

# Campus Action Plan for Democratic Engagement: Simpson College

2018/19 Academic Year



**vote** everywhere

THE ANDREW GOODMAN FOUNDATION

# SIMPSON COLLEGE



# | Landscape Analysis

*There is a lot of support for democratic engagement on campus, including from the administration. Vote Everywhere Ambassadors, together with the Culver Center, CEEP, volunteers, and other partners are working to increase democratic engagement on campus. While Simpson votes at a higher rate than other institutions our voting rates did decline in the 2016 Presidential election when compared to the 2012 Presidential Election. We want to bring our voting rate back up to the same or higher levels than previous years. At Simpson women tend to vote at a slightly higher rate than men. First year students also have the lowest voting rate of each class. Social sciences, communication/ journalism, and computer sciences/information sciences have the three highest voting rate out of all fields of study, while health professions, liberal arts/ humanities, and fitness studies have the three lowest voting rates. Over 50% of Simpson students participate in Varsity Athletics, but student athletes tend to be some of the least engaged students on campus. Targeting this group could significantly increase the overall voting rate of the campus. In years past the Vote Everywhere team has had success registering voters during engagement related events and on National Voter Registration Day and we hope to continue this. Our team faces challenges with the Iowa Voter ID law. This has been a point of confusion for many students. There is current litigation involving the new law so there are some difficulties with education about the law and the law itself.*

## | Partnership Highlight

### **John C. Culver Public Policy Center**

- We host many events in partnership with the Culver Center.
- We also recruit many Culver Fellows to help with registration efforts.

### **Campus Election Engagement Project**

- We host most of our events and table with our campus's CEEP Fellow.

# | Landscape Analysis (cont.)



## National Voter Registration Day:

Every year our AGF Vote Everywhere Ambassadors partner with the John C. Culver Public Policy Center to host multiple voter registration tables on NVRD. These tables are very successful in registering first-year students who are often first-time voters and helping upperclassmen update their voter registration since moving into a new campus residence.

## NSLVE Data:

2012

- Registration rate: 89.5%
- Voting rate: 64.5%

2014

- Registration rate: 79.7%
- Voting rate: 34.7%

2016

- Registration rate: 88.3%
- Voting rate: 58.3



## Voter ID:

AGF Vote Everywhere Ambassadors have worked with a number of organizations and other Iowa schools to fight a new Voter ID law in Iowa. The law poses a barrier to many people, especially out-of-state college students. Ambassadors focus on educating voters to ensure they have the correct information on the Voter ID laws.



# | Goals

**Goal 1:** Increase voter accessibility by securing an early voting site on campus for the 2018 Midterm Election.

**Goal 2:** Engage all NCAA sports teams on campus to support GOTV efforts for the 2018 midterm election.

**Goal 3:** Register voters at least 50% of first year seminar classes prior to the preregistration deadline.

**Goal 4:** Spread the word about the ALL-IN Campus Voting Challenges, including ALL-IN Iowa, and encourage participation so we can win the Iowa challenge.

**Goal 5:** Achieve a voter registration rate of at least 85% and a voter turnout rate of 45% for the 2018 Midterm Election.

**Goal 6:** Present at Iowa Campus Compact's Civic Action Academy on the campus' democratic engagement achievements.

**Goal 7:** Achieve a voter registration rate of at least 90% and a voter turnout rate of 65% for the 2020 Election.

**Goal 8:** Implement an altered class schedule for election day(s) to create a time block for students and staff to vote by November 2020.



With the 2018 Midterm coming up, the team is going to be focusing a lot of effort in the fall on getting students registered to vote and educating them about how to vote here on campus. To accomplish some of the goals the team will start by working with the various groups that the Ambassadors are already involved in, including NCAA sports teams and first year seminar classes. As the election nears, focus will be placed on tabling in common areas during busy times and anytime there is a large lecture or event. There will also be a large emphasis placed on National Voter Registration Day, as this day coincides with a large political lecture happening on campus. The ambassadors will also focus on spreading the word to students about the ALL IN CHALLENGE and the All in Iowa challenge. Hopefully by pushing students to compete against other schools we can increase voter turnout. There will also be debates and candidate visits to inspire students to vote.

During the spring semester, the team will spend a lot of time researching how well the methods worked in the fall. The Ambassadors will design and conduct a survey about how Simpson students felt about our efforts to register them to vote and educate them about the Midterm election. Reviewing these survey results will allow future ambassadors to know what works well and what doesn't work. In the spring, the process will also begin to get an altered class schedule for future election days. Since this will be the first time an idea like this has been proposed, there is not a defined set of steps to accomplish this. The team will begin by speaking to various offices and hopefully learn more about what the process will look like. There will also be various voting engagement events to try to keep students interested, even though it is not an election year.

# | Strategy

- Get an on-campus early polling place for the 2018 Mid Term election (Campus Team)
- Visit every first year seminar class and register students (Ambassadors)
- Raise awareness about the ALL-IN Challenge to promote voting to “win” the challenge (Ambassadors)
- Promote engagement among the athletic teams (Ambassadors)
- Raise awareness about the Andrew Goodman my.VoteEverywhere.org portal working with student groups and communications department (Ambassador)
- Table to register students at all relevant events on campus (Ambassadors)
- Increase social media presence with the new Vote Everywhere at Simpson accounts, and our hashtag #StormThePolls (Ambassadors)
- Organize a candidate visits and debate watch parties (Ambassadors)
- Host a #VoteTogether party with partner organizations on election day and on the day of the early on-campus voting site, if accepted (Campus Team)
- Host a #VoteTogether style party for ABRs after early voting starts (Campus Team)
- Host a concert with The Future is Voting and HeadCount.Org (Campus Team)
- Present democratic engagement work at a conference related to civic engagement work (Ambassadors)
- Organize a meeting with Student Affairs to discuss an altered class schedule for the future (Campus Champion and Team Leader)
- Create and conduct a survey reviewing how well the efforts to educate students worked (Ambassadors)
- Work with the the student newspaper write at least one article talking about our voting registration efforts (Ambassadors)
- Identify potential partner organizations and speak during at least one of their meetings (Ambassadors will each reach out to 3-4 organizations on campus)

# | Timeline

## FALL 2018

- September** Collect at least 150 signatures for the petition for an on-campus early voting site.  
Table on National Voter Registration Day in the cafeteria, campus center and prior to the Culver Lecture.
- October** Visit SC first year seminars to register student to vote.  
Finalize GOTV planning.  
Weekly/ongoing voter registration on campus/with partners.  
Meet with SAAC representatives to initiate challenge to athletic teams for GOTV efforts.  
Host candidate debates on campus.  
Host a HeadCount.Org/The Future is Voting Concert.
- November** Provide all Simpson students with PDF version of housing lease agreement for use in same-day registration on Election Day  
GOTV activities implemented (e.g. #VoteTogether, rides to the polls on Election Day).  
Present at Iowa Civic Action Academy.  
Send a survey to all students about how prepared and knowledgeable they felt for the election and voting.
- December** Monitoring and Evaluation of semester activities.  
Plan a post-election engagement activity

# | Timeline (con't)

## SPRING 2019

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| <b>January</b>  | Request meeting with Student Affairs to discuss schedule change for future election days.<br>Analyze results from student survey.   |
| <b>February</b> | Conduct follow-up to Student Affairs meeting.<br>Plan democratic engagement event.  |
| <b>March</b>    | Write article about democratic engagement work.<br>Reach out to at least 10 campus organizations to establish a working relationship.<br>Host declared and exploratory candidates for the 2020 Presidential Iowa Caucus season. |
| <b>April</b>    | Identify one conference to attend for next academic year.<br>Plan democratic engagement event.<br>Monitoring and Evaluation   |
| <b>May</b>      | Plan democratic engagement event about staying engaged and active over summer break.  |



# | Monitoring and Evaluation

The Vote Everywhere team will participate in bi-weekly meetings that will include our partners, the Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow and members of the Culver Public Policy Center. We will meet in a large group setting with the Culver Public Policy Center on a basis that will be determined by the executive director of this group. The team will explore issuing a debriefing survey to the campus population after the midterm election to find out where people got their election information, if at all. We will take the results of this survey into consideration to help us plan effective engagement events on campus in the future. This year, our team has reauthorized participation in NSLVE and our Campus Champion is the administrator that will receive the report. We will use this report in addition to our own surveys. The team will fill out Vote Everywhere Event Reports on an ongoing basis to collect proper data on our practices for enhancing civic engagement.