

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT PEMBROKE

UNCP VOTES

All IN Campus Democratic Engagement
Action Plan 2024



**COMMUNITY &
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS



For more information go to 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 2020, during a presidential election year, UNCP's National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report results showed that our campus had a voting rate of 67.3%, compared to the national average of 66%. With increased engagement efforts on campus, these numbers paint a picture of students being more engaged in the 2020 election cycle. The coalition heading democratic engagement, UNCP Votes, set several goals for the 2022 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 Community & Civic Engagement (CCE). 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 Community and Civic Engagement. The Assistant Director selects and supervises two student service interns who are responsible for democratic engagement programming (including UNCP Votes) on UNC Pembroke's campus and one representative is chosen from the Student Government Association to serve directly on the coalition. The service interns serve on the coalition as members and hold bi-weekly meetings with student volunteers and other campus partners to develop and implement events and election engagement efforts on campus.

UNCP Votes, Community and Civic Engagement service interns, and a local community partner completed 123 voter registration forms for the 2023 National Voter Registration Day. Voter Education programming was also planned throughout the academic fall semester of 2023. This entailed a celebrity mock election hosted by UNCP Votes that resulted in 91 attendees, related voting to pop culture movies/shows during Voter Education Week with 40 attendees, and hosted an array of interactive activities that raised voting awareness.

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 selected service interns.

Shania McMillian | UNCP Votes Advisor
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Katie Aguilar Manueles | UNCP Votes Chair 2022/2023
Service Intern for Community Engagement

Kimberly Pelagio-Luis | 2023/2024 SGA Democratic Liaison

Cara Martin | 2023/2024 | Service Intern for Democratic & Civic Engagement

Magally Ortiz-Rojas | 2023/2024 | Service Intern for Student Engagement

Kymora Darcuiel | 2023 Civic Influencer

Nigel Freeman | 2023 Civic Influencer

ON/OFF CAMPUS PARTNERS

Dr. Kyle Smith | Associate Vice Chancellor & Dean of Students / CARE Team Chair / SGA Advisor
Student Affairs

UNCP Campus Engagement & Leadership
Division of Student Affairs

Lawrence Locklear | Director of Student Inclusion & Diversity
Division of Student Affairs

UNCP Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Terrell Womack & Jeffrey Mason
Community Partner: North Carolina A. Philip Randolph Institute

FACULTY & STAFF VOLUNTEERS & ADVOCATES

Evan Long | Faculty/Staff
Shelby Newsome | Faculty/Staff
Anthony Hunt | Staff
Kamren Lewis | Staff
Dr. Scott Hicks | Faculty
Dr. Josiah Marineau | Faculty
Dr. Christie Poteet | Staff

Sandy Jacobs | Staff
Sam Hauser | Faculty/Staff

Succession Information

In the event of the Assistant Director of Student Engagement being vacant, the Director of Community & Civic Engagement will make accommodations for this plan to still be executed.

UNCP Votes Coalition meetings

In Fall 2024, the coalition is planning to continue to meet every 2 weeks. 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 are responsible for planning and implementing events.



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 Community & Civic Engagement.

We remain an active partner with North Carolina Campus Engagement and one pivotal moment for our campus was in 2017, Chancellor Dr. Robin Cummings was the first in the state to sign and submit [UNCP's Civic Action Plan](#) for what was known as NC Campus Compact, now named North Carolina Campus Engagement. 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." Chancellor Cummings continues to play an active role in democratic engagement by serving on the 2023-2024 executive board of NC Campus Engagement for a 3-year term.

Furthermore, when thinking about how our student leaders are committed to the work of democratic engagement we like to highlight our current SGA Vice-President and Service Intern for Student Engagement, Magally Ortiz-Rojas. Magally was a recipient of the 2023 Community Impact Student Award (CISA) and was honored during the award luncheon at the CSNAP Student Conference, held on November 4, 2023 at NC State University. Magally was also chosen as 1 of 10 North Carolina fellows to serve in the 2023 Civic Impact Fellowship. Being selected to receive the CISA automatically nominates the student to participate in the 18-month NC Civic Impact Fellowship. This fellowship "empowers outstanding civic-minded student leaders across North Carolina to develop a project that will have a lasting positive impact on their campus. Fellows are nominated by their college or university President/Chancellor based on their potential to excel in civic and community service leadership. Throughout the fellowship, students engage in monthly skill-building training, attend a leadership camp, and present a project capstone."

A highlight that is important to recognize for our campus is that as of July 2023, the North Carolina State Board of Elections approved identification cards and employee identification cards for use as photo identification for voting through December 31, 2024. This was an important step toward increasing voter participation on our campus.

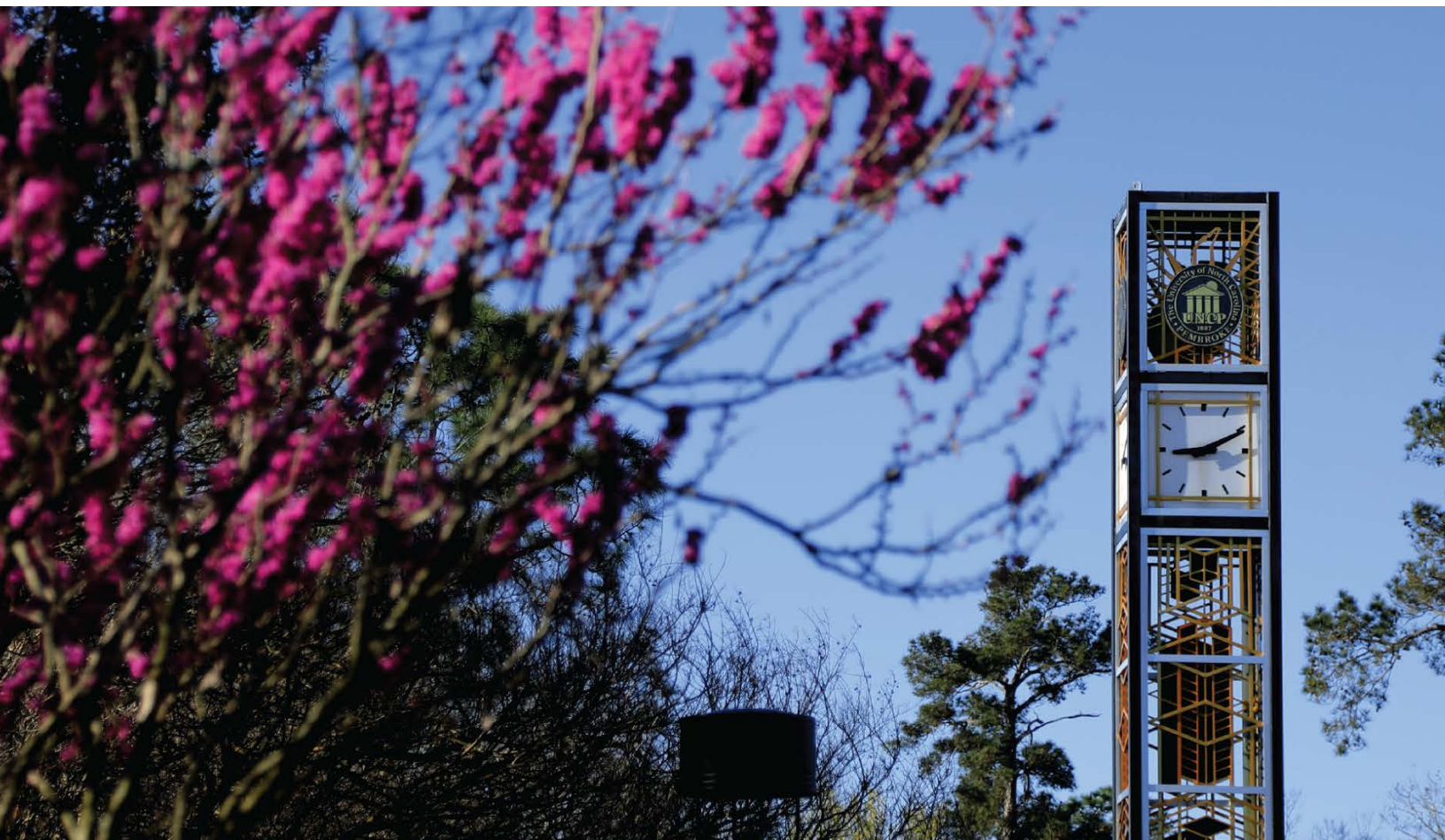
Our campus also takes pride in our 2023 Voter Friendly Campus designation. "UNC Pembroke, was named a Voter Friendly Campus, one of 258 campuses in 38 states and the District of Columbia by Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. The initiative recognizes institutions that have planned and implemented practices that encourage their students to register and vote in the 2023 elections and in coming years."

Landscape

UNC Pembroke is located in Robeson County, which has a population of 116,663 people as of July 2022 provided by the United States Census Bureau. "Since 2008, Robeson County has been identified as among the 10% of United States counties that are majority-minority; its combined American Indian, African American and Hispanic residents constitute more than 68 percent of the total. Members of the state-recognized Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, make up most of the 38 percent of the population who identify as Native American." As of December 2023, there are a total of 72,127 voters which result in 48.4% Democrat, 18.74% Republican, 0.33% Libertarian, 0.01% Green, 0.07% No labels, and 32.44% Unaffiliated.

Our landscape tells us the impact our students can have by registering and voting in our local community. Our goals for 2024 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. Our NSLVE reports also shows that our students vote early, so we need to provide resources for them to do so.



Current Work

We have actively collaborated with on-campus partners to facilitate and enhance democratic engagement programming. Through our collective efforts, we have successfully executed initiatives such as voter registration drives and other impactful events. These collaborative endeavors consistently attracted robust participation, with each event garnering an attendance of 50 or more individuals. Our commitment to fostering civic participation on campus has not only been a testament to our dedication but has also yielded demonstrable success in engaging and mobilizing the university community.

Goals

On our campus during the 2020 election we had a registration rate of 89.2% and a voting rate of 67.3% among students. The NSLVE report shows an increase in both the registration rate and the voting rate when it came to election activity. In the election, we noticed an increase of 9.4% among students registered and in total eligible voters in 2018. In efforts to increase voter education, registration, and mobilization, the following goals for 2022.

Goal 1: Increase UNCP Votes Coalition efforts | 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:

- Facilitate outreach and host 2 interest meetings in spring 2024 and fall 2024 and invite identified stakeholders.
- Identify and invite representatives from student organizations, including but not limited to: Black Student Union, Caribbean Student Union, Native American Student Organization, Organización de la Lengua Española, and Spectrum.
- Identify 2 faculty members to integrate conversations of democratic engagement into course curriculum.
- Facilitate strategic outreach and engagement with students.
- Diversify Coalition Representation: Housing & Residence Life Representative, Political Science Department Representative, Student Affairs Representative, Athletics Representative, Academic Affairs and at least one staff member from the local Board of Elections to the coalition.
- Increase Coalition Membership: Recruit and onboard 1 faculty, 1 staff, 2 students, and 1 community member to join the UNCP Votes Coalition by the end of each semester.
- Develop and Implement Workshops: Create workshops to educate coalition members on effective voter engagement strategies, campus-specific challenges, and best practices in fostering democratic participation.
- Track and Report Coalition Impact: Implement a simple tracking and reporting system to measure the impact of the UNCP Votes Coalition on campus voter engagement, regularly sharing findings with coalition members and the broader university community.

Goal 2: Increase student participation and involvement with democratic engagement | This involves fostering a sense of responsibility, awareness, and participation in the democratic process among students. The goal recognizes the importance of student voices in shaping the future and seeks to create opportunities for them to be informed, involved, and influential contributors to the democratic community on UNC Pembroke's campus.

Objectives:

- Civic Educational Workshops/Dialogues: Host ~3 civic education workshops/dialogues per semester to enhance students' understanding of democratic processes, political systems, and the importance of civic engagement.
- Continue Collaboration with Student Organizations: Establish partnerships with student organizations on campus to integrate democratic engagement activities into their events and initiatives, fostering a culture of participation.
- Continue Campus-wide Democratic Events: Organize campus-wide events focused on democratic engagement, such as debates, forums, or discussions, to provide platforms for students to actively participate and express their opinions.
 - Examples: Deliberative dialogues such as having a living room conversation or bringing the Braver Angels to our campus to host a debate and train some of our student leaders to host their own.
- Create a Social Media Campaign: Implement a targeted social media campaign to reach the student body, promoting awareness of democratic engagement opportunities, events, and important civic dates.
 - Collaborating with on-campus partners, SGA, and student organizations to hear what students want to see will be a tactic to implement

Goal 3: Mitigate Barriers to Student Voting and Enhance Voter Accessibility | Identify and alleviate existing obstacles that impede student voting, with the overarching aim of promoting a more accessible and inclusive voting experience for all eligible students on campus.

Objectives:

- Barrier Assessment for Students: Conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify specific barriers that hinder student voting participation. This assessment will include gathering feedback through surveys, focus groups, and engagement with UNCP Students.
- Collaborative Solutions: Foster collaboration among campus stakeholders, student organizations, and local community partners to collectively brainstorm and implement tailored solutions to address identified barriers. This collaborative approach ensures a more holistic and effective strategy.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement a monitoring and evaluation system to track the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at mitigating voting barriers. Regular assessments will inform adjustments and improvements to the strategies over time.

Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan is a comprehensive and time-sensitive roadmap designed to achieve our three primary goals aimed at enhancing civic participation within the UNC Pembroke community. First, it's important to focus on expanding and strengthening the UNCP Votes Coalition, secondly, aiming to boost student engagement in democratic activities, and lastly, addressing the challenges hindering student voting to increase their voting participation.

We feel that it is important to first work within what we have, then expand those efforts to evaluate what we need to do to improve democratic engagement on-campus. The coalition is supposed to be our driving force of all efforts related to democratic engagement, but it has been difficult to create the buy-in to have participants follow-through with their commitment. Working with our on- and off-campus partners will increase buy-in through word of mouth and collaboration of events to increase democratic activities, ultimately leading to successful assessment and evaluation.

Assessing the obstacles that create barriers for students to voting will also be a tactic that is on-going from semester to semester. The close monitoring of these assessments will help our department and coalition know what measures need to be taken to improve the initiatives and strategies that will be outlined below.

2024 CALENDAR:

January-February:

- Determine the on-going bi-weekly Votes Coalition meeting dates/times & implement.
- Identify committed faculty, staff, students, and department/organization representation through outreach and interest meetings.
- Determine the workshops that will take place during the Spring 2024 semester - host the first workshop towards the end of February.
- Begin the Social Media Campaign.
- Collaborate with 1-2 on-campus partners who would like to bring the Brave Angels debate to UNCP's campus and have this hopefully in April.
- Engage Faculty/Staff advocates to help with the creation of a barrier assessment.

March-April:

- Identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- Analyze current levels of student engagement in democratic activities.
- Encourage faculty to promote awareness during class time. Specifically reaching out to the Political Science department, UNV 1000: Freshman seminars, and others.
- Form working groups in the Coalition to focus on key barrier categories and assign responsibilities and establish a timeline for proposed solutions.

May-August:

- Hold coalition meetings with faculty and staff over the summer to implement plans, share updates, and evaluate the recent progress to have a successful fall semester.
- Coordinate meetings to collaborate with other departments for the fall semester regarding voter registration drives and edutainment events regarding the 2024 presidential election.

- Plan facilitated training sessions for student leaders interested in initiating democratic engagement projects – the sessions would have to happen in the Fall semester.
- UNCP Votes Coalition and Community and Civic Engagement launch campaigns to educate students on voting rights, registration processes, and potential barriers. Social media will be useful for this effort.

September-December:

- Organize a coalition kickoff event to introduce new members and set goals.
- Determine the on-going bi-weekly Votes Coalition meeting dates/times & implement for the semester.
- Plan and host campus-wide events, such as debates or forums, to foster dialogue and collaborate with student organizations for increased attendance, while also evaluating the impact of these events on student engagement levels.
- Heavily implement social media campaigns to include information regarding our events about democratic engagement as well as the election, early voting, voting shuttles, etc.
- Celebrate and implement events for the Civic Holidays in preparation for the election in November.
- Send communications out to students, staff, faculty, and stakeholders about the resources that Community & Civic Engagement will provide.

Events, Outreach, Tactics, Resources:

- FLIGHT, BraveNation Bash, Back on our Block, Part-Time Job & Volunteer Fair (Welcome Week event hosted in August)
- Student Success Expo - event for Freshmen to know about resources on campus which includes voting and democratic engagement
- Information for UNV 1000: Freshman Seminar classes
- Interactive Tabling: Volunteers will table around campus to register students to vote
- Dialogues and Braver Angels (hopefully) events
- Actively using social media to interact with students
- Civic Holidays: The coalition will coordinate programming for the following Civic Holidays: National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Day.
- Early Voting: The coalition will offer additional support around early voting processes.
- Giveaways: UNCP Votes buttons, Early Voter buttons, Advocacy buttons, T-shirt giveaways for completing assessments
- Food incentives for participating in select events
- Voting Shuttle: Early voting shuttles and election day shuttles scheduled
- Voting Partners: The coalition will work strategically with campus partners (NC Campus Compact, All In, Campus Votes Project, Campus Election Engagement Project, NC Democracy, and more) to incorporate innovative strategies into programming

Reporting

The UNCP Votes Coalition and Community & Civic Engagement plans to use various communication channels to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. Regular updates will be posted on the UNCP Votes Coalition website (serve.uncp.edu/UNCPVOTES), interactive calendars, and feedback forms to encourage participation and suggestions.

Here are other reporting strategies we plan to implement:

- Insights from the All In Plan and NSLVE data, aligning coalition goals with broader campus objectives will help with the Final Report.
- Coalition meetings and reoccurring workshops provide opportunities for in-depth discussions on progress, challenges, and strategies.
- Evaluation surveys, distributed after events or annually, gather participant and stakeholder feedback.
- Quarterly review meetings assess key performance indicators and allow for adjustments to strategies based on feedback and changing circumstances.
- Volunteer Celebration events at the end of each semester recognize milestones and contributions.
- Utilizing social media channels for real-time updates and community engagement.

Evaluation

To evaluate the overall effectiveness, the coalition and Community & Civic Engagement will focus our attention heavily towards the goal section. We believe this will align us to gather the data that we need to continue to improve in our efforts at UNC Pembroke. UNCP Votes will use this data to see what population of students' efforts should be focused on as well as what needs to be revised.

We hope to receive data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) because the data included into this action plan was from 2020.

Other methods of evaluation that we hope to incorporate into our plan includes but are not limited to:

- Assess social media engagement, including the growth in followers, likes, shares, and comments on platforms used for real-time updates and community engagement.
- Evaluate the attendance and participation levels in coalition-led events, workshops, and campus-wide democratic engagement activities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of collaborations with student organizations, faculty, staff, and community partners, considering the impact of joint initiatives on the overall success of the plan.
- Document instances of recognition or support received from the local community for coalition efforts, indicating the impact on building positive relationships beyond the campus.

- Showcase specific instances where lessons learned from reflective sessions have been implemented, leading to improved strategies or more effective outcomes.

This allows and includes evaluation methods in our report to provide more of a holistic view of the plan's impact, effectiveness, and areas for continued improvement beyond the specific goals. We hope to have a positive impact at UNC Pembroke and create a collaborative campus culture that values voting initiatives.

This plan was developed by Assistant Director for Student Engagement, Shania McMillian on 12/12/2023. Reviewed and edited by the Director for Community & Civic Engagement, Sandy Jacobs on 12/13/2023.