

# UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA VOTING ACTION PLAN 2020-21

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# Voter Registration Programs

## Introduction

The University of Virginia was founded in 1819 by Thomas Jefferson. Two hundred years later, UVA is a thriving public institution devoted to the ideals of democracy that Jefferson and his peers envisioned as they forged a new government. What's different today is UVA continues to redefine its mission as a public institution that Jefferson could never envision – one where the truth about the past must emerge to enlighten and inform the present and the future; where women, African Americans, and people of all races, sexual orientations, financial means, and religions have an equal voice in how they are governed.

Jefferson's principles of self-government and an educated citizenry are woven into the fabric of his university. Students continue to shape those principles to their time. Active in public service and civic engagement, they participate each year in substantial numbers in democratic elections.

With the 2020 election season under way, students have organized the Virginia Votes coalition to encourage participation in the democratic process in even greater numbers.

It should be noted that this plan is based on a normal academic year, which is not expected to unfold in 2020-2021 given the COVID-19 pandemic. As more information becomes available, the plan will be modified.

## Voting Demographics

The state of Virginia holds elections every year, and turnout rates vary due to the scale of each election. In 2016, the University of Virginia was above the national average for universities across the nation with a turnout rate of 63.9% (National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement). Turnout for midterm elections improved in 2019 from 2014 from 14.9% to 45.8% (NSLVE). Student turnout is highly dependent on publicity surrounding the election and student initiatives to register and get out the vote.

## Virginia Votes

In 2018, under the leadership of UVA's Student Council, a coalition of UVA offices and student groups came together to focus on voter registration and voting

activities. While many activities already were taking place at the University, they lacked coordination and cohesion.

## Objectives

The objectives of Virginia Votes are to:

- Create a culture of civic participation at UVA.
- Develop coordination among offices and student groups involved in voter registration and voting.
- Increase voting levels among UVA students each year by 10% in comparison to turnout in the equivalent election (presidential year vs state legislature year).

## Partners

**Student Council:** As the governing organization for the student body at UVA, Student Council provides a means for students to participate in issues and policies that affect the student body, while offering several services to the University.

### Activities:

Leadership and coordination: Convene meetings, communicate with Virginia Votes partners, and provide overall leadership for the Virginia Votes effort.

### Programming:

Student Council's Legislative Affairs Committee will hold Election Day office hours for students to come and ask questions, get sample ballots, and provide resources to make a plan to vote. In addition, the committee will hold an absentee voting workshop for students who are registered with their home addresses.

Legislative Affairs has conducted focus groups with UVA's hourly workers in order to identify barriers to voting for those employed by the University. Informational brochures and flyers will be created and distributed electronically and in break rooms specifically for hourly workers.

Tabling: Legislative Affairs will organize two days to table at four locations frequented by students: O’Hill, South Lawn, Newcomb, and Engineer’s Way. Volunteers will table from 10am-4pm on National Voter Registration Day (September 24) and the day before the registration deadline (October 12).

University Democrats table every Tuesday and Thursday from 11am-1pm at Newcomb.

**Representatives:**

Hannah Koizumi, Chair, Legislative Affairs Committee

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**Center for Politics:** [few sentences summarizing their scope/mission]

**Activities:** CFP oversees year-long fellowships for the Campus Vote Project for students to engage in projects to increase civic engagement in the University community. In addition, these fellows will support the Legislative Affairs Committee as volunteers during classroom registration and tabling.

CFP tables at the resource fair during Summer Orientation to register incoming students. In addition, they will coordinate with Legislative Affairs to create a civic engagement pamphlet to hand out during Orientation, move-in weekend, and the Student Activities Fair.

**Representatives:**

Glenn Crossman, Director of Programs

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**UVA Libraries:** The Libraries provide access to accumulated knowledge, and in so doing, increase it. In pursuit of that goal, they collect, preserve, organize, and share materials of all kinds. The Library's staff, services, and resources ensure that the University community has the information it needs for teaching, research, and personal enjoyment and enrichment. As physical facilities frequented by students, they represent ideal places to educate students about voter registration and civic participation.

**Activities:** Providing the space, tables, bulletin boards, and circulation desks as a place to advertise civic engagement resources and informational brochures created by Legislative Affairs.

**Representatives:**

Haley Gillilan, Undergraduate Student Success Librarian

Amber Reichert, UVa Libraries

Maggie Nunley, UVa Libraries

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**Office of the Provost:** The Vice Provost for Academic outreach is the primary advocate and representative for community engagement, public service, and academic outreach programs across the University.

**Activities:** Community Engagement includes a robust curricular program grounded in community partnerships and a commitment to the education of students for socially responsible, engaged citizenship. The University also commits to supporting research that is clearly in the public interest.

**Representatives:**

Louis Nelson, Vice Provost for Academic Outreach

Rick Willis, Administrative Coordinator

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**Office of the President:** This office provides leadership to the entire University, supporting civic participation in both word and deed. President Jim Ryan has specifically made a commitment to support the All in Democracy initiative.

**Activities:** Provide advocacy and communications support on civic engagement as part of the University's mission and current strategic plan.

**Representatives:**

Zaakir Tameez, Presidential Fellow

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**Division of Student Affairs:** This division advocates on behalf of students and provides resources to help students create an exceptional student experience during their time at the University. Public service and civic participation is one of seven core goals of the division along with academic rigor, honor and integrity, student self-governance, diversity and inclusion, and health and wellness.

**Activities:** Support the Legislative Affairs Committee with information, advising, communication, and resources as needed. Serve as a repository for institutional knowledge to assist and support evolving student leadership.

**Representatives:**

Dirron Allen, Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Student Engagement

Virginia Carter, Director of Communications for Student Affairs

Andy Petters, Associate Dean of Students for Housing & Residence Life

**Proposed Coordinated Activities:**

Move-In Weekend: A partnership with Housing and Residence Life along with volunteers from the student body for move-in weekend (Aug 28 & 29). Volunteers will be at four locations around first-year dorms: Gooch/Dillard, Old Dorms courtyard, O’Hill, and Gibbons along with two locations on Central Grounds: UVA Bookstore and South Lawn. Volunteers will table from 10am-4pm, and the first 30 students to sign up to volunteer will receive a free T-shirt. This opportunity will be publicized through a Facebook event. Student volunteers will be centered around dorms while community members who volunteer will be placed near Central Grounds.

Activities Fair: Legislative Affairs will table for voter registration at the entrance of the event.

Dorm Events: A partnership with Housing and Residence Life to hold voter registration events for dorms every Monday 7-9pm from September until the Virginia Voter Registration deadline in October. Legislative Affairs will present at Orientation for HRL staff in order to inform them on the upcoming elections, voting resources, and why it is important to participate in elections. Afterwards, senior resident staff members will sign up for a slot to hold an event, and will be given marketing materials to distribute to their residents from Legislative Affairs.

Communication: Support the Virginia Votes effort with mass messaging to students, a Virginia Votes website, and other communication or marketing-related activities.

Student Engagement: Encourage civic participation as part of being an engaged student at UVA.

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**Student Organizations**: Contracted independent organizations and students who work for the University in some capacity play a crucial role in the grassroots organizing around voter registration and get out the vote efforts.

**University Democrats** go to meetings of student organizations to register members at their request. In addition, they will table to register students (will be added to Virginia Votes calendar when times/locations are decided upon).

**College Republicans** will maintain their involvement in coordinated activities.

Legislative Affairs will reach out to members of the **Black Student Association, Latinx Student Association, and Asian Student Union** in order to form a coalition. The main purpose of this coalition is to disperse voting resources, and for Legislative Affairs to be a resource to these student organizations.

Students who are resident advisors and senior residents will play a critical role in distributing information and planning dorm registration events.

**Representatives:**

Kiera Goddu, President of University Democrats

Hunter Hess, Campaign Chair for University Democrats

Matthew Nalls, Chair of College Republicans

Chloe Sparwath, College Republicans

Austin Hammond, Black Student Alliance

Justin Ephriam, Black Student Alliance

Alex Winkowski, Multicultural Student Services

Grace Leffler, Resident Advisor

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**Community Partners:** Members of the Charlottesville and Virginia communities who are involved in some aspect of promoting civic engagement.

**Representatives:**

Katie Slayton, Virginia21

Jake Washburn, Albemarle County Registrar

Jamie Virostko, City of Charlottesville Registrar

Seth Ragosta, Charlottesville Community

## Communication Plan

### Mass Messaging

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, University-wide emails will be sent by Student Affairs 90 days and 60 days before the Virginia voter registration deadline.



Mass messages also will be sent prior to Election Day in order to give students the information and resources they need to be engaged citizens.

The slogan 'Be A Voter' will be promoted among Virginia Votes materials and accessories such as stickers.

Any mass messaging for voter registration will focus on the need for students to re-register after changing their address. In addition, it will encourage them to check their registration after they turn 21 and receive their new license, as often students will unknowingly get registered at their permanent addresses by the DMV during this process.

### Virginia Votes Website

The Center for Politics will lead the effort to create a website for civic engagement resources for students along with Virginia Votes partners. The website will include voter registration and Election Day resources, a calendar for civic engagement events held by partners, a volunteer opportunity for students outside of partner groups, and a section on why voting matters.

### Social Media Campaign

In addition to University-wide emails, voting information will appear in the New Student Resource Guide, and social media; and Legislative Affairs will organize a video with prominent members of the community, which will give information on how to register and encourage students to double-check their registration. This video is to emphasize the need to re-register after changing addresses and to make students aware that the DMV could have changed their registration when they turned 21.

## **Calendar (June – November 2020)**

All dates subject to change due to uncertainty of 2020-2021 academic year schedule.

# AUGUST 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31*	1	2	3	4	5

21/22: Move-in weekend

24: Activities Fair

\*Dorm voter registration event from 7pm-9pm, location tbd (Legislative Affairs)

## SEPTEMBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7*	8	9	10	11	12
13	14*	15	16	17	18	19
20	21*	22	23	24	25	26
27	28*	29	30	1	2	3

\*Dorm voter registration event from 7pm-9pm, location tbd (Legislative Affairs)

24: Campus-wide tabling for National Voter Registration Day (Legislative Affairs)

## OCTOBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5*	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

12: Campus-wide tabling for voter registration (Legislative Affairs)

13: Voter Registration Deadline

\*Dorm voter registration event from 7pm-9pm, location tbd (Legislative Affairs)

# NOVEMBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

3: Election Day