

# UNCP VOTES

ALL IN CAMPUS DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT  
ACTION PLAN 2020



**NCPIRG**  
Students



For more information go to [serve.uncp.edu/UNCPVOTES](https://serve.uncp.edu/UNCPVOTES)

## Executive Summary

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke has a long-standing commitment to community and civic engagement. This includes empowering students to be active and engaged citizens through service, civic learning and democratic engagement. In 2018, during a midterm election year, UNCP's National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report results showed that our campus had a voting rate of 31.8%, compared to the national average of 39.9% in 2018. Though we also observed an increase of +11.9 (31.8%) in 2018, this was 7.3% less than the national average of 39.1%. With increased engagement efforts on campus, these numbers paint a picture of students being slightly less engaged in the 2020 election cycle. The coalition heading democratic engagement, UNCP Votes, set several goals for the 2020 election year, including increasing our efforts in engaging first year students, institutionalizing democratic engagement & voting processes, and building stronger partnerships to increase civic learning and democratic engagement.

UNCP Votes is a student-managed non-partisan election engagement coalition hosted by the Office for Community & Civic Engagement. The coalition serves as an umbrella for all democratic engagement on campus and encourages partnerships with UNCP departments, student organizations, the Student Government Association, and other non-partisan groups. UNCP Votes is advised by the Assistant Director for Student Engagement in the Office for Community and Civic Engagement. The Assistant Director selects and supervises two student fellows sponsored by the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) and the Campus Votes Project (CVP) who represent (1) the Office for Community & Civic Engagement and (2) the Student Government Association. The fellows serve as co-chairs of the coalition and hold weekly meetings with student volunteers and other campus partners to develop and implement events and election engagement efforts on campus.

UNCP Votes and NCPIRG completed 800 voter registration forms and mobilized a total of 78 people to the polls. UNCP Votes also wanted to obtain at least 18 of 22 points on the CEEP self-assessment, which would qualify our campus to have a "high engagement" level. The Campus Votes Fellows took the CEEP self-assessment in 2020 obtaining a total of 16 points, meeting our goal to be a "Medium Engagement campus".

## Leadership/Coalition

The UNCP Votes coalition is made up of various UNCP students, faculty, and staff charged to oversee and commit to increasing civic learning and democratic engagement. The Assistant Director for Student Engagement selects and supervises both fellows/co-chairs.

Jorge Castillo | UNCP Votes Co-Chair 2019/2020  
2019 Election Engagement Fellow | Student Service Leader for Civic Engagement

Dana Hunt-Locklear | UNCP Votes Co-Chair 2019/2020  
2019 Election Engagement Fellow | SGA Representative

Dalton Hoffer | UNCP Votes Advisor  
Assistant Director for Student Engagement | Community & Civic Engagement  
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Hannah Picknell | NCPIRG Students  
Organizing Director

Joseph Martinez, Ashraf lowry, Bryce Nephew, Bailey lowry, Noe Rodriguez, Christopher Suggs, Kevin Steep, Mary Thorn, Cole Connor, John Felix, Sean Franklin  
Campaign Volunteers | *Campaign volunteers sign-up up on UNCP Serve and are selected, trained, and managed by the UNCP Votes fellows.*

In Fall 2020, the coalition is planning to meet every 2 weeks for election year. Coalition meetings will provide campaign members an opportunity to meet and share ideas for upcoming events and develop action plans for goals and barriers faced. Members of the coalition were responsible for helping plan and implement events. The coalition student members also served as volunteers during canvassing work.



## Commitment

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke has a longstanding commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement. UNCP's mission "Changing Lives Through Education" reminds us that students, faculty, and staff are here for a greater cause: to educate students on what they can do to improve their own lives and the lives of others. The UNCP Votes coalition works with the same commitment and goal of "Changing Lives Through Education" in all of the work we do.

As a part of the [University's strategic plan](#) to "Create collaborative partnerships that result in enhanced student educational experiences.," UNCP is committed to civic learning and democratic engagement starting with upper administration. Through outreach and regional programs this is seen through the Division of Student Affairs in their own [strategic plan](#) to "enhance student connections between academic learning and civic responsibility" by supporting efforts of the Office for Community & Civic Engagement.

In 2017, Chancellor Dr. Robin Cummings was the first in the state to sign and submit [UNCP's Civic Action Plan](#) for NC Campus Compact. This plan shares UNCP Votes' vision to "prepare students for engaged citizenship with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good."





## Landscape

UNCP is located in Robeson County, which has one of the lowest voter registration rates in North Carolina at 55%. The University itself is 3.1% above the average campus Voting rate of registered students, averaging at 44.6%. As a result, many local elections are decided by the smallest of margins, with only a few hundred votes for each candidate; and only a handful of students participating in local elections. The UNCP Votes coalition aims to end the cycle of low voter turnouts in Robeson county local elections. Our landscape tells us the impact our students can have by registering and voting in our local community. Our goals for 2020 will assist us in further advancing the mission of the University and UNCP Votes through creating a gateway for students to be active and engaged citizens.

Currently our board of elections has established two polling locations that are both 2-3 miles away from campus (one only being open during election day). We hope to move that polling location to campus to allow easier access for students to vote, and provide them a hub or resources on campus on election day near the poll. Also our NSLVE reports show that our students vote early, so we need to provide resources for them to do that.



## Goals

On our campus during the 2016 election we had a registration rate of 69.6% and a voting rate of 46.7% among students. The NSLVE report shows a decrease in both the registration rate and the voting rate when it came to election activity. In the election, we notice an increase of 1.5% among students registered and in total eligible voters in 2016 and in 2012. In efforts to increase voter education, registration, and mobilization, UNCP Votes set the following goals for 2020.

**Goal 1: Full Voter Participation** | Institutionalize a voter registration campaign within an established university process that ensures all eligible UNCP students register to vote by December 2020.

Objectives:

- Create an action team for full participation through the coalition of faculty, staff, students and community stakeholders that meet regularly led by UNCP Votes Chairs.
- Identify and establish an institutionalized process for voter registration for all UNCP students so in 4 years all students are registered to vote.
- Use an online voter registration tool through email, social media campaigns, and in person to assist in registering current students.
- Work with the local Board of Elections to identify and secure a plan.

**Goal 2: UNCP Votes Coalition** | Enhance the democratic engagement coalition by expanding the members to committed faculty, staff, students and community members to increase support, buy-in, overall campus voter engagement.

Objectives:

- Identify faculty that are willing to commit to increase democratic engagement on campus through NCPIRG's commitment pledge.
- Host 2 hybrid interest meetings in August 2020 and invite identified stakeholders.
- Develop a toolkit for faculty and staff to assist them in their efforts in democratic engagement efforts.
- Host 2 coalition meetings a semester led by UNCP Votes Chairs.
- Recruit at least but not limited to the following stakeholders to the coalition: Housing & Residence Life Representative, Political Science Department Representative, Registrar, Student Government Association Representative, NCPIRG Students representative, Student Affairs Representative, Athletics Representative, and at least one staff member from the local Board of Elections to the coalition.

Goal 3: On-Campus Polling Location | Establish an on-campus polling location for future elections to enhance ballot access for all UNCP Students and community starting with the 2020 General Election.

Objectives:

- Research other institutions and collect resources to assist in organizing the effort
- Host 2 hybrid interest meetings in August 2020 and invite identified stakeholders. (the board, the chair, the staff)
- Meet with the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and Pembroke Town Manager to request letters of support
- Create a petition to move the polling location from the Pembroke Rural Fire Department to an On-Campus location
- Encourage University General Counsel to contact the Board of Elections on behalf of the students.
- Attend the Board of Elections meetings to build relationships and petition for the polling location to be moved
- Work with university officials in student affairs to coordinate the effort and organize space reservations and requirements.

## Strategy

Strategy includes short-term tactics and long-term strategies. Tactics include a description of multiple voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout activities. Long-term strategies seek to make civic learning and democratic engagement an established part of the institution's curriculum and co-curriculum and go beyond the election.

### Voter Registration:

- Pembroke Day: The largest community event held on campus. Members of the coalition will walk around this festival type event on the UNCP campus with clipboards and registration forms.
- Welcome Week: Event for organizations to set up to advertise to freshmen students. Campaign volunteers walked around welcoming students to campus and registering them to vote.
- Class Announcements: Many professors and departments are willing to allow voter registration in their classes - which is a great way to help register students to vote correctly, and engage with more of the campus.
- Tabling: For a week period volunteers rotated between the university center and the residence halls around campus to register students to vote. Tabling will be completed the week after Welcome Week and the week before October 16th (End of Early Voter Registration).
- Logistics: Host training by the local board of elections to train volunteers and coalition on voter registration. Pick up, distribute, and collect voter registration forms to groups on campus.
- Posters: Coalition members will put posters up advertising our events and also provide students with information to register to vote.
- Sporting Events: Have tables and volunteers helping to register students to vote as they enter sporting events.
- Residence Halls/On Campus Housing: Include voter registration forms in move in packets, and follow up that evening and throughout the first week to collect forms.



- Braves ID Office: Include a voter registration booth with trained volunteers during the process of getting a Braves ID, so that all new students have the option to register while they wait.
- Online Voter Registration: Incorporate [ncstudentvote.org](https://ncstudentvote.org) into all campus emails, school websites, social media, etc to widen the reach of our voter registration efforts.
- UNCP Votes Fellows and volunteers plan to do a “dorm storm” the week before the election to pass out candy, voter guides, and invite the Party to the Polls event. Majority of students living on-campus are first-year students. UNCP Votes will also table in the lobby of dorms in hopes to register students to vote. We plan to distribute 450 flyers with general election information and a link (snapchat code) to the UNCP Votes website of voter resources.
- The UNCP Votes coalition will use our website ([serve.uncp.edu/UNCPVOTES](https://serve.uncp.edu/UNCPVOTES)) as a platform to communicate our strategy. We also plan to share our All In Plan with other organizations on campus as well as departments to create a wider reach within the campus

### Voter Education:

- Citizen U: a series of workshops hosted on and off campus to educate students to be active and engaged students. Topics include: Immigration, Using Your Rights, War on Fake News, Town Council Connections, Voter Registration Information, etc.
- Provide voter registration guides online on [serve.uncp.edu/uncpvotes](https://serve.uncp.edu/uncpvotes)
- Print and distribute voter guides during all uncp votes events
- Debate and election watch parties in collaboration with Housing and the Political Science Department.

### Voter Mobilization:

- Focusing on first-years students allows for UNCP Votes to start institutionalizing democratic engagement by encouraging students to be engaged from the moment they become a student. We hope that by engaging them early in their collegiate career they will more likely be civically active later on. We plan to add a member of our campuses resident hall association to our coalition, allowing us to better plug our events to first-year students.

- All campus wide communications sent via email to students must be sent out by the Assistant Director for Student Engagement and approved by the Registrar and General Counsel. This limits the amount of communication through email but was sent to the entire campus first then slightly changed for targeted audiences such as first year students (first year listserv) and housing (individual residence hall listserv).
- The efforts of UNCP Votes will provide a more concerted effort to engage students in the democratic process and inform students about positions, policies, law, and registration processes. The coalition will develop a consistent communication that is slowly being adapted across campus. The process of providing the board of elections the list of students that live on-campus has been improved and happened much earlier this year than in the past.
- UNCP Votes will examine the early voting process for students including registration, education, and mobilization. Most importantly establishing a process for early voting including on and off-campus students' proof of residence. These efforts are to reduce the barriers students face when voting.
- Through building campus and community partnerships UNCP Votes wants to educate and support others to promote democratic engagement. Partnerships include but are not limited to academic departments with lower voter rates, athletics, SGA, Greek Orgs, and the Political Science Department.
- At every event we hosted we provided students with resources to help them find their polling location. If they were a student living on campus we also provided transportation to their polling location during both early voting and on election day. This year was the first time we have offered a shuttle to the polls, this was a great first time that has allowed us to see what we need to do differently for 2020. This year we wanted to earn more credibility among school media, we did this by meeting with the school paper and yearbook editor to write articles about voting and how to get involved.
- Voting Shuttle: Early voting shuttles and election day shuttles scheduled
- Students can go to [serve.uncp.edu/uncpvotes](https://serve.uncp.edu/uncpvotes) for links and resources to identify polling locations and other election day information.
- Get Out The Vote- set different competitions for the best student project for voting (tiktok video, bring a friend, etc).

## Reporting

The UNCP Votes coalition will use our website ([serve.uncp.edu/UNCPVOTES](http://serve.uncp.edu/UNCPVOTES)) as a platform to communicate our strategy. We also plan to share our All In Plan with other organizations on campus as well as departments to create a wider reach within the campus.

## Evaluation

To evaluate progress, the campaign uses NSLVE reports and NSSE Civic Engagement module data. UNCP Votes uses this data to see what population of students' efforts should be focused on. The initiative has also worked together with separate entities such as the Student Government Association (SGA) to increase outreach to the student population. This has allowed the coalition to plan larger events that educate students on elections and democratic engagement opportunities.

The fellows meet with the Assistant Director for Student Engagement to assess each program after submitting a service report which collects event information such as collaboration data, number of engaged participants, voter registration forms and reflections from student leaders. This allows for necessary reflection to make modify the event for the future. The coalition plans to assess the 2020-2022 goals through NSLVE data and various reporting for each initiative.

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*This plan was developed by UNCP Votes Chairs, Jorge Castillo and Dana Hunt Locklear. Reviewed and edited by the Assistant Director for Student Engagement, Dalton Hoffer and Hannah Picknell, NCPIRG on 4/29/2020*