

# UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Bob Graham Center for Public Service

**2018 Action Plan**

University of Florida's action plan for the ALL IN Challenge's 2018 midterm election awards.

# Voting Action Plan 2018

## Connection to University Initiatives

As part of the University of Florida's overall strategic plan, one of its goals is to provide "an outstanding and accessible education that prepares students for work, **citizenship** and life."

UF's Bob Graham Center for Public Service works to fulfill this strategic goal through several programs and initiatives. The center is committed to revitalizing the civic culture of Florida and the United States, by training the next generation of informed citizens and public-minded leaders at UF. Located at the heart of campus, the BGC is a hub for civic engagement among students, faculty and the local community.

Our approach to ensuring engaged and informed citizenship is grounded in the **emerging theory of change**.

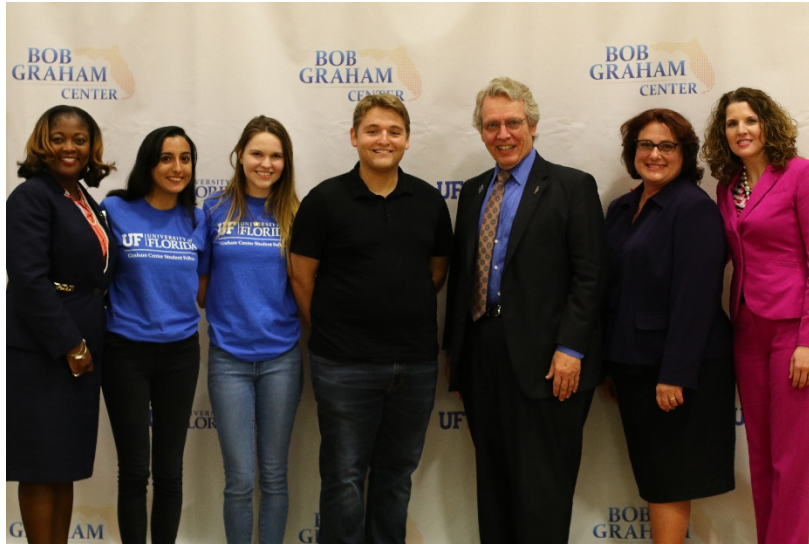


*David Jolly and Patrick Murphy discuss partisanship in Washington as part of the Graham Center's public lecture series*

## Civic Ethos

The Bob Graham Center hosts a number of public forums and discussions between students, student organizations and other constituents. Our public lectures bring the campus and community together around high-impact speakers and ideas. The 2018 Provost's Symposium examined the role of the university and its faculty in addressing the rise of extremism on campus. The center's student group, the Graham Center Student Fellows, similarly hosted a campus conversation for students on the balance between free speech and student safety. The BGC has traditionally sponsored broad programming

based on the vital issues of the day, from race to voting rights to polarization to “fake news.” But we're increasingly attuned to the need to build deeper understanding in specific policy areas such as health care, environment, justice and education. As such we have hosted programs around these critical issues as well.



*Graham Student Fellows host a campus conversation with the Dean of Students, the Director of UF Communications and the VP of Student Affairs.*

### Civic Literacy & Skill Building

At the University of Florida, we're working to bring civics back to our academic mission. We understand the inherent connection between higher education and democracy. A new online civics course at UF, *Democratic Engagement and Public Leadership*, offered by the Bob Graham Center, takes you from the founding documents to civil rights to the role of the press in politics and provides an understanding of how the past informs and influences current debate. The curriculum is rooted

in developing the skills and habits of democratic participation. Assignments are designed to encourage the use of reason and research. It challenges students to take collective action, consume media critically and use civil discourse in the face of extremism. The course is offered completely online and is a convenient option for any UF student to earn three general education, social-science credits. It's additionally offered as a dual enrollment course for high school students.



*2017-18 Bob Graham Center and City of Gainesville Fellows*

### Civic Inquiry

The Bob Graham Center for Public Service provides UF undergraduate students with an outstanding opportunity to combine academic coursework and credentials with a living curriculum of internships and



undergraduate research. Our civic engagement programs draw from across disciplines and have had a tangible impact from small Florida communities to the statehouse in Tallahassee to Washington, D.C. We've placed hundreds of interns in public offices as well as in private companies. Our annual class of Civic Scholars fans out to all 67 Florida counties to conduct research and propose solutions to critical issues facing our state.

### Civic Action

Our student-run Future of Florida Summit calls upon the most engaged student leaders from public and private universities across the state to immerse themselves in a key challenge facing Florida and propose policy solutions. Along the way students learn everything from how to capture the attention of busy lawmakers to composing compelling testimony.



*Members of the Future of Florida Summit student organizing committee*

The Center's Healthy Civic Campus and Community Initiative aims to create a community characterized by involved citizens, responsible leadership and actions that assist fellow citizens. Members of healthy communities volunteer, stay informed and express themselves in a civil manner. The H3C initiative is an opportunity for social entrepreneurs to improve the civic health of our UF campus and/or a Florida community by proposing projects that will advance the common good. These projects have taken many forms, with a focus on social, economic, educational, health and political issues, or on some combination thereof. But they are collaborative, groundbreaking and promote achievable objectives. Funded projects have ranged from book sharing programs, to community gardens to services for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.



*Voter Registration drive and meet and greet with Alberta Gator in Pugh Hall*

## Civic Agency

The Center is also playing a leading role in developing the university's strategic relationship with the City of Gainesville through a newly established fellowship program. The City of Gainesville focuses on a citizen-centered approach to government — starting with the needs of the citizen and improving accessibility for all. Through the fellowship program our students are at the heart of this important work. Students perform project based work striving to improve operational city issues and objectives. Through this program the Graham Center is connecting the city with the tremendous talent at the University of Florida for the benefit of the entire Gainesville community. The fellowship bridges the gap between student life on campus and citizen life in Gainesville. This year, it was collaboration among our fellowship team that led to the development of a digital service that mapped out the complex process of starting a new business in the City of Gainesville—increasing points of interactions with the user, building an accessible interface and simplifying navigation to key information. The fellowship experience highlights the give-and-take process of creating solutions in the public sphere and underscores how diversity in educational backgrounds, life experiences and skillsets

is invaluable to solving problems locally for all citizens.

## What we aspire to support through our work?

- The cultivation of foundational knowledge about fundamental principles of democracy
- The infusion of democratic values into the academic and co-curricular fabric of our campus
- Increased voter registration and participation on campus
- A forum for the analysis and discussion of state, national and global issues.
- Collaborative work across academic disciplines, political ideology and other divides to address common challenges and create common ground



*National Voter Registration Day pizza party in Pugh Hall*

## Goals

GOAL: Improve Voter Registration Rate on 2020 NSLVE data by at least 3 percent (83.2 percent)

GOAL: Achieve 80 percent voting rate based on 2020 NSLVE data (increase of 5 percent).

GOAL: Increase by 5 percent voting rate among 18-24 year olds

GOAL: Increase voting rate among computer and information science majors (largest decrease in 2016)

## What knowledge, skills, and dispositions contribute to a thriving democracy?

- How/where to register to vote
- How to use Florida's new online voter registration system
- Voter registration and other election deadlines
- Precinct locations—early voting and general elections
- Updating voter registration information
- Requesting absentee ballots
- Making informed decisions—candidates, ballot initiatives, policy issues
- Engaging in productive civil dialogue
- Taking collective action
- Consuming media critically
- Open-mindedness and empathy



How can we best foster the acquisition and development of the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for a thriving democracy?

- Host public presentations on voting, civic engagement and critical public policy issues.
- Ensure that our public leadership minor encompasses knowledge, skills and dispositions of engaged citizenship as outlined above.
- Infuse civic engagement/political conversations into our internship experiences, undergraduate research opportunities, student conferences and grant programs.
- Develop an accessible civics course that promotes civic literacy and skill building.

How can we build the institutional culture, infrastructure and relationships needed to support learning that enables a thriving democracy?

- Increase support from administration
- Build campus connections through our faculty affiliates program and student fellows program.
- Introduce voter registration touchpoints at key institutional bottlenecks including Preview, The GatorOne ID office and ONE.UF student services portal.



*Voter registration drive in the student union with Alachua County Supervisor of Elections Kim Barton and UF President Kent Fuchs*

## Partners

UF is focused on partnering with both internal and external entities to amplify our academic, economic, social, and cultural impact and reputation. The below is a non-exhaustive list of campus and community partners that will both directly implement and indirectly assist this plan.

## Campus

- Brown Center for Leadership and Service
- College Democrats
- College Republicans
- Housing and Residents Education
- Human Resources
- Multicultural and Diversity Affairs
- Office of Student Affairs
- Office of Public Affairs
- Office of the Provost
- Office of Student Activities and Involvement
- Office of the President
- SGA—Chomp the Vote and Civic Engagement Cabinet

## Community

- ALL IN Challenge
- American Democracy Project
- Association of American Colleges & Universities
- League of Women Voters Alachua County Gainesville
- Lou Frey Institute
- Florida Joint Center on Citizenship
- Campus Compact- Florida
- Campus Vote Project
- NASPA- CLDE
- Alachua County Supervisor of Elections
- The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)
- Santa Fe College
- Andrew Goodman Foundation





*Voter registration drive in Pugh Hall*

## Checklist/Action Plan

- Host TBS political satire show “Full Frontal with Samantha Bee” to launch her new civic literacy mobile app.”
- Send a campus-wide voter registration email through the Office of the President
- BGC staff and BGC Student Fellows to distribute and collect voter registration forms and nonpartisan voter guides (League of Women Voters) during campus-wide scheduled programs
  - Summer Splash: Summer B
  - Weeks of Welcome: August 17 to September 29
  - Gator Nights: Every Friday during fall spring and summer session.
  - New student orientation aka. Preview
- Coordinate with the Alachua County Supervisor of Elections Office on existing campus efforts
- Coordinate with Chomp the Vote on existing campus efforts
- Train Preview Staff to talk about/answer questions about voter registration with new students
- Partner with Housing and Residence Education to utilize:
  - Resident Assistants to encourage students living on campus to register to vote
  - Internal TVS
  - Place registration forms in common areas
- Partner with UF Panhellenic Council to register affiliated students in on-campus housing
- Coordinate with BGC Faculty Affiliates to distribute forms at the beginning or end of their classes

- Host campus-wide events/programs/special activities on
  - National Voter Registration Day pizza party-Sept. 25
  - Constitution Day- Sept. 17
  - Gubernatorial debate watch party
  - National Coffee Day- Sept. 29
- Embed voter registration button on the ONE.UF student portal and the GatorOne survey
- Place a voter registration ad in all outgoing electronic emails
- Voter registration slide on Graham Center homepage slideshow
- Social media voter registration campaigns
  - Photos/Videos with Al and Alberta, Bob Graham, student leaders, and administrators answering questions about voting and registration
  - Facebook Live weekly sessions: review each constitutional amendment and articulate what a vote “for” or “against” means (content pulled from the nonpartisan League of Women Voters’ Voter Guide.)
  - “Coffee with Kevin” – highlighting critical dates, importance of voting
  - “Meet \_\_\_\_\_” Designate a handful of student voting “experts” who can serve as a resource for students, employees, and community members.
- Voter Registration Drive with Alachua County Supervisor of Elections and UF President “Cookies with Kim and Kent”
- Send TurboVote information to all transfer students instructing them on how to update voter registration using their local or campus address
- Sponsor early voting shuttles from the Reitz Union
- Publish op-eds on voting, voter registration and constitutional amendments in the Gainesville Sun
- Weekly voter registration tabling in: Pugh Hall, Marston Science Library and Smathers Library
- Gator Ticket pickup: Student volunteers will man voter registration tables from 11-1 p.m. each Thursday preceding gator home games during student ticket pick-up/purchase at the Gate 13 box office.