

# All In Challenge Action Plan



# TRINITY UNIVERSITY



## I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Jamie Thompson, Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Student Involvement to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Trinity University. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over the calendar year 2022, on and around our campus in San Antonio, Texas.

Trinity University empowers students for lives of purpose. In fulfilling this mission, civic engagement is threaded throughout the campus culture, including both curricular and co-curricular initiatives. Trinity's commitment to strengthening voter participation and other civic engagement opportunities can be seen through the efforts 2020 Census & Voter Engagement Task Force (see [summary report](#)) and our voter engagement success in 2020 (see [2020 NSLVE report](#)).

According to the 2020 NSLVE report, Trinity University had higher registration rates, higher voting rates of registered students, and higher overall voting rates in 2020 compared to data from the 2016 and 2018 election years. In 2020, the Trinity University voting rate was 75.6% (compared to 66% for all institutions), a 23% increase from the general election in 2016.

This is the second time Trinity has participated in the All In Challenge program. Continued interest in this work is driven by: (1) an institutional "moonshot" goal to be ranked in the top 25 of all national liberal arts institutions; (2) momentum from the 2020 general election; (3) interest from the Student Government Association (SGA), as demonstrated by their commitment to fund TurboVote for the next four years (through 2025); (4) new cabinet-level leadership who recognize the importance of civic engagement; (5) an institutional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; and (6) a focus on holistic student success, which inherently includes an acknowledgement of the forces of our communities and societies in our everyday lives. In short, our collective momentum and interest in voter engagement is a strength the institution can build upon in future election cycles with support from the All In Challenge program.

In 2019-2020, the TU 2020 Census & Voter Engagement Task Force, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, collaboratively worked to meet the goals outlined in our [2020 All In Challenge Action Plan](#). Please see an update on those goals below.

1. Increase eligible registered voters to 90% (from 86.8% in 2016 and 88% in 2018);
  - a. **Increased to 93.3% (and 81% of those voted!)**
2. Increase the presidential election voting rate to 65% (from 44.5% in 2012 and 52.5% in 2016).
  - a. **Increased to 75.6% voting rate (22.9% chance from 2016); institutions in the same Carnegie classification had an average voting rate of 69%**
3. Increase the proportion of male students voting to 50% (from 39.9% in 2016 and 41.1% in 2018).
  - a. **Increase of 28 p.p. to 67%**
4. Increase the percentage of early voting voters to 75% (from 62.3% in 2016 and 60.1% in 2018).
  - a. **Increased by 10 p.p. to 73%**

5. Raise the lowest voter turnout rate by discipline to 50% (from 37.6% in 2016 and 37.2% in 2018).
  - a. **One great example: "Business" (as articulated in the NSLVE report) increased to a voting rate of 72% (2020) from 36% (2016)!**

## II. Leadership

Jamie Thompson, Assistant Dean of Student and Director of Student Involvement will provide leadership to the Task Force to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. Undergraduate students, faculty, and staff will be leading this work at Trinity University in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections.

As of January 2022, the TU Voter Engagement Task Force membership includes:

- Jamie Thompson, Student Involvement, *chair*
- Unknown at this time, Greek Council representative
- Unknown at this time, Student Athlete Advisory Council representative
- Unknown at this time, 1-2 student organization representatives from cultural and identity-based groups
- Unknown at this time, 1 faculty member from the School of Business
- Unknown at this time, 1 faculty as assigned by the Faculty Senate
- Unknown at this time, 1-2 staff members as assigned by the Trinity Staff Engagement Council (TSEC)
- Unknown at this time, 1 Residential Life student staff representative

Strategies across the calendar year 2022 will be supported by student leaders, student organizations, faculty, and staff. Specific efforts will be made to engage athletic coaches, cultural and identity-based student organizations, the Student Diversity & Inclusion Office, and faculty across disciplines to bring relevant content into the classroom, facilitate educational co-curricular programming, and encourage student participation. In the coming months, the Task Force will develop comprehensive strategies designed to engage all corners of the campus community (see Strategy section).

The local election office is the [Bexar County Elections Department](#) (210-335-VOTE) and is a frequent resource to our University community. In the past, Task Force members called the local elections office at least once/month with questions unique to our community members.

In addition, [MOVE Texas](#), a nonpartisan organization that is highly active in San Antonio and other local universities and colleges. They have supported voter registration drives in the past and we intend to lean on this organization (and our point of contact, Jonathan Gutierrez) in 2022.

It is anticipated the Task Force will meet twice/month in-person (on campus) or via Zoom (when needed) during the Spring 2022 and Fall 2022 terms. During the summer, available members will convene with less frequency. Member turnover will be addressed by replacing individuals, as relevant, to ensure their specific perspective and representative position continues to be reflected within the Task Force.

### **III. Commitment**

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. Trinity University is guided by a mission to prepare its graduates to pursue lives of meaning and purpose and to thrive in an interconnected world. Trinity's guiding values of enduring excellence, intentional inclusion, and perpetual discovery are central to its mission. At Trinity, students are expected to connect across differences while thinking deeply and acting meaningfully.

#### *Mission*

Trinity University is a transformational liberal arts and sciences university with selected professional and pre-professional programs. In pursuit of this mission, Trinity is committed to the highest levels of academic and professional excellence in teaching, research, learning, service, leadership, and personal integrity. Trinity embraces innovation in all pursuits: rigorous and relevant courses, supportive mentoring relationships, and a wealth of learning opportunities wherever they occur. Trinity prepares its graduates to pursue lives of meaning and purpose.

#### *Vision*

Trinity will redefine liberal arts education for the 21st century. By embracing innovation, Trinity will become a national leader by preparing students to thrive in an interconnected world, strengthening interdisciplinary and experiential education, and integrating academic and residential campus life.

In 2013, the Board of Trustees approved the Trinity Tomorrow Strategic Plan. As a result, in 2015 the newly formed Center for Experiential Learning and Career Success (CELCS) opened its doors. CELCS staff work with campus and community partners to expand sites of learning from the campus classroom to local neighborhoods, the city, and beyond. CELCS in addition to other interdisciplinary programs provide numerous opportunities for students to gain direct experience working with city government agencies, non-profits, cultural institutions, established businesses, and start-ups. Such opportunities include volunteerism, community service, service-learning, community-based federal work-study, internships, and undergraduate research. Students are encouraged to reflect on and consider ways in which their involvement in those opportunities contribute to civic learning and democratic engagement.

Trinity University is also concerned about its contributions to and impact within our communities — demonstrated in the Pathways curriculum and in a commitment to faculty development. CELCS has worked with the Faculty Senate and University Curriculum Council to define what constitutes an Experiential Learning (EXL) course. An EXL-designated course suggests students will have demonstrated the ability to execute a specific project or experience that involves purposeful engagement with the local, national, or global community or the natural environment outside of the formal classroom. Other curricular and interdisciplinary programs such as the Humanities Collective, Mexico, Americas, and Spain (MAS) program, and Mellon Initiative seek to connect students with experiences and research opportunities in our local and global communities in myriad ways.

Key diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives over the last few years also drive continued learning in this space. In 2019-20, Trinity kicked off the academic year by hosting a

symposium entitled “Inclusive Excellence: Empowering Faculty and Staff for Serving 21st Century Learners with Diverse Perspectives.” The symposium included guest speakers on topics ranging from inclusion and mental health to rethinking assumptions about race on campus. In Summer 2020, the institution formed a Diversity & Inclusion Task Force comprised of faculty, staff, and students. This work resulted in 100+ recommendations that will continue to be addressed for years to come in order to build and sustain a more equitable and inclusive community for all employees and students.

Other efforts indicate Trinity University’s commitment to improving democratic engagement. For instance, since 2012 Trinity has participated in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to gather data on voter turnout. Each subsequent election year has yielded increased registration and voting rates. In 2018 and 2020, Trinity received Platinum and Gold-level recognition, respectively, from the All In Challenge program. In 2020, the institution formed a collaborative group, the 2020 TU Census & Voter Engagement Task Force, to guide census and voting initiatives. Local news covered polling transportation efforts and virtual initiatives to engage students in the general election. Finally, the University president, Dr. Danny Anderson, signed the 2020 President’s Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation to publicly show their support to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement.

Looking forward, there are several institutional changes that will be/currently are driving interest in civic engagement work: (1) an institutional “moonshot” goal to be ranked in the top 25 of all national liberal arts institutions — in fact, in January 2022 Trinity University’s request to be reclassified to a Carnegie Baccalaureate Arts & Sciences institution was granted ; (2) momentum from the 2020 general election; (3) interest from the Student Government Association (SGA), as demonstrated by their commitment to fund TurboVote for the next four years (through 2025); (4) new cabinet-level leadership who recognize the importance of civic engagement; (5) a renewed institutional commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging; and (6) a focus on holistic student success, which inherently includes an acknowledgement of the forces of our communities and societies in our everyday lives. In short, our collective momentum and interest in voter engagement is a strength the institution can build upon with support from entities such as NASPA, Students Learn Students Vote, and the All In Challenge program.

#### **IV. Landscape**

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2021-2022 when our total student enrollment was 2759.

**Enrollment Data:**

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
94.00%	6.00%	5.00%	95.00%

In-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter

75.90%	4.50%	80.00%	0.00%
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**Gender Demographics:**

Men	Women
46.80%	53.20%

**Racial Demographics:**

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
7.80%	3.00%	4.10%	21.70%	0.10%	56.10%	4.90%

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

- National Survey of Student Engagement is used to inform faculty engagement and classroom settings.
- Trinity University is a member of the University of Southern California (USC) Race & Equity Alliance. Our partnership enables us to implement the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climate (NACCC).

Previous voter engagement efforts: 2020 Task Force members worked to create numerous voter education touchpoints, programs, and events to create momentum leading to the 2020 election, boost voter knowledge, and increase voter turnout. The following items are a selection of key successes.

1. **52** volunteer deputy registrars (VDRs; faculty, staff, and students) trained on campus in February 2020.
2. **7** presentations to the TU community between August and November 2020.
3. **2** "LibGuides" highlighting local and national resources related to voter registration, voting, and post-election scenarios.
4. SGA funded the TurboVote platform and Trinity was ranked in the **top 15** institutions nationally by engaging more than 30% of undergraduates in the platform.
5. **769** students, faculty, and staff enrolled in the TurboVote platform between September-November 2020.
6. **48** student Voter Advocates were trained to serve as peer sources of information and resources for voter registration and voting.
7. A partnership with Residential Life and RAs resulted in **52** residence hall passive displays highlighting voter registration and voting resources.
8. Transportation to the nearest polling location was provided on National Vote Early Day in October (and on a 1:1 basis at varying times during the early voting period as requested by students).
9. **830** "I am a voter!" swag bags were distributed to faculty, staff, and students (and mailed to approximately 30 students living off campus).

10. **3** debate watch parties were hosted by a faculty member, staff member, and student and reached approximately **100** participants in total.
11. **3** full-page, color ads appeared in the Trinitonian student newspaper.
12. Media coverage included **1** campus video with Dr Anderson and **2** local news stories (KSAT).
13. In-person Election Day guidance (maps, reminders, and encouragement) ensured *at least 20* Trinity students made it to the poll at Alamo Stadium Convocation Center.
14. Kudos to **3** members of the Task Force (Dr. Sepulveda, Gabby Garriga, and Brian Yancelson) who were selected to serve on the Biden-Harris transition team!

On campus, we've seen:

- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- Voter registration tables
- Signage promoting Election Day

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Walks / rides to polls
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Deliberative dialogues

We point to the above examples to illustrate our commitment to this work.

## **V. Goals**

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- We don't have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We don't have specific ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding.

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We are able to engage student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.

With this in mind, we have set the four (tentative) goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. By November 2022, apply for and receive at least one external funding/grant to support voter engagement at Trinity University.
2. By November 2022, partner with MOVE Texas to leverage local resources, including hosting at least one voter registration drive on campus.
3. By June 2022, collaborate with cultural and identity-based student organizations to identify two DEI and belonging (voting-focused) topics that can serve as education platforms for campus in Fall 2022.
4. NSLVE data goals for the 2022 mid-term elections:
  - a. Increase eligible registered voters to 95% (from 93.3% in 2020, 89.2% in 2018, and 86.7% in 2016).
  - b. Increase the voting rate to 80% (from 75.6% in 2020, 52.9% in 2018, and 52.7% in 2016).
  - c. Increase the proportion of male students voting to 75% (from 67% in 2020 and 41.1% in 2018).
  - d. Increase voter turnout rate by discipline to at least 70%.

We have also set three (tentative) goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

1. By 2026, establish a sustainable plan for the institution to continue civic engagement work year-round. This plan may include staffing, funding, and other forms of infrastructure that demonstrate a permanent commitment.
2. By 2026, identify one new curricular (credit-bearing) opportunity for students connected to voter and civic engagement.
3. By 2023, develop a web presence on the Trinity University web page dedicated to voter engagement.

## **VI. Strategy**

Given that the Task Force has not yet fully formed and convened, this section of the report will be temporarily incomplete. Once convened, the Task Force will bring this vision to life by identifying short and long term strategies to meet the aforementioned (tentative) goals.

## **VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)**

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 93.3%. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.



In 2020, our voting rate was 75.6% and our voting rate among registered students was 81.1%. During this year, our voting rate was higher than the national average.

For the racial groups that have recent voter turnout data, we saw the following groups increase in voter turnout compared to four years ago.

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

Successes from 2020 based on the NSLVE report:

1. There was an increase in the proportion of male students voting to 67% (from 39.9% in 2016 and 41.1% in 2018).
2. There was an increase in the percentage of early voting voters to 73% (from 62.3% in 2016 and 60.1% in 2018).
3. We raised the lowest voter turnout rate by discipline (business) to 72% (from 36% in 2016).

Our campus also has access to our NSLVE data for 2018. In 2018 our registration rate was 88%, our voting rate was 50.1% and our voting rate among registered students was 56.9%.

## **VIII. Reporting & Evaluation**

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition
- Email to campus administration
- Email to the President

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect; and
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts.

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year;
- Reviewing TurboVote data regarding student participation in and engagement with TurboVote resources; and
- Tracking the budget to determine total costs for these efforts.