

University of Miami: Democracy For U, By U
GOTV CAMPUS PLAN - FINAL REPORT 2018-2019

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Overview

History and Background of UM

The University of Miami is a vibrant and diverse academic community, which has rapidly progressed to become one of America's top research universities. The University comprises 11 schools and colleges serving undergraduate and graduate students in more than 180 majors and programs. In 2016, U.S. News & World Report ranked UM No. 44 among the top national universities in the country in its “Best Colleges” listings. U.S. News also cites several of its programs in “America's Best Graduate Schools.”

Furthermore, the University of Miami’s mission is to educate and nurture students, to create knowledge, and to provide service to our community and beyond. Committed to excellence and proud of the diversity of our University family, we strive to develop future leaders of our nation and the world.

The University is absolutely committed to freedom of inquiry—the freedom to think, question, criticize, and dissent. We pursue the value of excellence in our research and educational missions with the single-mindedness that only great commitments deserve. The University provides its students with the foundations for ethical citizenship and service to others, a respect for differences among people, and a commitment to high standards of thought and communication. We also will prepare them for rewarding lifelong careers and will imbue in them a continued and permanent desire for the study of knowledge and the search for truth.

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NSLVE Data Analysis

According to Tufts University's National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) report, UM students voted at a higher rate during the 2012 presidential election than the 2014 midterm election. In 2012, UM's voting rate was 50.1% and our registration rate was 83.2%. Although our 2014 election rate (15%) was substantially lower than our 2012 rate, we are committed to creating the best ways to mobilize our students to vote by enhancing their democratic engagement. Using this data, UM has made a commitment to implement strategic civic participation endeavors across campus by creating a coalition committed to increasing our voting rates in future presidential, midterm and local elections.

GOALS

The University of Miami set multiple goals in coordination with the Get Out The Vote organization. These goals included:

1. Implementing a campus-wide voter awareness program.
2. Promoting an atmosphere of democratic engagement.
3. Increasing student voting rates above 2012 levels.
4. Registering 1,000 students to vote.
5. Hosting at least three university-wide events.
6. Collecting 500 pledges to vote.
7. Providing transportation to the polls during early voting.

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COALITION

Overview and Impact

The CanesVote Network is made up of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and community members who are passionate about civic participation in the University of Miami community. The coalition enabled us to connect individuals with the common purpose of increasing awareness and active participation.

Lead Voter Engagement Organization: Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

GOTV is a campaign led by students with the support of the University of Miami's administration. The purpose of the campaign is to reach out to the students, faculty and staff and encourage them to get involved in the political process.

Schools, Colleges and Campus Units:

Division of Student Affairs, Butler Center for Service and Leadership, Department of Political Science, School of Law, Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, Miller School of Medicine, Housing and Residential Life, LGBTQ Student Center, Multicultural Student Affairs, Orientation and Commuter Student Involvement, Student Center Complex, and Student Activities and Student Organizations.

Student Organizations and Program:

Student Government, College Democrats, College Republicans, Association of Greek Letter Organizations, Student Athlete Advisory Committee, Graduate Student Association, SpectrUM – LGBTQ Student Organization, United Black Students, Hurricane Productions, Association of Commuter Students, Students for Sensible Drug Policy, Rathskeller Advisory Board, Freshman Leadership Council, Federacion de Estudiantes Cubano, TEDxUMiami, Orientation Outreach, First Year U, and STRIVE.

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Community Partners:

Engage Miami, National Organization for Women, League of Women Voters, Women's Commission, Florida Campus Compact, Campus Vote, Campus Election Engagement Project, Vote Smart, and the Miami-Dade Board of Elections.

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

Mobilization Campaign: Democracy By U for U

The University of Miami and GOTV scheduled multiple events to further engage the campus community. This included programs to increase voter registration, educate the campus and assist students in easily getting to the polls and voting.

Voter Registration

Campus voter registration drives are planned to be held at least twice a week from 12-2pm throughout September and then three times a week for the first week of October. Voter registration drives were also held at campus resource and organization fairs, new student orientation, campus service days, Hurricane Athletes Vote event, National Voter Registration Day, student organization meetings, classroom presentations, Greek chapter meetings (Greeks' Vote), and at residential colleges (Coming to U Dorm Stake-Out).

Transportation to the Polls and Early Voting

GOTV, in partnership with Student Government and Parking and Transportation, will provide early transportation to the Coral Gables Public Library in late October and on Election Day. GOTV will table specifically to assist students in requesting an absentee ballot and host a 'Canes Vote Extravaganza' on Election Day which encourage, and rewards, students to vote at the on campus polling station. GOTV will use palm cards, flyers and social media for updates and reminders.

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Outreach Campaign

Academic Involvement

In order for students to gain a better understanding of how elections work in the United States and the role of the everyday citizen in making democratic government function, the Political Science Department designed an elections course. In addition to lectures from faculty, each week guest speakers from campaigns, the media, polling, and other key players in the 2016 election provided inside accounts of the democratic process. Multiple courses also offered extra credit to students for volunteering with GOTV and attending GOTV's events. Faculty allowed GOTV to promote events and awareness through classroom presentations and sent email blasts empowering students to participate in the electoral process.

Internal Media

GOTV will use social media to engaged the larger campus presence through groups and personal pages. Pictures, reminders, and infographics will be posted on social media at least three times a week by each executive board member of GOTV as well as other campus organizations and partners. All events will be promoted and covered through the student newspaper (The Miami Hurricane), student weekly e-newsletter (Ibis News), Political Science Newsletter, the William R. Butler Center for Volunteer Service and Leadership Development's e-newsletter, and the student organization listserv.

Additional Media Coverage:

Aside from media coverage, GOTV will use banners ("Why Do You Vote?" and "Register to Vote!"), flyers for each event, palm cards (Transportation to the Polls and Election Day Watch Party), buttons ("CANES VOTE), pens, and t-shirts ("No Vote, No Voice; I Voted at the U").

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REFLECTION

Obstacles

Despite GOTV's successes, there were indeed several obstacles encountered during this election cycle. These included:

1. Efficiently and effectively communicating information with all UM campuses.
2. Communication to all departments and across campus about events.
3. State of Florida Board of Elections inputting incorrect data from students registering to vote.
4. Outside partisan organizations registering students without consent of the University of Miami administration.

BEYOND 2018

As a campus that has exhibited great vigor for civic participation, UM will continue to perpetuate student civic participation at all times, not just during elections. The UM campus community, specifically GOTV, will continue registering students to vote every week through tabling, participating in college-wide events and partnering with student organizations, academic departments, and Greek Life.