

## 2020 Campus Action Plan

### University of Illinois Chicago's Action Plan to Increase Civic Learning, Political Engagement, and Voting Rates for the 2022 midterm election

*For the purposes of this action plan, we have made the decision to intentionally reference the 2018 midterm election as opposed to the 2020 presidential election – as it is most comparable to the upcoming race(s).*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

##### Background

Civic and community engagement are values that are deeply rooted in the history and identity of the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). The university sits on the site of the Jane Addams Hull-House, Chicago's first social settlement and a place where immigrants of diverse communities gathered to learn, to eat, to debate, and to access the tools needed to put down roots in their new country. UIC students and faculty are involved in a range of civic engagement projects at international, national, state and local levels, while maintaining partnerships with a large number of Chicago-area agencies and community organizations.

##### CORE Group

The CORE Group (in previous UIC action plans they were referred to as the Civic Engagement Coalition) is made up of representatives from student affairs, academic affairs, government and public affairs, alumni, and students. There is no official charge for this group; however, they are all invested members of the UIC community who are committed to campus based civic engagement. They meet virtually once a month to give updates to various past and upcoming efforts to increase civic engagement on campus. This action plan includes efforts from these CORE members to build upon successes of UIC's 2018 civic engagement efforts. Our aim for the 2022 midterm election is to increase voter registration, education, and participation among UIC Students. This is particularly important after some success we saw in the 2018 midterm and 2020 presidential election; and we do not want to lose ground on the progress we have made to date.

##### 2018 Efforts

The Coalition's efforts for the 2018 election were very successful, and also revealed opportunities for strengthening and deepening the work. Through events and programs put on by members of the coalition as well as other entities across campus, we successfully increased our voter registration and voting rates.

#### LEADERSHIP

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### CORE Group Members

Joseph Hoereth, Director  
*Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement*

Norma Ramos, Director for Marketing and Communications  
*Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement*

Michael Crumbock, Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives  
*Department of Public and Government Affairs*

Martha Gutierrez, Senior Director  
*Department of Public and Government Affairs*

Dick Simpson, Professor  
*Department of Political Science*

Kate Floros, Clinical Assistant Professor  
*Department of Political Science*

Lizzie Lachapelle, graduate assistant  
*Student Leadership and Civic Engagement*

Lauren Bell, Academic Advising & Program Specialist  
*Honors College*

Mia Garcia-Hills, Director  
*Student Veterans Affairs*

Michael Fernandes, student representative  
*Undergraduate Student Government*

Judith Hamill, Director of JMLS Government Relations  
*University of Illinois Chicago School of Law*

\*\*Other members of the UIC community are open to join the CORE group permanently or just attend a meeting or two depending on their needs

### CORE Group Meetings

Our coalition meets virtually the first Tuesday of the month (taking a break in June and July)

### Community Partners

Illinois Campus Compact, Chicago Votes, IL PIRG Campus Action, ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Civic Nation, and the Chicago Board of Elections Commission

## COMMITMENT

UIC's Chancellor Michael Amiridis and a representative working group set four strategic priorities to guide UIC. These priorities are student experience and success, national and international impact and visibility, Chicago and community engagement, and the entrepreneurial university. These priorities are shared frequently in public talks, on the University website and on the Chancellor's page, in the University's public five-year strategic priorities document, and other spaces. In written documents and remarks, the Chancellor highlights the role of UIC as not just the University of Illinois AT Chicago, but the University of Illinois FOR Chicago. The Chancellor looks to build upon the institution's history of community engagement and support meaningful engagement with community. In addition, Chancellor Amiridis speaks about the importance of out-of-classroom experiences for student learning, including internships, volunteer experiences, research and civic engagement.

These strategic priorities and the consistent references to them set a tone for campus that real-world partnerships and engagement, including civic engagement, are a core part of the UIC experience, and ones that the Chancellor looks to build on during his time on campus.

## LANDSCAPE

Civic and community engagement are values that are deeply rooted in UIC's history and identity. The university sits on the site of the Jane Addams Hull-House, Chicago's first social settlement and a place where immigrants of diverse communities gathered to learn, to eat, to debate, and to acquire the tools needed to put down roots in their new country. Today the original home and dining hall have been preserved and serve as a museum and space for dialogues, programs, and guest lectures.

According to the UIC website, The University of Illinois Chicago is one of the nation's most diverse public research universities. As a federally designated Minority-Serving Institution, UIC welcomes students, staff and faculty from a variety of racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations and abilities to cultivate a diverse learning community. UIC is one of the most diverse campuses in the nation and a national leader among urban, public higher education institutions in providing access to underrepresented students. UIC is focused on eliminating disparities in health, education and economic opportunity. Community engagement is a centerpiece of UIC's urban mission. Faculty, students and staff in every college work with neighborhood, foundation and government partners on a wide range of projects to improve the quality of life in metropolitan areas around the world.

## GOALS

Short Term (2022 Mid-Term Election)

- Utilize any opportunity for promotion of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement to highlight civic engagement and registering to vote through TurboVote, especially during open houses, freshmen and transfer student orientations, involvement fairs, etc
- Ensure that each UIC college or department that has a website section that promotes civic engagement has a link to the SLCE Civic Engagement pages for ease in registering students to vote

- Publish the Civic Engagement calendar of events on the SLCE website and reach out to student organizations, colleges, and departments to add their civic engagement events to this “master calendar”
- Reach out to individual professors with the civic engagement calendar and asking them for help in promoting events as well as offering extra credit for attendance or reflection papers, especially first year seminar classes

### Long Term

UIC’s overall long-term goal is to support students in developing as lifelong active citizens. To move toward that goal over the next 10 years, we hope to:

- Increase voter participation to over 85% for eligible voters
- Find ways to engage students who are not eligible to vote
- Provide opportunities for students to stay engaged in the community around them

A few specific action steps we plan to take for the 2022 elections are:

#### Registration

In addition to continuing the work of registering students at orientations, student involvement fairs, and civic engagement events, we realize that we need to be more intentional about reaching out to the students who are adult learners, remote/online students, and the students at the Law School and the West Campus. This can be done through social media but also having tabling events at the other two campus locations.

#### Education

Campus-wide, the Provost’s dialogue series will continue to happen as well as Future of Chicago lectures and we will work to bring additional civic related speakers. When it comes to either state or local elections we will continue to work hard to ensure students are educated about candidates and issues that will appear on those ballots, as well as provide voter guides, events, and opportunities for students to vote early on campus. Another goal is to create more courses, or highlight current courses offered, that focus on civic engagement and service learning.

#### Collaboration

Involvement is just as important as making sure students have access to proper civic education opportunities. We are working to provide students with more internships in offices on the city, county, and state level. We will also make efforts to work with the campus’ student coalition that lobbies at the Capitol and increase student involvement in government affairs. We will reach out to departments, colleges, and student organization who have in the past done their own programs and often worked in silos and invite them to the CORE group or to at least think of the CORE group as a place to promote beyond their usual audience.

### NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT (NSLVE)

The NSLVE report showed that there was an increase in our overall voting rate and the student voting rate for registered voters, with 20,629 Registered Voters in 2018, a 75.8% Voter Registration Rate; a 41.1% UIC Overall Voting Rate (up from 19% in 2014, and compared to 39.1% at all institutions); a 54.9% UIC Student Voting Rate for Registered Voters (up from 27.5% in 2014); and a 33.5% UIC Voting Rate increase for 18-21 year old students (and UIC’s Voting Rates increased for every age group in 2018).

Based on the above data, the specific goals set for the 2022 mid-term elections are...

- To increase our 2022 Overall Voting Rate by 10 points, from 41.0% (in 2018) to 51.0%.
- To increase our 2022 Registration Rate by 6.7 points, from 75.8% (in 2018) to 82.5%.
- To increase our 2022 Rate of Registered Students who Voted by 10.1 points, from 54.9% (in 2018) to 65%

*We utilized data from the last midterm election cycle in 2018 as the baseline for setting our goals.*

## STRATEGY

### Voter Registration

- Turbo Vote
  - We plan to continue our partnership with TurboVote into the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years. We integrated the platform into the UIC Blackboard Learning Management System, the UIC Portal, and the Campus Labs Engage platform, along with its use in targeted social media and campus wide email marketing campaigns. We also want to encourage our student who are already registered to vote to still sign up on TurboVote to update address information, as well as get election reminders
- Voter Registration at Orientation
  - We will have staff attend all first year and transfer orientation sessions to encourage all students to register to vote during their orientation process. During this time, we will also suggest ways for those who are not eligible to vote to be able to stay civically engaged.
- New Student Convocation
  - During New Student Convocation, we have been able to promote the TurboVote platform before, during, and after the event through a custom announcement/promotion using the venue ribbon board.
- Constitution Day
  - This fall the Law School is partnering with the Department of Political Science to host a virtual webinar on Crisis on American Democracy. SLCE will have an opportunity to promote voter registration throughout the duration of the event.
- National Voter Registration Day
  - We will be hosting an event on campus to get as many students as we can registered to vote on National Voter Registration Day. We are hopeful to partner again with Rock the Vote and IL PIRG Campus Action.
- National Student Issues Convention
  - UIC will again host a virtual convention of students from a half dozen universities in collaboration with other universities in the Chicago region and other universities around the country to create an agenda of student issues before the November election to which candidates and government officials respond. About 400 students participate in the half-day event.
  - This past year they voted on the top 5 issues that students are concerned with – climate change, healthcare, criminal justice reform, education, and racism. Depending on what the new “top 5” are, we will plan to have follow up student forms around those issues to discuss next steps.
- Candidate Debates and Debate Watch Parties

- During the Fall 2022 semester, students will have the opportunities to register at debates, debate watch parties or other election programs held prior to the last day to register regularly in Illinois for the November midterm Election and/or the last day to register online in Illinois for the November midterm Election. We will have student staff in attendance walking around asking students to register. There will also be a booth near the door for students to go to register to vote, get more information on voting, and access non-partisan candidate issue guides. After each debate, we will ask students to participate in a short survey regarding civic engagement and whether or not students feel more civically engaged after watching the debates.
- Faculty Involvement
  - We plan to coordinate with faculty members to encourage their students to register to vote in the first weeks of classes. We will also encourage them to offer extra credit for attending any election event (or writing a reflection paper on their sense of civic engagement after attending).

#### Voter Education

- Candidate Debates and Debate Watch Parties
  - Through hosting of debates and debate watch parties, students will have access to learning about candidates and their various viewpoints related to their candidacy and the election. Since UIC is a commuter campus, we will reach out to the Housing staff and see if this could be done in conjunction with RA programming.
- UIC Voter Information Website
  - We will continue to keep updated a website that students can visit for civic engagement. We plan to update this site to provide information about voter registration, information for voting, sample ballots, candidate issue guides, upcoming events, and other resources that may prove helpful to students.
- University Mass Email
  - We will send a mass email regarding voter information and registration in the beginning weeks of the Fall 2022 semester. The mass email will include links to our website and other resources on voting, as well as information for upcoming events surrounding civic engagement.
- Increased Promotion through Department/College Newsletters
  - We will create a media kit with non-partisan details on candidate issues, voter registration information, and promotions for early voting. This will go to all Student Organization officers, Department Directors, and College Deans for them to post flyers in their offices as well as on their emails, newsletters, and social media
- Student Open Forums
  - SLCE will host open forums where student can learn about and discuss issues that mean the most to them or that impact them directly (ie. student loans, campus safety, climate, etc).
- Deliberative Dialogues
  - In partnership with NASPA and the Kettering Foundations, SLCE will host deliberative dialogues using the National Issues Forum guides to encourage students to think about and discuss various issues such as free speech and campus inclusion, immigration, etc.
- Candidate Forums

- The Undergraduate Student Government Association hosted a candidate forum in March of 2022 for the Secretary of State. USG is hoping to host another in the Fall of 2022.
- Collaboration with Student Organizations
  - More intentional follow up with Undergraduate Student Government Association, IL PIRG Campus Action, Student Advocacy Coalition, and other student organizations who may have plans for civic engagement/election events but could benefit from help/support/resources/funding from SLCE and the CORE group to elevate their programming and increase the student attendance.

#### Voter Participation/Ballot Access/Get Out the Vote

- University Mass Email/Targeted Emailing/Election Engagement Strategy
  - Turbo Vote - This tool has helped us in communication with students leading up to both the primary and election voting days.
  - We plan to send a mass email regarding voter information and registration in the beginning weeks of the fall 2022 semester. The mass email will include links to websites and other resources on voting as well as information for upcoming events surrounding civic engagement. We will send another email to students reminding them about early voting and voting day and provide information on how they can find their polling place.
  - Students will be able to send emails to our office with questions or concerns they have regarding the elections. We will have the Civic Engagement Fellow and staff read and respond to said emails as quickly as they can.
- Bulletin Boards
  - We plan to create bulletin boards that have voter registration forms, voter guides, sample ballots, and issue guides that will go to different offices and student-heavy locations around the university.
- Flyer Distribution
  - In the days leading up to the Primary and Election Day, we will post and distribute flyers encouraging students to get out and vote.
- Social Media
  - We plan to organize social media campaigns to get students active and voting on campus. This would involve sending regular updates through various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to remind students of important deadlines and other pertinent information regarding the elections, deadlines, and the candidates
- Blackboard
  - We are hopeful to work with Blackboard administrators to have reminders posted once students and faculty members sign in to remind them about early voting and Primary and Election Day voting.
- Primary Day Voting
  - University of Illinois Chicago is a Primary voting site.
- Early Voting
  - Early voting will be available at UIC for those registered to vote in the City of Chicago
- Election Day
  - University of Illinois at Chicago is an Election Day voting site.
- Election Results Watch Party

- We will host a watch party to reveal the election results on campus. If we feel that our students would not attend a watch party, we will host an Instagram takeover instead.

### **Available Resources**

- We will continue to seek out opportunities for grants from outside groups to be used toward our Civic Engagement efforts.
- We will be co-sponsoring a number of events with student organizations across campus, including the Undergraduate Student Government, the Center for Student Involvement and the seven Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change at UIC.

### **Challenges and Navigation**

UIC is largely an international serving institution with, 12.1% of our students coming from other countries. Without being able to identify who's legally allowed to vote or not in the United States, we find it difficult to target specific resources to students. As a way to combat this, we hope to offer more open-ended, open-dialogue spaces where students can engage in conversation about issues that matter to them. With this, students feel motivated to be interpersonal with their peers, while encouraging those with the power to influence an election to make their way to the polling place.

Many students at UIC commute to and from the campus and limit their involvement in various organizations because of that. In order to navigate through this issue, we think it would be pertinent to use the student leaders that are actively involved on campus to get other students engaged civically as well as in their own student organizations. Students with the desire and passion to lead also make sure that other students' voices are heard. In the end, we hope a hierarchical, trickle-down effect is effective for peer motivation.

With the outcomes of the 2020 presidential election leading to polarizing effects on our campus, we find that most students tend to stay away from conversations about politics for various reasons. We are hoping that implementing deliberative dialogues will help student be able to have civil conversations amidst the controversy.

Lastly, we are already seeing the effects of COVID and being remote and then hybrid and socially distanced for the past 2 years. Our rising sophomores and juniors are not as engaged in activities and some lack a sense of belonging. In general, student affairs is working on creative ways to help our student integrate better on campus and find ways to get involved and be engaged in the UIC community.

### **Calendar of Events (Tentative dates are italicized)**

- February 15, 2022-Civic Engagement Workshop Series: Civic Engagement in the Digital Age
- March 14, 2022-IL Secretary of State Candidates Forum
- March 15, 2022-Civic Engagement Workshop Series: Women in Politics
- April 1, 2022 – New Voters Project: Voter Registration Table sponsored by IL PIRG Campus Action
- April 12, 2022-Civic Engagement Workshop Series: Environment and Sustainability



- May 24-August 17 – SLCE table set up with Voter Registration QR code during Freshmen and Transfer Orientation Marketplace
- *June 12, 2022-Last Day to Register to Vote Online*
- *June 22, 2022-Early Voting (City of Chicago Residents Only) for 2022 Midterm Primary Elections*
- *June 22, 2022-Party at the Polls*
- *June 23, 2022-Last day to apply for Vote By Mail ballot*
- *June 23, 2022-Early Voting (City of Chicago Residents Only) for 2022 Midterm Primary Elections*
- *June 23, 2022-Party at the Polls*
- *June 24, 2022-Early Voting (City of Chicago Residents Only) for 2022 Midterm Primary Elections*
- *June 24, 2022-Party at the Polls*
- *June 28, 2022-2022 Midterm Primary Elections*
- *September 10 – [OFFICIAL EMAIL] About Voter Registration, Events, and Resources*
- *September 17, 2022 – Constitution Day*
- *September 19, 2022 – Constitution Day event with Law School and Political Science : Crisis on American Democracy webinar*
- *September 20, 2022 – National Voter Registration Day Event with SLCE and IL PIRG Campus Action*
- *October TBD, 2022 – National Student Issues Convention (virtual)*
- *October 22, 2022 - Last day to register to Vote (Regular)*
- *October 23, 2022 – Last day to register to Vote (Online)*
- *November 7, 2022 – [MASS EMAIL] Election Day is Tomorrow*
- *November 8, 2022 – Election Day*
- *November 8, 2022 – Election Day Results Watch Party*

Events yet to be scheduled:

Debate Watch Parties, Ballot Parties, Voter Information/Ballot Access Information Lunch; Additional Voter Registration Events, etc. Additionally, we know there will be events that arise throughout the election cycle that will be added as unanticipated events.

## REPORTING

This plan will be shared with all members of the CORE group, posted on the website of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement, and incorporated into reports to upper administration. We will also share the NSLVE data/report on the Student Leadership and Civic Engagement website. Where applicable, we will also share updates and information through social media channels and official University news outlets.

## EVALUATION

We would like to know if our civic engagement efforts are effective in increasing student participation in the areas of voter registration, education, and participation. We would like the evaluation to give us information that will help us continue to improve student civic engagement, build stronger coordination for civic engagement efforts, and help us advocate for this work to become a university-wide priority that is supported with some institutional resources.

The coalition will lead the evaluation process, building on what we have already started. We will continue to consider attendance at events/programs/early voting, implement evaluations at events, and work with NSLVE and our local elections board to get data on numbers for comparison to previous years. We plan to gather information throughout the process and adjust programming and outreach based on the data as we go along. We will also do an overall evaluation with all data after the 2022 midyear elections and use this data along with the information we receive in our next NSLVE report to evaluate our success in meeting the goals we have set out in this plan.

We will share the information gathered through the coalition members, reports to upper administration, and social media and University news outlets as appropriate.