



2018 University of Kansas Voter Engagement Campus Plan

Prepared by Martin Doherty and Adam Hupp

Executive Summary

The KU Voter Engagement Campus Plan is developed by representatives of the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics (Dole Institute) and the KU Student Senate Student Legislative Awareness Board (SLAB). Since 2004, years the Dole Institute has hosted a series of speakers and events in the fall called Civic Engagement and KU Leadership. Along with these events, the Dole Institute partners with SLAB and other student organizations to register voters on the university campus. Kansas has a strong tradition of political engagement, however, like most states, Kansas voters aged 18-29 vote at much lower rates than their elders. The Civic Engagement and KU Leadership events aim to address this issue. The Big 12 Voting Challenge will be a helpful addition to help entice KU students to vote in the 2018 midterm elections.

Leadership

Efforts to register students will be lead by Adam Hupp on behalf of the Dole Institute. Hupp will work in conjunction with Dr. Barbara Ballard, the associate director of the Dole Institute and a Kansas legislator representing the 44th district. Civic Engagement and KU Leadership is led by the Dole Institute and the Civic Engagement Leadership Council, which is comprised of student groups such as residents halls, Student Union Activities (SUA), KU Young Democrats, and KU College Republicans.

The Big XII Voting Challenge will be advertised during the voter registration efforts of Civic Engagement and Leadership. As such, Adam Hupp and Martin Doherty will be the primary points of contact with regard to the Big XII Voting Challenge. They will work with different organizations to ensure that the Big XII Voting Challenge is incorporated into existing activities and that they are representing KU and the competition in a professional manner.

Most major Civic Engagement and KU Leadership Events are hosted by the Dole Institute or partner organizations. The Dole Institute plans such as Pizza and Politics and Discussion Groups that help bring experts face-to-face with students on various political topics. Additionally, the Dole Institute Student Advisory Board (SAB) helps promote the Dole Institute and its events by offering volunteers for such events. There is a high level of cooperation between all the organizations involved (Dole Institute, Student Senate, SAB, etc), and they will continue the success of previous years' voter drives.

Commitment

As mentioned previously, the Big XII Voting Challenge will be incorporated into voter registration efforts. This series of programs, events, and volunteer opportunities has been an annual event for over ten years. As such, the Dole Institute at the University of Kansas has a proven commitment to organizing these events year after year. This commitment is reflected in the participating organizations' mission statements.

“The mission of the Dole Institute of Politics is to promote political and civic participation as well as civil discourse in a bi-partisan, balanced manner.”

“[The] Student Legislative Awareness Board was created to give the student body a platform to voice their opinions and protect their interests... SLAB aims to foster a civically engaged student body by, but not limited to: registering voters, lobbying for higher education, informing students on the most recent issues, and ultimately holding elected officials accountable for their actions.”

Thanks to a strong partnership between the Dole Institute and student organizations at the University of Kansas, KU possesses a strong commitment to furthering the political awareness and participation of students. The Dole Institute and SLAB fully support participation in the Big XII Voting Challenge, and look forward to a successful voter registration drive.

Goals

In the 2014 midterm election KU had a voting rate of 21.3%, which was 2.5% higher than the rate for all institutions. While much lower than the 51.3% voting rate achieved in the 2016 election, the 2014 results show that KU students can be convinced to vote. In 2017 the Dole Institute's voter registration efforts registered 640 people to vote. This year Civic Engagement and KU Leadership will take place from September 30 through October 19. However, the last day to register in KS is October 16. Additionally, KU's fall break starts on October 13. As such, the last day of the voter drive will be October 11. Also, in order to have a strategic campaign, efforts will take place at locations that are frequented by a variety of students. With all this in mind, the following goals have been developed.

- Increase frequency of tabling at Mrs. E's due to fall break in order to reach on-campus students, most of which are 17 or 18 year-old freshman
- Register students to vote at Party on the Patio on Aug 30, the Spencer Museum's Backyard Bash on Sept. 30, and the Dole Institute's Constitution Day Event
- Partner with the All Scholarship Hall Council (ASHC) to register scholarship hall students
- Either attend, or send materials, to sorority and fraternity chapter meetings to register greek life students
- Increase frequency of tabling on Wescoe Beach (a high traffic area) due to fall break limitations
- Register students to vote
- Register 1000 people to vote before October 16
- Create a unified social media effort across student organizations to encourage voting
- Host an event as part of SUA's "Tea at 3" in order to reach students who do live off-campus
- Attain high turnout at Civic Engagement and KU Leadership events, specifically Pizza and Politics and Discussion Groups
- Win the Big XII Voting Challenge

Reporting

The campus plan will be reviewed by representatives of the Dole Institute and the Civic Engagement Leadership Council. Adam Hupp and Martin Doherty will have contact with Barbara Ballard at least once a week leading up to the events. Martin Doherty reports to Student Senate, who will also be monitoring the progress of the events and student registration efforts.

Evaluation

The number of students registered to vote will be compared to previous years. Results will be analyzed considering if an election occurred that year, and if it was a midterm year or not. Rough attendance will be taken of Civic Engagement events to determine their popularity amongst students compared to previous years. Additionally, NSLVE data will be analyzed to determine if the University reached its voting rate goal.