

UNCG



VOTER ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

UNC Greensboro - 2020





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNC Greensboro is a 4-year public research university in Greensboro, North Carolina that serves approximately 20,000 students each year. Community and civic engagement are central to UNCG's mission and vision of preparing students "for meaningful lives and engaged citizenship" and serving as "a source of innovation and leadership meeting social, economic, and environmental challenges in the Piedmont Triad, North Carolina, and beyond" (UNCG Mission Statement, 2018). UNCG is a minority serving institution that takes pride in its supportive environment and engaged community. UNCG has recently been recognized for being #1 in North Carolina for social mobility, a military friendly school, being a best college for your money, and for our success at closing the gap in graduation rates between black and white students (<https://newsandfeatures.uncg.edu/accolades-table/accolades-list/>).

Many UNCG departments are involved in a wide range of community and civically engaged projects and partnerships both locally and globally. However, an administrative unit within the Division of Student Affairs, the Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement, serves as a catalyst for experiential curricular and co-curricular leadership development, civic engagement, and service-learning initiatives that empower students to affect positive change and serve as citizen leaders in a global community. The Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement is responsible for coordinating and submitting this action plan to further its UNCG Votes initiative, which serves as an important feature of the office and university's civic learning and democratic engagement efforts. This action plan will address the context, goals, and strategies of UNCG's voter engagement plan for the 2020 election season, January 2020-December 2020. It will be updated for subsequent election cycles.

LEADERSHIP

Kristina Gage, Associate Director for Civic Engagement
Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement

Autumn Cox, Graduate Assistant for Civic Engagement
Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement

Noah Ambrose, Student Democracy Fellow
Pre-law Political Science Major

Ryeen Airall, Student Democracy Fellow
Biology Major

Jessica Agbemavor, Student Democracy Fellow
Political Science Major

Melissa Maingi, Student Democracy Fellow
Communication Studies Major

Cameron Farrar, Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellow
Sociology and Political Science Major

Isaac Dannenberg, Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellow
Social Work Major

Nikki Baker, Director of Federal and External Affairs
Office of the Chancellor

Spoma Jovanovic, Professor of Communication Studies & Fellow for National
Center for Free Speech & Civic Engagement

Asa Eger, Associate Professor of History & Associate Director of the
Humanities Network and Consortium

Sue Dennison, Professor Emerita in the Department of Social Work & President
of the Association of Retired Faculty

Kynnith Frances-Vaughn, Coordinator
Campus Activities and Programs

Demarcus Merritt, Assistant Director
Housing and Residence Life

Daisy Santiago, Assistant Director
Office of Intercultural Engagement

Additional Partners:

Campus Vote Project, All In Democracy Challenge, NASPA's CLDE Lead Initiative, Voter Friendly Campus Program, and North Carolina Campus Compact

The UNCG Votes coalition consists of an active core team of staff and student fellows, affiliated with the Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement, and a larger coalition that partners and collaborates to support the work. The core team is led by Kristina Gage, Associate Director for Civic Engagement. Autumn Cox, Graduate Assistant for Civic Engagement directly supervises the student team of Democracy Fellows as they coordinate volunteer recruitment and co-curricular programming for students. Many of our co-curricular events such as Constitution Day, debate watch parties, Election Fest, etc. are partnerships with Campus Activities and Programs, Office of Intercultural Engagement, and Housing and Residence Life.

Faculty members on the team work to engage faculty and academic departments in action plan efforts and serve as co-planners and sponsors of key events in the plan. Dr. Eger convenes a group of faculty members to discuss and coordinate civic engagement efforts in the majors and serves as the liaison between that group and the UNCG Votes team. Dr. Jovanovic coordinates the annual Voice, Activism, and Democracy Symposium each spring in collaboration with many campus and community partners. She also co-teaches a national model for civic engagement in the classroom, a course called Reclaiming Democracy.

The Director of Federal and External Affairs, Nikki Baker, serves as the university liaison to the Guilford County Board of Elections. In this role she works to find ideal locations for the on-campus precinct polling site and early voting sites. She ensures clear communication between the Board and University regarding on-campus addressing for voter registration, what counts as proof-of residency for on-campus students, and status of UNCG student IDs as voter ID. Ms. Baker also ensures programming aligns with state and university policy regarding non-partisan political activity and leads development and communication of policy for groups hosting political events or speakers on campus. Ms. Baker supports the team amongst upper administrators and directs many inquiries of information or support to the team.

Listed as partners, a few national, state, and local organizations play an important role in supporting election engagement work at UNC Greensboro. Campus Vote Project, NASPA's CLDE Lead Initiative, North Carolina Campus Compact, Campus Election Engagement Project, the All In Democracy Challenge, the League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad, and You Can Vote provide innumerable resources, ideas, opportunities to network with colleagues at other institutions, and funding opportunities.

COMMITMENT AND LANDSCAPE

The University motto since 1893, "Service" continues to be a guiding principle put into practice through all aspects of university life. UNCG's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement are primarily understood through the institution's sense of public purpose, and connectedness to place. The mission and vision statements, provided below, both implicitly and explicitly highlight this commitment. Additionally, the University's strategic plan echoes this identity through its inclusion of regional transformation as one of three main areas, with vibrant communities and global connections as areas of focus within this transformation. This strategic plan and stated goals align the University's motto of service with a commitment to "develop a capacity for active citizenship, ethics, social responsibility, personal growth and skills for lifelong learning in a global society" (UNC Greensboro General Education Council, 2015).

Mission and Vision:

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro will redefine the public research university for the 21st century as an inclusive, collaborative, and responsive institution making a difference in the lives of students and the communities it serves.

UNCG is ...

- A learner-centered, accessible, and inclusive community fostering intellectual inquiry to prepare students for meaningful lives and engaged citizenship;
- An institution offering classes on campus, off campus, and online for degree-seeking students and life-long learners;
- A research university where collaborative scholarship and creative activity enhance quality of life across the life-span;
- A source of innovation and leadership meeting social, economic, and environmental challenges in the Piedmont Triad, North Carolina, and beyond; and
- A global university integrating intercultural and international experiences and perspectives into learning, discovery, and service.

In 2016 UNC Greensboro Chancellor, Frank Gilliam signed the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Action Statement and an institution-wide Civic Action Plan was developed that reflected goals which supported the new strategic plan. This civic action plan can be found in Campus Compact National's library. UNCG's institutional commitment goes well beyond the words of its statements and plans. A variety of entities within UNCG speak to its long-standing commitment and cross-sectional approach to community engagement and civic pursuits. These offices, centers and institutes provide

students, staff, and faculty many opportunities to develop skills, share research, and promote civic involvement.

- Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Institute for Community and Economic Engagement
- Center for Housing and Community Studies
- Center for Community-Engaged Design
- Center for New North Carolinians
- Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships
- Center for Women's Health & Wellness
- North Carolina Entrepreneurship Center

In addition to these entities, many academic programs continue to seek ways to advance civic learning and democratic engagement within the classroom. In May 2018 UNCG's Communication Studies department was awarded a grant from AAC&U through their Civic Learning in the Major by Design Initiative to promote civic learning and social responsibility as expected dimensions within student's majors. More broadly addressing learning dimensions, UNCG's General Education curriculum was developed with five guiding learning outcomes. Most central to civic learning and democratic engagement is learning goal 5:

Personal, Civic, and Professional Development: Develop a capacity for active citizenship, ethics, social responsibility, personal growth, and skills for lifelong learning in a global society. In so doing, students will engage in free and open inquiry that fosters mutual respect across multiple cultures and perspectives.

UNCG's co-curriculum similarly reveals a culture of civic learning and democratic engagement. Within the Student Affairs Division, two main offices offer regular civic engagement programming. The Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement offers community service, civic engagement, and leadership development programming to students. The Office of Intercultural Engagement offers intercultural engagement and education, dialogue, and community building.

There are few current assessments or collections of data that directly speak to the political climate and democratic engagement on campus.

- **National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement** – This study, coming out of Tuft's institute for Democracy and Higher Education, offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates. UNCG has data for mid-term and presidential election years beginning in 2014 with rates resting near average or above similar 4-year institutions. This data has guided engagement efforts to focus on early voting, target first-year students for registration, and offered other important insights.

- **Co-curricular Transcript** – UNCG uses Campus Labs to power an online tool called Spartan Connect that allows students to build a comprehensive record of their participation in activities and accomplishments. With a civic category that is attached to applicable programs, this program will allow for a deeper and more thorough picture of what civic programming is happening campus-wide, and who is participating.
- **Collaboratory** – This tool, primarily designed to track an institution's community engagement and public service data, can track and report activities at UNCG in which faculty or staff selected "civic engagement" as a student learning goal. It also offers "voter registration" as option for the outcome or impact of an event or program. This tool is a nice complement to the co-curricular transcript as it currently contains mostly curricular or research-based content.



GOALS

Long Term:

- Expand opportunities for co-curricular civic engagement programming to reach 500 students per year by 2025 (Spartans in Dialogue, Civic Engagement Academy, etc.).
- Develop and publish a set of civic engagement learning outcomes for faculty to utilize in classroom settings by 2022.
- Continue to find new ways to incorporate voter registration into first year processes including, but not limited to, move-in, Rawkin' Welcome Week, first year classes, and electronic on-boarding in order to raise the first-year registration rate by five percentage points by 2025.

Short Term:

- **Voter Participation:** Increase UNCG's 2016 Voter Rate by 4% to 55% for the 2020 election (2012 – 55%, 2016 – 51%).
- **Voter Registration:** Increase UNCG's 2016 register voter rate by 3% to 70% for the 2020 election (2012 – 74%, 2016 – 67%).
- **Voter Participation:** Student Democracy Fellows will expand capacity of UNCG Votes team by recruiting and training 25 student volunteers during the Fall 2020 semester to assist with voter registration and co-curricular election engagement events.
- **Voter Education:** Student Democracy Fellows and/or OLCE staff will facilitate 40 classroom "Voting 101" presentations from January 2020-November 2020 (29 presented in 2016). These may be virtual or in-person.
- **Voter Registration/Participation:** In response to COVID-19 concerns, utilize our Turbovote digital platform to engage a minimum of 500 students to register, request an absentee ballot, or sign-up for election reminders.
- **Voter Education:** In response to COVID-19 concerns, develop online resources and social media that highlight absentee ballot process and new online voter registration abilities for existing NC DMV customers by beginning of academic semester in Fall 2020.

STRATEGY

The following list outlines the activities that the institution will implement towards achieving the stated goals. While some strategies fall in multiple categories, each is listed under its primary function: voter registration, voter education, or voter participation.

Voter Registration

- **Welcome Week:** Student Fellows will be registering voters and/or providing registration information at several large orientation and First Year events (Charlie's Fountain Fest, HRL Carnival, Fall Kickoff, Spartan Service Day, and House Calls). If these events are cancelled due to COVID-19 the coalition will work with the respective organizers to provide information digitally through the alternative platforms being used.
- **National Voter Registration Day:** The Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement (OLCE) staff, student Fellows and volunteers take over several tables in the student center commons to decorate patriotically and hold a registration drive.
- **TurboVote:** UNCG will continue its partnership with TurboVote throughout the 2020 election.
- **Provide Resources for External Groups:** Each year a variety of organizations, both partisan and non-partisan, come to campus to register students. The committee's procedure is to identify these individuals and ensure they are provided with a one-page guide for how our on-campus students should list their addresses to correctly register.
- **Partner with Athletic Teams:** Student Fellows will coordinate with athletic teams to host registration sessions at team meetings or games and promote these on social media.
- **Partner with Various Campus Activities for Registration:** To maximize effectiveness of tabling, OLCE student fellows will be setting up registration tables primarily at existing, well-attended events throughout the spring and fall semesters. These include an "exercise your right to vote" event with the wellness center, a "fall in love with voting" event during Valentines day with campus activities office, and others.

Voter Education

- **Host Website:** OLCE will continue to host and update its webpage of voting information relevant to students.
- **Develop Absentee Ballot Resources:** As UNCG is overwhelmingly attended by North Carolinian students, this is a new focus in response to students who may be concerned with voting in-person due to COVID-19. OLCE staff will be developing web and print resources about how individuals can request and submit absentee ballots.
- **Voting 101:** This 30-minute, interactive workshop offered by OLCE staff and student Fellows, has variations for staff and faculty groups, student organizations, and classes. It covers the basics of registration, election

dates and deadlines, the voting process, and a discussion on why voting is important. First year courses are specifically invited to host this presentation. Additional targeted groups for 2020 include fraternity and sorority life and athletics.

- **Dialogues:** OLCE is partnering with the Office of Intercultural Engagement to offer two fall dialogues for students to develop skills around understanding different perspectives, evaluating policy, and civil discourse.
- **Distribute Voter Guides:** OLCE distributes non-partisan voter guides across campus and makes the information more easily accessible.
- **Civic Engagement Academy:** Each semester OLCE coordinates a cohort of 15-30 students that participate in a series of workshops, field trips, and activities to develop civic skills, knowledge and abilities. Topics include dialogue across difference, news and media literacy, what is democracy, voting 101, and city council & local government.

Voter Participation/Ballot Access

- **On-Campus Voting:** On-Campus early voting sites are anticipated on UNCG's campus for both the primary and general election. In addition, one election-day voting precinct is located in the University Center, for students living in residence halls on the main part of campus. Print, web, and social media will be created to educate voters of this opportunity.
- **Election Fest:** This event, co-hosted by OLCE, the Student Government Association, and Campus Activities and Programs, is a fun, visible, and interactive GOTV event that promotes registration and election engagement through giveaways, music, games, and student speakers.
- **Party at the Polls:** Party at the Polls is an Election Day station with information and free treats to celebrate voting. It/they are located near campus polling stations to direct attention to the polling site.
- **Chalking:** Leading up to election day OLCE student Fellows and volunteers will chalk popular sidewalks with information about polling places and provide directional signage to the on-campus early voting site. Social Media Campaign: OLCE student Fellows will create and post regular content on OLSL's social media pages.
- **March to the Polls:** Depending on the nearest early voting site, OLCE and student Fellows lead a celebratory walk to the polls to raise visibility of the beginning of the voting period. This event is typically co-sponsored by multiple student organizations.
- **Student Emails:** Each October OLCE works with Housing and Residence Life to ensure that an email is sent out to on-campus students that affirms their residency information. This email serves as proof of residence for NC students who plan on voting locally for the first time. In addition, the university will be sending a all-student email about on-campus early voting and clarify rules for voter ID, which have recently changed.
- **Volunteer Recruitment:** OLCE student fellows will be recruiting and training 25 peer volunteers to assist with registration and voter turnout efforts.

REPORTING

This plan will be continuously updated as new efforts and opportunities emerge and will be shared with coalition members and made public on the Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement's voting information webpage. The plan will also be made public through the Voter Friendly Campus program and the All-In Democracy Challenge webpage. UNCG's NSLVE data/report will also be publicly available on the Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement's website.

EVALUATION

Evaluation will be taking place on multiple levels. This plan itself will be evaluated once the activities outlined in this plan are completed. A follow-up report will be made public on the Office of Leadership & Civic Engagement's website. The report will include an evaluation of progress made towards stated goals, data related to student participation in election engagement programming, program effectiveness, challenges and barriers to completion of the plan, and student voting rates (if available). This information, along with new NSLVE data, will be used to inform future election engagement efforts.

Evaluation of specific activities within the plan will also be taking place to determine program effectiveness. A few examples are provided below:

- Beginning in Fall 2020 the Voting 101 workshop will include a brief pre- and post-test anonymous online survey (similar to Kahoot or Poll Everywhere) embedded in the presentation to evaluate whether participants have met the workshops learning outcomes. Results will be recorded and tracked.
- Although many large turnout events may be impacted by COVID-19, if they take place, student attendance and demographic data (classification, gender, race) will be recorded through card-swiping.
- Social media efforts are evaluated through analytics provided by social media platforms. These analytics will help evaluate what is the most effective platform, when messages are reaching the greatest audience, and how the audience is engaging with them so we can tailor our outreach in the future.
- Students participating in Spartans-in-Dialogue or other democracy related dialogue programs will take a post-assessment survey to determine if the program met learning outcomes.