



**ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
Charleston, West Virginia**

2018-2019 Action Plan

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Executive Summary

The University of Charleston is an independent, comprehensive institution of higher education located in the capital city of West Virginia. The mission of the University of Charleston is to educate each student for a life of productive work, enlightened living, and community involvement.

The University of Charleston's Action Plan is developed by the ALL-IN Committee which is comprised of staff, faculty, and students. The action plan seeks to participate in the ALL-IN Democracy Challenge while also supporting the mission and Liberal Learning Outcomes of this University. The action plan was developed in order to fulfill the requirements of the ALL-IN Democracy Challenge and also to organize the efforts of the many talented individuals in the committee who seek to promote civic engagement at the University of Charleston. All of the activities and outreach will be conducted on the campus during the 2018-2019 academic calendar year. The action plan will be implemented by the ALL-IN Committee members and additional student volunteers.

ALL IN Committee Leadership

Current membership includes:

Kara Fisher, Political Science

Dr. Michelle Herdman, School of Pharmacy

Karissa Hudnall, Class of 2020 Nursing

Skyler Hunt, Office of Student Life

Dr. Joseph Janisch, Director of Choral Activities

Travis Kahle, Center for Career Development

Mo Russell, Class of 2020 Political Science

Dr. Juliana Serafin, Chemistry

Carrissa Sellards, Class of 2018 Political Science– (Committee Chair)

This committee meets weekly.

Commitment

The University's mission is an expression of shared values and goals. These include:

- Offering selected quality programs affording professional preparation in a liberal arts environment
- Preparing students to live in an increasingly complex and changing society by helping them develop the knowledge, abilities, and character needed to be lifelong learners
- Utilizing and enriching the strong relationship between the University and the greater Charleston community to prepare students for a life rich in community involvement

(2017-2018 University of Charleston Academic Catalog, p. 12)

In order to participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, the University is committed to increasing engaged citizenship campus-wide. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge requires participating institutions to engage in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). The University of Charleston will use the results of this voter engagement study to direct campus-wide civic engagement and voter participation outreach. For the Spring 2018 academic semester, the ALL IN Committee will host one inaugural educational event. The following action plan presents the goals for the 2018-2019 academic year. The ALL IN Committee will meet once weekly to further develop the University's commitment to civic engagement in order to meet this challenge and promote the broader University mission for productive work, enlightened living, and community involvement.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the ALL IN Committee at the University of Charleston is to promote community involvement and increase engaged citizenship campus-wide.

Spring 2018 Outreach:

I³ Innovation Showcase

At the 2018 I³Innovation Showcase, the ALL-IN Committee successfully executed three strategies of outreach as a kick-start on campus. The first activity was a Community Feedback Table. Participants who completed a questionnaire received an incentive for participating.

The second activity was an Issue Attention Activity and Raffle. For this activity students evaluated a series of political issues and “voted” for the most important issue. Topics included: gun control, environmental protection, sexual harassment, free speech, and marijuana legalization. Each student who participated was entered into a drawing for a restaurant gift card giveaway. Gift cards were donated by local businesses who supported the ALL-IN Committee’s efforts to promote civic engagement. The issue that received the most votes in this activity was sexual harassment.

The third activity was an Advocacy Training Workshop. The workshop was organized as a multidisciplinary and non-partisan training to educate attendees about how to advocate. This included discussion of defining political issues, working with non-profits, and understanding the state government process. An experienced trainer, Julie Morton-Warden, guided the workshop and provided information about additional educational opportunities. Julie is the Communications Director for WVFREE.

Proposed Strategies for Outreach 2018-2019

Connection to Experts

The University of Charleston ALL IN Committee plans to establish a database of contacts for elected officials, government agencies, interest group representatives, community leaders, and cultural speakers as a resource for students and faculty. This will allow for students and faculty to easily connect with local, state, regional, and even international organizations and individuals willing to partner with the University. This tool will provide the University of Charleston a connection to experts enabling shared discourse and additional opportunities to invigorate civic engagement.

Community Meetings

We propose to expand the University of Charleston community meeting. This opportunity allows for staff and administration along with members of the Charleston community to come together for shared discussion, civic activities, and events. We plan to further involve students and student organizations in these community meetings to promote civic engagement and growth between the city of Charleston and UC students.

UC Day at the Capitol

Given the prime location of the University of Charleston in close proximity to the state legislature and capitol complex, this committee plans to establish a stronger connection with the West Virginia Legislature. This would include the plan for a designated UC day during the legislative session and formalize arrangement for ongoing activities.

Voter Registration

The University of Charleston has two student organizations that actively seek to increase voter registration and participation for students: UC Inspire and Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in Social Science. The committee plans to coordinate the efforts of these two organizations, and provide support for larger and more efficient registration activities. These voter registration activities would remain non-partisan and would provide UC students, faculty, and staff the current election information and deadlines.

Advocacy Training Workshops

Workshops would provide training for students, faculty, staff and the community to understand the legislative process and engage through direct democracy practices. The workshop would train participants to speak with elected officials, provide information about organizations in West Virginia, provide instructions on organizing citizen lobbying meetings, and highlight agendas from WV groups.

Potential Challenges

According to the Current Population Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau (2016), West Virginia has one of the lowest voter turnout rates in the United States. Specifically the 18 to 24 year-old block is the lowest voting population. Tracking and measuring voter participation is based on estimate populations and is not an exact science. Additionally, there are many environmental and social factors that influence the voting population. One of the most notable challenges in West Virginia is an aging and overall declining population, and of particular concern is the number of young adults leaving the state to seek other opportunities. A way to overcome this obstacle will be to promote activism locally and across the state. Our challenge is to promote positive and real change, encourage the creation of new opportunities, and create a path to participate in the political process.

Reporting & Evaluation

As this is the University of Charleston's first active year in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, the committee will not have data to compare from previous years, and will begin collecting data Fall 2018. Additionally, through weekly meetings in the current academic year, the committee will qualitatively review efforts and determine the necessary steps moving forward.