

2020 University of Denver Campus Vote plan

Summary

The University of Denver (DU) has a long history of coordinating and executing large voter registration and mobilization programs that are year-round, for state- and local-level elections alike. We are proud of the quality and reach our civic engagement program has had over the years, and this year, we are excited to run our largest program to date while still providing the same high quality civic engagement experience for students.

In 2020, we are excited to implement the key takeaways from over the years into our 2020 program. We believe the most effective way to engage students is peer-to-peer and face-to-face, so this is where the majority of our efforts will be centered. We will complement this work with a communications and visibility component to ensure that students are aware of all the opportunities to register to vote and cast a ballot.

This plan is an overview of how we will approach civic engagement on DU's campus in 2020.

Point of Contact for Designation Process:

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Coalition description

The Center for Community Engagement to advance Scholarship and Learning (CCESL) and a nonpartisan community partner, New Era Colorado, are partnering again in 2020 to carry out this plan. These two entities have partnered and coordinated civic engagement efforts for the last seven years. CCESL's purpose is to engage the campus community to create meaningful change. One of the main initiatives of CCESL is civic development and voter registration.

New Era Colorado is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to engaging young people in democracy and has expertise in registering students to vote, as well as in educating students about changes to Colorado's new election law (Colorado modernized our elections system in 2013 and in 2019).

CCESL and New Era have been meeting to discuss ways in which to improve the civic engagement program based off previous years' experience. We have identified avenues to reach students to provide access to register to vote, discussed how to involve more student leaders in helping to carry out the work, and ways in which faculty and staff can be involved in the work.

Voter Registration Efforts summary:

Table during the Welcome Back events

Use welcome back events, such as the "Pioneer Carnival" as an opportunity to register students to vote, do outreach/education about the fact that you need to update your voter registration each time you move, and educate voters about other changes to Colorado's election law. By engaging students before school starts, we are able to get through to students before the busy school year begins.

Voter Education

At the beginning of the school year we'll send out an email to students and professors on campus with information and resources about registering to vote in Colorado and changes to Colorado's election law.

National Voter Registration Day

Tuesday, September 22nd is National Voter Registration Day, so it's a great opportunity to make a big splash for voter education at a good time in the overall election calendar.

Table on campus regularly starting in January

We will provide opportunities for students to register to vote or update their address registering students to vote starting in January - which is earlier than previous years to account for the March Presidential Primary. We'll use this opportunity to recruit student volunteers to help carry out the work to ensure that the work is effective and peer-to-peer. These tabling dates are scheduled strategically throughout the year with a heavy push in the beginning of the quarters, and leading up to the deadline for voter registration drives to submit forms in Colorado.

Potentially collaborate with departments and organizations across campus to offer voter registration

- Housing & Residential Education: We are interested in working to provide Residence Hall programming for students to ensure that new students living in the Residence Halls are educated on how they can register to vote at their new address.
- Collaborate with professors to offer voter registration: Because professors are a trusted resource for students, we would like for professors to offer a quick pitch for voter registration, and then give students the opportunity to actually register.
- Sorority/Fraternity life: We would like to continue working with the Sorority/Fraternity community to ensure that members are offered the opportunity to register to vote, and plug into our efforts.

Voter turnout efforts

Flyer throughout the campus to ensure students know what to do with their ballots when they receive them (include a photocopy of their student ID, a "Pioneer Card", if requested, etc)

Resources

- CCESL: We consider the CCESL department to be a huge resource. One of the core purposes of this department is to develop students civically. Therefore, carrying out and supporting voter registration efforts is a priority of this department.
- Election law experience & expertise specifically for students: New Era has been working on campuses in Colorado for over 10 years, and can provide high-quality information about the voter registration and voting process, while still making it digestible for students.

Timeline and evaluation

Our goal is to continue doing the work that we already know works best, while adding in a few newer components to create an improved civic engagement plan for 2020. Our goal is to instill a sense of civic engagement during the time students' begin to identify with other campus values. By starting voter registration earlier than ever before, we are able to get through to more students while educating them about the different elections taking place in 2020 (Presidential Primary, State Primary, 2020 General). The coalition will evaluate and debrief this vote plan after the election. We are excited to compare the outcomes of this year compared to previous years--including 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018.