



TEXAS LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

# 2020 DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

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## Executive Summary

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Texas Lutheran University (TLU) is a private, liberal arts institution located on 184 scenic acres in Seguin, TX. Seguin is situated on the growing corridor of cities between San Antonio and Austin. TLU has a diverse student body of approximately 1400 students, with over half of the student population being first generation (meaning they are the first in their families to attend college). In recent years, TLU became accredited to award master's degrees in four areas: athletic training, accounting, education, and data analytics. In summer 2020, a new accelerated bachelor of science in nursing (ABSN) program is set to begin in New Braunfels, TX (about 20 minutes from TLU's main Seguin campus). Students at the New Braunfels satellite campus will receive access to all of the same services that exist on the Seguin campus. Approximately two-thirds of TLU students live on campus in Seguin. TLU is also a Hispanic Serving Institution, with 40 percent of the student population being Hispanic. With just over 70 full-time faculty members, TLU has a small student-faculty ratio of 14:1 and an average class size of 18.

Texas Lutheran University is a community of learning and a community of faith. As part of its mission and institutional goals, TLU encourages and assists its students in developing a commitment to active community service, an integrated ethical perspective and a sense of moral purpose, a desire to cultivate physical and psychological health and well-being, and a will to pursue continued cultural, intellectual and spiritual growth. Civic engagement is actively promoted and supported at TLU, but explicit planning and goals related to voter engagement only began in 2018 when TLU applied for the Voter Friendly Campus designation. Most efforts for voter engagement have existed through the university's civic engagement center, the Center for Servant Leadership. As the Center for Servant Leadership restructured in 2016 to have one centralized staff person, the need to approach democratic engagement as a cross-campus collaborative effort has grown. This action plan establishes goals and plans for promoting civic learning and democratic engagement on TLU's campus, and creates measurable goals for the institution to use in the future. The Center for Servant Leadership developed this plan with the support of two student Democracy Fellows, chosen by the Center for Servant Leadership and Campus Vote Project.

The TLU Voter Engagement Plan was created to thoughtfully and intentionally plan civic learning and democratic engagement priorities and programs for the upcoming years. The plan re-establishes a working group/coalition that will assist in editing, maintaining, implementing, and advancing the action plan. The action plan is being submitted to NASPA for consideration of TLU as a 2020-2021 Voter Friendly Campus Designation Campus. It is also being submitted for consideration of the All In Challenge. TLU is proud that it was chosen as a designated VFC campus in the 2018-2019 program and the voter engagement team at TLU learned a lot through previous action planning. This year's Voter Engagement Plan begins with programming in fall 2020 centering around the presidential election, but continues on-ward indefinitely with long-term goals through at least 2024. The plan as it is laid out in this document will be implemented throughout the next year. The plan is living document—flexible and adaptive—and is expected to grow and change as new programs are established and created. The majority of this plan in its submitted form was written by Morgan Klaser, Director of the TLU Center for Servant Leadership and the two TLU Democracy Fellows, Raquel Morris and Adrian Villarreal.

## Leadership

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The TLU Voter Engagement Plan will be overseen by the Center for Servant Leadership and its Director, Morgan Klaser, who will serve as Chair of the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners. The Voter Engagement Plan will also be aided in its implementation by the two appointed TLU Democracy Fellows, which were selected in partnership with Campus Vote Project. The purpose of the Coalition of Partners is to bring together representatives of different parts of TLU's campus and Seguin's community to assist with the goals set forth in this Voter Engagement Plan. Group members are responsible for attending quarterly meetings, sub-committee meetings if needed, sharing ideas, and presenting feedback on the plan implementation based on their specific role in campus and/or broader community. The Student

Civic Engagement Coordinators (a one-year student leadership role through the Center for Servant Leadership) are responsible for taking minutes and reporting updates out to the campus community.

The Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners will include:

- A representative from Community Forum, a nonpartisan organization in Seguin working to register and empower voters
- A representative from MOVE Texas, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, grassroots organization working to build power in underrepresented youth communities through civic engagement, leadership development, and issue advocacy
- Faculty from various departments, including political science
- Staff Representative from TLU Athletics
- Director of Student Activities at TLU
- Director of First Year & Campus Programs at TLU
- Student representatives from the TLU Student Government Association, Black Student Union, and the Mexican American Student Association (MASA)
- Student Civic Engagement Coordinator with TLU Center for Servant Leadership
- TLU Democracy Fellows in partnership with Campus Vote Project
- Director of the Jon & Sandra Moline Center for Servant Leadership at TLU
- Associate Dean of Student Life & Learning

The members of this group represent student leaders, student affairs administrators, faculty, and off-campus, nonpartisan community organizations. By representing each of these groups, the Coalition of Partners brings together differing voices in the TLU and Seguin community that are knowledgeable about democratic engagement. The members of this group create diversity and inclusivity by means of fostering leadership from different parts of campus, representing different perspectives and areas of expertise, and accessing voters, especially those who are underrepresented in our democracy. Group members were selected based on their roles within their jobs and/or expressed interest. Additional group members, especially those related to assessment, marketing, and technology, can be added if the Coalition of Partners agrees they would assist with the TLU Voter Engagement Plan. The Coalition of Partners will meet at least quarterly during the year to update the existing plan and connect about future plans. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty about what TLU's fall semester will look like, the group will attempt to meet virtually until it is safe to meet in person. This group will coordinate with the Guadalupe County Elections Office's Chief Elections Administrator Lisa Hayes on an as-needed basis.

Several of the team members were part of the initial team in the 2018-2019 application cycle, but some are new additions. TLU also inducted a new president in 2019, Dr. Debbie Cottrell, who was previously the Vice President for Academic Affairs at TLU and supervised the Director of the Center for Servant Leadership. Dr. Cottrell is very supportive of civic engagement and democratic engagement efforts for our students and campus. She is aware of the work that the democratic engagement action plan outlines and is supportive of its work.

The primary point of contact for this initiative and the coalition is:

Morgan Klaser  
Director of the Jon & Sandra Moline Center for Servant Leadership  
Texas Lutheran University  
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## **Commitment**

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Texas Lutheran University demonstrates its commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement through the establishment and support of the Jon & Sandra Moline Center for Servant Leadership. The Jon and Sandra

Moline Center for Servant Leadership (CSL) provides centralized leadership for civic engagement, including an emphasis on quality over quantity, while also embracing community partners and students as co-educators. Created in 2005, the CSL is animated by 1 full-time staff, 12 student workers, and a shared office administrator. Each student worker serves as a year-long liaison to a different community organization, facilitating regular service opportunities for TLU students, ranging from promoting Mexican cultural arts at Teatro de Artes de Juan Seguin, to organizing events for a senior living community at Eden Cross, to mentoring at the disciplinary campus, Lizzie Burges Alternative School, for the local Independent School District. The CSL has two student coordinators dedicated to civic engagement and voter registration efforts. The CSL intentionally nurtures a wide diversity of community service opportunities. This includes coordination for two annual days of service (one per semester) in which student leaders facilitate reflection for small groups of participants. CSL staff support students' international efforts to raise funds and awareness for Tanzanian children orphaned due to AIDS, and build water wells in rural Africa. In 2016-2017, the CSL additionally hosted conversations and documentaries about social justice issues in the community, including a documentary about access to nutritious foods and a community dialogue focused on immigration issues in the United States. In 2019, the CSL co-hosted a campus speaker with local nonpartisan environmental group called Siempre Sustainable to discuss advocacy and community organizing.

The CSL Director also meets regularly with TLU faculty to encourage and develop curricular civic engagement. During the 2018-2019 academic year, 27 full-time faculty taught 75 civic engagement courses, reinforcing the culture of service within the academic setting. The culture of service at TLU does not begin and end with the CSL. Every athletic team participates in one or both of the annual days of service; many teams also organize a separate community service project. Each social Greek organization chooses a philanthropic cause to support through service and fundraising. For example, the Xi Tau sorority raises awareness about domestic violence by hosting several annual events and volunteering weekly at the local shelter. The institution does not currently have an explicit, visible commitment specifically demonstrating a commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement, but that is a goal identified in this plan. Structurally, the Center for Servant Leadership up until 2019 resided within the Office of Academic Affairs. In summer 2019, the decision was made to transition the CSL to the Office of Student Life & Learning. The transition and spirit of collaboration at TLU has allowed the CSL to have close ties with both academic and student affairs on campus. Additionally, the new TLU president Dr. Debbie Cottrell is a strong advocate and supporter of civic engagement for TLU students.

TLU communicates its commitment to democratic engagement internally through voter registration efforts in the FREX (freshmen experience) courses, which is a required course for all first-year students. Efforts to educate students, faculty, staff, and community members by the Center for Servant Leadership through candidate forums, debate watch parties, and civic dialogue programs are valued and marketed by the university. Civic engagement (or service-learning) courses are part of TLU's general education curriculum. All students are required to participate in a number of designated courses that support learning about Global Citizenship in order to graduate.

The TLU Action Plan, established in 2009 as a way to articulate institutional priorities that are part of the TLU Strategic Plan, demonstrates that fostering a positive, engaged and productive campus culture is important to TLU. These priorities are communicated internally to TLU faculty and staff. TLU communicates this priority to outside constituents by serving as a community resource for voter registration and proclaims it on the TLU website as a community education program. TLU's aim to "engage each student in a process of self-education which will assist him or her in developing as an informed and resourceful person in today's



rapidly changing world” shows its support of educational pursuits, such as those dedicated to civic learning and democratic engagement, that help with overall student development for adaptive change in the world. This plan’s purpose is to help instill a culture of democratic engagement at TLU. Currently, TLU’s administration is determining the strategic plan for the next five years, as well as retooling its mission, vision, and core values. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, TLU is considering a “one plus four” plan, where priorities related to the coronavirus are dictated for the next year with goals for the following four years also laid out. From preliminary conversations, it is clear that service and civic engagement will be a part of all of these retooled priorities in some form.

In spring 2020, TLU President Dr. Debbie Cottrell signed the presidential commitment from [All In Campus Challenge](#), signifying TLU’s commitment in striving towards full student voter participation.

## Landscape

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Civic engagement is a part of TLU’s Institutional Goals for Graduates, which are listed on the [TLU Mission webpage](#). In this document, it states that “TLU encourages and assists its students in developing:

- a commitment to **active community service**,
- an **integrated ethical perspective** and a sense of moral purpose,
- a desire to cultivate physical and psychological health and **well-being**, and
- a will to pursue continued **cultural, intellectual and spiritual growth.**”

While civic learning and democratic engagement are not specifically mentioned in these institutional goals, they are accepted as part of TLU’s responsibility and commitment to community service and ethical perspectives. Civic learning and democratic engagement is seen as a responsibility of active community members, and as such, TLU supports and encourages TLU students to be engaged. The Center for Servant Leadership also has developed learning outcomes for students engaged in its programs. As a result of engaging with the community, TLU students will be able to 1) value community, 2) discover their place within a community (civic identity), and 3) link the communities in which they operate (the academy and the larger community). Civic learning and democratic engagement are connected with these outcomes. Active participants in civic learning and democratic engagement programs become connected with a community, its issues, and find ways to connect their passions and values to the greater community through civic dialogue and using their voices.

TLU participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) with Tufts University’s Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life. According to data from NSLVE (see chart below) in the 2014 midterm elections, the voting rate for TLU was 10.6%, which was below the average voting rate for all institutions (19.1%). During the 2014 midterm elections, approximately two-thirds of students were registered to vote at TLU (66.3%). The 2016 voting rate at TLU was 43.7%, which is less than the 2016 voting rate of all participating institutions (50.4%). Between the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, TLU saw an overall increase by 13.4% in the voting rate. There was also an increase between 2012 and 2016 in the number of students who registered and the number of students who voted. In the 2018 midterm elections, TLU’s voting rate increased by 33.5% compared to the 2014 midterm elections. TLU renewed participation with the NSLVE program through 2023, which will help to see ongoing trends. The trends in the NSLVE data shows increased numbers of students registering to vote (86.4% of TLU students in 2018) and turning out to vote, but TLU still has work to do to maintain voter registration and achieve increased voting rate percentages that match national averages or surpass them.

National Study of Learning, Voting, & Engagement Data				
Year	Voter Registration Rate for TLU	Voting Rate for All Institutions	Voting Rate for TLU	Election Type
2012	65.0 %	46.9 %	30.3 %	Presidential
2014	69.2 %	19.1 %	10.6 %	Midterm
2016	83.5 %	50.4 %	43.7 %	Presidential
2018	86.4 %	39.1 %	44.1 %	Midterm

In 2016, TLU also participated in the Campus Compact Annual Membership Survey, which produced a comparison report to peer institutions. The key findings identified that Texas Lutheran University is on target with what comparably sized institutions (FTE student enrollment under 3,000) are accomplishing in community engagement on their campuses. Particularly, the way that TLU tracks curricular and co-curricular service and number of hours of service completed is on par with the national trend and affinity group. In terms of our campus-community partnerships, TLU is not currently utilizing community partners in many on-campus committees, which may be a beneficial addition to consider in the future. The Coalition of Partners is a positive step in increasing community partners on TLU committees. Tracking alumni engagement in public service and national service is not something TLU currently does, but could be useful for knowing some of the long-term impact of service and community engagement on Texas Lutheran University students. TLU is part of the 52% of institutions that identify specific learning outcomes for civic engagement, something that TLU utilizes in assessment efforts.

Civic learning and democratic engagement are present in the curriculum as part of civic engagement courses. The TLU general education curriculum has a global citizenship competency, which students are required to engage in. The global citizenship competency encompasses not only community engagement and civic engagement courses, but also courses where students are engaging in cross-cultural learning. Courses that have a civic engagement component and also are designated with the global citizenship competency use the CSL learning outcomes (community, civic identity, and linkages between academy and community) in their syllabi. These courses are assessed by the Center for Servant Leadership through a pre- and post-survey administered to students. Examples of departments that have civic engagement courses include Nursing, Education, Political Science, Sociology, Communication, and Information Systems. Additionally, all students are required to participate in a shared read during the summer before their first year at TLU. This shared read is used as a tool for discussion and learning during the fall semester through the Freshman Experience (FREX) course. For fall 2020, the FREX Committee determined that the first-year student shared read would be *Compulsory Voting: For and Against*. This book presents two scholars (Jason Brennan and Lisa Hill) on both sides of this issue. They talk about the role of voting in civic life, how informed voters should be, motivations for engaging in voting, and more. This is an example of how conversations about civic and democratic engagement are infused into TLU's curriculum. Civic learning and democratic engagement in the co-curriculum are mostly seen through programs with the Center for Servant Leadership (through volunteer opportunities and service-learning programs), Career Development (through vocational exploration programs), and Campus Ministries departments.

## **BARRIERS TO SUCCESS**

TLU's landscape is overall fairly accepting of civic learning and democratic engagement efforts in the curriculum and co-curriculum. Barriers do exist that prevent the institution from being fully successful in all endeavors. A challenging internal barrier is the lack of staffing. The Center for Servant Leadership is staffed by a Director, who creates curricular and co-curricular programming for civic engagement, volunteerism, and service-learning. The CSL Director, Democracy Fellows, and student coordinators are the main on-campus contacts for voter registration, voter engagement, civic dialogue, etc., but the CSL is tasked with a broader scope of civic engagement work outside of just democratic engagement. Another internal barrier includes limited funding overall for the Center for Servant Leadership's programming, which encompasses more than just voter engagement. The limited funding has cultivated a collaborative atmosphere of sharing ideas, resources, and funding when applicable with other departments.

External barriers that have been problematic include navigating local politics of a small town and their thoughts of college-age students voting in their county. TLU does have resources from the Guadalupe County Elections Office, the Community Forum group (a nonpartisan group dedicated to helping Hispanic and Latinx communities have access to voting), and MOVE Texas (a nonpartisan nonprofit). TLU has had a polling place on-campus for many years, but in recent conversations with the Guadalupe County Elections Office, we were able to move our on-campus polling place for fall 2020 into a more central location, making it easier for students to vote.

MOVE Texas and Community Forum have both been helpful partners in registering students to vote and co-planning democratic engagement events throughout the year. Their assistance has combatted the internal barrier of lack of

staffing. These external partnerships need to be additionally cultivated, and new partnerships that could be helpful should be explored.

## Goals

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TLU has both long-term and short-term goals for civic learning and democratic engagement. The long-term goals listed below are a vision for the next ten years, while the short-term goals are a vision for the next 1-2 years. These goals were formulated in conversation with members of the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners and TLU’s NSLVE Report from 2018.

LONG-TERM GOALS	SHORT-TERM GOALS
Increase student voting rates by 10 percentage points from 2016 to 2024.	Institutionalize the practice of the president sending a letter to all students every semester about the importance of being civically engaged and participating in elections.
Achieve an explicit, visible commitment on the part of the TLU president for improving civic learning and democratic engagement.	Develop resources for faculty with the CSL and Center for Teaching & Learning to incorporate civic learning and democratic engagement into their classrooms.
Incorporate civic education and democratic engagement into co-curricular programs/departments outside of the Center for Servant Leadership.	Establish Memorandums of Understanding with external partners, including Community Forum and MOVE Texas.
Utilize the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners to accomplish tasks and make the team’s reach larger, during election and non-election seasons.	Register 75% of incoming first-year and transfer students to vote during orientation and/or first semester at TLU.
Implement civic and democratic engagement in the strategic planning for the next 5 years.	Increase the number of students completing absentee ballots, for those applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Increase student voting rates for male college students at TLU by 5 percentage points from 2016 to 2020.	Create an open relationship between the Democracy Fellows and TLU students through increased visibility and transparency of their work.

### Completed Goals from the 2018 Voter Engagement Campus Plan:

- Publish TLU data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, & Engagement on the TLU website, and make it available to faculty, staff, and students. (2018 Short-Term Goal)
- Add voter registration (local and out-of-state) information to the institution’s external website and the internal portal website. (2018 Short-Term Goal)
- Integrate electoral engagement and voter registration into all “FRESH – Freshmen Experience” courses and orientation programming. (2018 Long-Term Goal)

## Strategy

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The strategy for programming listed below consists of both an election-season approach and a non-election-season approach. The Center for Servant Leadership, the TLU Democracy Fellows, and the student coordinator(s) for civic engagement will be responsible for this work, although some projects will require partnership and collaboration with internal departments and external community partners. The National Study on Learning, Voting, & Engagement (NSLVE) highlighted individuals on TLU’s campus who are not as likely to participate in voting, which included men and various majors, including kinesiology and education. To better meet the diverse needs of TLU’s students, our strategy includes meeting students where they are, including doing more tabling in the buildings where low-turnout majors typically congregate for class (Tschoepe Hall). TLU also has a large number of male student athletes at TLU, so we hope to work more closely with TLU Athletics to engage with their students. By having a representative from TLU Athletics on the coalition of partners, we can determine new initiatives to empower student athletes to vote.

## STRATEGY FOR ELECTION SEASON: 2020 Presidential Elections

### Pre-Election: August 25 (First Day of School)-November 3, 2020 (Election Day)

Prior to Election Day on November 3, 2020, the Center for Servant Leadership (CSL) with the help of the TLU Democracy Fellows will focus efforts around voter registration and voter education. These efforts will primarily be successful through email communication, web design, the creation of educational tools for the student body on the importance and procedures of voting, and marketing/promotional items.

#### PRE-ELECTION VOTER REGISTRATION STRATEGY

To register to vote in Texas, a completed application must be mailed to your local County Voter Registrar 30 days prior to Election Day. For the November 2020 elections, this date is October 5, 2020. Since Texas Lutheran University frequently has voters from both Guadalupe County (the county in which Seguin resides), Bexar County, and Comal County, the CSL makes multiple county applications available at each voter registration event. TLU Democracy Fellows are voter deputy registrar trained in surrounding counties, and MOVE Texas is also able to provide support for multiple county registrations. Some resources for voter registration that we utilize and tell students about includes:

- The [Am I Registered?](#) website can tell individuals if they are registered to vote in a particular county if this information can be provided: Name, County, Date of Birth. This is helpful if individuals have forgotten where they've registered or if they're registered already.
- The [Online Voter Registration Application](#) document must be filled out, printed, and mailed to your local County Voter Registrar to be valid.
- [Texas Student Voting Guide](#) gives some helpful tips about registering at school or home, which types of ID are needed to vote, voter registration deadlines, etc. that are specific to Texas.
- [Voting while Studying Abroad Guide](#) educates students who will be out of the country during the November 2020 Presidential Election. This guide illustrates a step by step process on how to request an absentee ballot and includes dates and deadline which need to be abided by in order for U.S. students to cast a valid ballot while abroad.
- The [Application for Ballot by Mail in Texas](#) is an important tool to use amid the COVID-19 pandemic, especially with many students temporarily displaced from their campus home.

In conversations with students at voter registration events, either the CSL representative, the Democracy Fellows, and/or MOVE Texas representatives provide students with information on how to register to vote using an on-campus address (if applicable). In the past, this was a source of trouble for students because they were required to provide the physical address of their residence hall, which is not publicized. To prevent students' applications from being delayed or rejected, TLU provides the list of correct addresses for students.

#### *Email Communication for Voter Registration*

An email regarding how to register to vote will be sent to students around the time of National Voter Registration Day, which is on September 22, 2020. This email typically is sent by the Director of the CSL, Morgan Klaser, but it may be helpful to ask the Dean of Student Life & Learning to send an email instead to try to reach a broader audience. A recommended date to send this email in Fall 2020 is Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, which is one week prior to National Voter Registration Day.

#### *Where & when will voter registration happen on campus?*

Voter registration efforts will be completed by a team of folks, consisting of the CSL Director, a student leader with the CSL staff, and the two TLU Democracy Fellows. These students will assist with voter registration efforts on campus and recruiting fellow students to be deputy registrars. Voter registration will also be assisted by MOVE Texas, who typically schedule a weekly time to table in the Alumni Student Center or outside of the TLU Chapel. These recruitment efforts will take priority in the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester for about 4- 6 weeks. With a greater amount of education being spread and registrations being recorded we are hopeful that this will lead to a much larger turnout for the November Presidential Election.



- First-Year Orientation. Many of the non-registered voters at TLU are incoming first-year students. A tabling effort during orientation will allow first-year students to register to vote on their first weekend at TLU using their new campus address.
- CSL Volunteer Fair. A table at the annual CSL Volunteer Fair will be occupied by the Guadalupe County Elections Office. They will provide on-the-spot voter registration for students. This event is anticipated to be held on Wednesday, August 26, 2020.
- National Voter Registration Day. A table will be set up in the Alumni Student Center (ASC) on Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9:30am-1:00pm. At the table, voter registration applications and information about polling locations will be provided, as well as promotional giveaways such as stickers and snacks.
- Tabling in the Alumni Student Center and Tschoepe Hall. A table will be set up in the ASC during the last week of voter registration. The table will be staffed with a student/staff rep or a representative of MOVE Texas. At the table, voter registration applications and information about polling locations will be provided, as well as promotional and marketing materials about FAQs. Additional tabling will happen in Tschoepe Hall outside of the Starbucks Café, to reach students in low-turnout majors whose classes typically happen in that academic building. MOVE Texas can also enroll students in a text reminder program to help remind them about deadlines and the election date.
- Digital Boards. On the digital boards on campus (called Bulldog TV), we will have a PowerPoint slide available in late September through mid-October that showcases information about registering to vote. Other promotional materials will include using the Growler (an online message board available to all students), as well as hanging posters and flyers using the “TLU Votes” branding.
- In-Class Presentations with MOVE TX, Democracy Fellows, & the CSL Student Leaders. To promote expanded voter registration, these entities will provide short, in-class presentations about voter registration and be able to complete on-the-spot voter registration for students. Faculty members will be able to engage with the topic about importance of voting and/or how voting influences their discipline. One specific example of how this will take place is with the Freshman Experience (or FREX) courses, which are required for every first-year student to take in the fall of their first year. Each FREX course has a designated Peer Mentor who helps to provide lessons that guide first-year students through transitioning to life in college. In fall 2020, one of the lessons will be about voter registration and engagement. Hopefully this lesson will stay as a part of the Peer Mentor/FREX curriculum from now on.
- Presentation to the TLU Coaches. To connect with more of the student athlete population, a presentation will be made to the TLU coaches to provide them with information to pass onward to their teams. If possible, we will host a competition to see which athletic team can get the highest percentage of team members voting on Election Day. This strategy is formulated to specifically target more male students in voting because a high number of TLU male students are also athletes.
- Students can pick up a hard copy of voter registration forms in the Center for Servant Leadership office at any time.

### PRE-ELECTION VOTER EDUCATION STRATEGY

#### *Candidate Forums*

In Fall 2020, the Center for Servant Leadership will host a series of Candidates Forums on campus, which will be open to faculty, staff, and students. The Candidates Forum will be planned in conjunction with community partners, Community Forum and MOVE Texas. They will bring candidates in the upcoming local elections onto campus to share their ideas, platforms, and educate the campus community about them as a candidate. TLU has partnered with Community Forum and MOVE Texas to host Candidate Forums on campus for over five years.

### *Debate Watch Parties.*

For more highly publicized elections, the CSL will host debate watch parties in the Alumni Student Center so that students can easily educate themselves about candidates in upcoming elections. This is a practice we used in the fall 2016 presidential elections and fall 2018 midterm elections. Local elections are not usually televised, which is why candidate forums have been used instead to educate students. To increase student turnout at these events, we may consider co-sponsoring the events with student organizations and offering food or other giveaways as an incentive to attend.

### *What's on the Ballot 101 Events*

Beginning in fall 2019 and continuing in spring 2020, TLU began hosting "What's On The Ballot 101" style events prior to election day. Typically the event has been co-sponsored with a student organization and the Center for Servant Leadership to increase student turnout. The event includes nonpartisan information about what will be on a student's ballot when they vote on election day. Tools are shared about how to access a sample ballot. This year, we hope to host the "What's on the Ballot 101" event during TLU's celebration of Civility Week, which will be October 19-23, 2020. This will also overlap with the beginning of early voting.

### *Marketing around Voter Education*

To further aid in voter education efforts prior to Election Day, flyers, social media, and bulldog TV ads will be posted to answer frequently asked questions about voting. This will kick off after National Voter Registration Day and occur for much of October. The goal of this marketing effort will be to aid in the conversation and culture about the election happening on campus. Some additional ways we will spread awareness about voter registration and engagement include:

- Flyers and handouts at first-year and transfer orientation
- A request to faculty members to include voting dates in their syllabi
- A "I plan to vote" handout that allows students to make a plan about when/where/how they plan to vote (i.e. in-person, early voting, etc.). This could potentially be in tandem with the Planner Party that Student Life & Learning hosts at the beginning of the semester.
- An email from TLU President Dr. Debbie Cottrell about the importance of engaging in democracy, registering to vote, and going out and voting. If possible, issue a statement about students not being penalized for missing class in order to vote on Election Day.

### Election Day: November 3, 2020

#### *Email Communication for Election Day*

An email from the Student Government Association president will go out on November 3rd reminding students that it is Election Day, directing students to the Frequently Asked Questions section of the TLU website at [www.tlu.edu](http://www.tlu.edu), confirming if students are registered to vote, and encouraging them to vote. Coming from a peer rather than a staff may encourage students to vote.

#### *Advertise campus polling place*

To spread the word about TLU's on-campus polling location in the Alumni Student Center, we will create and market a Bulldog TV slide about the hours that TLU's on-campus polling location will be open on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Additionally, signage outside of major buildings on campus will advertise Election Day, the location, and times.

#### *Party at the Polls with MOVE Texas*



**FALL 2020 SCHEDULED DEBATES**

Presidential Debate #1: Tuesday 9/29  
8:00PM-9:30PM CST

Vice Presidential Debate #1: Wednesday, 10/7  
8:00PM-9:30PM CST

Presidential Debate #2: Thursday, 10/15  
8:00PM-9:30PM CST [coincides with TLU's Fall Mid-Semester Break, so we may only do advertising, but not host a watch party]

Presidential Debate #3: Thursday, 10/22  
8:00PM-9:30PM CST

In celebration of Election Day, TLU will continue our tradition that began in the 2018 midterms of co-hosting a Party at the Polls with MOVE Texas. The Party at the Polls will take place near the on-campus polling location of the Alumni Student Center. For the peak traffic hours of the day (usually 9:30am-1:00pm), Party at the Polls will have balloons, music, food, giveaway, and games to celebrate Election Day with campus. Other provided items will include Texas Student Voting Guides and sample ballots.

### *Voter Taxi*

In 2016, the voter taxi at TLU made its debut! During that fall election, the on-campus polling place was tucked in a corner of campus that is not often accessed by foot by students. It is within a 15-minute walking distance of most places on campus, but was proving to be a pain point for students to actively participate on Election Day because it was too far to walk in between classes. The voter taxi was an idea created to solve that problem. A golf cart was borrowed from Facilities that had capacity to fit 6-7 people. During particular times of the day, student leaders helped to drive the voter taxi around campus to pick up students and drive them to/from the polling place on campus. This helped bring more visibility to the election happening that day. Since the fall 2020 elections are set to have an on-campus polling location more centralized to the heart of campus, the voter taxi will likely still take place to provide additional visibility and support for students trying to fit voting into a busy schedule of activities for the day.

### *Results-watching event*

To close out Election Day, the results will be broadcast in the Alumni Student Center's Graf Lounge television. Pizza will be provided to help make use of the high traffic space and create conversation around election results.

### Post-Election: After November 3, 2020

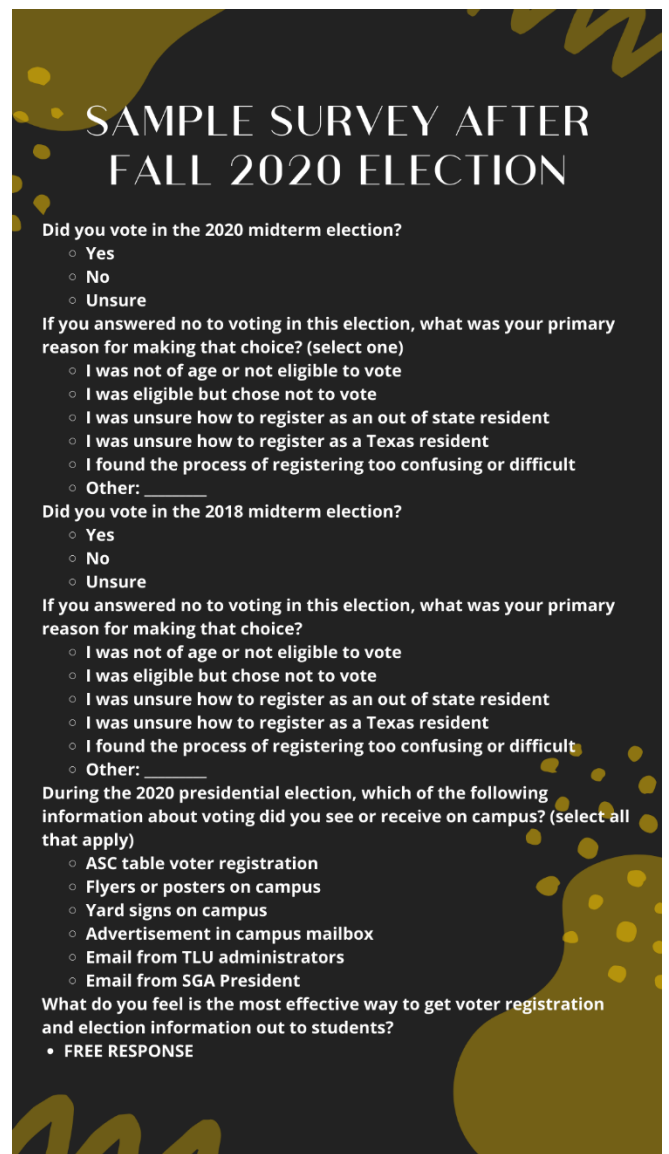
#### *Student Survey*

Following the fall 2020 elections, a student survey will be created and distributed through the weekly @TLU newsletter from TLU marketing. A gift card incentive will be given for a randomly selected participant to receive either Bulldog Bucks, a Tschoepe Coffee Shop gift card, or a discount to the campus bookstore. If possible, we may be able to have this survey available on a laptop at Party at the Polls to have some student complete the survey live. Faculty members may also be able to play an encouraging role in having students complete the survey.

### **STRATEGY FOR NON-ELECTION SEASON**

During the seasons when there is not an active election, the Center for Servant Leadership will have ongoing programming for education around civic learning and voter registration. Some examples of this ongoing engagement strategy include:

*Ongoing Voter Registration Efforts.* The CSL will offer voter registration on a regular rotation during the semester in the Alumni Student Center, which is the main student center on campus, and in academic building lobbies. Additionally, the CSL student coordinator for civic engagement will offer voter registration for faculty to implement in the classroom. This has worked as a popular voter registration method in the past, and faculty seem to enjoy having



the opportunity physically brought to their students in the classroom. The CSL student coordinator for civic engagement alongside the TLU Democracy Fellows will help to plan, coordinate, and implement voter registration efforts with the CSL Director and the County Elections Office. The main audience for this activity is current TLU students.

*Civic Dialogues.* The CSL will provide 1-2 civic dialogue programs each semester for students, faculty, staff, and community members. These events in the past have been in a variety of formats including community dialogue circles focused on a relevant issue, a speaker series bringing in local experts on a topic, or documentaries about a social cause or advocacy issue. The purpose of the civic dialogue events is to promote dialogue on campus where folks can educate themselves, find out how to get involved regarding a particular issue, and speak civilly about a controversial issue with others who may have differing opinions. As an example, the CSL co-hosted a civic dialogue event with the Black Student Union in February 2020 to have a conversation about the anniversary of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment being passed, which expanded voting rights to citizens regardless of race.

*Issues Advocacy.* MOVE Texas plans to host issues advocacy programming throughout the year that the CSL may co-partner with to bring resources to TLU students, faculty, and staff. The purpose of issues advocacy programming is to bring together individuals around a like-minded cause (i.e. healthcare), and provide those individuals with resources to be more active about around their stance on an issue in their community.

*Cultivating a Voter Engagement Culture at TLU.* An ongoing effort at TLU to cultivate a voter engagement culture is to incorporate voter registration into the first-year experience more, making it one of the expectations of what you do as a first-year TLU student. By embedding voter engagement more into the FREX curriculum that all first-year students participate in, over time working knowledge about voting will increase in TLU students.

### **STRATEGY FOR COVID-19**

Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that TLU will make a decision about the fall 2020 semester in June 2020. The decision will determine whether TLU will be starting off the Fall 2020 semester on campus or online. Even if TLU decides to make a full return to campus in fall, it is clear that we will likely need to comply with social distancing and not promote any large gatherings. We wanted to include a plan for engaging with students about voting in the case that we are limited to primarily online interactions.

Resources will be provided via email, such as virtual voting care packages that will be assembled and sent out via email to inform and educate the student body throughout the Fall 2020 term. Each care package will be themed and contain information pertaining to deadlines that are soon to approach. For instance, if the voter registration deadline is a few weeks away we will send out information regarding how to register to vote and online resources they can utilize. If the circumstances do require that students take classes online and do not live on campus, a virtual care package regarding how to apply for a ballot by mail will be sent out with infographics and step by step processes that will walk them through the application process from beginning to end. Ballot-by-mail voting will be emphasized through the term to ensure that students know how to vote if they're temporarily in a different county from where their voter registration is active. [The future of whether all Texans will be eligible to vote-by-mail due to lack of immunity from COVID-19 is still being determined by lawmakers.](#)

Another resource the Democracy fellows will implement is to have a Google form that will be accessible to all students on campus. This form will be advertised and utilized to answer questions about anything regarding voter registration, important dates and any other miscellaneous question regarding voting that need to be addressed. This Google form link will be posted on the TLU website and social media to serve as a resource for our campus.

Advertising and using social media will be crucial for a semester that is held online. The coalition will reach out to other large organizations on campus such as Student Activities, Student Government Association, the Black and Gold President's Council, and Athletics to see if we could have them post and inform on the importance of absentee voting. If the organizations are willing to help, the Democracy Fellows and CSL will provide materials that have been assembled

such as infographics that they can use to spread the word. Our goal is to serve all groups of students and reach out to as many diverse organizations to ensure that students' needs are met. So far in the university response to COVID-19, daily emails have gone out to campus with updates on TLU's response to the virus. It is planned to have twice weekly emails continue for the foreseeable future with updates. If this continues through the fall, these emails could include reminders about deadlines and updates regarding the election and voter registration. Another crucial way to reach students in the event that our campus has online education exclusively in the fall is through faculty interaction. We will create easily distributable videos and infographics that faculty members can share with their students at the start of virtual class. These short videos and graphics will provide useful information about how students can register to vote and prepare for the election.

If possible, many events such as Party at the Polls, What's on the Ballot 101, and Candidate Forums, will be converted to a digital format, whether it be using "Live" capabilities on social media, Zoom calls, and/or recorded videos. The continuation of these events in some capacity will ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with the fall election.

### **LONG-TERM STRATEGY**

Eventually these new short-term strategies and programming we are trying for the first or second iteration will become weaved into the fabric of what it means to be a Bulldog at TLU. Vocalized support from upper administration (i.e. an email from TLU president about the importance of Election Day or a mention about adding voter registration deadlines into a syllabus from the TLU VP of Academic Affairs) will continue to embed the importance of voting into TLU's culture. There is certainly more work to do in tying in civic engagement with diversity and equity work at TLU. The TLU Diversity Committee has issued an official [Diversity Commitment statement](#) which includes a commitment to leadership through service and civic engagement. It is important for the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners to think about connections and intersections to diversity work. If democratic engagement is to be further institutionalized, it would need to be brought by faculty members that are part of the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners to the larger faculty governing body for conversation and decisions. Faculty governance is of huge importance to TLU and their buy-in would help to further institutionalize this work as a priority. One way to know that the commitment to this work has been realized is through a stronger commitment to civic and democratic engagement seen in increased staffing and stronger inclusion in the faculty rank and tenure process. This year, TLU will first focus on incorporating faculty allies more into the coalition. With those strong allies in place, we can focus more on approaching the faculty as a whole and ultimately the upper administration with the needs around democratic engagement.

### **Reporting**

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The TLU voter engagement campus guide will be shared internally to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), the Vice President for Student Life & Learning, and to the President's Cabinet. The plan will also be shared on the Center for Servant Leadership portal page, which is an internal sharing site for TLU employees. The goals from the plan will also be shared in the Center for Servant Leadership's annual report, which is shared with the VPAA's division and faculty on campus. The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement data will be published on the CSL's external website so that it is made available to the public. Information from the NSLVE report will be shared at certain CSL civic engagement programs to help educate the audiences at each event of the level of engagement that TLU students have with the democratic engagement process. NSLVE data was shared by the CSL at TLU's annual fall faculty conference in August 2019, and it will be shared at future faculty conferences.

### **Evaluation**

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Continual participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) is critical in evaluating TLU's long-term goals involving voter registration and voter turnout. As the reports from NSLVE are sent to TLU periodically, the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners will monitor changes.

Additionally, the survey mentioned in the “Strategy” section will be sent to all TLU students by the Center for Servant Leadership and TLU Marketing Department after the November election. The purpose of the survey is for the CSL to better understand how to market the elections and voter registration materials to students. The audience for the survey will be students at TLU, regardless of whether or not they participated in the 2020 elections. The information collected from the survey will be analyzed by the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners to determine strategies that the majority of students found useful. The survey will help to identify new goals to pursue, and results of the survey will be shared with the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners and the Office of Student Life & Learning at TLU. Additional evaluations may be created and carried out by the Voter Engagement Coalition of Partners, in partnership with the TLU Center for Servant Leadership. It may also make sense to invite the Director of Institutional Research, as well as a representative from the TLU Diversity Committee, to join and/or advise the Coalition to plan future evaluations. Results from any existing or future evaluations can be shared through the Center for Servant Leadership’s annual report.