



2018 University of Oklahoma Voter Engagement Campus Plan

Facilitated by OU Votes and the Civic Engagement Fellowship at the
Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center.

All questions should be sent to the Carl Albert Center Civic Engagement Director,
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Executive Summary

The OU Voter Engagement Campus Plan was developed by the members and director of the OU Civic Engagement Fellowship at the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center. It was written by the Civic Engagement Fellows, Madison Morrow, Stephen Cromwell, and Carson Ball, as well as the Civic Engagement Director, Lauren Schueler. This action plan is a coordinated way for members of the OU community to work together to create more opportunities for civic engagement and support current work already taking place on OU's campus. Numerous organizations and institutes in partnership with the Civic Engagement Fellows help implement this plan across the University of Oklahoma campus. The plan was originally developed in 2018 because both OU and the state of Oklahoma would like to improve low voter turnout rates and increase political participation and civic engagement. This plan has already started by engaging students in the 2018 primary election and will end once we receive our 2018 midterm turnout NSLVE results. We will then use those results and our experiences to write a report for 2020, while still promoting voting in local elections during the interim. The action plan will be implemented by sharing with various organizations, as well as monitoring OU Votes to see where implementation is failing or more successful than expected and trying to figure out why. We will also present this report to student affairs, student government, and other campus partnerships for their insights. The OU Voter Engagement Campus Plan helps focus on our national campaign initiatives, including voter mobilization and the voter registration contest through the Oklahoma Campus Compact, election watch parties, and the Politics and Pizza student-faculty lecture series over various topics relating to U.S. politics and international relations.

Leadership

The Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center

The Carl Albert Center is a unique and nonpartisan institution that strengthens representative democracy through scholarship, learning, and service. Established in 1979 by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma, the Center is a living tribute to the ideals, leadership, and accomplishments of the Honorable Carl Albert, native Oklahoman, University of Oklahoma alumnus, Rhodes scholar, 46th Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Carl Albert Center provides many leadership opportunities for OU students, including the Carl Albert Civic Engagement Fellowship.

The Carl Albert Civic Engagement Fellows

Each academic year, two to three undergraduate students are selected to pursue the Carl Albert Center's efforts on-campus related to civic education and political engagements. In addition to ongoing efforts to register students to vote, Civic Engagement Fellows pursue civic engagement projects of their own. Past individual projects have included, among others, high school students voter registrations, developing a Norman Youth Council, and developing programs to engage women in politics.

The Center pursues these and related activities as a member of the National Campaign for Civic and Political Engagement. The National Campaign is a consortium of 21 institutions pursuing projects in civic engagement. It is staffed by the Institute of Politics in the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Director of N.E.W. Leadership and Civic Engagement, Lauren Schueler

Lauren Schueler is the Director of N.E.W Leadership and Civic Engagement at the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center. She coordinates the social media for the Center as well as the N.E.W. (National Education for Women's) Leadership program that seeks to address the historical under-representation of women in politics and public service. In addition, she helps organize other programs housed in the Carl Albert Center: Pipeline to Politics and the Civic Engagement Fellowship.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Oklahoma Campus Compact

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education sponsors a voter registration contest through its Oklahoma Campus Compact. OU competes against other colleges and universities to register the most

students to vote on their campus. This year, the contest will run from June 1st through October 12th. Registration booths and information centers will be set up in various locations on campus grounds. The Carl Albert Civic Engagement Fellows will be partnering with various organizations to make the drive a success and will be targeting all incoming and current students with a voter registration drive during the fall semester.

OU Votes

OU Votes' mission is "Registration. Education. Mobilization." OU Votes is a campus-wide initiative to encourage students to register to vote and to participate in local, state, and national elections. OU Votes and the Carl Albert Civic Engagement Fellows coordinate the voter registration contest on OU's campus.

Student Group Partnerships and OU Tabling Locations

We currently have many partnerships and potential partnerships with various OU student groups. We also have several different locations on campus grounds for tabling and registering students to vote. As a large university, it is beneficial to have partnerships to help implement our voter engagement campus plan. These groups help the OU community become more civically active and politically involved.

Student Groups Include:

- American Indian Student Association
- Anne and Henry Zarrow College of Social Work
- Asian American Student Association
- Black Student Association
- College Democrats
- College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Scholars
- Economics Club
- Generation Citizen
- Hispanic American Student Association
- Honors Student Association
- Norman 314 Action
- Political Science Club
- Political Science Department
- Rotaract Club of Norman
- Sigma Lambda Gamma Multi-Greek Cultural Society

- Social Work Student Association
- Student Government Association
- Student Government Exterior
- Young Republicans

Tabling Locations Include:

- Bizzell Memorial Library
- Dunham College
- Headington College
- Headington Hall
- Oklahoma Memorial Union

Commitment

Our voter engagement efforts are largely students driven with the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center providing guidance and support. While the university does explicitly support community engagement, political participation is not part of that mission.

The [mission statement](#) of the University of Oklahoma is “to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society.”

It is important to note that different educational departments and institutions that are part of the University of Oklahoma do have explicit political participation missions and goals.

Landscape

According to the Oklahoma Policy Institute, the national pattern of young voter non-participation is more pronounced in Oklahoma. In 2012, just 27.1 percent of citizens aged 18-24 voted, the third lowest rate in the nation. In 2014, turnout was a dismal 11.8 percent for Oklahomans aged 18-24 and 20.9 percent for those ages 25-44, according to Census Bureau survey data.

According to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement's (NSLVE) University of Oklahoma report, the 2012 voting rate for students was 41 percent and the 2014 voting rate was 16%. For the age group of 18-21 year olds, 4,313 of the 13,195 students enrolled on campus voted in the 2012 Presidential Election. For the age group of 22-24 year olds, 6,340 of the 2,396 students enrolled on campus voted in the 2012 Presidential Election. For the age group of 18-21 year olds, 1,179 of the 14,786 students enrolled on campus voted in the 2014 Midterm Election. For the age group of 22-24, 843 of the 6,770 students enrolled on campus voted in the 2014 Midterm Election. We hope to improve and change the low voter turnout rate for the age group of 18-24 year olds in Oklahoma through our efforts on campus.

Although we've been doing voter registration work on campus for many years, this is our first voter engagement campus plan and we seek to increase our visibility and efforts on campus. Students are more engaged than ever and we want to capitalize on that momentum as we build a solid foundation for civic mindedness on campus.

Goals

Long-Term Goals

Create a polling location on campus

- Further increase voter turnout

Work to create more systematic collaboration across campus

- Work on communication with our active partnerships and potential partnerships

Receive Carnegie Classification as a University

- Apply in Spring 2019

Better integrate voter registration of incoming students

- Improve on this at the Sooner Orientation Weekend Involvement Fair

Partner with OU political groups

- Begin a long-term partnership with Oklahoma political parties

Reach out to Marginalized Groups on campus

- Increase Voter turnout/registration in groups that are historically less civically engaged

Short-Term Goals

25% voter turnout in the 2018 Midterm Election

- Increase of 9% from 2014

Increase the number of active partnerships with OU Votes

- Partner with at least 10 OU student groups and organizations for political events

Host election watch parties

- Partner with campus tabling locations for these watch parties

Win 1st place in the Oklahoma Campus Compact Voter Registration Contest

- Register 300-350+ in state students and 50-100+ out of state students on campus

Engage students through our various social media platforms

- Take over the OU Snapchat on election days and provide students with voting information

Increase attendance at our Politics and Pizza Discussion Series

- Get the word out about our Politics and Pizza events

Strategy

Voter Registration

Tabling: To increase the number of students registered to vote, we will have various tabling locations all over OU's campus. At these tables, we will have OU and TX registration forms as well as computers/tablets where students can fill out online forms to request absentee ballots and look up information related to their voter registration status. The Civic Engagement Fellows and other volunteer students will encourage OU students passing by to get registered and answer any questions about the voting registration process, elections, and voting procedures. We will table at the various Residential Colleges and other OU student living areas on campus, the Bizzell Memorial Library, and the Oklahoma Memorial Union. We will also table at various student group meetings and campus events.

Student Orientation Weekend Involvement Fair: Student Orientation Weekend happens at the beginning of every school year to welcome new students to campus. There is an OU Involvement Fair during Student Orientation Weekend for new students to meet different people, get acquainted with the campus and community, and receive information about the many services and programs at OU. The Civic Engagement Fellows set up a booth at the Involvement Fair and register students to vote throughout the night. This event always increases registration numbers on campus and encourages new students to get civically involved.

Email Political Science Professors: The Civic Engagement Fellows email several Political Science Professors at OU and then schedule days and times to come to their classes and get students registered to vote. During the class period, Fellows also give a brief presentation on OU Votes and the importance of voting.

South Oval Events: There are always different events happening on the South Oval, and we are planning to set up booths and hold political events on the South Oval that encourage students to get registered to vote. We will also possibly collaborate with other student organizations, such as the Student Government Association, to create events with our partners and help increase registration numbers.

Greek Life Efforts: We are looking at increasing our efforts in the Greek Life community to help get fraternity and sorority members registered to vote. We are interested in visiting chapter meetings to

register members and having a competition among the Greek houses to see which sorority and fraternity can get the most members registered. We will also be visiting the five individual greek council meetings to inform and incentivise chapter participation.

Student Athletes: We will reach out to VarsityOne and the Student-athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), the on campus athlete student organizations as well as tabling in the freshman sports dorm. We will also reach out to coaches and assistants in an effort to promote voter registration.

Voter Education

Politics and Pizza Discussion Series: As a reflection of their commitment to civic education, the Carl Albert Center and the OU Department of Political Science will continue to jointly sponsor “Pizza and Politics” nights on the OU campus. These informal gatherings are designed to foster student-faculty discussions about various topics relating to U.S. politics and international relations. Three or four sessions are typically scheduled over the course of the fall and spring semesters and have been met with large success in years past. Students enjoy having the opportunity to come together and discuss important political topics. Politics and Pizza enables students to hear about OU Votes and the voter registration competition.

On-Campus Speakers: Throughout the school year, the Carl Albert Fellows will host on-campus speakers at various events and at the Politics and Pizza Discussion Series. These speakers can range from professors, political candidates, legislative directors, campus staff, etc. These speakers will help teach voter education by providing information about participating in elections.

Social Media Campaign: For this election year, we want to launch a social media campaign encouraging students to educate themselves on different candidates and let their voices be heard through their votes. We are planning to post different polling locations and reminders about voting on our social media pages. We also plan to take over the OU Snapchat on Election Day and post updates and reminders about voting.

Other Events:

Election Watch Parties: As student interest in the election continues to build this year, the Carl Albert Center will seek to get students involved and motivated. We will host debate watch parties at the Center,

and we plan, in conjunction with SGA, to host a large election night watch part. In these various watch parties, students gather on campus to watch a debate or election results streaming in on major television news networks and to hear analysis from professors of American politics. The election watch parties have always drawn a tremendously positive response from the students.

Big 12 Voting Challenge: OU Votes is working to join the Big 12 Voting Challenge. The Carl Albert Fellows and the Carl Albert Director of Civic Engagement will work to promote voter engagement not just at OU, but also throughout our entire conference.

Candidates on Campus: To increase student engagement in elections, we are planning to host different running candidates at OU prior to Election Day. These candidates could have a debate and present their platforms to OU students and encourage them to vote on Election Day.

(This may not happen but I remember discussing it during the meeting so I wanted to include it.)

National Campaign for Political and Civic Engagement Conference at the Institute of Politics at Harvard University: More than 60 student ambassadors from 30 colleges and universities across the country exchange their opinions on the state of the nation and topics of concerns and discussion on their campuses during the National Campaign for Political and Civic Engagement annual conference. The University of Oklahoma Carl Albert Civic Engagement Fellows attend this conference every year and learn about different ideas and activities they can bring back to OU's campus.

Oklahoma Gubernatorial Candidate Forum: The Carl Albert Fellows will be joining Gallogly College of Engineering, Fine Arts, Price College of Business, Gaylord College, OU Public Affairs, and the Oklahoma Academy to host a Gubernatorial Candidate Forum on Thursday, October, 18 from 5:30-7:30 pm. Prior to the Forum, we will encourage OU students to join us in hearing the different candidates speak on a variety of topics.

Reporting

The campus plan will be published on the OU Votes website, as well as by some of the partner organizations. The Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center will be allowed to share the plan as well. We hope to also have it confirmed by the OU Student Government Association.

Evaluation

We will evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts in a few different ways. We want to know how many people were impacted by each event, if those students found the events helpful, and if those numbers reflect in our voter registration and turnout numbers. This information will be collected and evaluated by the Carl Albert Fellows and OU Votes. (Language)

Voter Mobilization

We will evaluate voter mobilization through our voter registration contest through the Oklahoma Campus Compact. We hope to increase our voter registration numbers from last year's competition and win the competition by registering the most students to vote on our campus. We will target all incoming and current students to help make our voter drive successful and utilize our student group partnerships and various tabling locations.

Election Watch Parties

As student interest in the election continues to build this year, we will seek to get students involved and motivated through election watch parties. We will host debate watch parties, and we hope, in conjunction with SGA, to host a large election night watch party. Students will gather on campus to watch a debate or election results streaming in on major television new networks and to hear analysis of American politics. We will evaluate the turnout of our watch parties and examine if they furnish a positive response from students.

Politics and Pizza Discussion Series

We will also analyze the event attendance at our Politics and Pizza Discussion Series that's hosted by the Carl Albert Fellows. The Carl Albert Center and the OU Department of Political Science have jointly continued to sponsor "Pizza and Politics" nights on the OU campus. Politics and Pizza reflects our commitment to civic education and the more students we can get to attend, the more accomplished we will feel because more students will be able to engage in a political experience.