

All In Democracy Challenge Action Plan 2021-2022

Commitment

The University of Connecticut's Political Engagement programming, housed in the Department of Student Activities' Community Outreach (CO) Office, encourages students to become more politically active while exploring social issues that affect their daily lives. These initiatives seek to educate students, so they become well-informed, responsible democratic participants in society. CO's Political Engagement team commits to working with campus and local community members to address challenges to democratic participation, broadly defined. This commitment is part of UConn's identity, and is clearly exhibited by the efforts of staff, faculty, student organizations, and university leadership who continue to focus resources and intellectual capital to make UConn a leader in this regard.

The University of Connecticut will participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) through Tufts University. Using data collected, UConn will be better prepared to tackle the challenge of increasing voting participation rates in local and national election cycles. The University strives to create a community that fosters strong civic engagement - one where students are involved in political processes and with issues that affect the community - and a campus culture that encourages student democratic participation.

Coalition Members & Participating Student Organizations

Rebecca Nowinski; Undergraduate Student Leader

Program Director of Political Engagement
Office of Community Outreach

Mya Johnson; Higher Education and Student Affairs Graduate Student
Political Engagement and Dialogues Graduate Assistant
Office of Community Outreach

Andrew Oravec, MPP; Staff
Coordinator for Youth Development, Education, Literacy, and Political Engagement/Dialogue
Programs
Office of Community Outreach

Miguel A. Colón, MS; Staff
Associate Director of Student Activities & Director of Community Outreach
Department of Student Activities

UConn Undergraduate Student Government (USG)

The mission of the Undergraduate Student Government is to enrich the lives of the Undergraduate Student Body through advocacy for its interests to the administration and all other appropriate bodies. We strive to help student groups reach their fullest potential through new and continuing initiatives, programs and resources. The Undergraduate Student Government aims to foster an inclusive and collaborative community that works together effectively.

UConn Praxis

The purpose of UConn Praxis is to advance a public interest agenda and give students the skills and opportunities to practice effective citizenship. On campus and in the community, on local, state, national, and international issues, we investigate social problems, come up with practical solutions, convince the media and public to pay attention, and get decision-makers to act.

The mission of UConn Praxis is to empower, activate, inspire, and serve the interests of all UConn students. Our namesake “Praxis” denotes our founding principle of putting activist theory into concrete action. We are a student-directed, student-funded advocacy group that tackles complex social issues pertinent to civil, social, and economic human rights, equity, and accessibility in our local and global communities. We provide training, resources, and opportunities for passionate students to identify issues within their communities and work together to address them effectively. In serving our mission to practice transformative justice, UConn Praxis operates as an independent Tier-III organization committed to building a more equitable society for all identities.

Goals

- Long Term
 - Become a recognized resource for exceptional civic engagement programming in higher education
 - Collaborate effectively with internal and external partners to support a culture of

- civic participation in Connecticut
 - Facilitate and direct students to local, state, national, and international advocacy opportunities to encourage experiential learning related to democratic institutions
- Short Term
 - Create mentorship program for under-resourced primary schools to participate in civic education initiatives (CT History Day)
 - Host workshops that illustrate the connection between societal conditions and the political process
 - Provide educational interventions about voting and the structure of a federalist system of government

Program Activities

Fall 2021

- Media Literacy for Social Justice
 - The virtual event will be formatted as a presentation by PEN America, and the second half will be framed as a participatory discussion between presenters and attendees. Together we'll dissect the role that mis- and disinformation play in polarizing communities, particularly how racialized disinformation targets Black, Latino, and other communities of color. We will discuss how the harmful effects of disinformation manifest on campus and how we can use media literacy skills to disarm false and misleading narratives that preserve societal inequalities.
- Social Media Countdown/Educational Posts
 - We will utilize Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and the department's UKindness page to share information about voting and democratic institutions.
- Ask Me Anything featuring Dr. Frank Griggs (with UConn-Avery Point)
 - A virtual live event for people to ask all of their questions about the November 2nd election as well as any current pressing topics involving the UConn community.
- Policy and Advocacy Panel
 - Students will have the opportunity to speak with past and current UConn interns in the public policy, human rights, law, advocacy, and environmental spheres. Students will explore civically engaged careers and what they can do to prepare themselves for a position in public service.

Spring 2022

- CT History Day Engagement
 - Recruit mentors and host sites to participate in program activities. Work alongside first year experience staff to explore one credit course offering to create sustainable mentorship model.
- UConn Get Out & Vote
 - Civic Engagement & Accountability: Centralize where students can learn more about advocacy in the U.S. as well as find events and opportunities to be engaged.

- Voting Information & Resources
 - Update website dedicated to voter registration, absentee ballots, mail-in procedure, voting locations, and other logistics: <https://kindness.studentaffairs.uconn.edu/voting-information/>
- Voter Registration
 - Begin voter registration and non-partisan outreach for the midterm elections on November 8, 2022. Strategies will span in-person tabling, electronic posts, and events that spur reflection about the meaning of active citizenship.