UNC Charlotte 49er Democracy Experience Voter Engagement Plan 2024

The [49er Democracy Experience](#) brings together expert faculty and staff, civic-minded students, and community partners to develop educational programming to enhance the understanding of and participation in our nation's democratic process. As North Carolina's urban research university and the Charlotte region's largest higher education institution, it is fitting that UNC Charlotte is a leader in this initiative. UNC Charlotte maintains a particular commitment to addressing the cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater Charlotte region; the 49er Democracy Experience is an expression of that commitment.

Through the 49er Democracy Experience, UNC Charlotte has a three-prong voter engagement strategy for elections: voter registration, voter education, and voter mobilization. In 2012, at the request of then-Provost Joan Lorden, a committee of stakeholders from across campus developed the University's strategic approach to campus-wide student voting initiatives.

The key to UNC Charlotte's success in student voter engagement is the involvement of trained student leaders including Campus Election Engagement Project Civic Influencers, Campus Vote Project Fellows, students working with UNC Charlotte's SERVE team, Student Government Association, Athletics, and urbanCORE's voter engagement coordinators.

UNC Charlotte's voter registration strategy is centered on the University's partnership with TurboVote. The 49er Democracy Experience staffs voter registration tables in high traffic areas of campus in election seasons. At these sites, students are encouraged to sign-up with TurboVote, register to vote online (if eligible), print out their voter registration or absentee ballot request forms, sign these forms, and turn them in to on-site 49er Democracy student leaders. The 49er Democracy Committee coordinated the transportation and delivery of signed forms to the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections. For students registering to vote in other counties in North Carolina, their forms are mailed to the N.C. State Board of Elections. Student volunteers are trained by representatives of the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections to answer questions about voter registration.

In addition to creating designated voter registration sites, 49er Democracy Experience committee members present voter engagement information in classrooms, at Student Government Association meetings, in residence halls, and at UNC Charlotte sporting events. We will expand the number of classes and organizations using our virtual voter information presentations.

While TurboVote will send electronic reminders to students, the committee identified additional voter mobilization strategies. The 49er Democracy Committee works through Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and University Communications to remind students of early voting dates via social media and inform them of election-day processes.

The Office of Constituent Relations advocates for on-campus early voting for midterm and presidential elections. Because UNC Charlotte will host an early voting polling location on campus in 2024, we will partner with Parking and Transportation Service and the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections to creating signage and wayfinding to the Cone Center for early voting.

The 49er Democracy Experience provides information about acceptable forms of identification for voter registration and same-day registration. Our outreach targets students who are eligible to vote in Mecklenburg County, however, we also address questions about absentee ballots and voting elsewhere in North Carolina (an overwhelming number of our students who are eligible to vote are registered to vote in-state).

The 49er Democracy Experience holds several voter education events including our State of Democracy Event, expert panel sessions on important democratic issues, critical media literacy events, and candidate forums.

Members of the 49er Democracy Experience committee
- Director of Engaged Scholarship, urbanCORE
- Assistant Director, Leadership and Community Engagement
- Special Assistant to the Chancellor, Constituent Relations
- Faculty Council President
- Faculty in Education, Women and Gender Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science
- Associate Director, Athletics
- Director, University Communications
- Deputy General Counsel, Office of Legal Affairs
- Student Body President
- Civic Engagement Coordinator
- Student Athlete Association representatives
- SERVE and LEAD Team representatives

Areas of Focus for 2024

- UNC Charlotte would like to strengthen our voter turnout initiatives. We feel as though students have a number of opportunities to register to vote, but we are working to improve our turnout and understanding of down-ballot races.
- We would like to develop a strategy for developing and connecting students' deep knowledge of local social conversations and issues (public education, affordable housing, social capital, public health, income equality, access to transportation, digital divide, etc.) with student political engagement.
- We would like to explore civic responsibility curriculum development and integration for first year (freshman) seminar courses.

Fall 2022 49er Democracy Experience calendar

Date	Event	Partner/Contact
August		
Mid-Aug	Convening 49er Democracy Experience committee	
Late-Aug	Recruitment of student team	
September		
Sept 13	North Carolina Voter Summit at Elon	

Sept 17 - Nov 1	Classroom presentations and voter registration tabling	
Sept 17	National Voter Registration Day / Constitution Day ● Voter registration at Atkins yLibrary ● State of Democracy event	
Late Sept	Civil Discourse/Deliberative Dialogue trainings	
October		
Oct 7	Swarm the Polls (with the Charlotte Hornets	
Oct 16	State of Democracy event	
Oct 22	Digital Literacy Event	
Oct 17-Nov 1	Hosted Party to the Polls (and info panels) for Early Voting: ● UREC ● Athletics ● Greek Life ● HRL ● Womens' groups ● Environmental groups	
November		
November 5	Election Day	
Week of November 11th	Election Debrief	