

University of West Georgia ALL IN Voter Registration and Engagement Plan 2024

Executive Summary:

- Who Developed: This plan was developed by a faculty member in the Department of Civic Engagement and Public Service (DCEPS) with input from the president of Public Service Club, Young Democrats, and Young Libertarians and UWG administration approval. Note: No Young Republican representative could be found thus they were not included in the review of this plan.
- Purpose: The purpose of this plan is to increase student voter registration, education, and participation for the 2024 Presidential elections.
- Where implemented: This plan will be implemented across the campuses of the University of West Georgia including the main campus in Carrollton and campuses in Newnan and Douglasville.
- Goals:
 - Primary goals
 - Hold at least 4 voter drives coordinated by multiple student organizations
 - Provide students easy access to Georgia My Voter Page.
 - Hold at least 1 voter education session delivered by a collaboration of student organizations.
 - Subsidiary goals:
 - Educate students who are registered to vote know where to vote and how to request an absentee ballot.
 - Make voter education sessions an option for First Year Classes.
 - Reduce voter problems at the UWG poll location by 20%.
- Duration: This plan covers Spring 2024 through Fall 2024. Completion of plan implementation and debrief expected January 2025.
- Implementation: The plan will be implemented through the coordinated efforts between students, faculty, and staff. Students and student organizations will be the primary driver of most actions.
- Assumptions: This plan is based on the following assumptions. If any assumption proves not to be true, the plan is at risk and must be re-visited.
 - UWG supports student efforts host events that support voter education and participation.
 - All levels of administration support student efforts to increase student voter participation and cooperate in the dissemination of information and deployment of the plan.
 - Student political organizations and the Public Service club are active and recognized as valid student organizations.

Leadership:

- Organizing leadership:
 - Justin Jones, President Public Service club
 - Dr. Kathie Barrett, DCEPS
- Names and Titles of proposed working group members:
 - Faculty: Each of these faculty members are actively involved in, and responsible for, civic engagements on campus:
 - Dr. Kathie Barrett, DCEPS
 - Deirdre H. Rouse, Campus Poll Supervisor and Carroll County Elections Office liaison
 - **Tanya Thomas, J.D., Department of Management**
 - Student Affairs: Each of these members are responsible for interaction with students regarding civic engagement.
 - Anne Marie Reed, Assistant Dean of Students
 - April Wood Steward, Center for Student Involvement and Inclusion
 - Ashley Legett, Director of Multicultural Achievement
 - **Sonya Barnes, General Manager WUTV**
 - **Shawn Isaacs, General Manager Wolf Radio**
 - Students: Each of these students have contact with a broad range of students to ensure participation in events and dissemination of information.
 - Justin Jones, CEEP Fellow and President Public Service Club
 - Tyler McCoy, SGA President
 - Organizations: These are the key political organizations as well as a non-partisan civic engagement organization within the community. Each of the student organizations also have ties to community organizations.
 - Justin Jones, Public Service Club
 - **SaMya Adams, Black Law Student Society**
 - TBD, Young Democrats
 - TBD, Young Republicans
 - TBD, Young Libertarians
 - TBD, Turning Point
 - TBD, NAACP
 - Tyler McCoy, SGA
 - Jennifer Dandliker, President League of Women Voters of Carrollton and Carroll County
 - Local Election Office: Greg Rigby
 - Deidre H. Rouse, Poll Manager for on-campus polling location
- Additionally, contacts will be formed in each of the Colleges to assist with the dissemination of information.
- This working group is inclusive of and able to reach a broad campus and community base.
- The working group has the full support of all levels of upper administration
- It is important to have communications, including radio and television, involved in this effort.

- The working group will be formed at the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester and will hold virtual bi-monthly meetings to review efforts to increase participation in the 2022 election.
- **Each of the organizations are responsible for recruiting new members through events and tabling. Additionally, the corresponding local organizations provide support to the campus organizations for their recruitment efforts.**
- **Faculty advisors work with the student organizations to establish a success plan.**

Commitment:

- Institutional Commitment: The University of West Georgia recently reorganized creating a Department Civic Engagement and Public Service. This clearly communicates to the faculty, staff, students, and community UWG's commitment to civic engagement as part of the curriculum and culture. **The President has signed All In's president's commitment. Achievements are announced via weekly letters from the President and Provost as well as on televisions in the various buildings.**
- Furthermore, civic engagement is pervasive across UWG. This is demonstrated in the many service-learning classes that work closely with community partners to support their efforts, in the collaboration with local non-profit organizations, and in the volunteer efforts of faculty, staff, and students. **Additionally, opportunities to internship with political groups and individual campaigns are advertised to students who can earn credit for the internship.**
- The Carnegie Foundation recognized UWG as a Community Engaged Campus beginning 2020.
- UWG statements demonstrate the commitment to civic engagement. The mission statement includes "UWG is committed to academic excellence and to community engagement..."¹ This is further evidenced in the following value: "The value of wisdom is evident in our commitment to teaching and learning that emphasizes knowledge for the purpose of positively transforming the lives of our employees and students, as well as improving the world in which we live."²
- Civil learning and democratic engagement is included in the co-curriculum in two ways. First, UWG supports voting registration efforts by making the materials, including computer terminals dedicated to voter registration, easily available to the students. **For example, in past years terminals have been set up in the residence halls specifically to allow students easy access to registration.** Second, UWG allows student organizations to hold and/or broadcast speeches and debates by political candidates. **For example, in 2020 the Public Service Organizations livestreamed speeches by candidates running in the Democrat primary. Additionally, politicians have visited the campus including Senator Warnock.**

¹ See <https://www.westga.edu/about-uwg/mission-and-values.php> accessed June 15, 2020

² IBID

- The Thomas B. Murphy Center for Public Service³ hosts a public service guest speaker series each year. Additionally, the Center sponsors a leadership program which trains a group of students to be leaders in public service.
- The Department of Civic Engagement and Public Service coordinates the Georgia Legislative Internship Program⁴ by encouraging students across campus to apply for an internship with the Georgia General Assembly in the Spring of each year.
- The Department of Civic Engagement and Public Service sponsors a trip to Washington, DC during the summer which introduces students to various aspects of, and people involved in, government.
- Signs are posted on campus with the early voting and voting day dates as well as the date by which a person must register to be eligible to vote.
- Alumni who are now working elected officials and political parties are sending internship and volunteer opportunities to the Department of Civic Engagement and Public Service. These are being disseminated to students along with an explanation of the importance of participating in these opportunities.

Landscape:

- As of Fall 2023, the University of West Georgia (UWG) had a total of 12, 769 students of which 8,454 were undergraduate and 4,315 were graduate. Only 1,821 lived on campus. The student body includes students from Georgia, 30 other States and Territories, and 40 countries. There was a 60/30 ratio of females to males.⁵ Many majors and graduate programs are offered fully online.
- Georgia requires voter identification. A Student Id from the institution is considered a valid ID for voting.⁶ Additionally, any drivers license interaction, such as obtaining a license, renewing a license, or updating the address on a license, automatically registers the person to vote unless they specifically ask to opt out.
- Georgia has an online voter registration system that makes it quick and easy for students to register to vote, update their information (including changing their address), find their poll and early voting locations, request a mail-in ballot application and monitor the status of their mail-in ballot.⁷
- The immediate problem facing UWG is voter education and ensuring that all students are able to vote either in person or by absentee ballot. Students entering UWG have indicated that they do not understand the voting process. Additionally, it is known that misinformation is spread thus hurting student's ability to vote.

³ See <https://www.westga.edu/academics/university-college/thomas-b-murphy-center.php>

⁴ See https://cviog.uga.edu/student-opportunities/georgia_legislativeintern/

⁵ See <https://www.westga.edu/administration/provost/iea/just-the-facts.php>

⁶ See <https://sos.ga.gov/page/georgia-voter-identification-requirements>

⁷ See <https://mvp.sos.ga.gov/s/>

- Civic engagement is currently taught primarily in Political Science classes. Although some of the classes include civic learning and democratic engagement as a course learning objective, the reorganization provides the ability to have all courses taught under the Department of Civic Engagement Public Service to include such course objectives.
- There are three key internal barriers to success. The first is that these efforts require support from all levels of management for all events and efforts. Second, all student organizations need revitalization after having lost connections and efforts through fully online classes. Finally, administration must be willing to support efforts to include voter registration and education in First Year programs.
- The external barriers are any problems students may encounter when registering to vote or exercising their right to vote.
- **Having a polling location on campus for students living on campus allows them easy access to voting as long as they register using their campus address. However, those living off but near campus must go to another polling location and the campus location does not support early voting.**
- **Civic engagement efforts are directed towards all students, including international and dual high school and college enrollment students who are not eligible to vote. The Public Service organization has proposed a mock election for those students who were not eligible to vote so they can experience, and become familiar with, the process.**
- **To reach those students who are fully online or have limited campus access, a request is made to update the learning management system with announcements about key voting dates, such as the last day to register and early voting dates, and a link to the Georgia voter page.**

Goals

- The long-term ~~visions~~ **institutional goals** are:
 - 90% of eligible students to be registered and voting regularly in local, state, and national elections **based on the NSLVE reports.**
 - ~~All students to understand non-voting methods for civic engagement.~~ **At least 60% of on-campus students will participate in non-voting civic engagement activities. This will be measured by participation in student organization and institutional civic engagement opportunities.**
- The short-term institutional goals are:
 - **Students will demonstrate knowledge of their assigned voting location or use mail-in ballots. This will be measured by 1) no students having to be turned away from the campus poll location and 2) no complaints from students that they went to the wrong polling location.**
 - **Student voting rate according to the NSLV report will increase to 80%**

- **At least 90% of students will demonstrate an understanding of and comfort with the voting process. This will be measured with a survey presented to students after elections (see the Evaluation Section).**
- ⊖ **All First Year students will be exposed to voter registration, participation, and education information. This will be measured by either a presentation in every Cornerstone class or a voting module in every Cornerstone class.**
- ⊖ **All events encouraging vote registration will point students to the MYGeorgiaVotingPage. (Note: This is a result of some organizations encouraging online registration while others used paper registration causing one registration to overwrite the other and resulting in confusion on where the student should vote.)**
- ⊖ **Voting information will be available in every classroom and services building on campus and in the learning management system.**
- To achieve the long-term ~~goals~~ **visions**, students must graduate with an understanding of the political process, the importance of local civic engagement, and leadership skills to engage with their community. To complement this, students must have an interest in current events and information literacy. **This will be achieved through education in the Cornerstone classes, required American Government classes, and campus events such as those sponsored by the Murphy Center. Additionally, the Public Service Club holds regular meetings, open to all interested students, during which current events are discussed.**
- Short term engagement: The short-term focus for ~~Spring~~ 2024 is voter registration and voter education. Georgia has an effective and efficient online voter registration process which also allows voters to easily change their address, request absentee ballots, and identify their polling location. **This will be communicated to students via a QR code at tabling events by various student organizations including the Public Service Club and student political organizations. In the past this information and QR code was distributed to students in the dorms.** Students also need to be comfortable with the voting process. Therefore, efforts need to ensure that students know what to expect when they vote. Consequently, voter education and training must be disseminated to all students both through online, written, and media (radio and television) methods. **The local election office is willing to, and has in the past, come on campus to demonstrate voting machines. The campus radio and TV stations have in the past, and are willing to in the future, provide information about voting. Additionally, To help those students who are unsure or have questions student organizations need to—will be asked to set up contacts for voter questions concerning the 2024 election.**
- Long term commitment: Two efforts need to be addressed in the long term and achieved by Fall 2024. First is ensuring that voter registration and education is part of the student orientation process, both online and in person. **This will be achieved by having voter education and registration presentation in the Cornerstone classes required of each new student.** Second, is ensuring that students participate in local civic efforts to improve campus life within the community. **This will be achieved through student organizations encouraging students to participate in community service efforts. For example, the Black Law Student Society hosts regular community service efforts and the Public Service Club hosts regular fund raising efforts.**

NSLV

- Summary: The 2020 voting rate was 72.3% which is above both 2016 (55.9%) and 2018 (46.6%). The 2020 registration rate (92.7%) and voting rate of registered students (78.0%) was also higher than both 2016 (82.4% and 67.8%) and 2018 (84.2% and 55.4%) and well above the all institutions rate of 66%.
- Students faced several voting challenges in 2018 including long voting lines and confusion about polling locations. Therefore, an increase in 2020 is not surprising. Therefore, we expect significant interest in the 2024 elections and voting participation to increase.
- By race, voting rates were lowest among Asians (54%) and Hispanics (65%), although both were higher than 2016 and 2018. First Year students also had the lowest undergraduate rate at 64%. Among fields of study, Computer Science (65%) and Biology (68%) had the lowest rates. This presents the opportunity to target outreach to low voting majors and groups, particularly by engaging associated student organizations, to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with voting registration, their polling location, and the voting process. **For example, presentations in the Cornerstone classes required of all First Year students will address their low participation rate. Since Biology students are primarily in a different building, efforts will be made this year to provide signage in that building. Increased information to Computer Science students will be achieved by involving the Computer Gaming sports group and student organization.**
- Detailed efforts:
 - Raise student awareness and use of MyGaVoterPage through social media, posters, availability of terminals in central locations. This will allow them to identify their poll location and easily request an absentee ballot.
 - Provide a link to MyGaVoterPage in a place that is easy for students to see and access.
 - Arrange visits to First Year classes to encourage student registration and educate them on the voting process.
 - Arrange visits to Biology, Computer, and Fitness classes to encourage voter registration and voting.
 - Involve student organizations associated with low voter participation groups in voter re

Strategy

- Institutional efforts to reach democratic engagement. Students are both the audience and primary driver for all events. Progress will be marked by dates listed below:
 - January 29, 2024
 - Identify and contact student organization leaders.
 - Convene working group.
 - February 15, 2024

- Have student organizations establish public service notices addressed to students about how to register to vote, check or change their address, and check their poll location for Wolf TV and Radio. This requires working with the manager of the two venues.
 - Verify that there are dedicated terminals in the library and residence halls for students to access MyGeorgiaVoterPage for voter registration.
 - Arrange for First Year and underperforming major class visits.
- February 29, 2024
 - Ensure student organizations are using social media to discuss, advocate for, and answer questions about voter registration and voting.
- April 8, 2024.
 - Reconvene the working to review student voter education efforts and determine what they need for support. Begin planning for early voting and voting on campus.
 - Establish week-long voter registration push coordinated across all student organizations.
- August 30, 2024
 - Identify and contact student organization leaders.
 - Convene working group.
- September 15, 2024
 - Have student organizations establish public service notices addressed to students about how to register to vote, check or change their address, and check their poll location for Wolf TV and Radio. This requires working with the manager of the two venues.
 - Verify that there are dedicated terminals in the library and residence halls for students to access MyGeorgiaVoterPage for voter registration.
 - Arrange for First Year and underperforming major class visits.
- September 30, 2024
 - Ensure student organizations are disseminating information about absentee voting and poll locations.
- October 15, 2022
 - Establish week-long push coordinated across all student organizations to increase awareness of poll location and absentee voting.
- Institutional efforts whose audience includes students, faculty, and staff:
 - September 20, 2024
 - Communicate with faculty and owners of common video displays to play voter registration and education videos.
 - October 1, 2022
 - Schedule voting machine demonstrations.
 - Coordinate campus transportation to off-site early voting and poll locations. **In the past this has had very low participation and was costly. Since the early**

voting location for those voting in the county is now on a current transportation route this should be easier. To accommodate transportation to poll locations efforts will be made to find out who needs the service to determine what kind of transportation is needed.

Reporting and Evaluation

- **Reporting:** During the fall a campus wide working group is assembled to focus on voter engagement efforts. The NSLV reports and Action Plan will be shared with this group. Additionally, upon receipt of the NSLV reports notification is sent to the administration highlighting the achievements and areas of improvement as well as how the action plan will facilitate improvements. Student organizations associated with civic engagement will be asked to post Action Plan information, including a summary of the most recent NSLV report, on their page of the Student Organization application. If approved by the administration, the NSLV report and Action Plan will be added to the Department of Civic Engagement page.
- **Event participation reporting:** Attendance at formal events, such as speakers and presentations, is tracked by having students swipe their ID cards which allows organization or class credit. Prior to the events, faculty are asked to announce the events. When the event is bipartisan or not political, there is the possibility that students can receive extra credit for attendance. *Attendance at partisan and strictly political events cannot be tracked or used for extra credit.* Attendance is used by the sponsoring organization or department to determine future event topic and timing. For example, low attendance at an on-site noon Public Service Ethics panel will result in the event being held in the evening in the future and livestreamed so online students can participate.
- **Evaluation:** Student organizations will be asked to have their members provide feedback on their voting experience then submit anonymized information to the Working Group. **After internal approval including Internal Review Board approval, a Qualtrics survey will be distributed to the organizations so they can distribute it to their members (there is no way to directly survey all students to ensure student confidentiality).** Using a Likert scale, this survey will ask perceptions of voter registration including ease of registering and knowledge of registration status, voting knowledge including where to vote and understanding of the voting process, ease of voting including voting location and mail-in process, overall voting experience, and open-ended questions asking what efforts were most beneficial and what could have been done to improve the voting experience. ~~This information will be used to improve efforts in the future.~~ **The results will be shared with the working group and will be used to develop the next Action Plan. Additionally, since the student organizations coordinate and run the majority of events they are constantly adjusting their events based on turnout and feedback from their members. For example, tabling to increase voter registration and participation is done by a bipartisan group of organizations because students are more comfortable than when a single partisan organization runs the event.**
- **Implementation:** ~~Student organizations will be provided with an anonymous Qualtrics survey that they could use if they choose. Before the end of the semester, the Working Group will be~~

~~convened to review the process and feedback and update the plan for the future.~~ **Immediately after the election, the Qualtrics survey will be sent to the presidents and faculty advisors of student organizations asking that they disseminate it to their membership. Additionally, it will be distributed to departments with fully online programs who will be asked to have their students complete the survey. The survey will have a due date of the Friday before Thanksgiving break. This will allow reporting of results during the last week of classes.**