Dean Valerie Ann Johnson**
 - School of Divinity – **Dean Gregory Howard**
 - School of Business and Professional Studies – **Dean Lynette Wood**
- Shaw Athletic Director – **Mr. George Knox**
- Experiential Learning and Career Development – **Ms. Morgan Ray**
- Alumni Relations – **Mr. Ronald Gay**

Local and National Partnerships

- Common Cause
- You Can Vote
- NC Black Alliance
- NC League of Conservation Voters
- League of Women Voters
- Campus Vote Project/NASPA Voter Friendly Campus
- Andrew Goodman Foundation
- Ask Every Student
- The NC Board of Elections

Commitment

Shaw University Vision: Shaw University seeks to “instill in students, the importance of making a difference, not only in their own lives, but in the lives of others, by partnering with local communities to provide services that improve the human condition and contribute to the betterment of society.”

Mission: “Shaw University exists to advance knowledge, facilitate student learning and achievement, to enhance the spiritual and ethical values of its students, and to transform a diverse community of learners into future global leaders”

Core Values: “ Shaw University is committed to the transformative educational process of preparing graduates for citizenship in the twenty-first century workplace and for graduate or professional school, and seeks to instill in its students a philosophy that values lifelong learning, leadership, and service.”

Strategic Plan: Shaw University Epic Strategic Plan - 2020

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:** Enhance Institution-wide infrastructure to support the University’s mission and business ambitions.
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:** Optimize academic and operational processes to increase institution-wide efficiency and effectiveness.

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- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:** Improve student retention, time to graduation and career readiness.
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:** Develop new local, national, and global strategic partnerships that increase faculty effectiveness and engagement; diversity and student success.
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5:** Create diversified revenue streams in order to drive the business process and support the University's mission.
- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6:** Increase marketing presence with refined brand identity and value proposition.

Landscape

The 2022 Bears to the Ballot and Beyond 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 Shaw University voting patterns in key elections from 2016 – 2020, as well as the percentage change during that time.

Shaw University

Brief Summary	2016	2018	2020	Change
Number of students registered	1,603	1,125	1,005	(- 598)
Number of students who voted	907	365	605	(-302)
Voting Rate of registered students	57	32%	60%	(+4%)

Challenges: Due to a number of factors Shaw University saw a devastating decline in voter registration and in the number of students who voted. Given that the Center for Racial and Social Justice is a new campus entity, we gathered information about what those challenges may have been. A big issue was getting confusing information at the polls. The biggest barrier was the fact that life was virtual due to COVID, so student engagement was extremely limited.

What the CRSJ has observed is that there is implicit improvement needed around cultural change. We believe that by focusing on education the students will feel more compelled to empower their voter decision making to naturally desire to be engaged. We hear students saying they are already registered, or they have been asked a bunch of times to register. However, when it comes time to vote there seems to be low turnout. We believe this disconnect comes from a lack of being informed about the candidates and the issues.

Goals

Short term goals

- Develop a page on our website for educational student resources
- Create marketing tools to educate students on ballots/ candidate/ issues
- Increase faculty & staff participation
- Establish a voter campaign to market & build a sense of community
- Establish a place at Freshmen orientation to register all incoming students
- Develop CRSJ Fellows and Ambassadors as leaders with real world experience
- Increase All of our numbers and percentages

Long term goals

- Institutionalized voter engagement
- Become a resource for clear impactful student voter education
- Develop an engaged network within Shaw that shares responsibility
- A Civic Engagement Ambassador Program
- A sustainable proven programmatic blueprint framework that can be tailored based on the interest of students and the political climate (Creative, intentional, adaptable).

Phases and Programmatic Focus

Election Season	Presidential	Off Year	Mid-term
Phase 1	March- July Planning & Preparation	March- July Planning & Preparation	March- July Primary registration & GOTV
Phase 2	Aug -Sep Voter Registration	Aug -Sep Voter Registration	Aug -Sep Voter Registration
Phase 3	Sep- Oct Voter Education	Sep- Oct Civic Engagement	Sep- Oct Voter Education
	Oct- Nov	Oct- Nov	Oct- Nov

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Phase 4	Get Out the Vote	Civic Engagement	Get Out the Vote
Phase 5	Jan- April Civic Learning / Engagement	Feb- March Voter Registration/ Education	Jan- April Civic Learning / Engagement

Year-round: Education 101 series

Purpose: Starting in June the CRSJ is developing a page on our website dedicated to voting education geared towards students. We will have links to useful information, important dated and tailored educational information to support students feeling informed come voting time.

Aug: Bears to the ballot social media campaign kickoff

Purpose: The CRSJ will be hosting a welcome event once students return to campus. This event will serve as an opportunity for the CRSJ to directly connect with students and listen to what they want/ care about. This opportunity will kick off the “Bears to the Ballot” social media campaign.

Sep: Constitution Day 9/19

Purpose: Constitution day is a yearly event hosted by Shaw University. This year, the CRSJ will host constitution day, a Freshman CASES requirement. At this event, our goal is to register all freshmen under the Shaw university address so that they will be advocates for the issues that impact Shaw and the Raleigh community. This will be the first of a 4-year initiative to have all Shaw students registered by 2027. We will have You Can Vote to lead the group registration efforts and use their app to remind students of voting updates.

Sep: National voter registration day 9/20 (sometime this week)

Purpose: This will serve as our last big registration push since the registration deadline is Oct 9th. We will have a registration table that will also serve as a promotional opportunity for the CRSJ movie night. The movie will be social justice-related, and we will include pizza, bean bag chairs & food, and beverages. This will be an opportunity to register students and engage in social justice conversations with a reflection discussion at the end of the movie.

Oct: Costumes & Candidates/ (15th - 31st Early voting)

Purpose: The CRSJ will host “Costumes and Candidates” This will be a student-led conversation with ballot candidates. Students and candidates will be encouraged to wear Halloween costumes to encourage a relaxed environment. Students will get an opportunity to ask questions and gain clarity on issues relevant to them directly to the candidates. The CRSJ

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website will provide some education on the candidate before the event to prepare students. Alumni associations will partner with us to bring candidates to SHAW.

Oct: Pledge to Party to the Polls

Purpose This is an opportunity for Shaw students to pledge to party at the polls as a school. We will have a DJ, Food, pep band, and cheer squad will lead the march as everyone walks to Chavis Park to vote.

Nov: Election Reflection

Purpose: The CRSJ will have a thanksgiving style dinner/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. Additionally, the NSLV data will be shared with all stakeholders and partners upon request.

Evaluation

We are looking forward to having our first 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.