



ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan Fall 2022

Section I: Executive Summary

The University of Georgia (UGA) was chartered in 1785 and is often referred to as “the birthplace of higher education” in the nation. UGA is situated as the flagship institution for the state, and with relative proximity to the state’s capital of Atlanta, the university strives to engage students in to participate in leadership and service-focused experiences. The expressed dedication to holistic student success is essential toward the strengthening of campus-wide civic engagement, while the needs of the student body immediately following a global pandemic are inclined toward enacting positive change within the contexts of UGA and Athens communities.

Purpose & Mission

The 2022 All In Action Plan for the University of Georgia is designed to identify best practices and current successes of civic engagement initiatives while simultaneously noting gaps in connecting with the entire student body. Since the designation of responsibility to ELS was decided within the year, critical reflection and contextual patterns of student engagement will be crucial to the execution of developed strategies and ideas. In its entirety, this action plan aims to...

1. Define realistic action steps for UGA students, faculty, and staff to fully engage with their community, particularly with local community partners;
2. Enhance visibility & understanding of civic engagement on-campus through year-long offering of events, resources, and spaces for learning;
3. Raise voter registration and voter turnout numbers for Midterm & Presidential Elections;
4. Introduce & develop civic competencies & media literacy through multiple opportunities to engage in dialogue with diverse perspectives; and
5. Establish & strengthen partnerships among UGA, on-campus departments, and off-campus nonpartisan organizations

This action plan was drafted starting in October 2022 with the goal of immediate & continuous implementation throughout the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years. ELS staff will revisit the plan at the start of each semester as a means to recall goals that will determine pathways for intriguing programming and efficient marketing.



Coordination of fulfillment and revisions will be administered by the Engagement, Leadership, and Service department in collaboration with campus and community partners within the Athens, GA area.

University of Georgia's 2022 Civic Engagement Action Plan was developed by:

- Rachel Taylor, Senior Coordinator for Community Engagement
- Erica Lee, Assistant Director for Community Engagement
- Taylor Cain, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Engagement, Leadership, and Service

Section II: Leadership

In the summer of 2022, the Engagement, Leadership, and Service (ELS) department at the University of Georgia designated civic engagement efforts as a priority within the scope of programming. ELS seeks to deliver programs, services, events, and significant learning experiences which strengthen students' connection to the University, cultivate a sense of community, and empower students to be engaged and contributing leaders. This mission and foundational ownership of civic engagement through ELS aligns directly with the Division of Student Affairs focus on empowering students through engagement, intellect, and character. Democratic engagement affiliated with specific parties and viewpoints is offered through registered student organizations, while ELS efforts remain nonpartisan and are available to all individuals, regardless of political affiliation.

Increased civic engagement programming will allow ELS to expand their current departmental reach with students and share the importance of continuous engagement in the community. Students will acknowledge personal values within the context of involvement at UGA, take direct action in a variety of platforms throughout the year, and reflect on the existence of social issues at the local, regional, national, and global levels. In short, students will have the opportunity to seek out knowledge beyond the classroom that encourages informed decision-making & advocacy.

Rachel Taylor, Senior Coordinator for Community Engagement, and Erica Lee, Assistant Director for Community Engagement, are responsible for the implementation of this plan through their respective roles in the department.

Collaboration with on-campus departments specifically regarding civic engagement has been introduced. The following departments have been identified as partners for the working group:

Office of Student Conduct

- Staff member
 - Hillary Westbrook, Assistant Director of University Judiciary
- Task(s)
 - Redesigning community service-sanctioned group reflections to encompass holistic community & civic engagement
 - Training members of University Judiciary to facilitate reflections

Tate Student Center Facilities

- Staff members
 - Ashley Johnson, Senior Coordinator for Campus Reservations
 - Tim Smith, Student Affairs Information Technology Lead
 - Greg Albanese, Associate Director of the Tate Student Center for Facilities and Operations
- Task(s)
 - Coordinating Advance Voting location on campus to increase availability to UGA students, faculty, and staff

Multicultural Services and Programs

- Staff member
 - Wanda L. Johnson, Assistant Director of Multicultural Services and Programs
- Task(s)
 - Utilize “The Intersection” (on-campus event space) for National Voter Registration Day

In addition, two student-led organizations are integral to the execution of events such as Advance Voting. For the Fall 2022 Midterm election, these organizations assisted with volunteer recruitment and successful communication of training requirements. These groups will be central to the overall civic engagement brand awareness as well as extensive recruitment of student volunteers for Advance Voting in the 2024 election.

Student Government

- The Student Government Association aims to guarantee a student voice within the University, to advocate on behalf of the common interests of all students, to promote responsible and effective student leadership, and to train ourselves in democratic government



- Student representative: Obamide Samaye, Vice President

UGA Votes

- The UGA Votes Coalition is a cross-campus, nonpartisan voter registration and engagement campaign empowering over 27,000 student voices at the University of Georgia
- While the coalition houses many on-campus student organization partners, the charge is led by Roosevelt @ UGA, Student Government Association, UGA Young Democrats, UGA College Republicans, and Georgia Political Review
- Student representative: Marley Brock, Executive Director

Lastly, regarding coordination of Advance Voting on-campus in the Tate Student Center, ELS directly partnered with the Athens-Clarke County Elections Office. The Board initially proposed the idea of the Tate Center resuming as an Advance Voting Location. Upon acceptance of ELS ownership of this initiative, members of the Elections Office (listed below) communicated regularly with Rachel Taylor to decide logistics and a marketing plan, all while abiding by the regulated procedures from the Secretary of State.

- Lisa McGlaun, Elections Assistant
- Betty “Lanie” Lessard, Elections Clerk
- Tenacity “Ten” Bartholemew, Area Manager
- Mary Songster, Tate Student Center Poll Manager

Section III: Commitment

In compliance with the 1998 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the University of Georgia, at a minimum, makes a good faith effort to offer information to students regarding voter registration. On behalf of the President’s Office, an email is distributed annually to all UGA students, faculty, and staff with details on accessing physical forms as well as electronic registration through the Georgia My Voter Page. The Action Plan developers recognize that while key to widespread awareness of voter registration, this email is only the beginning of efforts for public endorsement of civic engagement action steps by university leadership.

The perception of civic engagement at the University of Georgia is bound to fluctuate with the characteristics of the student body. In short, the topic can expand to include both academic and co-curricular entities in engaging students. Apathy can appear in the lull of a non-election year, so involved groups such as ELS and UGA Votes are currently



tasked with offering intriguing opportunities for students to have dialogue with one another surrounding the holistic model of engaging with their community. While voting and civic education are not immediately pervasive within the institutional culture, the goal of this action plan is to define small-scale changes that can be made alongside interested campus partners to communicate that civic engagement is the responsibility of all campus constituents.

The University of Georgia adopts the motto “to teach, to serve, and to inquire into the nature of things” as an illustration of the commitment to enrich the academic and experiential learning excellence of enrolled students. Furthermore, UGA seeks to prepare individuals for full participation in global society, which encompasses civic engagement. The University dedicates efforts across campus departments to educate and empower student leaders to critically approach a post-college environment.

The University of Georgia’s Strategic Plan, set to take effect in 2025, incorporates application of civic engagement initiatives via the third Strategic Direction, titled “Strengthening Partnerships with Communities across Georgia and around the World.” In particular, Goal 3.3 outlines broadening opportunities for students to engage with communities in Georgia with an emphasis on locally identified needs and issues. This goal can be exemplified through voting-related events and speaker series, as well as social media campaigns and digital resource toolkits, that explore the presence of local needs and offer productive avenues to create change.

Section IV: Landscape

Academic Presence

General Education requirements for all UGA students incorporate foundational components of civic education and recognition of the political process. All individuals receiving a degree from the university are mandated to pass exams related to the Constitutions of the United States & Georgia as well as histories of the United States and Georgia. Approved courses such as American Government, State Politics, American History to 1865, American History Since 1865 can exempt enrolled students from paying to take the required exams. Topical outlines and objectives for each course name the extend of democratic engagement topics within the curriculum, such as voting & elections, public opinion, and the news media. These courses are available to all, but particularly targeted to first-year students as an encouragement to complete the prerequisite early.



UGA faculty are encouraged to exercise their right to vote in federal, state, and local elections. If a polling location is not open two hours prior or following an employee's normally-scheduled hours, the university grants a paid two-hour voting leave upon request.

Co-Curricular Presence

Prior to the summer of 2022, civic learning was not appointed to a particular UGA department. The Student Affairs website houses voting information for students year-round, and an annual email is sent to all students, faculty, and staff attributed to access of voting resources and upcoming deadlines. In addition, interest-based registered student organization participation has existed for many years through politically-categorized groups such as College Republicans, Young Democrats, and Students for Socialism. Organizations such as Common Ground, Roosevelt Network, and Democracy Matters aim to gather students via nonpartisan advocacy.

UGA Votes, a nonpartisan voter registration and engagement coalition, initiated Early Voting on campus for the 2016 presidential election. Within two days, the Tate Student Center site saw over 2,600 people to cast their ballot. The on-campus polling location for the 2020 presidential election was approved for Stegeman Coliseum, the on-campus multi-purpose arena that is home to the UGA basketball and gymnastics teams. Due to the change in location, UGA Votes also sought out support from UGA Athletics, and student athletes were present around the site to welcome voters as well as cast their own ballot.

The Tate Student Center was revisited as an on-campus voting location for the 2022 midterm election. As the primary coordination of voting transition continues, ELS staff plan to arrange a centralized location for Advance Voting in the 2024 presidential election and establish the Athens-Clarke County Board of Elections partnership to promote this opportunity bi-annually.

UGA staff are encouraged to exercise their right to vote in federal, state, and local elections. If a polling location is not open two hours prior or following an employee's normally-scheduled hours, the university grants a paid two-hour voting leave upon request.

Student Outlook

Total Student Enrollment Demographics by Race
(Full-time, part-time, undergraduate, and graduate)

White	66.7%
Asian	9.48%
Black or African American	8.22%
Hispanic or Latino	5.72%
Two or more races	4.06%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.115%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders	0.0715%

The University of Georgia is a predominately-white institution, and as such, it is vital that all students are equitably included in both the planning of and participation in democratic engagement initiatives. From the lens of perceived social culture at UGA, students are looking to resume their involvement after the cessation of in-person experiences over the past two years. Therefore, grouped with accessible information, extensive marketing, and partnerships with on-campus departments serving an array of student populations, there is expansive potential to grow the awareness of opportunities to participate in one's community.

Barriers to Full Engagement

- Lack of clarity on university representation
 - The UGA Votes Coalition has represented the student voice of democratic engagement since the 2016 presidential election, and while the achievements of Early Voting are not to be dismissed, university representation through a department has previously been missing.
- Centralized nonpartisan efforts
 - Many student organizations who receive the greatest retention of membership is those affiliated with a specific party or candidate. Nonpartisan student-led groups do exist, but spaces for directed partisan support are increasingly popular. Especially in a year without a presidential election, students do not engage in structured events related to voter registration and/or civic learning. This is likely because of the common association with federal elections taking place every four years. Shifting the narrative to year-round civic engagement and further active participation in local initiatives can prove to be challenging with these notions of the student body that are normalized.
- COVID-19 pandemic lasting effects
 - As staff members are perceiving the adapting needs of incoming classes who have lived a significant portion of their latter education within the

constraints of a global pandemic, open-mindedness, preparation for needs assessment, and dedication to year-round work from all constituents will play a large role in the initiation of structured programming. Eventually, an increase in student-led proposals and execution of events (possibly a departmental initiative of student leaders focused on civic engagement) would be welcomed.

Section V: Goals

As a whole, the long-term vision of this action plan is to launch a multi-faceted coalition of partnerships with on- and off-campus constituents in order to designate a centralized “hub” for civic engagement endeavors. At its core, the plan begins with contextualizing nonpartisan learning outcomes that span all future action steps. Upon naming these outcomes, subsequent programming can be continuous, far-reaching, and impactful for all UGA students. By 2028, the University of Georgia will aim to raise student voting rates by 6 percentage points.

Timely goals for increasing student engagement in civic efforts are categorized through the following areas:

Forging a Brand

Goal Description	UGA Individual(s) and/or Group(s) Involved	Intended Deadline	Notes
Define civic engagement learning outcomes within lens of ELS community engagement	ELS staff (Rachel Taylor, Erica Lee, & Taylor Cain)	End of Spring 2023	ELS is concurrently structuring community engagement learning outcomes, and civic engagement is intended to be woven in to create a holistic model of opportunities.
Assess current student perceptions of civic engagement via surveys and/or focus groups.	ELS staff, outreach to newly-established partnerships, Registered Student Organizations	Ongoing (goal to pilot in late Spring 2023)	The intention with this goal is to hear directly from students about their understanding of civic education topics and voting in order to inform the pathway for planned initiatives.



Institute both widespread and targeted marketing efforts to make information on civic engagement accessible.	ELS Staff, department ListServ managers, digital screens across campus, Tate Print & Copy	Ongoing & dependent on upcoming events	Existing Marketing & Communications contacts for service-based marketing will be updated & utilized accordingly.
Update the ELS website to include information on timely voting information, media literacy tools, and year-round actions.	ELS Staff (citing resources from All In, Voter Friendly Campus, etc.)	Spring 2023	A simplified bit.ly link can be adopted for quick sharing in marketing graphics, social media campaigns, and presentations.

Partnerships

Goal Description	UGA Individual(s) and/or Group(s) Involved	Intended Deadline	Notes
Create a network of Student Affairs departmental partnerships who can expand the application of civic engagement into existing programming.	Office of the Dean of Students, Student Transitions, Disability Resource Center, Greek Life, Multicultural Services & Programs, International Student Life, Pride Center, Student Care and Outreach, Student Conduct, Student Veterans Resource Center, University Housing	Fall 2023 <i>(Plan for email outreach in Spring 2023 and meet with interested groups at least once within the semester)</i>	Coupled with newly written learning outcomes, these groups can gather to process their upcoming plans for the 2023-2024 academic year while simultaneously conceptualizing ideas for accessible events & education that can meet the needs of respective student groups each serve.
Consolidate the existing UGA Votes coalition to form a strong student-led alliance.	UGA Votes Executive Board, all affiliated student organizations	Fall 2023	The values and programming often overlap with this group, and a working liaison between dedicated student organizations will escalate the potential for student-led advocacy efforts.



Voting

Goal Description	UGA Individual(s) and/or Group(s) Involved	Intended Deadline	Notes
Host Advance Voting on-campus to allow students, faculty, and staff an accessible polling location option prior to Election Day.	Athens-Clarke County Board of Elections, Tate Facilities team, Stegeman Coliseum Facilities team, UGA Votes, Student Government Association	Summer 2024	Anticipation of a presidential election year turnout will likely warrant a larger space than the Tate Center room utilized for the 2022 Midterm Advance Voting location, but both Facilities teams will be contacted to explore options.
Host National Voter Registration Day to encourage students to register or check their registration status.	Multicultural Student Services & Programs	August 2023	Feedback from the 2022 iteration of NVRD, hosted in The Intersection within Tate Student Center, will be implemented to broaden the scope of students reached.
During an election year, collaborate with Registered Student Organizations to raise awareness on voter registration and creating a voting plan.	ELS Staff, Registered Student Organizations	Spring 2024 <i>(interest form sent out before Summer 2024)</i>	A definitive plan for engagement, such as social media awareness or a structured event/program, can be determined through feedback from student leaders.

Civic Education

Goal Description	UGA Individual(s) and/or Group(s) Involved	Intended Deadline	Notes
Allot time during summer New Student Orientation through existing presentations, breakout sessions, or passive tabling.	Office of New Student Orientation	Summer 2023, prior to start of sessions <i>(Outreach will begin in Spring 2023 to introduce the idea & explore possibilities)</i>	Specific presence can be determined to fit within the current schedule to increase contact with incoming first-year UGA students.



Develop a presentation to offer to interested professors and student organizations upon request.	ELS Staff (eventual incorporation of student facilitators)	Summer 2023 <i>(goal to pilot offering in Fall 2023 semester)</i>	Instruction materials will focus on the significance of the voting process, approaches to informed decision-making with media sources, and structured pathways for effective change-making.
Communicate with First-Year Odyssey (FYO) professors to inquire about scheduling class time to emphasize voting and media literacy.	ELS Staff	Summer 2023	Ultimately, this presentation could also be adapted into a lesson plan format. Presently, the presentation timeslots would be limited until interested student leaders were trained to facilitate.
Coordinate with the Office of Student Transitions to incorporate material into initiatives such as Dawg Camp Extended Orientation Weeks and National Transfer Student Week.	ELS Staff, Student Transitions	Late Spring 2023	Dawg Camp: Classic City highlights exploration of local non-profits, restaurants, and historic music venues. In addition to first-year students, the goal is to reach a diverse group of students in different stages of transition to UGA, such as transfer students.

With the goals outlined above, the intent is to initiate conversations surrounding civic education and voting to a diverse group of students. While the designation of efforts to ELS is relatively new, the goals are structured to prioritize outreach and build a support network with one another in order to actualize the capacity of programmatic execution. Particularly within the Student Affairs and UGA Votes student-led coalitions, voices from a wide range of identity groups can inwardly reflect on the application of the planned initiatives for their group(s) of students.

Section VI: Strategy

The following includes short-term and long-term strategies for accomplishing the goals outlined in Section VI:

Short-Term

Summer 2023:

- Compose program-wide learning outcomes for student learning
- Construct assessment forms in Qualtrics to hold at the conclusion of upcoming events
- Discuss opportunities for cross-collaboration with Engagement and Leadership facets of the department
 - Example: “Active Citizenship and Voting” leadership event
- Communicate with campus partners to outline scheduled events for the academic year and plan for collaboration with a civic engagement focus
 - Example: International Coffee Hour (collaboration with International Student Services) focused on democratic engagement

Fall 2023:

- Brand recognition for Civic Engagement through ELS
- Introductory stages of planning for 2024 presidential election
 - Collaboration with the Athens-Clarke County Board of Elections
- Host National Voter Registration Day event in a centralized location
 - Widely advertise to academic programs and student organizations
- Release educational materials for voters via social media
 - Example: “Create Your Voting Plan” template on Instagram
 - Provide information to students on serving as a poll worker for the county
 - Significant push during National Voter Education Week and recurring acknowledgement of civic holidays

Spring 2024:

- Voter education & registration
- Civic engagement structured events
 - Examples: Speaker Series, Deliberative Dialogue (referencing the National Issues Forum), movie screenings

Fall 2024:

- North of the Arch program (introduction to campus directed at new students)
- Host Advance Voting on campus for the 2024 presidential election

Long-Term

- Utilize assessment data on a continuous basis to update existing structures and pilot new initiatives
- Launch a student-led leadership group (similar to UGA Votes) and consolidate overlapping initiatives between student organizations and ELS events
- Host regularly scheduled focus groups with politically-affiliated student organizations to hear their ideas and concerns related to full democratic engagement
 - Feedback can be shifted into a nonpartisan approach to future programs
- Build a certificate program that students can earn through participating in community engagement experiences through ELS
 - Examples: Serve UGA Ambassador role, IMPACT Service Breaks participant, Advance Voting volunteer
 - Coordination with the Experiential Learning office could offer a chance for credit in addition to the internal recognition
- Maintain a digital presence (via social media and university website) to ensure accurate information is accessible to all students
- Develop a democratic engagement lesson plan to offer to First-Year Odyssey (FYO) professors to engage their class within the context of their course outcomes

Section VII: NSLVE

As the University of Georgia seeks to increase voter registration and voter turnout rates, regular participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) will be crucial for longitudinal assessment of improvements made.

Referencing the 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), the University of Georgia has made significant improvement in both voter registration and turnout rates. Data illustrates that there is a heightened interest in early voting, while absentee ballot voting is simultaneously popularized for out-of-state students. The most compelling growth by engaged age group is young voters between the ages of 18-24. Finally, alongside the university's strong tie to rigorous curricular and experiential learning, outreach to colleges and programs across campus will be beneficial to establishing buy-in to democratic engagement.

Self-Comparison (2016 vs. 2020)

- Increase in registration rates (+5.9%), voting rates of registered students (+15%), and overall voting rates (+17.6%)
- The number of registered students increased by 5,054
- The number of students who voted increased by 8,519

*In addition, the total student enrollment at UGA increased by 2,711 from 2016 to 2020

Field of Study

All fields saw a rise in voting rates from 2016-2020, with distinct mention for Law Enforcement (24% increase), Biological and Biomedical Sciences (22% increase), and Computer and Information Sciences (22% increase).

Fields that could favor targeted marketing within this plan include Cultural & Gender Studies (5% increase), History (8% increase), Education (10% increase), and Mathematics and Statistics (10% increase). Overall, there is a noticeable trend that traditional STEM fields have higher voting rates compared to Liberal Arts.

Institutional Comparison (2020)

UGA voting rates are above the institutional average of 66%. Utilizing the above data points, it is evident that the University of Georgia has made significant positive strides towards engaging college students in the voting process. Particularly as the flagship institution for the state of Georgia and proximity to the capital of Atlanta, the opportunity for widespread marketing of civic engagement resources will be pivotal for the acceptance within institutional culture.

The University of Georgia is committed to the ongoing participation in NSLVE as a pathway to reflect on goal progression and justify implementation of new initiatives.

Section VIII: Reporting

The 2022 All In Action Plan for the University of Georgia will be shared, at a minimum, with relevant stakeholders involved in the completion of the outlined goals. This includes on-campus groups such as UGA Votes and Student Government as well as the Athens-Clarke County Board of Elections. Within the intended bi-monthly meeting with interested departmental staff, the inaugural agenda will include describing the purpose



of campus-wide civic engagement and detail the action steps necessary to begin goal progression.

Similarly, this plan will be shared with the Student Affairs Leadership Team, Dean of Students Office, and Division of Academic Enhancement to ensure that leaders in roles such as Directors and Associate Vice Presidents can review, reflect, and share within their spheres of influence to determine appropriate applications of the outcomes. Furthermore, including this plan in communication to the President's Office would be an exciting avenue to pursue in order to acquire institutional commitment to fortified civic engagement at UGA.

Regarding budget for the ELS department, this plan will also be linked to proposals for upcoming years. The Community Engagement budget for future fiscal years will intend to list specialized funds for structured civic education programs and initiatives in order to enrich experiences that were piloted in 2022 as well as cultivate new ideas.

Finally, to allow access to the resource for public entities, this action plan could be made public via the ELS website. As the Civic Engagement page is undergoing construction to provide an organized space for resources & upcoming events, the plan can be made visible for interested individuals to view as an illustration of the department's dedication to nonpartisan democratic engagement for all students. Alongside the plan, statistics from the university's NSLVE report will provide data points that align with the action steps proposed within this plan.

Section IX: Evaluation

Quantitative Measures:

- Updated NSLVE data every two years
- Number of attendees to civic education & voting structured events
- Number of partnerships, both internal and external to UGA

Qualitative Measures:

- Formal assessment of students, faculty, and staff (at least annually) regarding successes and areas of improvement for initiatives throughout the year
- Formal assessment of students participating in initiatives derived from advancement in co-curricular learning outcomes defined by ELS
- Informal feedback from Advance Voting volunteers and Clarke County Board of Elections to refine the on-campus polling location during an election year

Results from both formal and informal evaluations of relevant stakeholders will be utilized in a timely manner throughout the academic year to gauge overall progress. Formal assessments will be created in the ELS Qualtrics account — this method easily allows for seamless tracking of patterns and longitudinal change in need over time. Additionally, attendance to all civic engagement-related events will be tracked through Involvement Network, a product of Campus Labs that is utilized for UGA department and student organization programming. Extensive analysis & reporting of feedback will be conducted at least once per semester by ELS staff, and necessary changes to previously outlined steps can be equipped in a timely manner. Involved stakeholders outlined in each goal will also be considered to best inform forward decision-making.

Section X: Conclusion

Engagement, Leadership, and Service acknowledges that this All In Action Plan is a living document that will be referenced throughout the academic year and updated regularly to reflect the present needs of students. Overall, this document will prove to be extremely useful in forging a path for commitment to nonpartisan civic engagement on the University of Georgia's campus.