

A black and white photograph of the University of Iowa Old Capitol building. The building is a large, classical-style structure with a prominent portico supported by tall columns. A flagpole with the Iowa state flag stands on the roof. In the foreground, a group of students is sitting on the grass, and a person is walking on the right. The sky is bright with scattered clouds.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN 2020

WRITTEN BY
HAWK THE VOTE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHO DEVELOPED THIS ACTION PLAN?

This action plan was developed by Hawk the Vote, a student-led initiative within the Office of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement in the Division of Student Life which seeks to expand student knowledge of and participation in elections at a local, state, and federal level.

WHAT IS THIS ACTION PLAN FOR AND WHAT DOES IT SEEK TO ACCOMPLISH?

This action plan serves as a starting point for cross-campus collaboration on democratic engagement and civic learning. This document will be used internally by Hawk the Vote, and by the newly-formed Civic Engagement Strategic Planning Committee which is made up of students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Primarily, it has been the responsibility of the student governments and politically affiliated student groups to register and educate students to vote. This plan will be used to facilitate conversations about how faculty, staff, and administrators can create a wider network to perform democratic engagement across campus in years to come.

We will implement the *Ask Every Student* model in order to achieve an 80% voter registration rate (up from 75.8% in 2018), and a voter participation rate of 70% in the November 2020 election (up from 58.0% in 2016). We are committed to full student participation.

WHERE WILL IT BE IMPLEMENTED?

This action plan will be implemented at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, IA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY WAS THIS ACTION PLAN DEVELOPED?

This action plan is developed for the purpose of expanding democratic engagement on campus. The UI's strategic plan emphasizes the importance of engagement with the greater community. The UI fosters well-rounded and civic-minded leaders, and voting is a crucial part of the educational process. Democratic engagement must be prioritized in a more intentional way in future UI strategic plans.

WHEN DOES THIS ACTION PLAN START AND END?

This action plan contains both short- and long-term goals, and will serve as the primary guiding document for Hawk the Vote from May 2020 - May 2021. A new action plan should be drafted immediately following the November 2020 election, to be implemented in May 2021.

HOW WILL THIS ACTION PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

This action plan will be implemented primarily by Hawk the Vote and staff advisors within the Division of Student Life and the Office of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement, with input from the Civic Engagement Strategic Planning Committee and the Engagement subgroup of the university's Path Forward strategic planning committee. These committees include undergraduate and graduate students, staff, faculty, and administrators.

LEADERSHIP

WHO IS COORDINATING AND OVERSEEING THE INSTITUTION'S WORK TO INCREASE CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT?

Hawk the Vote was established formally in September 2019 to coordinate and oversee civic learning and democratic engagement at the University of Iowa. This group of eight students meets weekly and are advised by staff in the Office of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement in the Division of Student Life. They train and recruit an additional 50-75 students annually to serve as student volunteers who participate in tabling activities, lead workshops, and share posts on social media. Additionally, the Civic Engagement Strategic Planning Committee convenes twice per semester to advise on democratic engagement and the work of Hawk the Vote.

HAWK THE VOTE MEMBERSHIP 2020-2021

Jocelyn Roof

Student, Executive Director

Joseph Verry

Student, Associate Director

Connor Johnson

Student, Strategic Assessment Manager

Kevin Drahos

Student, External Relations Manager

Kathryn Shumaker

Student, Social Media Manager

Cesar Perez

Student, Volunteer Manager

Autumn Moen

Student, Workshops & Events Manager

Caitlyn Grebner

Student, Workshops & Events Manager

Erika Christiansen

Staff, Advisor

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Commitment to full student participation in elections means acknowledging and honoring the experiences and voices of groups which have been historically underrepresented, marginalized, and left out of decision-making processes, both in American government and in the context of higher education institutions. Both Hawk the Vote and the CESPC should be reflective of the diversity of the University of Iowa community and inclusive of all perspectives and identities. Special care should be taken in all democratic engagement planning and execution to ensure the full and active participation of groups who have been historically disenfranchised and those who, in some cases, continue to have their votes suppressed.

LEADERSHIP

ROLES OF HAWK THE VOTE TEAM MEMBERS

Executive Director

- Meets weekly with advisor
- Leads 1:1's weekly with entire exec team
- Leads weekly team meetings
- Sets organizational goals, priorities, and direction
- Creates timeline and task lists for positions
- Serves as main contact for creating and maintaining partnerships both internal and external
- Guides strategic planning and brainstorms new strategies for outreach
- Manages executive team and tracks productivity
- Ensures executive team has up-to-date information about voting, elections, trends, data, etc.
- Coordinates fundraising efforts and grant writing for organization

Associate Director

- Meets 4 times a semester with advisor
- Assists leading 1:1s with exec team and supports Executive Director
- Analyzes past voting data (NSLVE, campus data, Johnson County Auditor Office) to increase understanding of student voters at Iowa
- Creates strategic plans for the upcoming year
- Organizes and convenes Civic Engagement Strategic Planning Committee composed of representatives from UISG, GPSG, Staff Council, and Faculty Senate twice per semester
- Researches other institutions and their civic engagement efforts, plans calls and conversations as needed
- Supports with internal team task list and helps track productivity of members

LEADERSHIP

ROLES OF HAWK THE VOTE TEAM MEMBERS

External Relations Manager

- Works closely with Office of Strategic Communications and the Vice President of Student Life communications team
- Writes press releases, media advisories, and press calls for events and data
- Maintains the Hawk the Vote website and email
- Creates talking points for all Hawk the Vote events, media requests, etc.
- Establishes and helps maintain contacts with campaign staff, auditor's office, and other external groups
- Meets consistently with university administration to keep updated on other engagement efforts
- Actively seeks to build new relationships with student organizations, academic affairs, and other university contacts
- Creates and distributes a monthly newsletter
- Manages hotline (Google Form) for election questions

Volunteer Manager

- Recruits, tracks, trains, and communicates with a diverse group of volunteers
- Coordinates tabling, workshops, events, and classroom presentations with volunteer network
- Communicates with 50+ student volunteers and exec team and other political and non-political organizations on campus about volunteering
- Corresponds with community volunteers to collaborate as needed
- Manages accountability and recognition of the student volunteers

LEADERSHIP

ROLES OF HAWK THE VOTE TEAM MEMBERS

Event and Workshops Manager

- Plans and executes stand alone events (Meet the Campaigns, Mock Caucus, etc.)
- Partners with campus and external groups to host events
- Manages a small sub-committee of volunteers for event and workshop leadership
- Organizes donations and establishes relationships with local businesses as needed for events
- Plans for and executes the 90% challenge
- Schedules all tabling opportunities across campus
- Presents workshops in classes, departments, residence halls, organizations
- Creates workshops (civic engagement, voter ID laws, how to vote, organizing and advocacy, requests taken for new content)
- Trains volunteers and executive team on new workshop content

Social Media Manager

- Manages Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts for Hawk the Vote
- Creates content using software like Adobe Illustrator and Canva
- Works with UI Marketing + Design as needed
- Manages social media takeovers for UI accounts and external partners
- Stays up-to-date on trends in social media and creates content accordingly (TikTok, memes)
- Manages volunteer group for messaging for upcoming events and elections

SUCCESSION PLAN

The Hawk the Vote Executive Team will typically be appointed each April through an application and interview process. The Executive Director for the upcoming year is to be the Associate Director from the previous year, whenever possible, to assure sustainable and knowledgeable leadership and the successful continuation of the initiative.

LEADERSHIP

FORMATION OF THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The CESPC first convened early spring 2020 with the purpose of meeting twice per semester to hear from the Hawk the Vote executive team on current voting plans and initiatives and to cultivate a campus-wide culture of democracy. Members were recruited from various areas of campus and the community in order to share their perspective and expertise with students.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Jocelyn Roof (chair)

Student, Executive Director of Hawk the Vote

Joseph Verry

Student, Associate Director of Hawk the Vote

Connor Wooff

Student, President of Undergraduate Student Government

Paul Esker

Student, Gov Relations Chair in Graduate Student Government

Carrie Schuettepelz

Faculty Senate Representative

Kevin Zihlman

Staff Council Representative

Erika Christiansen

Assistant Director of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement

Ian Van Anden

Associate Director of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement

Angie Reams

Dean of Students

Tanya Uden-Holman

Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of the University College

Travis Weipert

Johnson County Auditor and Elections Commissioner

Susan Enzle

Voter Registration Coordinator for the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

OTHER GROUPS INVOLVED IN DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Hawk the Vote

UI Public Policy Center

UI Dept. of Political Science

UI Dept. of Journalism and

Mass Communication

UI Dept. of Rhetoric

UI Cultural and Resource Centers

UI Student Governments

University Democrats

College Republicans

Hawkeye Caucus

UI Roosevelt Network

UI Environmental Coalition

UI Women's Resource and

Action Center

NextGen Iowa

Johnson County Auditor's Office

League of Women Voters of Johnson County

Iowa Campus Compact

Campus Election

Engagement Project

Iowa Secretary of State's Office

All In Challenge for Campus Democracy

When We All Vote

National Voter Registration Day

Rock the Vote

Vote Mob

Band of Voters

Let America Vote

Tufts University (NSLVE, CIRCLE)

COMMITMENT

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT?

The University of Iowa's president, Bruce Harreld, has been asked to make a commitment to democratic engagement and full voter participation in the upcoming November 2020 election. Unfortunately, the ask was made right around the time the COVID-19 crisis began, and his office has not yet responded. However, in 2018 President Harreld made a public commitment to full voter participation on campus and committed funds toward the UI's participation in the Big Ten Voter Challenge, so it is reasonable to assume a similar commitment will be made in fall 2020. The commitment will be widely shared and posted publicly, and ideally promoted through a social media campaign across campus and through local news outlets.

CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR COMMITMENT TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Educating for civic learning and democratic engagement is not yet a pervasive part of institutional culture at the University of Iowa. The main source of voter engagement is Hawk the Vote, a student-led initiative which has just finished its inaugural year. Previously voter engagement was embedded in the work of the undergraduate and graduate student governments, with little engagement from other academic and student life departments. There is now more movement toward creating a campus culture of democratic education, as evidenced through the formation of the Civic Engagement Strategic Planning Committee and in the institutional Path Forward strategic planning group and Engagement subcommittee.

The UI lists several short- and long-term goals in its strategic plan, several of which relate to democratic and community engagement. However, there currently is not a strong accountability system for executing those goals and students are largely left out of planning processes.

KEY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT:

1. Widely communicate commitment to democratic engagement by launching a large-scale social media campaign leading up to the 2020 Election. Individuals such as President Harreld, Provost Uden-Holman, Vice President for Student Life Hansen, and Dean Reams should make statements affirming their support of voter engagement efforts.
2. Incorporate democratic engagement in a more robust way into the institution's mission and strategic plan. Start by including a student representative from Hawk the Vote on the Path Forward Engagement subcommittee.
3. Explore tagging community-engaged courses on MyUI and ICON so students know they are available to them, and explore a public service general education requirement.
4. Solidify and widely share guidelines for conversations about politics and voting in the classroom so faculty can uniformly integrate civic conversations into their curriculum.

LANDSCAPE

ARE CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT OVERALL CAMPUS LEARNING OUTCOMES?

Civic learning and democratic engagement are priorities of certain departments and divisions across campus, such as in the Office of Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement in the Division of Student Life. However, it is not explicitly stated as a desired outcome in the UI's university-wide strategic plan.

ASSESSMENT DATA AND CAMPUS POLITICAL CLIMATE FROM 2016 AND 2018 NSLVE REPORTS

58.0%

Overall
voting rate

44.9%

Overall
voting rate

75.8%

Registration
rate

72.1%

Registration
rate

BRONZE
All-In Seal of
Engagement

2016

GOLD
All-In Seal of
Engagement

2018

VOTER TURNOUT DEMOGRAPHICS (2016)

**49.7% of
enrolled
undergraduate
students**

**56.8% of enrolled
graduate
students**

**54.9% of
enrolled women**

**47.2% of
enrolled men**

VOTER TURNOUT IMPROVEMENT (2018)



**16.7%
increase in
voter turnout
from 2014**



**5.8%
higher than
average
voting rate for
all institutions**

LANDSCAPE

ANALYSIS OF NSLVE DATA

The University of Iowa voted at higher-than-average rates in both 2016 and 2018 according to NSLVE data from Tufts University, but there is still work to do. In 2016, the UI received All In's "Bronze Seal" of engagement for having a voting rate between 50-59%. At this time, voter engagement work was executed only in student government. Between 2016 and 2018, a new initiative for voter engagement was formed called "Hawk the Vote," which started in student government but became a stand-alone student initiative following the 2018 election.

In 2018 the UI saw a turnout increase of 16.7% points from 2014, the last midterm election. In 2018 the UI earned All In's "Gold Seal." This is encouraging, and shows that with a more targeted and widespread effort, voter engagement can be greatly increased on campus. There has been success at creating a campus culture of democratic engagement, and 2020's campus voter turnout should reflect the amount of work that has been done to expand voter registration and education through Hawk the Vote.

As far as target groups on campus, it is clear that work needs to be done in the Tippie College of Business and the College of Engineering, as those colleges had the lowest voter turnout in both 2016 and 2018. Additionally, engagement is lower with second year students than any other grade-level, likely because second year students tend to have less contact with campus after moving out of the residence halls.

BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT

The UI's voter engagement efforts are somewhat siloed and ineffective because they are mainly executed by students with little input from staff, faculty, and administrators. There is also no specified budget for voter engagement work, meaning Hawk the Vote relies on student government dollars. Civic learning outcomes are not explicitly stated by the institution, thus indicating that democratic engagement is not a campus-wide priority.

KEY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT:

1. Explicitly state that civic learning and democratic engagement are overall campus learning outcomes in the UI's strategic plan.
2. Do targeted outreach to second year students, business students, and engineering students.
3. Continue to promote a campus culture of democratic engagement by getting monetary and verbal support from administrators.
4. Centralize elections messaging through Hawk the Vote to ensure students get accurate and streamlined election information.
5. Advocate for simpler voter laws and guidelines to the Iowa Secretary of State, especially regarding the usage of student IDs.
6. Identify a reliable funding stream for voter engagement work by launching a GoldRush fundraising campaign and applying externally for grants.
7. Integrate civic learning outcomes into curriculum in all colleges.

GOALS

SHORT-TERM - ACHIEVE IN FALL 2020

1. Commit to full student voter participation in the 2020 Election by implementing the *Ask Every Student* model.
 - a. Ask students to register to vote in welcome week programming, within the residence halls, in online spaces, in student organization meetings, classrooms, and mass emailing.
2. Increase student voter registration rate to 80% and student voter turnout rate to 70% in the 2020 Election.
3. Create programming specific to business and engineering students by partnering with faculty and student groups in order to boost turnout in typically low-turnout populations.
 - a. Partner with Tippie Senate and the Engineering Student Council to engage students within the colleges.
 - b. Present in large intro-level business and engineering courses.
4. Launch a social media campaign to educate students about the power of their vote.
 - a. Discuss social movements, voting rights, historic suppression and marginalization of minoritized groups, and the battle for suffrage.
 - b. Discuss other mechanisms for civic engagement besides voting, such as petitions, protests, marches, community conversations, and useful research and reading.
5. Implement workshops and presentations into classrooms, student organizations, and educational events in order to reach returning students.
 - a. Use a more active and assertive strategy -- rather than solely tabling on the walkway or in the Iowa Memorial Union, offer a robust variety of workshops and presentations on voter ID, how to register, ways to advocate, and the history of voting rights.
 - b. Meet students where they are at (in their current involvements) rather than asking them to attend stand-alone voter education events, which generally only bring in already-active students.
6. Ramp up social media messaging and utilize campus influencers to create a culture in which voting is seen as the norm and democratic engagement, activism, and advocacy are seen as essential parts of being a Hawkeye.

ENSURE GOALS ARE SMARTIE:

1. Specific
2. Measurable
3. Achievable
4. Realistic
5. Time-bound
6. Inclusive
7. Equitable

GOALS

LONG-TERM - ACHIEVE BY 2025

1. Secure long-term sustainable funding for voter engagement by launching a GoldRush campaign, partnering with the alumni network, and having conversations with university administrators.
 - a. Ensure money for student stipends, general programming and events, SWAG, educational materials, and social media boosting.
 - b. Need is ~\$15,000 in presidential and midterm election years and ~\$5,000 in off-years.
2. Include an explicit commitment to democratic engagement in the institutional strategic plan and from the Office of the President.
 - a. Include a student member of Hawk the Vote on campus-wide strategic planning committees.
 - b. Continue meetings of the Civic Engagement Strategic Planning Committee, and expand membership to include staff, faculty, and administrators in more departments such as athletics, business, engineering, etc.
3. Widely circulate NSLVE data and begin collaborating with the Department of Political Science and the UI Public Policy Center in order to analyze it.
4. Ensure UI students have the following competencies:
 - a. A clear understanding of Iowa Voter ID law and proper voting documents/identification and processes to register.
 - b. The importance of community activism as well as voting in local/school board, state, and federal elections.
 - c. The ability to discern reputable information from trusted sources when it comes to elections information and candidate stances.
 - d. The caucus process and how it differs from a primary.
 - e. The ability to find information about voting procedures in other states and countries.
 - f. The ability to have fact-based, respectful conversations with people they disagree with.
5. Integrate civic learning goals into the general education curriculum and have clear guidelines for conversations about politics in the classroom.

BY 2030...

The UI should have a diverse team of staff, faculty, administrators, and students dedicated to advancing the ideals of democratic engagement and continually working to better educate students on voting in local, state, and federal elections as well as participating in non-electoral methods of advocacy and activism to engage in the community.

STRATEGY

WHAT IS THE WORK, AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Meeting and Planning (all stakeholders)
 - Continue weekly executive team meetings and one-on-ones with Hawk the Vote members to continue progressing the status of this plan, create leadership and mentorship pipelines, and actively recruit new students to lead the cause.
 - Continue to meet as a Civic Engagement Strategic Planning Committee, solidifying a mission and purpose and actively looking to expand membership.
 - Include a student member of Hawk the Vote on the campus-wide Engagement Strategic Planning Committee in the Path Forward and include democratic engagement as a core value of the institution.
 - Create new action plans continually and ensure accountability and follow-up after each November election cycle.
- Voter Registration (Hawk the Vote)
 - Expand tabling efforts across campus in common spaces, walkways, residence and dining halls, and the Iowa Memorial Union.
 - Continue to use new best-practices, such as *Ask Every Student* in order to ensure every Hawkeye gets the chance to register to vote.
 - Advocate to expand accessibility of online voter registration to non-residents.
 - Host a political fair on National Voter Registration Day
 - Launch the "90% Challenge" and Civic Engagement Seal to incentivize voter registration across all campus groups, departments, and organizations.
- Voter Education (Hawk the Vote)
 - Continue to host events, post candidate guides, and send mass emails informing on upcoming elections.
 - Continue to host tabling to disperse educational materials and SWAG.
 - Offer workshops and presentations on voting rights, voter ID, how to register, the history of suffrage/voter suppression, civic engagement opportunities, and how to advocate to Fraternity and Sorority Life, student organizations, the cultural and resource centers, and classes to meet students where they are at.

VISION

The UI's democratic engagement strategy has been almost entirely developed by students -- in order for this type of work to truly be institutional, strategizing and execution will need to become more widespread throughout the university.

STRATEGY

WHAT IS THE WORK, AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- GOTV and Turnout (Hawk the Vote)
 - Create and execute a robust in-person and social media campaign to encourage students to get out and vote.
 - Participate in National Vote Early Day and advocate for multiple days and locations for on-campus early voting.
 - Utilize funding from grants to hold "parties" at the polls, hand out pizza to those waiting in lines, etc.
 - In the age of COVID-19, work to expand student knowledge of absentee voting and ensure there is adequate information about how to request a ballot not only in Iowa but also in students' home states.
- Reflecting and Sharing (all stakeholders)
 - Widely share turnout information and demographic data to inspire the student body to be better and foster friendly competition.
 - Continuously update the UI's action plan to reflect national best practices and keep up with an ever-shifting digital world.
 - Continue the use of internal surveys and metrics to gauge widespread democratic engagement, in addition to NSLVE data.
- Ensuring Sustainability (Division of Student Life)
 - Maintain a strong relationship with the Johnson County Auditor's Office and the League of Women Voters in Johnson County.
 - Use Hawk the Vote as a leadership and mentorship pipeline, continually recruiting young students as executive members and committee members and pulling from extensive volunteer pools for following years.
 - Maintain that the Associate Director of Hawk the Vote becomes the Executive Director the following year, whenever possible.

REPORTING & EVALUATION

HOW WILL THIS PLAN BE SHARED, INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY?

This plan will be shared on several internal platforms, as well as broadcasted to the wider community. We will post it on our social media sites (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), and encourage our affiliated accounts to do so as well, like UI Student Life and even UIOWA generally. We will make it publicly available on our website, vote.uiowa.edu, and distribute it in a mass email to the university community. We will present it to shared governance (USG, GPSG, Faculty Senate, Staff Council) and to the Path Forward Strategic Planning Committee. We will share it with the Office of the President and continually take feedback on it throughout the year.

All data, like our campus NSLVE report, and resources we used, like the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide*, will be available on our website as well.

HOW WILL EVALUATION BE EXECUTED?

The purpose of the ongoing evaluation of this plan and its execution is to measure the success of our democratic engagement efforts across campus and to garner feedback from peer institutions. Evaluating the success of Hawk the Vote and its initiatives will demonstrate the need of the initiative, as well as guide the direction of its mission for years to come. The evaluation will be shared with the same stakeholders as mentioned above, as well as posted publicly. In the future, faculty researchers may be interested in becoming involved with evaluation, but for now it will be performed internally by the Hawk the Vote executive team and Leadership, Service, and Civic Engagement Staff. Evaluation will be carried out each spring, as the formation of a new action plan begins. We already have the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement and All In's Gold Seal, as well as designation as a Voter Friendly Campus. In addition to our NSLVE data, we will utilize volunteer surveys, executive team surveys, student participant surveys, campus and community partner surveys, and garner feedback in focus groups.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is ongoing, and includes not only NSLVE data yearly but also surveys from events, focus groups with community and campus partners, and internal reflection and documentation of which efforts are successful and which are not. Evaluation will occur not only within Hawk the Vote, but by stakeholders across campus.