

UChiVotes

The University of Chicago Institute of Politics
Voter Engagement Plan for the All-In Challenge, FY 2018-2019

GOAL

The 2018 midterm elections are shaping up to generate the most voter interest in decades – and it’s time for UChicago to step up. We want to boost voter registration and turnout on campus to new highs because as we all know, voting is the essence of democracy.

Using our past performance in the 2014 midterm elections as a guide, we hope to increase voter registration and turnout to:

	<u>2014 Midterm Results</u>	<u>2018 Midterm Targets</u>
Voter Registration	58% (6140 students)	70% (8400 students)
Voter Turnout	19% (2042 students)	40% (4800 students)

Using data from TurboVote and the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement ([NSLVE](#)) at Tufts University.

BACKGROUND

The 2018 midterm elections are shaping up to generate the most voter interest in decades. A recent [Harvard IOP poll](#) found the most youth interest in midterm voting that has been seen in the poll’s history. The New York Times recently reported that new voter registrations are spiking across the country, driven in part by student activism in the wake of the Parkland school shootings. Analysts, including the [former head](#) of the Federal Election Commission, are expecting the most expensive midterm election in U.S. history.

In Illinois, voters will go to the polls this fall to vote in one of the most contested state elections in recent history, and February 2019 will bring hotly contested municipal elections as well. With state-wide campaigns here already making national headlines, this election cycle presents an opportunity for UChicago to be more active in the electoral process than in years past. And, with 72 percent of UChicago students coming from other states, according to 2017 data, it is imperative that voter engagement efforts focus not just on Illinois, but on other states, too.

Throughout Fall 2018, the Institute of Politics will support UChiVotes, a non-partisan, campus-wide, student-led effort to promote voter engagement. UChiVotes will partner with stakeholders across the University to raise voter registration and turnout rates ahead of the 2018 Midterms and beyond. We view voter engagement as a fundamental objective for this campus -- in line not only with the IOP’s mission of igniting in students a passion for politics and public service, but also with the University’s broader commitment to developing a thoughtful and engaged citizenry.

PLAN

Our campus-wide effort consists of three key pillars:

1. Cultivate a robust student community focused on voter engagement
2. Launch an engaging social media campaign using #UChiVotes
3. Encourage and facilitate getting students to turn out on Election Day, Tuesday Nov. 6, 2018

1. CULTIVATE A ROBUST STUDENT COMMUNITY FOCUSED ON VOTER ENGAGEMENT

- Recruit “Voting Ambassadors” who promote voting registration through TurboVote at uchivotes.com, uchicago.turbovote.org, or through a customized TurboVote link. Voting Ambassadors can be students, staff, or faculty members. They do not have to be eligible to vote themselves.
- Hold at least 4 Voting Ambassador information sessions in September and October
- Hold campus-wide voter registration tabling efforts, starting during Orientation Week in September and continuing throughout Fall events. Encourage voter registration competitions for campus groups including RSOs, Houses, and campus departments.

2. LAUNCH AN ENGAGING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN USING #UChiVotes

- Create a “UChiVotes” logo for use on electronic and print communications, including webpages, flyers, stickers, T-shirts, etc.
- Create uchivotes.com, a central landing page for voter registration, campaign, and election information
- Use #UChiVotes to post on social media, especially around National Voter Registration Day on Tuesday September 25
- Include the TurboVote link in staff/faculty email signature
- Create multimedia efforts such as “Why I Vote” videos and photo gallery

3. ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE GETTING STUDENTS TO TURN OUT ON ELECTION DAY

- Promote voter education through tools like the non-partisan site ballotready.org and host Ballot Planning Parties
- Mobilize the absentee vote by organizing at least 4 social opportunities for students to complete and mail in absentee ballots
- Mobilize the early vote by encouraging students to use the early voting location on campus, coordinating rides/walks to early voting locations
- Host large-scale Election Day events, including Marches to the Polls and an Election Day Party; create awareness in highly trafficked areas across campus

PARTNERS

The IOP is supporting a student-led UChiVotes effort to establish partnerships with relevant campus offices and organizations, including: Office of the Registrar, Office of Civic Engagement (UCSC), the College, Communications, Housing & Residence Life, the Harris School of Public Policy, and the Law School.

We will encourage UChiVotes to continue its efforts through the Chicago mayoral election in early 2019 and the 2020 presidential election.

KEY DATES

- Thursday, Aug. 30, 12p – Initial call between IOP and UChiVotes student leaders
- Tuesday, Sept. 11, 12p – Voting Ambassador Info Session (1)
- Saturday, Sept. 22 – UChicago Orientation Starts
- Tuesday, Sept. 25 – National Voter Registration Day
- Thursday, Sept. 27 – Start of Early Voting in Illinois
- Monday, Oct. 1 – Start of Classes
- Tuesday, Oct. 2 – National Request Your Ballot Day
- Thursday, Oct. 4, 3p – Voting Ambassador Info Session (2)
- Tuesday, Oct. 9 – Last Day of Regular Registration in Illinois
- Wednesday, Oct. 10, 12p – Voting Ambassador Info Session (3)
- Wednesday, Oct. 10 – Grace Period Voting & Registration in Illinois
- Friday, Oct. 12, 2p – Voting Ambassador Info Session (4)
- Sunday, Oct. 21 – Last Day for Online Registration in Illinois
- Wednesday, Oct. 31 – National Mail Your Ballot Day
- Monday, Nov. 5 – Last Day of Early Voting in Illinois
- Tuesday, Nov. 6 – Election Day
- Tuesday, Feb. 26 – Chicago Mayoral Election