

University of West Georgia ALL IN Voter Registration and Engagement Plan 2022

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 2022 midterm 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 2 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 Fall 2022 and provides preparatory work for 2023. Completion of plan implementation and debrief expected January 2023.
- 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. Karen Owen, Director Murphy Center
 - Deirdre H. Rouse, Campus Poll Supervisor and Carroll County Elections Office liaison
 - Student Affairs: Each of these members are responsible for interaction with
 - Jill Drake, Associate VPAA or Anne Marie Reed, Assistant Dean of Students
 - April Wood Steward, Center for Student Involvement and Inclusion
 - Ashley Lewis, Director of Multicultural Achievement
 - 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
 - Sydney Severin, 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
 - TBD, Young Democrats
 - TBD, Young Republicans
 - TBD, Young Libertarians
 - TBD, NAACP
 - Sydney Severin, SGA
 - Martha Ann Saunders, President League of Women Voters of Carrollton and Carroll County
 - TBD, Carrollton Votes
 - 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.

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.
- 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.
- 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. Second, UWG allows student organizations to hold and/or broadcast speeches and debates by political candidates.

Landscape:

- 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.
- 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.

Goals

- The long term visions are:

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

² IBID

- 90% of eligible students to be registered and voting regularly in local, state, and national elections.
- All students to understand non-voting methods for civic engagement.
- To achieve the long-term 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.
- Short term engagement: The short term focus, by November 2022, 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. 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. Additionally, student organizations need to set up contacts for voter questions.
- Long term commitment: Two efforts need to be addressed in the long term and achieved by Fall 2022. First is ensuring that voter registration and education is part of the student orientation process, both online and in person. Second, is ensuring that students participate in local civic efforts to improve campus life within the community.

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 2022 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.
- 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:
 - August 20, 2022
 - Identify and contact student organization leaders.
 - Convene working group.
 - August 31, 2022
 - 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 10, 2022
 - Ensure student organizations are using social media to discuss, advocate for, and answer questions about voter registration and voting.
 - September 15, 2022.
 - 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.
 - October 10, 2022.
 - 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, 2022
 - Communicate with faculty and owners of common video displays to play voter registration and education videos
 - October 1, 2022
 - Schedule voting machine demonstrations.

- October 31, 2022
 - Coordinate campus transportation to off-site poll locations.

Reporting

- Evaluation: Student organizations will be asked to have their members provide feedback on their voting experience then submit anonymized information to the Working Group. This information will be used to improve efforts in the future.
- 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.