

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PEMBROKE

# UNCP VOTES

ALL IN CAMPUS DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT  
ACTION PLAN 2018



COMMUNITY &  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PEMBROKE

Section I: Executive Summary

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

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 the democratic engagement process of voting. UNCP's National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report results show that our campus had a slightly above voting rate of 47.6% in 2012 compared to the national average of 46.9%. We also observed a decline of .9% (46.7%) in 2016 which was 3.7% less than the national average of 50.4%. With increased engagement efforts on campus these numbers paint a picture of students being disengaged in the prior election cycle. The coalition in charge of democratic engagement, UNCP Votes, has set several goals for the upcoming year including increasing our efforts in engaging first year students, institutionalize democratic engagement & voting processes, and building stronger partnerships to increase civic learning and democratic engagement.

UNCP Votes is a student managed nonpartisan election engagement campaign hosted by the Office for Community & Civic Engagement. The campaign 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 campaign and hold weekly meetings with student volunteers and other campus partners to develop and implement events and election engagement efforts on campus. The group performed the campus CEEP self assessment to measure the level of election engagement on campus to find that out of 36 preferred items, UNCP completed barely 5 items in 2016. The campaign set a goal to receive 600 pledges (10% of the student body) from students to go out and vote, and of those pledges, we wanted to register at least a third (200). UNCP Votes also wanted to obtain at least 24 points on the CEEP self assessment, which would qualify our campus to have a "high engagement" level. At the completion of the campaign, 615 pledges to vote were received and

approximately registered 205 students. After the start of 2018, the Fellows took the self assessment again obtaining a total of 25 points, meeting our goal to be a “highly engaged campus”.

## Section II: Leadership/Coalition

This 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.

Harrison Pegram | UNCP Votes Co-Chair  
Election Engagement Fellow

Thomas Crowe-Allbritton | UNCP Votes Co-Chair  
Election Engagement Fellow | SGA Representative

Dalton Hoffer | UNCP Votes Advisor  
Assistant Director for Student Engagement  
Office for Community & Civic Engagement

Kyle Levine | SGA Advisor  
Assistant Director  
Campus Engagement & Leadership

*Des Woods, Kevin Steep, Mary Thorn, Cole Connor, John Felix*  
Campaign Volunteers | *Campaign volunteers sign-up up on UNCP Serve and are selected, trained, and managed by the UNCP Votes fellows.*

## Section III: 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 #UNCPVotes campaign 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 “enhance regional engagement through its outreach and academic program offerings” 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.”

## Section IV: Landscape

UNCP is located in Robeson county, which has on of the lowest voter registration rates in North Carolina at 55%. The University itself is almost 5% below the average campus voting rate, averaging at 50.4%. 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 these local elections. The UNCP Votes campaign aims to end the cycle of low voter turnouts in Robeson county local elections.

## Section V: Goals

UNCP's Looking at the data provided by National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, we were able to recognize a drop in both the registration rate and the voting rate when it came to Midterm Election activity. On our campus during the 2012 presidential election we had a registration rate of 70.2% and a voting rate of 47.6% among students. In the midterm election we notice a drop of 28%, leaving only 20% of registered student voters to vote come election day. The registration among students drops slightly to 64.2% in the midterm election, compared to the 70.2% during the presidential election. In efforts to increase voter education, registration, and mobilization UNCP Votes have set the following goals for 2018-2019.

### Goal I: Increase voter registration and turnout among 1st year students.

- 35% of first year students voted in the 2016 election which is almost a 7% drop from the 41.8% that voted in 2012. However, 49.2% of upperclassman voted in 2016. These statistics show us that first years students were less engaged in voting than their peers.
- 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.

### Goal II: Develop and institutionalize democratic engagement & voting processes for students.

- In the past 2 elections UNCP has tried different strategies in streamlining student voter registration and voting process. Due to various complications the processes changed and prevented students from voting.
- In the past two presidential elections majority of our students that voted did so during early voting. 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.

### Goal II: Establish and build stronger partnerships to increase civic learning and democratic engagement.

- UNCP Votes currently does not have a close relationship with the local Board of Elections. By developing this partnership the campaign will be able to have a more open line of communication in fostering a better voter experience for students.
- 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, and the Political Science Department.

## Section VI: Strategy

UNCP Votes has developed various events and programs since the 2016 election. The campaign strategy is focused on voter registration, education, and mobilization.

Through these initiatives the campaign has started to develop a culture that is encouraging others to be more democratically engaged.

## Voter Registration

The UNCP Votes Campaign sets up tents across campus and at several events in efforts to register UNCP Students to vote. We call this our traveling tent because its placed in various locations to broaden the amount of people reached. The campaign has participated in the National Voter Registration Day by hosting a snow cone event for the past two years. We hosted a voter registration week where we canvassed campus focusing on departments with lower registration rates based off of the NSLVE report, we set up a table to register students to vote, inform students on upcoming events, and educate students on election information by encouraging students to spread the word about the campaign and election.

UNCP Votes plans to set up at various orientations and first year programs during welcome week to register first year students. The fellows are also meeting and fostering a relationship with New student programs to secure better ways to reach first year students.

## Voter Education

The UNCP Votes Campaign developed a series of events by collaborating with a variety of campus partners to educate students about the upcoming election and where and how to vote. These events brought candidates and community members to the campus to help students understand how each office affected them directly and the platforms of the candidates running for them. One event the campaign hosts is POPCORN & POLITICS, which provides candidates a platform to reach out and connect to students. The fellows developed a candidate guide that explained what each candidate was running for. UNCP Votes utilized a variety of mediums to educate students such as social media, campus email listservs, CVP's Student voter guide, candidate guide, and a series of wallet cards provided by CVP. Our fellows have developed a UNCP Student Guide that provides detail instruction on voter registration

and voting tailored to UNCP processes. In the future the campaign plans to have the document approved by administration and BOE.

The fellows plan to present at various Freshman Seminar classes on UNCP Votes and the importance of democratic engagement.

The campaign will also implement a new initiative focused on the timeline of voting and civil rights. Each major moment in history will be sponsored by a student organization to provide information through handouts, videos, performance, or information session.

## **Voter Mobilization**

The UNCP Votes Campaign developed several initiatives to ensure students were able to get to the polling locations. We partnered with the campus' brave shuttle to provide rides to students to early voting locations and created a march to show students that we have a polling location right next to campus (practically on campus). UNCP Votes plans to have a block party at the Chancellor's Residence which is located next door of the polling location.

## **Creating a culture**

One strategy the UNCP VOTES coalition has used to help engage students to be more democratically engaged is by helping create a culture on campus where voting is a common practice among students. Passing out buttons, shirts and providing students with information pertaining to opportunities dealing with democratic engagement have helped us to create a culture of civic engagement on our campus. By developing stronger partnerships with student organizations, campus departments, and community partners, the campaign will be better equipped to provide support and encouragement to those organizations in their democratic work.

## Resources

The campaign has utilized several resources from various partners on and off campus. UNCP Votes is committed in developing new resources and maximizing our capacity by continuously identifying relevant resources.

CAMPUS RESOURCES		
All-campus email blast (UNCP Votes events, how to register, and other voter information)	All Students, faculty & Staff	Sent once announcing any major events the campaign hosted and will send more near election time
Posters or flyers on voting rules	50	Printed in house.
UNCP Votes Video made by Fellows	1	Distributed via Facebook.
Website & Social media		All events were placed on the University Calendar
Student Voter Handout (made based off of CVP SVG)	350	Passed out and distributed at our events and around campus

TOOLS USED	COMMENTS
CEEP Campus Self-Assessment	We used this to help measure the focus of our events and what needs we should focus on. We started with only completing not even 5 items on the assessment.

CEEP 7 Key Ways	Having to start from scratch, this was helpful for the team (once established) to plan and implement the UNCP Votes Campaign.
NSVLE Report	We will utilize this information to help focus events and opportunities in the future. Looking at different numbers to determine how to strategically engage campus.
Campus Vote Project "Voter Friendly Campus"	UNCP has become a "Voter Friendly Campus" which allowed us to receive helpful information. We plan to once again apply to become a "Voter Friendly Campus".

## Section VII: Reporting

The UNCP Votes campaign 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. We plan to use our NSLVE report that show us what majors have fewer students that are registered so that we may target these specific departments to increase voter percentages. After each program the fellows must submit a service report to the Office for Community & Civic Engagement to keep track of engagement and assess each program.

## Section VIII: 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. This allows for necessary reflection to make modify the event for the future. The campaign plans to assess the 2018-2019 goals through NSLVE data and various reporting.

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*This plan was developed by UNCP Votes Fellows, Harrison Pegram & Thomas Crowe-Allbritton.  
Reviewed and edited by the Assistant Director for Student Engagement, Dalton Hoffer on 5/31/18.*