

# University of North Carolina Asheville Action Plan—2020

## Overview

The efforts to register and mobilize voters and to promote democratic engagement on the University of North Carolina Asheville’s campus are supported by a variety of different organizations and offices on campus including (though not limited to): the Student Affairs Division, the Student Government Association (SGA), the Key Center for Community Engaged Learning, the Student Organization Council, the Political Science Department, and the Political Science Club. As part of the All-In Challenge, representatives from each of these organizations (faculty, staff, and student), as well as from multiple academic departments, have agreed to serve on a voter engagement committee to plan, oversee, and coordinate all registration, mobilization, turnout, and other election-oriented activities on UNCA’s campus for the 2020 elections and any elections thereafter. Our efforts are a reflection of our university’s wider commitment to engagement and service to the community.

Our overarching goals, to be discussed in greater detail below, are to to increase voter turnout in the 2020 election relative to past presidential elections (especially among the 18-25 year old demographic), to provide easy access to non-partisan candidate and ballot information, to provide information about and clarify confusion over recent election law changes at the state and local level, and to provide greater access to the polls for members of the campus community. We also plan to continue encouraging students and members of the community to participate in the 2020 census, since this government function has so many implications for democratic governance. More generally, we hope to create/foster a culture of engagement on our campus, and, while we are aware this may not be accomplished in a single year or single election cycle, we believe the plan herein described lays the foundations for achieving this goal.

Beyond participating in the All-In Challenge, to accomplish these goals, we have also become a Commitment Campus with the Ask Every Student Initiative (<https://www.studentvoting.org/>) and plan to use their resources and framework to expand our outreach to the student body in the 2020-2021 academic year (and thereafter). We also participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (<https://idhe.tufts.edu/nslve>) to inform our strategies and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of our current framework for engagement. Further, we have developed very rich partnerships with the community outside our campus and work with the Campus Vote Project, NC Campus Compact, the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP), Democracy NC, the League of Women Voters, and other organizations to register and mobilize voters and educate the campus and wider community about elections and politics more generally.

Typically, our engagement efforts on campus rely heavily on face-to-face interaction—namely voter registration drives, candidate visits to campus, debate watching parties, information sessions, etc. However, in light of the coronavirus pandemic, we are well aware that many of these efforts might be more difficult to manage, especially in the short term, depending on health conditions. As such, we are already working to develop virtual alternatives to our usual efforts and those newly planned efforts we had been developing—these may include online voter registration drives, social media “watch parties” for candidate debates and election night, the creation of a campus website with voter information, etc. While these plans are still very much in the development stage, they are a priority for the committee.

The planning and implementation of the goals and strategies described subsequently are already underway; preparation for the 2020 election has been in full-force on UNCA’s campus since Fall 2019. On campus, we have already hosted voter registration drives, primary debate parties, a primary election night party, and other events to encourage students to follow electoral politics early on. Our efforts will pick up once students return to campus in August 2020; we are spending the summer formulating a game plan so that roll out in the Fall is as smooth as possible. Our efforts will extend beyond the November election, however. There are already plans in the works for a post-election panel conversation to discuss what to expect in the subsequent 4 years, and we will be continuing voter registration and engagement efforts into Spring 2021.

We are committed to continual efforts on campus in this regard, even if those efforts are most visible in the months immediately prior to an election.

This report was primarily completed by Ashley Moraguez, an Assistant Professor of Political Science, in consultation with those listed in the next section. Please direct questions and comments to [amorague@unca.edu](mailto:amorague@unca.edu).

## Leadership

As mentioned above, engagement efforts on UNCA's campus are supported by multiple offices, student organizations, academic departments, and individuals on campus. Our working group overseeing and planning the efforts most intimately includes a key group of faculty and staff on campus:

- Correne Anderson, Associate Director of Cultural Events & Engaged Citizenship, Key Center for Community Engaged Learning
- Patrick Bahls, Professor of Mathematics and Director of the Honors Program
- Kenneth Betsalel, Professor of Political Science
- Kate Johnson, Director of the Key Center for Community Engaged Learning
- Heidi Kelley, Professor of Anthropology
- Ashley Moraguez, Assistant Professor of Political Science
- Robert Straub, Director of International Student Services & advisor to Student Government Association, Student Affairs

In addition to the faculty and staff, student leaders are also a critical part of the efforts on campus. Our student leaders are passionate about democratic participation, have new and innovative ideas, and know the student body better than anyone else. Among the students, the Political Science Club<sup>1</sup> typically takes primary responsibility for planning and executing voter registration and mobilization events, in consultation with other groups. The Student Government Association also consistently helps with these efforts. The key student leaders involved in engagement efforts for the 2020-2021 academic year are:

- Devon Gill, President of the Political Science Club & Campus Election Engagement Project fellow
- London Newton, President of the Student Government Association
- Heather Russo, Treasurer of the Political Science Club
- Brodereck Stahl, Secretary of the Political Science Club
- Nikolai Wise, Vice President of the Political Science Club

Our working group is committed to being inclusive to all faculty, staff, and students interested in leading engagement efforts on campus, as our goal is to not only engage the student body but the entire campus community. Further, we are always looking to recruit new members who can bring fresh perspectives and new ideas with which we can work. While there is no official chair to our working group, as it is a very collaborative and equal partnership, the main organizing members are Ashley Moraguez, Kate Johnson, and Devon Gill. Some members of the committee will start meeting regularly (1-2 times per month) over summer 2020. As the Fall semester approaches, we plan to start having full committee meetings to begin concrete planning for the Fall. Once the Fall semester begins, the plan is to meet regularly and often—the frequency will be determined by the plans and events we lay out for ourselves (and how the public health conditions affect said plans).

Of course, there is turnover in membership of our working group from year to year, especially among the students who work on these efforts. However, there are succession plans and resources in place to account

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<sup>1</sup>Ashley Moraguez, listed above, serves as their faculty advisor

for such turnover. The Political Science academic department is committed to consistently providing faculty (and some financial) support to voter registration efforts. A member of the Political Science faculty will regularly advise the Political Science Club on campus and thus will, by requirement of the role, help to lead voter registration and engagement efforts on campus. The Political Science Club Constitution lists as the main charge of the organization to promote civic engagement and voting in a non-partisan manner on campus, so they will continue to spearhead these efforts. The Key Center similarly has an ongoing commitment to these issues in its stated goals and mission.

Further, to help facilitate smooth transition and turnover in these efforts, outgoing Political Science Club president (and recent UNCA alumna) Chase Loudermelt drafted a detailed document entitled “A Voter Registration Guide: UNC Asheville and Beyond.” This document is a how-to guide for planning engagement events on campus; it provides a detailed description of all the past civic engagement events that have been hosted on campus, an overview/evaluation of the challenges and successes the campus has had since 2016, and a proposal of ideas/recommendations for the future. Loudermelt created this guide as part of her fellowship with Campus Vote Project and her Community Engaged Scholar project with the Political Science Department and the Key Center for exactly these reasons.

Beyond our campus partners, members of the wider Asheville community are critical to our efforts, and we would not have the level of success we’ve had without them. They include:

- Buncombe County Election Services—particularly Jake Quinn, the chair of the Buncombe County Board of Elections
- Democracy NC—including UNCA alumnus Edward Peters
- NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org
- NC Campus Compact
- Campus Vote Project—especially Rachel Clay
- Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)— especially Liam Hysjulien
- The League of Women Voters of Buncombe County—particularly Aiden Carson
- Interfaith Initiative for Social Justice & Carolina Jews for Justice-West—especially Ron Katz

## Commitment

Our civic and voter engagement plans are consistent with and guided by the wider mission and goals of the university. UNC Asheville’s Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of community engagement as a means to “encourage students to engage in civic leadership and democratic processes.”<sup>2</sup> Further, recently established plans for the future of UNCA prioritize amplifying the whole student experience on campus, with the goal of developing our students into active citizens locally and globally. Similarly, the university’s mission statement emphasizes the importance of “engaged service” and “practical experience” for students; it also commits us as an institution to “respond to the conditions and concerns of the contemporary world” and “public responsibility to address the needs of our community.”<sup>3</sup> We believe that by promoting and assisting civic engagement, voting, and civil discourse on campus that we are helping address the needs of the local community, opening dialogue on pressing issues, and positioning students to make a difference in the world around them. Due to efforts like those described, UNC Asheville has ranked in the top two nationally for “Best Schools for Making an Impact” in 2016 and 2018 in the Princeton Review’s guidebook for *College that Pay You Back*.

The commitment to civic learning and engagement is present at every level of the institution—from the

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<sup>2</sup><https://strategicplan.unca.edu/strategic-direction-3-community-engagement>

<sup>3</sup><http://catalog.unca.edu/content.php?catoid=16&navoid=953>

administration to the student body. The administration has supported these efforts in many ways. In particular, the administration has committed UNC Asheville to be an early voting location for the campus and wider community during presidential election years. Even in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the senior staff at the university is committed to doing all they can to securing an early voting location on campus to make voting as easy as possible for students, faculty, staff, and the community members. While the ultimate decision about our designation will sit with the county Board of Elections, our institution has expressed interest in hosting voter services in the Fall and has already begun planning the safety protocol and the logistics in case we are approved. In particular, Vice Chancellor Bill Haggard has helped lead these efforts with Robert Straub, Ashley Moraguez, and alumna Chase Loudermelt, and with the support and approval of senior staff.

The university administration has also been and will continue to be a pivotal part of the Census efforts in Buncombe County. Three members of the campus community sit on Buncombe County's Complete Count Committee; they are Darin Waters, Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Community Outreach and Engagement, Brandy Bowman, our Community Engagement Project Manager, and Ashley Moraguez, Assistant Professor of Political Science. UNC Asheville's Chancellor, Nancy Cable, has been very active in promoting census participation to the campus community and in emphasizing the importance of an accurate count. She also encouraged the campus community (pre-pandemic) to consider working for the Census Bureau to help them fulfill their Western NC staffing needs. As census deadlines have been extended due to the pandemic, the institution remains committed to ensuring our community participates in this important civic duty.

Further, the Key Center for Community Engaged Learning on campus seeks to build partnerships within community to connect community leaders to students, faculty, and university staff. The Center's goals are to strengthen our community and to address social issues. As such, democratic participation and civic learning are at the core of their mission. This office also supports Service Learning on campus, which is approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic knowledge and skills to address needs in the community. Many of these classes focus on democratic engagement, in particular; these include classes on voting theory and on US elections, which team up to lead voter registration efforts on campus and to have students work the polls on Election Day. Further, the university has also offered a Service Learning course on the US census, in which students worked with the Census Bureau to ensure a complete count in our county.

Our working group is also currently working with Communications and Marketing on campus and with Residential Education in planning civic engagement for the 2020-2021 academic year. In particular, we are in conversations about trying to integrate voter registration training into the training for Resident Assistants, as we know that students are more likely to respond to mobilization efforts from their peers. We are also working to see if it will be possible to create a page on our university website or in our student portal system to provide students with everything they need to know about voting on campus—this would include links to voter registration forms, instructions on how to fill out the forms, dorm addresses, the early voting schedule, reminders about deadlines for registration & absentee voting, etc. In light of the pandemic, which might make many of our planned face-to-face voter mobilization efforts more difficult, we think this online presence could be particularly important.

The faculty also work to embed civic engagement into the curriculum and the classroom experience. This is discussed in more detail on the next section. But, the faculty's commitment to engagement also goes beyond the classroom and class content and into the co-curricular. For example, the History Department hosted a panel on impeachment (in a general sense) in Spring 2020 to educate the campus community about the process and how it works. The Political Science Department, in Spring 2020, also hosted a C-SPAN visit to campus. Further, the first-year seminar program and first-year experience also include an element of civic engagement. All faculty who teach these courses are given the opportunity to invite trained student "experts" into their classroom to register their classes to vote and to discuss the importance of voting (this is described in more detail below).

The Student Affairs division is also a pivotal part of the campus commitment to civic learning and en-

agement. They have an extremely dedicated staff who provide assistance to students in planning events, provide a budget for student organizations to do outreach work, and provide engagement and volunteer opportunities. They also help train student leaders. There are many key offices within student affairs that support these efforts, but the Multicultural Affairs Office and Student Organization Council are prominent among them.

Our most important commitment to civic engagement and voter participation, however, comes not from the administration, faculty, or staff but from our students. We have a very active and passionate student body and vibrant student organizations. As mentioned previously, the Political Science Club and the Student Government Association are key actors in voter and civic engagement efforts, but they often recruit volunteers and support with great success from across the student body. For example, our National Voter Registration Day efforts alone generally attract 50-60 student volunteers. Student groups have also been pivotal in inviting candidates to campus in the past, hosting nonpartisan groups to discuss the ballot, hosting debate and election night parties, and arranging early voting locations on campus and shuttles to the polls.

## Institutional Landscape

Our goals as a committee and as representatives of various departments, organizations, and offices at UNCA are informed by the the landscape both on and off campus. In particular, our goals are a reflection of the institutional structures around, resources for, and the realities of democratic participation within our campus community and in the state of North Carolina as a whole (especially since we recognize that many of our students are not necessarily Buncombe County voters).

## Campus Overview—Campus Curriculum, Efforts, Resources, and Barriers

As mentioned previously, there is a commitment to civic engagement and civic learning at all levels of the institution, including at the curricular level. For example, the Political Science Department seeks to “cultivate students who ask questions and think critically and creatively about the political world, communicate effectively in diverse communities, and are actively engaged in local, national, and international life.”<sup>4</sup> As such, the department is offering a host of courses in Fall 2020 to accomplish these goals, including but not limited to US Elections, ReStorying Community, Political Communication, and the Politics and Policy of Immigration. Similarly, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology emphasizes and promotes “discussion of a range of issues (e.g. gender and sexuality, queer theory, race and ethnicity, labor, globalization, disability studies, deviance and social control, poverty).”<sup>5</sup> Further, the Environmental Studies program teaches students to solve “environmental issues with sustainable solutions,” emphasizing the intersection of biology, chemistry, politics, and public policy (among other disciplines).<sup>6</sup> A faculty member in Management also offers an annual course called “Ideas to Action,” in which students learn how to turn their ideas into plans that can become reality; they are introduced to the theory and practice of social entrepreneurship, conduct a critical analysis of problems and needs, and work in interdisciplinary teams to design solutions to social problems. Further, many departments across the university have internship opportunities for students, in which they work with food banks, advocacy groups, political campaigns, and many other organizations. While these are anecdotal examples, many courses and departments across the university encourage students to participate in the community, engage in applied learning, and promote social responsibility.

In addition, the Liberal Arts Core at UNC Asheville requires all students to enroll in at least once Diversity Intensive course. These courses share 5 primary learning outcomes:

1. Students will understand the socially constructed nature of identities.
2. Students will understand the significance of individuals’ differing relationships to power.

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<sup>4</sup><https://politicalscience.unca.edu/>

<sup>5</sup><https://socanth.unca.edu/>

<sup>6</sup>[uncahttps://envr.unca.edu/](https://envr.unca.edu/)

3. Students will understand how individuals, organizations, and institutions create, perpetuate, or challenge inequality.
4. Students will understand how multiple identities intersect.
5. Students will be better equipped to reevaluate their ideas about diversity and difference.

These courses are dedicated to fostering an appreciation and understanding of diversity on campus. In Fall 2020 alone, almost 60 sections of DI courses are being offered at UNCA.

As mentioned previously, UNCA also has Service Learning Designated courses. In these courses, students are required to work for 20+ hours a semester with a community partner outside of class meeting time. These courses are organized through the Key Center, which also provides training for the faculty teaching these classes. These courses aim to:

1. Use student learning to address community needs and encourage community resilience
2. Encourage students to clarify, develop, and live their own values while respecting the views and beliefs of others
3. Deepen connections between the “real world” experiences and academic content
4. Foster feelings of civic responsibility
5. Allow students to develop life skills by working with people and places that are different from their own experiences

Eighteen Service Learning classes will be offered in Fall 2020, covering topics including “Supporting Math at Asheville Housing Authority,” “Cultivating Global Citizenship,” “US Elections” and “Community Health Promotion.” While these courses are not required of the student body, they are promoted to students and are popular among them. The Key Center also sponsors our Community Engaged Scholars Program, which provides the opportunity for students to become deeply involved in community based research and receive recognition for their efforts.<sup>7</sup> All these efforts are supported by co-curricular measures touched on above and subsequently.

In terms of campus resources to support civic learning and engagement, our biggest asset is our community—faculty, staff, students, and our Asheville-Buncombe community partners. Our institution has a good working relationship with many organizations and offices in the community, including the city and county government, the Mountain Area Health Education Center, the Collider, and many others. These organizations provide internships, work, and research opportunities for students on the campus. In terms of democratic participation, our campus has worked closely with local government, the county Board of Elections, the Asheville Field Office of the US Census Bureau, the League of Women Voters, NC Campus Compact, the Campus Vote Project, CEEP, Democracy NC, and so many other organizations and individuals who are committed to making sure our students know their democratic rights and have all that they need to exercise them. Without these partnerships, civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus would not be what it is today. We also have an incredibly active student body that cares deeply about social and political issues—their 75 percent voter registration rate and our volunteers for registration drives are examples of their commitment to democratic participation.

One of the biggest challenges to democratic engagement on campus is one of financial resources. Every year, our voter registration and mobilization efforts grow and become more ambitious; however, our modest budget for these activities remains limited and largely static. Our primary resources for our civic and voter engagement efforts come from the budgets of the Political Science Club, SGA, and the Key Center. Academic departments and other offices occasionally chip in, depending on need and the nature of our events. To supplement the on-campus funding we receive, we have come to rely on mini-grants from partner organizations, including the NC Campus Compact-CEEP, Democracy NC, and Campus Takeover. However, we know that if we are to continue to grow our efforts, securing a more stable funding structure will be an asset, and this is

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<sup>7</sup><https://keycenter.unca.edu/students/community-engaged-scholars/>

something that we are actively working on. It, however, may be more difficult in the financial climate induced by the coronavirus. Another challenge to our voter engagement efforts, in particular, is discussed in more detail in the following section—the way state laws have created barriers to voting and registration on campus.

Despite these challenges, our campus landscape is, we believe, conducive to fostering a culture of engagement, which is what we ultimately seek. The next subsection will show our progress toward this goal.

## Campus Overview—NSLVE Results and Campus Trends

UNCA participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), which provides institutions with data on student registration and voting rates.<sup>8</sup> Based on our access to data from the 2012-2018 election cycles<sup>9</sup>, we believe we have a good sense of the potential trends in participation on campus. While the 2012 and 2016 reports, in some ways, speak more directly to our challenge and context for 2020, as they cover presidential election years, we believe that the 2018 report reveals some important information about the activity of our student body that may be applicable to the 2020 cycle, as well.

Based on the accessible data, we believe we should focus on increasing both registration and turnout rates on our campus. In terms of registration, 72% of students were registered in 2012 and that dropped to 68.7% in 2016. Going into 2018, we were worried about this decline, even if slight. However, in 2018, registration rates increased to 75.7%, a 7-point increase from 2016. While we are heartened by this increase and recognize that registration rates over 75% are high, we believe/hope they can be improved upon. Of those students who are registered, turnout rates were 67.5% in 2012 and 75.3% in 2016. We are hoping to increase that further going into the 2020 election. Between the 2014 and 2018 midterm elections, turnout among registered students increased 24.5%, so we are hoping to capitalize on the growing momentum and engagement of our students in more recent elections.<sup>10</sup> We find these upward trajectories promising but would like all of our registered students to exercise their right to vote. The overall voting rate of students on campus was 48.7% in 2012 and 51.8% in 2016. We are encouraged that over half of our students turned out to vote in 2016 but want to increase those percentages for the election cycles to come. Indeed, there have been some changes to our electoral system at the state and local level that may help bolster our numbers, which will be discussed in more detail.

There are some interesting institutional and demographic patterns on campus worth noting, as well. UNCA students seem to overwhelmingly take advantage of early voting opportunities: in 2012, 66.4% of our students who voted did so in the early voting period, 69.6% in 2016, and 56.8% in 2018. This is in comparison to the 22.7%, 17.9%, and 32.4% that voted on election day in 2012, 2016, and 2018 respectively. This is a pattern of which we intend to take note and upon which we will focus in our goals for 2020. Further, we also note that a non-negligible percent of our students voted absentee in the past 2 presidential election cycles. Approximately 10%–12% of our voting students voted absentee in between 2012 and 2018.

In terms of demographics, race and ethnicity seem to be important factors in voter turnout on UNCA's campus. In general, students who identify as racial and ethnic minorities tend to have lower turnout rates than do those students who identify as white. The major exception to this trend was among Native American/American Indian students, who turned out at the highest rates of any demographic in 2016, at 64.7%. White student turnout was 52.6%, compared to 44% for Hispanic students, 36.1% for Asian students, 43.7% for black students, and 47% for multiracial students. These trends are important to consider for the goals we are setting.

Age also seems to play a major role in voting on our campus. Turnout steadily increases with the age of our students. In particular, the age range of concern is students that are 18-21, with a turnout rate of 43.3 in 2012 and 40.9 in 2016.<sup>11</sup> Turnout increased significantly for students 22-24, with rates of 46 and

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<sup>8</sup>We will be participating again in 2020; we reauthorized our participation prior to the 2018 election cycle.

<sup>9</sup>We have little data on the 2014 results from our campus, due to turnover of staff on campus. All our information from 2014 was provided by comparisons in the 2018 NSLVE report.

<sup>10</sup>Turnout in 2014 was 32.5%, compared to 57% in 2018

<sup>11</sup>It was 37.3% in 2018

59.6 in 2012 and 2016. In particular, we plan to focus on first-year students to combat some of these trends, something we began for the 2018 election cycle.

## North Carolina Overview—State Voting Data and Patterns

Trends in voting across the state of North Carolina are also relevant to the efforts we make on our campus to increase registration and turnout rates. North Carolina has a controversial history when it comes to voting rights. As recently as 2016, a federal appeals court struck down a state Voter ID law that targeted black voters with “almost surgical precision.”<sup>12</sup> The same law made it more difficult for young voters to register, by barring pre-registration efforts. While the law has since been struck down and is no longer in effect, it has bred a lot of disenchantment with and confusion surrounding the registration and voting process. Then, in 2018, NC voters approved a constitutional amendment to require photo identification for voting purposes, despite the controversy over the original voter ID law passed in 2013. Recently (as of December 31, 2019), a federal court issued an injunction against the new ID requirement.<sup>13</sup> The injunction will remain in place until further order from the court. However, at the moment, there is state legislation proposed to reinstate the requirement. As it stands now, it appears that photo identification will not be required in 2020, but this may change. This back-and-forth on the issue has created a lot of uncertainty over the state of election law in the state. Efforts to increase registration and voting on UNCA’s campus, then, must be made with this in mind. One of the largest barriers to registration and voting in the state, we believe, is one of information and access.

Some of the voting trends we see on campus seem to be more systemic, as they are also apparent at the state level. While turnout rates in NC are the 11th highest in the country (69 percent in 2016), it is not consistent across all segments of society. The demographic with the lowest turnout rates state-wide was voters in the 18-25 age bracket with a 2016 turnout rate of 53% (compared to 60% in 2008 and 55% in 2012). Further, according to Democracy NC, a non-partisan nonprofit in North Carolina that focuses on voter engagement, there was a 7 point gap between white and black voter turnout in 2016 (71% vs 64%); the rate for Hispanic voters was even lower at 58 percent.<sup>14</sup> We believe it is critical to think about the barriers that may be affecting the turnout rates of these groups on campus and in the state writ large when creating our campus action plan.

Another contextual factor at the state level that may affect voting and engagement on our campus is the controversy around NC’s partisan gerrymandering. North Carolina was one of the two states whose districts were being litigated in the 2019 Supreme Court case *Rucho v. Common Cause* (Maryland was the other state). In that case, the Supreme Court declared that issues of partisan gerrymandering are political questions and thus outside the purview of federal courts. This led to a belief that North Carolina’s congressional districts would remain untouched. Asheville was one of the cities most affected by these gerrymanders. In fact, CNN recently ran an op-ed that went viral about gerrymandering in Asheville.<sup>15</sup> Further, UNCA’s campus was affected by the redistricting plan put in place after the 2010 Census. Asheville was previously split between the 10th and 11th congressional districts and those district lines cut through UNC Asheville’s dormitories (and even particular apartments and suites on campus). This made registering voters on campus difficult to navigate and also had an effect on student voters’ feelings of efficacy. However, as of November 2019, state courts have struck down our previous maps and approved new ones for the state.<sup>16</sup> Under the new maps, which will be in place for the 2020 primary and general elections, Asheville (and thus UNCA’s campus) is contained entirely in the 11th congressional district. This change should increase voting power of our campus, and there is no incumbent running for office. As such, this should hopefully increase turnout. The way redistricting has affected our campus is also one reason why census efforts are so important on campus and why an accurate count in our county is critical.

Another recent change worth noting is that, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, NC has moved for

<sup>12</sup><http://electionlawblog.org/wp-content/uploads/nc-4th.pdf>

<sup>13</sup><https://www.wral.com/federal-judge-blocks-voter-id-in-north-carolina/18861700/>

<sup>14</sup><https://democracync.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/WhoVoted2016.pdf>

<sup>15</sup><https://www.cnn.com/2019/11/23/opinions/gerrymandering-voting-districts-america-daley/index.html>

<sup>16</sup><https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/12/03/north-carolinas-new-congressional-map-shifts-two-seats-toward-democrats/?arc404=true>



the first time to allow online voter registration; previously you could only register by paper form. This should make it easier (or at least faster) for many students to register to vote or to update their registration. However, it is only available to those who hold NC driver's licenses, and we do not know how long the measure will last. We will need to rework our registration efforts, potentially, to account for this change and the slight difficulties it could pose.

While some of these changes may encourage mobilization and engagement, we have had a lot of big electoral changes occur in a very short period of time. As such, one of the most important efforts we will have to make going into the 2020 election is one of information provision—we need to spread the word about the status of the voter ID law and the new districts.

## Goals

### Short-Term Goals (Fall 2020 & Spring 2021)

1. Maintain/increase the voter *registration* rates on campus, relative to 2018—the registration rate on UNCA's campus was 75.7% in 2020 (which was higher than in both 2012 and 2016). We believe that if we can make registering easy enough and pervasive enough on campus, we can maintain our levels of registration and possibly increase them. Our ambitious goal is to aim for 78-80% registration, but we understand that a 75.7% rate is already very high and that there may be diminishing returns on efforts at some point. However, this will not temper our efforts. Focusing on registration rates is one of our major goals, given that among registered voters, turnout was over 75 percent in 2016, which is a very high rate.
2. Improve voter *turnout* rates on campus, which we believe requires a multi-tiered approach:
  - Maintain/increase aggregate voter turnout rates on campus, relative to 2012 & 2016—in 2016, the voter turnout rate on campus was 51.8%, which was significantly lower than the aggregate state average and lower than the state average for voters between 18 and 25. As such, our goal is to have campus turnout rates increase in 2020 and to hopefully reflect or exceed the state and national averages for voters in the 18-25 age bracket. Given the surge we saw in voting and registration rates in 2018 (especially impressive for a midterm year) and the national increase in college student voting<sup>17</sup>, we believe this goal is within reach.
  - Increase turnout among groups of students with lower rates—We aim to increase turnout among the demographic groups with the lowest turnout rates on campus, as described above (18-21 year olds, racial and ethnic minorities, etc). Further, there are some trends from the NSLVE reports that indicate that students in certain fields of study are less likely to vote than are others, and we aim to take measures to combat these trends.
  - Pledging at least 500 students to vote—While pledges are not a true commitment device, we do think that they have a psychological effect on potential voters and can help encourage turnout in the election. Further, when we pledge students, we intend to give them an option to sign up for an email listserv that provides important election-related updated and information, which can help increase mobilization. For the 2018 midterm election, we pledged over 300 voters. On National Voter Registration Day in 2019, a non-election year, we were able to pledge over 400 potential voters to vote in the 2020 primaries and general election. If we can get that kind of interest in an off-year, we should be able to increase that during a high profile election year.
3. Reduce barriers/obstacles to voting for our campus community—we perceive that there are some institutional and informational barriers to voting on our campus that should be addressed in any plans to increase civic engagement and voter participation among our students and the wider UNCA community. First, we believe there may be a lot of uncertainty, confusion, and misinformation about recent electoral changes. This may produce anxiety in students considering voting, so we will aim to spread accurate information and to provide resources for students to turn to in order to have

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<sup>17</sup><https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/09/20/massive-surge-college-student-voting-2018>

their questions answered. Further, in 2018, our campus was not an early voting location, due to construction on campus and anticipated low turnout in midterm elections. This created potential barriers for students being able to vote, as the closest early voting location was over 2 miles away (and most of our students utilize early voting options) and many of our students either do not or cannot have cars.<sup>18</sup> We offered free shuttles and transportation for the polls, but we believe turnout would have been higher if there was early voting on campus, as there was in 2016.

4. Provide opportunities for students to get engaged in the wider community, model civil discourse, & promote a culture of engagement—For those students who are particularly interested in politics and democracy and want to get involved, we hope to provide greater information on and opportunities for students to get involved in the election both on and off campus. We hope to have at least 50 students volunteer for campus registration events and another 40-50 volunteer with the Buncombe County Board of Elections, primarily as poll workers. We also hope to sponsor a series of talks, parties, and events on campus to attract attention. We believe this is key to fostering well-rounded citizenship and we think that the involvement of students in the process can positively affect and influence other students to get involved, creating an atmosphere of engagement. This, of course, will all be contingent on public health conditions.
5. Create a plan for engagement amidst the coronavirus in case in-person mobilization efforts are not possible or advisable—We are currently thinking about the best ways to transition our efforts to the virtual or remote setting, in case it will be necessary. Many of our efforts in the past and those we have been planning in advance for 2020 were based on face-to-face interaction—large voter registration drives, debate and election parties, Party at the Polls, etc. We will need to completely rethink our usual plans and have fun and engaging remote options, if public health conditions necessitate it. Even if in-person events are possible, we will need to make sure they comply with campus safety regulations.
6. Promote census response rates—The Census self-response period was supposed to end in June 2020. However, because of the pandemic, census efforts have been extended till October 31st. As such, we will continue to promote the census and encourage responses, especially since census efforts began in earnest once the Spring 2020 semester went remote. Students are supposed to respond to the census at their college addresses, but many students were home with their families and were confused by how to respond or did not receive their mailer. We will work to dispel this confusion. The Census has huge implications for representation, funding, racial & ethnic minorities, children, and so many other important groups and issues. We know we cannot turn a blind eye to continued work in this area.

## Longer Term Goals

Beyond the (relatively) short-term goals addressed above, we have some longer term goals that we hope to accomplish in the new few years:

1. Ensure campus as an early voting location from here on
2. Have election-related information included on the university calendar
3. Reach a voter turnout rate of 60 percent across campus and increase turnout among segments of campus with lower rates
4. Develop and maintain relationships with local high schools to host voter registration and election-rated events, especially political candidates/politician visits, to increase the 18-21 turnout rate in Asheville
5. Further embed community/civic engagement, democratic participation, and political inclusivity in future iterations of the university's strategic plan
6. Secure greater university and outside funding for voter mobilization activities

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<sup>18</sup>For example, first-year students cannot have vehicles on campus and are, for the most part, required to live on campus.

# Action Plan

Below, we include our initiatives & strategies to accomplish each of the preceding goals.

## Strategies for Short Term Goals

1. Maintain/increase the voter registration rates on campus—We believe registering a greater number of students/members of the campus community to vote is a critical step in getting greater numbers to vote and otherwise participate in elections. For these reasons, we plan to do the following:
  - (a) Host multiple registration events around campus (\*if public health conditions allow—we address this below)—we believe hosting multiple high-profile registration events on campus will be key to getting students registered in time to vote in the November election. These events will involve recruiting volunteers, training volunteers, and tabling at various places around campus (while observing safety protocol). In particular, we would like to strategically host these events before the October 9 registration deadline for the general election. While it is possible for voters to register and vote at the same time during the early voting period, we think that pre-registering voters will make them more likely to turnout and to have the necessary resources to cast informed votes. We will, however, advertise, the same-day registration option during the early voting period, as well.
    - Possible events/registration drives (again, only if they can be done safely):
      - RendezBlue (August 2020)—first-year student orientation. Since many first-year students may be first-time voters, we want to particularly focus on getting them registered to vote. Embedding registration into the orientation schedule will be hugely helpful on this front. Previously, we have had student volunteers visiting first-year seminars (required courses for first-year students) but orientation may be a more efficient way to do so, if possible.
      - Rockypalooza (August 2020)—annual picnic and celebration to kick-off the new school year. Many members of the campus community attend this event, including first year students (it is part of their orientation process) and their families. This will be a prime opportunity to register a large group of voters
      - Student Organization Fair (August 2020)—We intend to table at the Student Organization Fair, an annual event that gives student organizations the opportunity to attract new members, in order to register students to vote at a location they will likely visit anyway and as a way to recruit volunteers for our registration drives and election day activities
      - Constitution Day (September 2020)—The office of Student Affairs, often with the help of the Political Science Department, hosts an annual Constitution Day speaker, as well as Constitution week events (movie viewings, trivia, etc). As part of these festivities, we plan to have registration tables at the locations of each of the events and around high traffic areas on campus
      - National Voter Registration Day (September 22, 2020)—This is typically our largest day of registration activity on campus, with over 40 volunteers and hundreds of students registering and pledging to vote. We typically table all over campus, host training sessions for volunteers, and offer incentives to get students, faculty, and staff to stop by to register. We provide free food at these events, information about candidates, sample ballots, and NOW points for those who attend. NOW points are points that students collect for attending events on campus that can be redeemed for various prizes at the end of the semester.
    - Tabling locations— Generally, high traffic areas would be the top priority for tabling: outside Brown Dining Hall, both inside and outside Highsmith Student Union, outside Ramsey Library, outside residential dorms, outside Rhoades-Robinson academic building, and by the Rocky the Bull Dog statue. Other academic buildings would be covered, if enough volunteers are recruited. However, the state of the pandemic may render this not feasible.
    - Advertising—To advertise these campus-wide registration events, we intend to co-host these events with as many student organizations as possible, use social media pages to post fliers and

reminders, post fliers and banners around campus, post advertisements on the digital media screens in dormitory buildings, email student listserves, and hopefully post on a prominent page on the university website.

- (b) Encourage online voter registration for those students who are eligible, at in-person drives and via email and social media. We can also designate “Voter Registration” areas around campus that operate all year long for students who cannot register online—ideally, we hope to designate a voter registration area in academic buildings, dorms, and in Highsmith Student Union so that students can stop in at any time to register to vote. A designated faculty/staff member will periodically check into to each location to collect and submit any registration forms submitted. This will be done in addition to the advertised events. We already have some of these locations, but we should have more.
  - (c) Training as many volunteers as possible—while registering to vote is not necessarily a difficult task, in general, it can be tricky for students who live in campus dorms. Residential addresses cannot be designated as PO Boxes; however, students who live on campus are assigned a campus PO Box as their address and often use this as their residential address on voter registration forms. When this occurs, the Board of Elections cannot process the form. As such, we will train members of the campus community to instruct students on how to fill out the registration forms, to provide the addresses of the actual dorm buildings (which can serve as the residential address for students), and to explain that PO Boxes can only be used as mailing addresses. We especially intend to train any registration drive volunteers and RAs in the dorms of this. We also plan to post fliers with residential vs mailing addresses at any registration location. This process should be easier now that campus is contained within one congressional district.
  - (d) Apply for external funding to support these efforts—many of the efforts that we are planning (and that have been successful in the past) have required resources and funding that are not always readily available on campus. As such, we plan to continue applying for external grants to support these efforts, while working to secure on-campus funding as well.<sup>19</sup>
  - (e) We have already joined the Ask Every Student Initiative as a Commitment Campus and plan to use their framework and toolkit to support our efforts
2. Improve turnout rates on campus—while we believe registering students is a major step in improving turnout rates on campus, we also recognize that registering a student to vote does not guarantee that they will, in fact, turn out to vote. As such, we plan to do the following:
- (a) Encourage Early Voting—We believe that informing students and members of the campus community about and encouraging them to vote during the 17-day early voting period can help turnout rates. As we have seen from our NSLVE reports, early voting is overwhelmingly the option our students choose. We want to further emphasize the benefits of doing: fewer/shorter lines, the ability to vote at any early voting location (rather than at a designated voting location), weekend voting, etc. We will have fliers with early voting dates and locations available at all registration drives and in Highsmith Student Union. We believe early voting is especially important on our small campus, since many of our students are commuters and many work off-campus jobs during the work week.
  - (b) Designate campus as an early voting location (or provide transportation to the polls)—UNCA’s campus served as an early voting location for the 2016 election due to efforts of our student body president and SGA. However, due to widespread construction on campus during the Fall 2018 semester, it was not an early voting location for the midterm elections in 2018. While construction is still ongoing on our campus, the student union is now complete and is the ideal space for early voting. As such, we are currently working with the Board of Elections and the university administration to designate campus as an early voting location, which will make it much easier for all members of the campus community to vote. We recognize, however, that there are many other factors, besides increasing turnout, that go into a decision about hosting a voting

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<sup>19</sup>We have been fortunate enough to receive mini-grants from NC Campus Compact and the Alliance for Youth Organizing in the past

location. As such, we intend to be flexible if we are not able to designate a campus location as one. We plan to apply for grants to pay for shuttling to early voting locations, if campus does not serve as one. Regardless of the outcome, we will help students get to the polls.

- (c) Focus on groups with lower turnout rates—Given past NSLVE reports, we believe it is important to focus on certain sections of the study body with lower turnout rates, hoping to improve those rates in 2020 and future elections. We believe the key to success in this area is communication and outreach. The groups we would like to assist are as follows:
- First-year/younger students: Given the voting rates of 18-21 year olds on campus, we intend to focus many of our efforts on this age group. In particular, we plan to focus some of our activities more particularly around the first-year experience; we believe that first year students are less likely to register and vote because of the difficulty in navigating the process, especially at a new address, and because many are new to voting. Further, our recent incoming first-year classes have been quite large, meaning that they are an increasingly important group on our campus. To help facilitate their participation, we intend to have voter registration tables at move-in and orientation events. Further, UNCA requires all first-year students to enroll in a First Year Colloquium (FYC), generally during their Fall semester. We will extend an offer to all FYC instructors to have representatives of the Voter Engagement Committee come to each of their class periods for 20-30 minutes to register students to vote, answer any questions about voting/ballots/candidates, and provide voter information guides.
  - Racial and ethnic minorities: As noted above, voter turnout among UNCA students that identify as racial and ethnic minorities tend to be lower than the university average and the average for white students. To help increase those rates, we intend to work with the Multicultural Affairs office and Student Organization Council on campus to reach out to these groups. We hope to cosponsor voter registration and election-related events with student organizations that represent these groups. Further, we intend to have open conversations with student groups on campus to identify the issues that students find the most pressing and to see how we can foster greater engagement and inclusivity. We believe this communication is critical.
  - Certain fields of study: According to NSLVE reports, we have some fields of study with low turnout rates (some natural sciences, for instance) and others with decreasing turnout rates (such as history). We intend to reach out to these departments (faculty, department chairs, etc) and extend the offer to visit classes to register students. We also plan to have voter registration tabling events in these academic buildings. In 2018 and 2019, we tabled outside of Rhoades-Robinson, a main science building on campus, on NVRD and this was, by far, one of our busiest registration locations.
- (d) Ask students to pledge to vote & send follow up emails: While many of our efforts will be focused on registering new voters, we are aware that we also must foster a sense of engagement in those who are already registered to vote. As such, we will offer voter pledges at all registration events and will offer incentives for students who agree to pledge to vote. When a student pledges to vote, we will also offer to sign them up for a listserve that will exclusively be used to send reminders about upcoming deadline and dates, political events on campus, and updates/changes to election law.
- (e) Access to absentee ballots—At all voter registration events on campus, we intend to provide absentee ballots for our students, so that they have ample time to fill out their ballots and send them off to the appropriate county board of elections. While a large proportion of our students are from the state of North Carolina, they do represent the entire state geographically. A decent number of our students choose to stay registered in their home districts and about 10 percent of those who voted in 2012 and 2016 voted absentee. For students who wish to do so, we aim to make this as easy as possible and to walk them through the process. We believe access to and use of absentee ballots will be particularly important amidst the pandemic.
- (f) Election Day/Early Voting Period reminders— We believe one of the reasons young voters turn out to vote at lower rates is the fact that they have so many other things going on in their lives;

college students, in particular, can be overwhelmed by the amount of information and number of events that are available to them. For this reason, we think that reminding students about the early voting period and about election day can be a huge step in increasing voter turnout on campus. We can easily accomplish this goal by emailing student listserves and posting fliers around campus. Further, we intend to offer students the possibility to sign up for a reminder listserve when they register or pledge to vote at our registration drives. When a student pledges to vote, we inform them that this will automatically sign them up to receive 1-2 email reminders about the upcoming election, close to the voting period. We also offer this possibility to those who are newly registered as well.

- (g) Advertise same day registration—Many of our efforts on campus will encourage students to pre-register to vote before the state’s October 9 registration deadline. However, we do not want members of the campus community who miss that deadline to think they will be unable or ineligible to vote. As such, after October 9, many of our efforts will switch gears to start advertising same day registration possibilities, which are available to them during the day early voting period. We plan to use social media, email, and fliers to advertise this information.
  - (h) Host a Party At (or To) the Polls (if possible)—In 2018, we received a small grant to host a Party to the Polls. This event provided food, music, activities, and voter resources to the campus community, while free shuttles transported students back and forth the closest early voting location. This event was very well attended and brought a lot of attention and excitement to voting. We hope to do this again in 2020. If campus is an early voting location, we will host the party in the same building as the voting location (though, not immediately next to the polling location, of course). If it is not an early voting location, we will emulate our plan from 2018 and provide shuttles during the party. All of this is contingent on public health conditions.
3. Reduce barriers/obstacles to voting for our campus community—We believe that there are various potential barriers that may prevent, discourage, or depress turnout among the campus community that we can take measures to alleviate, if not resolve:
- Now that congressional districts have been redrawn in the state, Asheville, in its entirety, lies within one congressional district. This is a huge change for those of us spearheading registration efforts. Previously, when campus was split into two congressional districts, students had to be very careful in filling out their voter registration forms, and were required to know not only their dorm address, but their specific room/suite numbers and letters. Many students would neglect to fill out the form properly and would have troubled getting their forms processed. However, now the process should be significantly streamlined. The pressure on volunteers to make sure that students provide their room number is also lessened as they all will be in the same congressional district if they live on campus, and forms should be more easily processed. This will make the process much easier for those filling out forms, those volunteering to help register voters, and the Buncombe County Board of Elections.
  - As mentioned above in more detail, we want to make voting as convenient as possible for the students. We’re hoping to make campus an early voting location, or to at least provide free transportation to the closest early voting location.
  - Information also tends to be a significant barrier to voting. If voters feel that they cannot easily access information on candidates or the election to cast informed votes, they may not bother to vote at all. Given all the recent changes to electoral laws, we believe that spreading accurate information will be key to turnout in 2020:
    - Voter ID laws—as mentioned previously, in the past 6 years, NC has enacted two different voter ID laws, one of which was struck down by the federal courts and the other of which is temporarily blocked. As it stands currently, voters will not need a photo ID to vote in 2020, but that is subject to change. As such, the onus is on us to follow the litigation on this front and to keep the campus community informed as to the status of the law. While voter ID laws can generally have a depressing effect on turnout, we hope that if it is re-instated, it will not have such an effect on campus. Before the recent decision to block the ID law, our

campus worked very hard to have our campus IDs approved as official forms of ID for voting purposes, and we were successful. As such, if the law is re-instated before November 2020, we will make major efforts to ensure that the campus community knows that they can use their university IDS, which all students, faculty, and staff have.

- Asheville recently voted to move our local elections to national election years (previously they were held in so-called “off-years”). However, it is very possible that many potential campus voters are not aware that the 2020 ballot will not only have presidential and congressional candidates (we have a Senate seat up for election, in addition to a House race with no incumbent) but will also have city and county officials as well. As such, we want to spread information about the down ballot so that voters can get informed. We plan to provide sample ballots and non-partisan candidate information (often provided by local chapters of Democracy NC or the League of Women Voters, etc) at our registration drives and other events to help inform voters and lower that information barrier.
4. Provide opportunities for students to get engaged in the wider community, model civil discourse, & promote a culture of engagement—The overarching goal behind all of our actions is to foster a sense of community and civic mindedness on our campus and to create a norm of engagement and participation. Towards that end, we seek to take action to imbed these actions into our curriculum, our extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, and our community outreach projects:
- Curricular Efforts/Engaged Learning: As described previously, there are many Service Learning classes being offered in Fall 2020 and more will be offered in Spring 2021. Further, in Fall 2020, there will be 3 courses taught specifically on voting and the election.
  - Election Night Party (which may need to be virtual): We will host an election night results-viewing party, as a culmination as many of the efforts that we will engage in the Fall. We will open this party to the whole campus (and outside) community, provide refreshments, and will invite faculty members to give context to and discuss the results. We believe that this activity will show students that politics can be fun and educational at the same time. Further, we think that having a group viewing of the results will foster a sense of political and democratic community and that having faculty participate can elevate the conversation to facilitate responsible discourse
  - Community Outreach: Beyond all the efforts we will be embarking upon on campus, we also strive to provide opportunities for students to volunteer and work with outside organizations to increase voter registration, turnout and mobilization in the wider Asheville and Western NC areas. We already have contacts with Democracy NC and other groups to participate in voter registration drives off-campus. Further, we hope to do outreach to local high schools to host voter registration drives.
  - Continue having student fellows work with engagement organizations—We currently have two students who are serving as fellows with the Campus Vote Project and the Campus Election Engagement Project. These organizations have been providing resources and training to help these students lead voter engagement efforts on campus. We would like to continue to support students in pursuing these opportunities and get more students involved in such projects.
5. Create a plan for engagement amidst the coronavirus in case in-person mobilization efforts are not possible or advisable—While this plan is not fully fleshed out quite yet, it is a priority for us, and we are regularly meeting to develop a plan. It may include:
- Creating a page about voting on the university website or the student portal—as mentioned above, we are in conversation with the Communications and Marketing Department about this possibility
  - Figuring out the best way to do voter registration drives and NVRD remotely—for now, NC has allowed for online voter registration because of COVID-19; we assume this will remain in to the Fall. As such, it should be easier enough to have online voter registration drives from a logistical standpoint. However, there are some challenges. Research shows that people are more likely to register and turnout if asked by a peer. As such, we need to find a way to make the online drives

personal and to attract students. Further, the online registration is only possible for students with NC driver's licenses, as the process is handled through the DMV. As such, we need to find a safe, social-distanced way to get out-of-state students or students without proper ID paper forms and to help them mail them.

- Hosting virtual watch parties on social media for candidate debates and election night results
  - Developing an online challenge for voter registration and turnout to keep students engaged and active in the campus' progress
  - Planning a student take-over of the university's social media page to discuss the election and voting
  - Hosting webinars on the ballot, the safety protocol for voting in person, absentee voting, etc
6. Promote census response rates—To do this, we are planning on sending campus-wide emails about where, how, and when to respond to the census and providing updates on Buncombe County's response rates. We are also considering adding a banner to our webpage that encourages census responses and links to the census website. We plan to host (possibly virtually) the WNC Census Bureau Partnership Specialist to talk to students about the importance of the Census and what's at stake. We had such an event last academic year, but in light of the new circumstances, it is worth repeating.

## Strategy for Long Term Goals

1. Ensure campus as an early voting location from here on—As mentioned above, the senior staff has already approved our campus to be an early voting location for Fall 2020 and is working on plans to figure out the logistics and safety protocols in advance. However, the county and state Boards of Election have the ultimate decision making power. Our campus has expressed interest to the county that we would like to be considered for early voting for presidential and midterm election years and are advocating for approval. We believe that we should be able to secure this during presidential election years, but in midterm years, there are fewer early voting locations and it may be a challenge. However, we are laying the groundwork. The challenge we currently face is county budget cuts threatening to reduce the number of early voting locations, at least this year.
2. Have election-related information included on the university calendar—We are working with the university's Communications and Marketing Team on brainstorming events for the Fall and with the intent of having them placed on the university calendar in advance. While the coronavirus is making it harder to plan such actions in advance, we believe that if we can get some on the calendar before the semester this year, we will have more success in the future as well.
3. Reach a voter turnout rate of 60 percent across campus and increase turnout among segments of campus with lower rates—We hope to continue all our efforts described above in the hopes on creating a more pervasive civic culture on campus. We also hope to continue our participation in the All-In Challenge, Ask Every Student Initiative, and other programs to help support our efforts and provide us with a framework.
4. Develop and maintain relationships with local high schools to host voter registration and election-rated events, especially political candidates/politician visits, to increase the 18-21 turnout rate in Asheville— This is a very nascent project on our part, but we believe partnering with our Education department may be a great way to start this process. In the short term, however, the coronavirus may make this outreach difficult.
5. Further embed community/civic engagement, democratic participation, and political inclusivity in future iterations of the university's strategic plan—When the time comes to revisit our mission statement and strategic plan, we hope to be an active part of the process and advocate for this.
6. Secure greater university and outside funding for voter mobilization activities—This is one of our biggest challenges. We believe that working on partnerships both on and off-campus will be key here—pooling resources is our best bet. The key is finding these partners willing to pool said resources.



## Reporting

We intend to share our action plan internally and potentially externally, as well. Internally, the action plan will be made available to the senior administration, the Student Affairs staff, the Political Science Department, the staff of the Key Center, and anyone interested. Further, student organizations will have access to it through the Political Science Club and the Student Government Association. In addition, in Fall 2020, two service learning classes are being taught regarding the elections and voting: Political Science's "US Elections" course and "Outside the Ballot Box: Voting Theory" in the Honors Program. The action plan will be made available to the students enrolled in these courses to guide their service both on and off campus and for them to build off of and improve.

In terms of external reporting, this is a work in progress. As mentioned previously, we are working on the possibility of developing a page on the university website dedicating to voting. If we receive approval to do so, our plan is to share our All-In Challenge Action Plan and our NSLVE reports, the main data we use to inform these efforts, on this platform. We are optimistic about these efforts and are already working with Communications and Marketing to make this a reality.

## Evaluation

We will use a variety of metrics to evaluate the success of our civic engagement and democratic participation. Our main metric, due to the systematic nature of the data collection process, will be our NSLVE report. As described above, we use it to diagnose the weakness in our outreach efforts, identify areas for improvement, and adjust our strategies. However, we also think other data is very useful.

For example, on at all our voter registration drives on campus, especially National Voter Registration Day, we keep meticulous track of our registration numbers and pledges to vote. Volunteers are asked to keep track of this information, and every voter registration station is provided a tally sheet that is updated hourly. These sheets are submitted to Ashley Moraguez at the end of NVRD or other registration events, and she and the board of the Political Science Club keep track of the numbers. These are also checked by counting the voter registration forms before submission to the Board of Elections. We use these numbers to internally gauge the success of our efforts and to provide a basic longitudinal analysis of how our efforts are playing out—we like to compare the data from year to year to see what strategies work and compare election year rates to non-election year rates. Interestingly, since 2016, we have seen an upward trajectory in registration rates each year, regardless of whether there is an election or not. We have also shared this data with organizations we work with and who provide fellowships to our students, including the Campus Vote Project and CEEP.

We do recognize, however, that recent changes may pose a threat to this particular evaluation method. Until March 2020, voter registration in NC was exclusively done via paper form; this allowed us to keep track of registration progress, since most students chose to register to vote at campus registration drives, at which the process was taken care of for them (forms are double and triple checked and sent to the appropriate BOE). Due to the pandemic, however, NC now has online voter registration options for those with NC driver's licenses. While this is a great change and will, we think, encourage registration on campus, it will make it more difficult for us to gauge registration, since students can easily register without attending a campus registration drive. Further, at this point, we don't know if health conditions will allow in-person drives in the Fall. As such, we are working on trying to set up a series of challenges and self-reporting on social media or the university website to keep track of registration (and turnout potentially). While self-reporting may not be the best metric, it is better than nothing.

At all our engagement events, we also provide an opportunity for students to join a listserv to receive information about political events on campus. This growing listserv allows us to track student interest and cater our advertising to those most likely to show up (though we still advertise widely as well). Finally, we also count the attendees at all events we host (watch parties, debate parties, candidate visits etc) to get a better idea of what types of events attract students, what days and times seem to work best, and how to use our admittedly limited funds.