

Simpson College: Campus Action Plan 2021-2022



vote everywhere

THE **ANDREW GOODMAN** FOUNDATION



| Executive Summary

This campus action plan was developed by 3 Andrew Goodman Foundation ambassadors and a co-chair of the Culver Center's Voter Engagement Committee. The action plan sets specific goals for Simpson College student civic engagement along with specific tactics and strategies to be implemented for the following academic year. It seeks to further institutionalize civic engagement in campus culture and continue to improve student registration and turnout rates in elections. This plan was developed to further engage populations of students that may not have in the past. It seeks to ensure that voting and civic engagement are institutionalized within the revised general education curriculum of Simpson College. The vote everywhere team seeks to establish voting as the norm among students. The strategic plan was developed over the summer between academic years and was beginning to be implemented in August of 2021. The plan will be updated and reevaluated between semesters. The implementation of this plan is to be carried out by the campus' Andrew Goodman Foundation ambassadors, student leadership within the Culver Center, and other Culver Fellows.

1. **Leadership:** The Simpson College voter engagement team is housed under the John C. Culver Public Policy Center as a subcommittee of Culver Fellows. The co-chairs of the committee consist of Andrew Goodman Ambassadors and Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow(s) and other leadership as appropriate. The campus champion is the chair of the Culver Center.
2. **Commitment:** Simpson College requires Civic Engagement as part of the general education requirements for all students. As part of the changing curriculum, all First-Year students will be required to take a Civic Engagement Course as part of their First-Year curriculum.
3. **NSLVE:** *(Still waiting 2020 NSLVE reports)* Simpson College achieved significant improvements in voter registration and voter turnout rates in the 2018 Midterms. We had the highest voter registration rate of any campus in Iowa at 87.4%, and the second-highest voter turnout rate at 50.2%.
4. **Partnerships:** *Key campus partnerships include: John C. Culver Public Policy Center, Student Government Association, SC Democrats and Republicans, Simpson Colloquium (first year seminar program), Student Development Office, Residence Life, Greek Life, Career Development, and First-Year Orientation. Key state and local partnerships include: Iowa Campus Compact, Warren County Auditor, Warren County Democrats, and Warren County Republicans. Key national partnerships include: Andrew Goodman Foundation, Campus Election Engagement Project, ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, National Voter Registration Day, TurboVote, IssueVoter, and VoteSmart.*
5. **Resources:** *Activity budget funds from the AGF Vote Everywhere program, CEEP, #VoteTogether, the Culver Public Policy Center, and other sources are held in a separate account managed by our Campus Champion (the Culver Center director).*
6. **Institutionalization:** *Simpson College has a branded TurboVote site (simpson.turbovote.org) that is embedded in SC Connect, the College's internal website for students, faculty, and staff. We always have a presence during mandatory welcome week activities for first-year students and optional activities for upper-class students, where we usually see big success in registering people. We will be providing a mandatory presentation in all First-Year Foundations classes as a permanent part of the curriculum. We also maintain a frequent tabling presence in the Kent Campus Center.*
7. **Programming:** *Tabling, mock caucuses during presidential election years, "Scooping Up the Votes" with ice cream, voter registration parties with s'mores at the campus fire pit, partnerships with Residence Life and Greek Life to inform students about how to register and update their registration each time they move on campus, and Culver Center programs, lectures, and panel discussions on political and public policy topics.*

8. **Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities:** Our **achievements** from the past year include: hosted 11 presidential candidate events on campus during the Iowa Caucus campaign that drew significant student attendance; recognition from the [ALL IN Iowa Campus Challenge](#) for highest voter registration rate (87.4%) among Iowa campuses in 2018; [Platinum Campus recognition](#) from ALL IN Challenge for breaking 50% student voter turnout in 2018; recognition in [Washington Monthly](#) magazine as one of America's best colleges for student voting; participation in the ALL IN Challenge [Presidential Commitment to Full Student Voting Participation](#); secured approval from Simpson's presidential cabinet for our proposal to create an altered class schedule for biennial general elections; successfully hosted two mock caucus trainings prior to the 2020 Iowa Caucuses; leaders of voter engagement team staffed check-in tables on Caucus night and assisted precinct chairs and secretaries with procedures and head counts.

Historically, our main **challenge** has been reaching all returning students to explain that they must update their voter registration address each time they move to a new campus residence. We also have experienced challenges in expanding our social media presence among students.

Challenges posed by the pandemic will also provide **opportunities** to expand our social media presence and further institutionalize TurboVote and other digital outreach to students.

| Goals

1. Long-term goals:

- a. Stronger social media presence for @SimpCoAGF channels (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).
- b. Increase our campus to a consistent 90% voter registration rate, 70% voting rate in presidential elections, and 50% voting rate in midterm elections
- c. Increase voting rates for male students, athletes, STEM and business majors
- d. Make voting even more a part of the campus culture.

2. Short-term goals:

- a. Successfully present on voter registration and civic engagement in all 17 Foundations I courses.
- b. Engage students in the local November elections through educational programming and 3 tabling events to turnout students for local elections.
- c. Educate students on new Iowa voting laws.
- d. Increasing student following on social media, consistently posting throughout the semester.
- e. Further utilizing the SimpleTexting services to provide urgent election information.

| Strategy

1. Long-term Goal Strategies:

- a. Host tabling and programs for voter registration and voter education, experimenting with new events to host voter registration tables. Connect with a student liaison in each student organization that can register their members to vote.
- b. Collaborate with Greek Life and the athletic departments on campus.
- c. Collaborate with existing campus institutions to decrease barriers to voting.
- d. Increase conversation about the history of voting rights on campus and continue the “I Vote Because” campaign.
- e. Increase social media presence on and off campus to engage students throughout the calendar year.

2. Short-term Goal Strategies:

- a. Providing information to students about absentee and early voting in local elections.
- b. Engaging the Culver Fellows Voter Engagement committee more effectively in voter registration initiatives.
- c. Maintain an altered Election Day schedule for the local elections.
- d. Partner with new director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for programming on civic engagement and voting.
- e. Work with Foundations Faculty to engage students in Foundations I classes.
- f. Continue educating students on new Iowa voting laws through tabling and pizza and policy events.
- g. Delegate among ambassadors who will be responsible for certain social media posts. Work with other department social media pages to build our presence.

| Tactics and Timeline

1. Events:

- Host tabling periodically in Kent Campus Center and at lectures or forums held on campus.
- Host forums on important voting information, such as Iowa's Voter ID law.
- Hold educational programs about contacting your representatives and issue-based advocacy.
- Host candidate forums for local elected office.
- Host a s'mores and registering to vote event at the campus fire pit.

2. Actions:

- Contact Foundations facility and coordinate class presentations on voting.
- Creating a set of new short videos on voter registration to share on social media channels. Focus on creating Instagram stories to share videos.

3. Meetings:

- The Vote Everywhere team will plan to meet at least once every other week with the voter engagement working group at the Culver Center to coordinate upcoming events. Communication about events will be maintained between meeting times. In the case of a full or partial move to an online campus, Zoom meetings will be used to continue plans and coordinate all events.

4. Digital Communication:

- Campus-wide emails to spread voter information to all students
- Maintain Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook pages with content regarding events and important news.
- Contact out of state students via email and social media about how to vote in their state in the event of campus semester irregularities due to COVID-19
- Ask campus staff that frequently sends campus-wide emails to include voter registration information and TurboVote link in email signature and potentially ask faculty to include it in their syllabi.

| Reporting

1. **Sharing Your Plan:** Plan will be shared with the voter engagement committee as well as relevant external voter engagement partners.
2. **Publishing Your Plan:** We will share our plan with the All-In Campus Challenge and made it available to the public through social media and the Culver Center page.
3. **Reporting NSLVE Data:** The Culver Center will host programming to report on NSLVE data once the report is available.

| Monitoring and Evaluation

1. **Meetings:** Maintain a group chat and meet at least once per month to discuss ongoing monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness of campus action plan.
2. **Event Reports:** AGF Lead Ambassador and CEEP Fellow will be responsible for our tracking.
3. **NSLVE:** Simpson's Voter Engagement team will review past NSLVE reports to generate ideas to improve voter registration and turnout rates.
4. **Research:** The team will continue to monitor best practices for student engagement.
5. **Continuous Evaluation:** In regular meetings we will look over and re-evaluate the campus action plan.