



# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

## ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan Spring 2020

### **SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The University of South Carolina (UofSC) is located in Columbia, S.C., the state's capital. The state legislature is in the university's backyard, just a block away from the center of the main campus. UofSC has seized many of the great opportunities that are afforded with this unique setup, through intentional partnerships and educational initiatives. Despite previous attempts, this has not yielded as high of voter turnout as desired.

The Tufts University National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) campus report reveals information about UofSC's voter engagement that has shaped this action plan. When analyzing the data we received for our 2014 and 2018 Midterm Election Data we gathered the following:

UofSC has made significant increases in both registration rates and voting rates since 2014. Additionally, UofSC is slightly higher than the national average for registration rates confirming our hypothesis that students showing up to the polls is the primary election engagement issue we face on our campus. Absentee ballots are still the most popular method of voting at UofSC (increased by 6.9%). There are significant increases in voting rates for all class standings, both genders mentioned in the survey, all ethnicities, and all reported fields of study except one (Ethnic, Cultural, Gender and Group Studies). Black students on our campus had the highest voting rate of any race/ethnicity in 2014 and 2018 by at least 15%. Despite this, UofSC is still behind the national institutional average for voting rates in general.

#### **Self-Comparison (2014 vs. 2018)**

Increases seen in registration rates (7.5%), voting rates of registered students (19.4%), and overall voting rates (+16.9%)

- Number of students who registered increased by 4,067
- Number of students who voted increased by 5,955

\*note: total populations at UofSC also increased in four years by 2,651\*

#### **Institutional Comparison (2018 vs. 2018)**

- UofSC rates lower than Public Research Institutions by 6%
- UofSC rates lower than All Institutions by 4.4% (which is a larger gap than the 1.9% lower in 2014)
- UofSC is slightly higher than the national average for registration rates

Additionally, when comparing the 2016 voting data with that of 2012, it is evident that UofSC is making progress in terms of increases among students registered to vote, as well as those actually voting in elections. In the 2016 presidential election, UofSC had a 53.5% voting rate which was 3.1% higher than the national institutional average. Additionally, the voting rate of

UofSC students in 2016 was a 7.7% increase from the previous presidential election in 2012.

Overall NSLVE data reveals the distressing reality that the majority of college students nationwide are not exercising their right to vote during presidential elections. Although UofSC is relatively on par with its peer institutions, the university will seize the opportunity to address this national issue through its commitment to civic education. We will implement the programming outlined in this action plan to grow UofSC's voter registration and voter turnout numbers for the 2020 presidential election.

## **PURPOSE & MISSION**

This action plan is designed to serve as a catalyst for student-led, year-round, nonpartisan civic and democratic engagement at the University of South Carolina. This action plan aims to:

- 1) Improve students understanding of civic engagement processes;
- 2) Increase voter registration and voter turnout numbers (using our 2016 presidential election and 2018 midterm election numbers as a comparison);
- 3) Enhance student's civic competencies through respectful dialogue and consideration of diverse viewpoints; and
- 4) Strengthen partnerships between UofSC, partisan, and non-partisan community organizations

This action plan was created and began in January 2020 to be implemented continuously through the 2020-21 school year. This action plan will be revised again at the start of the Spring 2021 semester. Implementation and revisions will be spearheaded by the Leadership and Service Center in collaboration with campus and community partners at University of South Carolina (Columbia Campus).

University of South Carolina's Civic Engagement Action Plan was developed by:

- Carly Zerr, Leadership and Service Center
- Jabari Bodrick, Ph. D., Leadership and Service Center
- Nancy Jones, Civic Leadership, Education and Action Team (CLEAT)
- Emily Zeidman, Civic Leadership, Education and Action Team (CLEAT)
- Emmeline Basco, Civic Leadership, Education, and Action Team (CLEAT)
- Caroline Kaplan, Civic Leadership Education and Action Team (CLEAT)
- Margaret St. John, Civic Leadership Education and Action Team (CLEAT)
- Colleen Bedenbaugh, Civic Leadership Education and Action Team (CLEAT)

This action plan will be implemented by enacting the programming and strategies outlined in this document to achieve the defined goals.

## **SECTION II: LEADERSHIP**

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The Leadership and Service Center (LSC) at University of South Carolina will coordinate and oversee the institution's work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement. The Leadership and Service Center equips students to positively impact their communities through involvement in student organizations, leadership development, service, and civic engagement. The LSC works towards a vision that students will be engaged, lifelong leaders committed to positive change in the world.

Stronger emphasis on civic engagement initiatives will assist the LSC in achieving their mission by guiding students to become responsible and engaged citizens in their local, national and global communities. Students will become more aware of social issues, take diverse

perspectives into consideration, and connect their current leadership and service efforts to a deeper meaning.

Carly Zerr, Coordinator for Service and Civic Engagement and Jabari Bodrick, Associate Director of the Leadership and Service Center, will primarily be responsible for the implementation of this plan with the Civic Leadership Education Action Team.

Additionally, collaboration with campus and community partners will occur. As of now the following groups and individuals have been identified as ongoing partners for the working group:

- Student Government
  - Student Body President, Issy Rushton
  - Student Body Vice President, Hannah White
  - General student government members
- Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
  - Director of Student Conduct, Maureen Grewe
  - Carolina Judicial Council (a group of students who uphold and promote the standards of the Carolina community through the Carolinian Creed)
- Community Partners and Local Representation
  - Richland County Elections Commission, Cale Carter
  - Mayor of Cayce, Elise Partin

The role of the working group is to provide feedback on the mission and programs outlined in the action plan, as well as support programming as it arises. The working group pulls together students, staff, faculty, and community partners who collectively work to implement the programming outlined in this action plan.

### **Civic Leadership Education and Action Team**

Students are crucial to developing and strengthening a culture around civic education and participation at UofSC and in Columbia. The Civic Leadership Education and Action Team (CLEAT) is a group of committed students established to assist in implementation of this action plan. CLEAT is currently composed of nine student leaders who envision and implement student-led, year-round, nonpartisan civic engagement programming. CLEAT's student leadership recruits and manages student participants to assist with the organization's mission. This organization cultivates collaboration with the above mentioned groups. CLEAT meets weekly to revisit the goals addressed in this action plan, and coordinate corresponding programming.

### **Additional Partners**

On-campus partners:

- Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support
- Department of Student Life
- Student Government (Legislative Action Network, Congressional Advisory Board)
- Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity
- Political Science Department
- Off-Campus Living and Neighborhood Relations
- Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
- Voter Registration Coalition (currently composed of students representing 15 different student organizations)
- College Democrats, College Republicans, College Libertarians, Young Democratic Socialists, etc.

Off-Campus partners:

- Richland County Elections Commissions
- Civic Nation
- #VoteTogether
- National Voter Registration Day
- TurboVote
- Campus Labs
- Campus Compact
- Local politicians including; Mayor Benjamin, Mayor Partin, Bakari Sellers, Micah Caskey, Senator Hutto, Representative Norrell, Tameika Isaac Devine, among others

Our internal collaborators predominantly serve as partners in programming and resource cultivation. Student voice has, and will continue, to help determine and implement initiatives, as well as serve as voter advocates. The off-campus partners have agreed to offer their support to the university's civic engagement initiative through helping with voter registration drives, helping students obtain free voter identification cards, and/or educating students about policy issues. Our external partners also provide a variety of helpful resources to assist in planning and cultivation of best practices.

### **SECTION III: COMMITMENT**

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The University of South Carolina values diversity and inclusion of all identities and thoughts. The university's Carolinian Creed states "I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from different people, ideas, and opinions". UofSC has a rich history of helping students develop their multicultural competencies through a variety of programs, both curricular and co-curricular. This civic action plan is an attempt to both continue and further such tradition. In recent political events, the nation has witnessed Americans becoming increasingly less civil toward one another as they discuss their political views. UofSC believes that civility and education about voter engagement and political issues can happen simultaneously. Because of UofSC's proximity to the state capitol, the university is fortunate enough to have access to many campus and community partners with a vested interest in civic engagement which aids the mission outlined in this action plan.

The institution demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning in a myriad of ways. From a staff development perspective, the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support have provided multiple professional development opportunities focusing on this topic, including a division meeting centered on Viewpoint Diversity, a Student Life Lunch & Learn centered on Free Speech on Campus, as well as informal discussion with the Vice President of Student Affairs around civic and democratic engagement at his roundtable discussions.

Additionally, University of South Carolina has contributed monetary support in this area as well. First and foremost, we have signed multi-year contracts with organizations such as TurboVote, and Campus Labs that are primary drivers in our voter registration efforts. The Leadership and Service Center, supported by the Department of Student Life, has also added civic engagement programming as a primary job function to an employee's job description, as well as added a specific budget line for civic engagement programming.

Support from the Academic Affairs perspective is present as well. Conversations to broaden student perspectives are often brought into classrooms such as a presentation called "Seizing Civility" into first-year classrooms, and the Public Deliberation Program based on National Issues Forum into various classrooms across multiple disciplines. Voter Engagement presentations are also given in classroom settings to educate students on the voter engagement process.

The support in our guiding documents, financial resources, and staff development, set our institution up for success when attempting to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

The civic learning outcomes that have been outlined are the following:

- Students will understand the voting process and the resources available to them
- Students will gain a better understanding of political processes
- Students will engage in meaningful dialogue to cultivate civil deliberation and increase issue-based knowledge
- Students will understand what it means to be an active citizen in their community

These four learning outcomes align with our four goals for programming outlined in Section V of this document.

## SECTION IV: LANDSCAPE

### University of South Carolina Demographic Breakdown

#### Undergraduate Enrollment

Demographic	South Carolina	United States	UofSC Columbia	UofSC System
White	63.9%	62.6%	76.7%	69.1%
African American	27.9%	13.2%	10.2%	15.9%
Native American	0.5%	1.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Asian	1.5%	5.3%	2.3%	1.9%
Hispanic	5.3%	17.1%	4.0%	4.0%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	1.7%	2.4%	3.2%	3.1%
NR Alien			1.6%	1.5%
No Response			1.7%	4.2%

#### Graduate & Professional Enrollment

Demographic	South Carolina	United States	UofSC Columbia	UofSC System
White	63.9%	62.6%	65.3%	65.4%
African American	27.9%	13.2%	11.8%	11.6%
Native American	0.5%	1.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Asian	1.5%	5.3%	2.1%	2.1%
Hispanic	5.3%	17.1%	2.7%	2.7%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Two or More Races	1.7%	2.4%	2.3%	2.3%
NR Alien			12.6%	12.2%
No Response			3.0%	3.5%

Source: Charts taken from UofSC Office of Diversity and Inclusion

### Student Engagement Overview

NSLVE data suggests that University of South Carolina students were slightly more engaged in registration and voter turnout than other four year public institutions and the national average in the 2016 election. Despite this success, UofSC lagged behind their peers for registration and voter turnout for the 2014 midterm election.

Table 1. UofSC Student Voter Registration and Turnout Rates, 2012-2018

	Student Voter Registration Rates		Student Voter Turnout Rates		
	UofSC	National	UofSC	4yr Public	National
2012	75.6%	69.0%	45.7%	46.8%	46.9%
2014	67.1%	68.0%	17.8%	18.5%	18.5%
2016	83.5%	70.6%	53.5%	49.8%	50.4%
2018	76.5%	73.3%	34.7%	40.8%	39.1%

Source: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, 2012 and 2016 reports  
 Source: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, 2014 and 2018 reports

## **ASSESSMENT OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMMING**

In the Leadership and Service Center blueprint (strategic planning document) the following is listed out:

**Goal Statement:** Students that participate in LSC events will become committed to enhancing their civic competencies and their understanding of civic engagement processes.

**Linkage to University Goal:** Building Inclusive and Inspiring Communities.

### **Achievements:**

#### **CLEAT**

Civic engagement efforts planned through Civic Leadership Education Action Team (CLEAT) primarily focused on voter engagement programming, education surrounding the midterm and presidential elections, Congress to Campus, and our Public Deliberations Program. CLEAT programming brought together a variety of constituent groups including 3 academic departments, 17 student organizations, and 3 student affairs partnerships.

- 100% of those who completed the civic engagement speaker survey agreed or strongly agreed a civility series event was a quality program in generating conversations for a better world

#### **Public Deliberation Program**

A Public Deliberation Program pilot was started during the spring 2019 semester. We intentionally facilitated to a select few groups to test out our program and have students gain first-hand facilitation experience. Additional student leaders were selected in the fall of 2019 to increase our reach across campus and therefore increase participant attendance.

- 2018-2019: 63 student participants in Public Deliberations
- 2019-2020: 120 student participants in Public Deliberations
  - Note: Two Public Deliberations were cancelled in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19 and transitioning to online programming

#### **Voter Registration**

All structured voter registration efforts referenced in this action plan took place during Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters. CLEAT and student organizations used TurboVote to register students, faculty and staff. We received the Voter Friendly Campus designation and renewed our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) participation.

- 834 people registered to vote so far this academic year

## **ANALYSIS OF BARRIERS**

### **Internal Barriers**

*Balancing new programming:* CLEAT is a relatively new student group being advised by the Leadership and Service Center at UofSC. Balancing new organization culture, as well as new programming in conjunction with prior prioritized projects occasionally comes with challenges.

*Maintaining Nonpartisan programming during an election year:* With South Carolina having had a lot of national attention in our February primary election, the majority of Presidential Candidates reached out about hosting events on campus. Determining the best group on campus to host such events to maintain our nonpartisan mission has been challenging when trying to fully capitalize on programming that could benefit the student body.

*Student confusion/procrastination:* While electronic voter registration is allowed in the State of South Carolina, absentee ballots require students to mail in forms. Some counties allow electronic commissions to be emailed or faxed, but not all have this option. Due to confusion and/or procrastination on behalf of students, absentee ballots may not be turned in by the deadline of 7pm on Election Day. We anticipate this confusion to grow as different voter registration methods are being discussed as options during this COVID-19 pandemic.

*General student apathy:* Student priorities are pulled in multiple directions, especially UofSC being an SEC football centered institution. Students do not always care to know what is going on politically despite being offered programming to increase their awareness.

## **External Barriers**

*Election laws: Registration deadlines, ID Requirements, Early Voting Restrictions*

- Early voter registration deadline is 30 days prior to the election which requires heavy efforts on the front-end of the cycle.
- Voter ID requirements enforce students to present a government-issued photo ID when voting. A student ID is often not an accepted form of ID.
- Despite absentee voting allowed prior to Election Day in some South Carolina counties, South Carolina as a whole does not allow early voting without legitimate excuses. This automatically makes it more difficult to engage in Vote Early Day and other programs geared towards early voting. To take advantage of absentee voting, voters must report to the election office in the county in which they are registered, providing a further barrier.

*Transportation to Polls:* Being able to provide enough reliable transportation for students to actually make it to the polls is a challenge. Furthermore, efficient advertisement of such transportation is critical.

*COVID-19 Pandemic:* Entering the Fall 2020 semester still being in the midst of managing a “new normal” during the COVID-19 pandemic presents additional challenges. One potential challenge is moving programming to an online, hybrid, or social distant model. The majority of our Voter Registration Drives occur face-to-face to be able to personally walk students through their options and ensure they register to vote correctly. Additional programming such as our Public Deliberation Program and Speaker Series are done in-person to create an environment of organic discussion that may be difficult to re-create with online platforms. Another challenge we may face is maintaining equity in general. COVID-19 has highlighted inequity issues on our campus and in our local community that we will need to be intentional about combatting to ensure all students have the same level of access to our programs and the ability to cast their vote. Lastly, severe budget cuts have affected program budgets in a negative way that could impact the resources available to implement this action plan. Furloughs are a possibility that may also impact staff member’s capacity to work on civic engagement initiatives as originally planned.

## **Available Resources**

The Leadership and Service Center has identified the following resources to further our action plan despite the previously listed barriers:

- Staff member focused on Civic Engagement Initiatives in the LSC: after shifting job responsibilities among coordinators in the office, a Coordinator for Service and Civic Engagement will be dedicating significant time to implementing this action plan in conjunction with the Associate Director in the center. This Coordinator for Service and



Civic Engagement will work with the members of CLEAT to help develop programming from both educational and action perspectives to create a year-long civic engagement culture on UofSC's campus.

- Group of engaged students and traditional programming: The Leadership and Service Center is a premier space at UofSC that is located in the hub of campus. The variety of programming that stems from the center provides an effective outlet to implement civic engagement into. The students who are involved in programming from the Leadership and Service Center are often very engaged in campus with a great deal of social capital. Utilizing these students as advocates and sources of feedback will help cultivate the culture we are seeking to promote.
- Higher-level administrative support: The LSC falls within the Department of Student Life, which is in the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support at UofSC. The work of our center, specifically civic engagement practices, has significant support from higher level administration that simplifies conversations of resources and credibility.

### **Additional Resources Needed**

- Relationships with external partners: The LSC is moving into year three of focusing on civic engagement programming and is slowly working on creating and enhancing relationships with external partners such as Richland County Elections Commission. Due to a lot of turnover in that office, further developing this relationship with their newer staff members is an additional resource needed.

## **SECTION V: GOALS**

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The long-term goal of this action plan is to create a culture of civic engagement on campus, and to create and implement sustainable programming that is year-round, nonpartisan, and student-led. A ten year goal would be to increase student voting rates by 14 percentage points from 2016 to 2024.

As mentioned above, the civic learning outcomes that have been outlined are the following:

- Students will understand the voting process and the resources available to them
- Students will gain a better understanding of political processes
- Students will engage in meaningful dialogue to cultivate civil deliberation and increase issue-based knowledge
- Students will understand what it means to be an active citizen in their community

This action plan seeks to increase student engagement in civic efforts through the following:

### **Area One: Voting**

- **Increase number of students registered to vote**
  - Specific: CLEAT is aiming to register at least 1801 students to vote before the presidential election. 1801 represents the year UofSC was founded.
  - Measurable: The admin side of TurboVote makes it easy to track number of student we have registered.
  - Achievable: The largest amount of students CLEAT has registered in one semester has been 1165 during the midterm election cycle, making 1801 an achievable goal.
  - Realistic: Given the additional attention Presidential elections receive, this should be realistic. "1801" is meant to build culture and school spirit around voter registration. We will push to register students beyond that number if possible.
  - Timely: CLEAT will register 1801 student before the voter registration deadline.



- **Assist students in understanding their options of what voting method is right based on their situation and disseminate absentee ballot information**
  - Specific: Holding at least 4 face-to-face opportunities (either in-person or via digital platforms) for students to ask questions and receive real-time answers.
  - Measurable: Able to track participation in these opportunities with participation count on virtual platforms, or scanning Carolina Cards for in-person events.
  - Achievable: We held 3 in-person events while registering folks to vote for the midterm elections. Adding one additional event should be achievable.
  - Realistic: Given the additional attention Presidential elections receive and the added confusion around how COVID-19 affects voting, we are confident students will take advantage of these opportunities.
  - Timely: All events will take place prior to the voter registration deadline.
  
- **Assist students in verifying they are registered and their information is correct**
  - Specific: Ensure website, advertising, and voter information cards have up to date links for students to verify their information.
  - Measurable: Track social media attention and number of voter information cards given away
  - Achievable: Able to easily add this information to what we already disseminate
  - Realistic: Students are often registered incorrectly or do not know if they are registered – helping them check this could help increase voter turnout rates by catching issues early. This is easy to accomplish given our resources
  - Timely: All work around this goal will be completed prior to voter registration deadline.
  
- **Provide education on voting logistics**
  - Specific: Provide resources for students to look up their polling location, learn about transportation options to the polls, and check their sample ballot in advance
  - Measurable: Track social media attention and number of voter information cards given away
  - Achievable: Able to easily add this information to what we already disseminate
  - Realistic: Students ask these questions all the time; putting the information in a place to make it clear would be very easy to accomplish.
  - Timely: All work around this goal will be completed prior to and on Election Day.

## **Area Two: Civic and Information Literacy Education**

- **Provide programming focused on helping students understand the political process and to check the validity of their political news sources**
  - Specific: Provide two speaker series events a year that provides clarity on political processes such as positions involved in elections, general purpose of midterm elections, and a deeper understanding of the effects the results could have for both the short and long term political climate, etc. Additionally, add information to our website about information literacy and checking your sources when gathering information about political or societal concerns.
  - Measurable: Assessments given out after speaker series events to gauge student learning
  - Achievable: We have money set in our budget specifically for our Speaker Series events. Additionally, we have access to edit our own website making it a simple task.
  - Realistic: We have held five Speaker Series events in the past that prove the successful nature of this goal
  - Timely: We spread this information out over the course of the year to achieve our overarching goal of providing year-round, student-led, nonpartisan programming.

### **Area Three: Dialogue & Deliberation**

- **Provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful dialogue to cultivate civil deliberation and increase issue-based knowledge.**
  - Specific: Host at least 4 smaller group deliberations (in student orgs or classrooms) in both the fall and the spring (i.e. at least 8 per year). Additionally, host at least 1 public deliberation open to anyone at the university.
  - Measurable: Easy to track how many deliberations have been facilitated. We will also assess student learning at the end of each deliberation with a survey.
  - Achievable: We have all the resources and partnerships prepared to carry out 8 deliberations.
  - Realistic: We completed 3 deliberations this past spring (prior to COVID-19 cancelling a few programs) making our goal realistic to accomplish.
  - Timely: We spread these programs out over the course of the year to achieve our overarching goal of providing year-round, student-led, nonpartisan programming

Effective deliberation can help students gain development in civic literacy, active listening, humility, non-dualistic thinking, grit, and a variety of others skills. Additionally, this type of dialogue can increase student's understanding of local and national social/political issues.

### **Area Four: Civic Action**

- **Assist students in turning ideas into action by increasing students' capacity and commitment to participate constructively with others and working collectively to address common problems**
  - Specific: Provide spaces and opportunities within our office's programs to have these conversations through trainings, individual meetings, and group-development models such as our Service Cohort and Close Family Emerging Leaders Program
  - Measurable: Easy to track through curriculum plans
  - Achievable: The Leadership and Service Center has begun to slowly add these conversations to our current curriculum plans over the past two years and have the capacity to expand
  - Realistic: We have a committed staff who sees the value of incorporating these conversations into our programming and peer leader development
  - Timely: We spread these programs out over the course of the year to achieve our overarching goal of providing year-round, student-led, nonpartisan programming

The before-mentioned goals and initiatives will occur in the 2020-21 school year and will be implemented by the Leadership and Service Center and CLEAT students in conjunction with support from campus and community partners. The primary audience for said programming is University of South Carolina undergraduate and graduate students living both on and off-campus. All programs aim to be as inclusive and equitable as possible, welcoming all into our spaces, and providing accommodations where necessary to have everyone be able to comfortably participate.

## **SECTION VI: NSLVE**

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The landscape section of this document (referenced again below) provides a comparison across the past four main elections in terms of both voter registration and voter turnout for our student population. This comparison outlines that UofSC's voter registration rates increased 7.9% between the 2012 and 2016 Presidential elections. Additionally, it outlines that UofSC's voter turnout rates increased 7.8% between 2012 and 2016 Presidential elections. Our specific goal for both voter registration and voter turnout rates is to match this increase for the 2020 Presidential election. This would bring our goal rates to 91.4% of students registered to vote and

61.3% voter turnout rate. Additionally, the information depicted in our student voting data by ethnicity in Tables 2 and 3 below, helps us understand where the gaps are on our campus so we can aim to be more inclusive in our efforts to promote voter engagement. The strategy outlined in Section VII explains how we plan to accomplish these increases.

**Table 1. UofSC Student Voter Registration and Turnout Rates, 2012-2018**

	Student Voter Registration Rates		Student Voter Turnout Rates		
	UofSC	National	UofSC	4yr Public	National
2012	75.6%	69.0%	45.7%	46.8%	46.9%
2014	67.1%	68.0%	17.8%	18.5%	18.5%
2016	83.5%	70.6%	53.5%	49.8%	50.4%
2018	76.5%	73.3%	34.7%	40.8%	39.1%

Source: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, 2012 and 2016 reports  
Source: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, 2014 and 2018 reports

**Table 2. UofSC Student Voting Data by Ethnicity, 2014 and 2018**

	2014			2018			Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Asian	1,422	59	4.2%	2,082	267	12.8%	↑ 8.7
American Indian/ Alaska Native	79	*	n/a	60	14	23.3%	n/a
Black	3,444	1,109	32.2%	3,176	1,585	49.9%	↑ 17.7
Hispanic	1,317	153	11.6%	1,554	446	28.7%	↑ 17.1
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	30	*	n/a	35	10	28.6%	n/a
White	24,251	3,907	16.1%	25,653	8,543	33.3%	↑ 17.2
2 or More Races	1,073	148	13.8%	1,237	410	33.1%	↑ 19.4
Unknown	392			828			

Source: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, 2014 and 2018 reports

**Table 3. UofSC Student Voting Data by Ethnicity, 2012 and 2016**

	2012			2016			Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Asian	801	158	19.7%	1,422	351	24.7%	↑ 5.0
American Indian/ Alaska Native	70	25	35.7%	64	31	48.4%	↑ 12.7
Black	3,334	2,257	67.7%	3,306	2,100	63.5%	↓ -4.2
Hispanic	1,090	353	32.4%	1,386	644	46.5%	↑ 14.1
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	22	*	n/a	36	15	41.7%	n/a
White	22,941	10,113	44.1%	25,055	12,836	51.2%	↑ 7.2
2 or More Races	842	354	42.0%	1,129	544	48.2%	↑ 6.1
Unknown	92			459			

Source: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, 2012 and 2016 reports

## **SECTION VII: STRATEGY**

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### **Area One: Voting**

**Strategy:** Continue utilizing TurboVote to track voter registration

- Helps students register to vote either online or by paper
- Helps students vote by sending election reminders via text or email to stay in touch with local elections
- Helps students vote by mail via absentee ballot request forms

**Strategy:** Engage in the Ask Every Student movement to increase our reach on campus

**Strategy:** Pull in partners across campus to increase social capital and reach within our scope

#### **Initiatives:**

- Student Voter Registration Coalition: A program that was piloted in Fall 2019 to engage more people in the voter registration process. The coalition is composed of representatives from different student organizations and departmental programs that come together to register their peers to vote. This group will run two “challenges” this year to increase voter registration rates:
  - 1801 Challenge – Register at least 1801 students to vote. 1801 represents the year UofSC was founded and is meant to promote pride and tradition among Gamecocks engaging in active citizenship
  - Student Org Voter Registration Competition – Student organizations will compete to see who can register the largest percentage of their organization to vote. We use TurboVote referral codes to track how many people have registered. The winner will receive a prize of catering for one of their events.

The Student Voter Registration Coalition will engage in the following to register people to vote:

- Complete student org visits (either virtually or in-person) to educate student orgs on our competition, as well as information about voting and our TurboVote site
- Complete classroom visits (either virtually or in-person) to educate about voting information and our TurboVote site
- Hold office hours in the Leadership and Service Center for students to individually stop by to have their questions answered by one of our team members (social distancing, PPE, and sanitation will all be practiced)
- Utilize signage outside the Leadership and Service Center and on our student union digital display signs to provide QR codes to easily access our TurboVote page and SC Votes website to check registration
- Utilize social media to update people on our 1801 goal, links to voter registration materials, and information about any upcoming events

- Participate in National Voter Registration Day by hosting a social distant in-person registration drive or digital drive depending on the state of COVID-19 at that time
- Establish a user-friendly website page that houses voting information and logistics, as well as advertising voter registration events
- Partner with Richland County Elections Commission for voter registration volunteer training

### **Area Two: Civic Literacy Education**

**Strategy:** Streamline civic literacy and information literacy resources

- Comprehensive and coherent information to help students better understand the political process

**Initiatives:**

- Speaker Series Events: Civic Engagement centered keynote and subsequent events to further dialogue
- User-friendly website page with links to civic literacy information and advertisement of related events
- Add a section of our website that is dedicated to information literacy resources to assist students in understanding the difference between reliable and unreliable sources
- Provide this information during tabling events, voter registration drives and digital formats

### **Area Three: Dialogue & Deliberation**

**Strategy:** Continue to use National Issues Forum model for deliberation programs

**Strategy:** Cultivate partnerships across campus to increase involvement and visibility

- Potential partners include: Office of Multicultural Affairs, Off-campus Living and Neighborhood Relations, Greek Life, and Student Government

**Initiatives:**

- Better promote this resources to classes such as U101, political science department, public health, etc., to student organizations, and departments within the Division of Student Affairs as a training option
- Host a Public Deliberation open to all of campus focused on Free Speech on Campus in partnership with Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity and Carolina Judicial Council as our 2020-2021 Civility Series Event

### **Area Four: Civic Action**

**Strategy:** Incorporate civic action into existing Leadership and Service Center programs to create more cohesive understanding of how leadership, service, and civic engagement work together

**Initiatives:**

- Incorporate trainings around active citizenship and social justice into our annual All Leadership and Service Center Peer Leader Training
- Incorporate social issue and advocacy specific trainings into our Service Cohort curriculum
- Incorporate brainstorming/reflection of civic action concepts in Alternative Break curriculum, specifically in regards to reorientation
- Incorporate conversations of civic action into leadership programming such as Student Leadership Diversity Conference, and Close Family Emerging Leaders Program
- Constitution Day Event: Create a video or Instagram Live stream interviewing various people on campus about what the Constitution and active citizenship means to them. Additionally CLEAT is looking into hosting an art display (either digitally or in-person) to give people creative freedom to answer the question what does the active citizenship mean to you?

**Summary of 2019-2020 Programming:****Fall 2019 Events:**

- Richland County Elections Voter Registration Training for Voter Registration Coalition
- National Voter Registration Day
- Civic Engagement Fair
- Family Weekend Voter Registration Drive
- Constitution Day Brunch; Conversation Café
  - The event included remarks from community partners, and facilitated small group dialogues that navigated a range of topics that may be controversial, polarizing, or garner differing opinions. The topics discussed included Limits of the First Amendment, Abortion, Immigration, Gun Control, Mental Health, Voting Rights and the Opioid Crisis. One student and one faculty or community member facilitated each table.
- Diversity in Politics Series
  - Night One: Rebecca Thompson from Reflective Democracy Campaign discussed White Male Electability Advantage and its impact on politics
  - Night Two: Local Politicians (Representative Mandy Powers Norrell, Mayor Elise Partin, and Tameika Isaac Devine) discussed their experiences and strategies on getting involved with politics and running effective campaigns as females and minorities.
- Food Insecurity Deliberation
- Gun Control Deliberation

**Spring 2020 Events:**

- MLK Voter Registration Drive
- Non-Partisan Political Film Festival
  - Partnering with Washington Political Film Foundation to host
  - Two movies were shown- The first movie shown was Ides of March which centered on the theme of Campaigns & Elections (due to it being right before the primary). The second movie shown was Loving which centered on the theme of Injustice, Freedom, and Civil Rights (for Black History Month). Both movies were followed with audience discussion lead by panelists.

- Divided State of American Deliberation
- Immigration Deliberation
- Healthcare Deliberation
- Planned to hold the first open forum deliberation on campus – Cancelled due to COVID-19 closure and pushed to 2020-2021 action plan

All programming is held on campus and open to all students, staff, faculty and sometimes community members.

**Long-Term Goal Strategies:** UofSC is currently entering its third year of intentional civic engagement programming. That being said, our strategy to move closer to our long-term goal of creating a culture of this type of programming on campus is relatively simple. Our strategy is to continue developing the Civic Leadership Education and Action Team by bolstering membership, adding diversity to our team, solidifying our internal and external partners (specifically connecting more to the academic affairs side of our campus), and pushing to create name recognition on campus. The before mentioned programs will assist in implementing these strategies.

## **SECTION VIII: REPORTING**

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This action plan will predominantly be used as an internal document that can be shared with Leadership and Service Center staff and Department of Student Life at University of South Carolina. That being said, our action plan will be publically available on the civic engagement section of the Leadership and Service Center website. As a partner of ALL In Democracy Challenge, our NSLVE data and previous/current action plans our published publically on their website as well.

Internally at UofSC we complete blueprints (strategic planning documents) to set goals for our units and report out on this information at the end of each year. This action plan informs the civic engagement section of our blueprint that is tracked through assessment measures throughout the year.

## **SECTION IX: EVALUATION**

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Quantitative Measures:

- TurboVote and NSLVE data
- Number of and attendance at election-related events in 2020-2021
- Number of and attendance at Public Deliberation Program events in 2020-2021
- Number of students engaged with Student Voter Registration Coalition
- Number of partnerships both internal and external to the university

Qualitative Measures:

- Feedback from staff and students working on civic engagement initiatives
- Feedback from other stakeholders on campus
- Surveys collected from Public Deliberation Program assessing student learning
- Surveys collected from Civility Series assessing student learning

Evaluation will occur before, during, and after each academic year and correlates with the civic action planning cycle. The Leadership and Service Center Staff will use previous year's data to create our next civic action plan and inform our goals. The bulk of the evaluation will be carried out during the assessment cycle of the department which occurs quarterly, with two deep dives at the end of each semester. The results will be shared to the department in the annual blueprint.



## **SECTION X: CONCLUSION**

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The Leadership and Service Center understands that this civic action plan is a living document that will be updated as necessary throughout the year. Overall this document will guide our programming and future planning as we commit to enhancing student-led, year-round, nonpartisan civic engagement on our campus.