

# UW Parkside Action Plan Fall 2020 The Presidential Elections

## Executive Summary

The Action Plan for voter engagement at UW Parkside is led by the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies, in collaboration with the Center for Community and Business Engagement. This is the third presidential election that the campus will run its signature event THE ELECTION EXPERIENCE. This co-curricular semester is designed as a *multilevel engaged learning opportunity* with numerous chances to participate (including students, faculty and staff), and the larger community outside the campus. The semester-long effort seeks to engage students and community members in the presidential election through registration and voting; it also seeks to build civic responsibility that transcends the campaign, and continues beyond the election.



Components of the project include a class centered on the election experience, a series of co-curricular events from the beginning of the semester to the last day of classes, and coordination of class content to the co-curricular events. Events and activities will be a combination of f2f interactions (as appropriate), hybrid, and online modalities.

## Leadership

Leadership in the Election Experience at UW Parkside begins with Chancellor Ford, who signed the Presidential Commitment to the All in Challenge for Campus voter engagement. The College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies leads the Election Experience. Dean Peggy James ([james@uwp.edu](mailto:james@uwp.edu)) coordinates events, marketing, student participation; the Election Experience is a general education course in the College. Staff in the college have responsibility for specific areas of the election experience:

Heidi Curtis is the instructor of record of the 3 credit course

Christopher Hudspeth (Politics Philosophy and Law) coordinates faculty participation  
Denise Olstinske and Lorene Bakkila orchestrate the program implementation

The College collaborates with the Center for Community and Business Engagement (Director Debra Karp) and the UW Parkside Library (Director Anna Stadick), as well as the Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Tammy McGuckin.

Representatives from these units coordinate with the following individuals and organizations:

1. The Andrew Goodman [Foundation](#) (voter registration ambassador)

The UW Parkside student Ambassador:

- Commits five hours on average per week, or more as necessary, toward Ambassador responsibilities such as check-in calls, team planning meetings, or campus programming
  - Articulates the mission and vision of AGF by connecting on-campus efforts to the history of the Civil Rights Movement and the legacy of Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney
  - Communicates with other Campus Team members, and AGF Program Staff as needed regarding program progress
  - Supports the creation and implementation of the campus action plan focused on increasing student voting on campus
  - Identifies voting impediments, develops and executes strategies to make voting accessible to students
  - Conducts voter registration, civic education, and Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts as well-organized, visible, and institutionalized parts of campus life
  - Complies with AGF reporting requirements
  - Meets on a regular basis with Campus Team members
  - Participates in AGF peer-to-peer learning opportunities and trainings
  - Recruits and mentors future Ambassadors and other student volunteers
  - Helps to ensure that The Andrew Goodman Foundation is credited in marketing materials, on a team website, and in media features, and when distributing and utilizing AGF digital and print materials
2. Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) intern, a UW Parkside student who will:
    - Collaborate and partner with student organizations, campus administrators, and faculty to organize voter registration, voter education, and voter engagement efforts on campus;
    - Plan and complete at least 6 direct actions that cover the topics of voter registration, voter education, and
    - GOTV;
    - Collaborate and partner with student organizations, campus administrators, and faculty to organize voter registration, voter education, and voter engagement efforts;

- Compose and submit a post-election report summarizing activities and accomplishments.
3. A Commitment Campus partner with the [Ask Every Student](#) campaign. As part of this collaboration, UW Parkside commits to :
    - Participate in checkins with their partner organizations about their process and needs
    - Have sessions with a campus partner(s) from the SLSV Coalition and other commitment Campuses, as needed
    - Incorporate AES tactics and strategies into action plans with an emphasis on utilizing full registration tools developed by AES Co-designer Campuses for the upcoming presidential election and those that follow throughout 2021
  4. All students in the [Election Experience course](#) will be considered as frontline participants in the election engagement activities.

## **Commitment**

The University of Wisconsin-Parkside has an active program in civic engagement, promoting volunteerism, internships and community based learning projects. In 2006, we became part of the American Democracy Project, preparing students for active participation in the 2008 election process through cooperatives across diverse departments and community partners. Indeed, community engagement is a nationally recognized point of distinction for UW-Parkside, embedded in an institutional commitment fostering civic-minded students, alumni, staff and faculty who provide scholarship, leadership, resources and services to the local and global community. Engagement is a hallmark of the institution as evidenced in our second Carnegie Classification, our office of Community and Business Engagement, and our Certificate in Community Engagement. In 2017, we adopted our [Civic Action Plan](#), with 3 goals:

1. Prepare UW Parkside graduates to be fully knowledgeable, active citizens committed to on-going engagement with the campus local and global communities;
2. The Campus is an active and authentic partner in improving the economic, social, political, and cultural life of its local, regional, and global communities;
3. Build and sustain a culture that appreciates, fosters, and supports a diverse inclusive campus and regional community.

The College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies is similarly geared towards civic engagement with the goal to develop society's professionals- an educated workforce based on responsible citizenship at the local, national, and global levels.

## Landscape

[The University of Wisconsin-Parkside](#) is a proud member of the University of Wisconsin System and is centrally located in the thriving metropolitan region defined by Milwaukee, 30 miles to the north, and Chicago, 60 miles to the south.

The university plays vital roles in preparing students for an enriched quality of life, and encouraging the entrepreneurship essential to regional growth. Graduates benefit from diverse opportunities with major employers, the public sector, and emerging organizations in southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois. Founded in 1968, UW-Parkside is home to 4325 students, 85% of whom are from Wisconsin. The campus is the most diverse in the UW System;

35% of our students are under-represented minorities, 57% are low income, and 21% are aged 25 or older. The campus straddles the border of Racine and Kenosha Counties; Interstate I94 bifurcates the counties creating a demographic that is more diverse and liberal on the east side of the freeway, and more white and conservative on the west. Historically, Racine County has been a bellwether for the Presidential election, siding with the winning presidential candidate since 1988.



## Goals

We have two goals for 2020: 1. Increase the number of students who register and vote in the Presidential Election, and 2. Increase the level of knowledge and awareness of topical and continuing issues in our society, (and how voting can affect these issues) and 3. Increase the level of active citizenship of our students.

Our objectives are

- To provide information regarding registration and voting options across a wide variety of media
  - Information will be provided across a minimum of five different platforms, not including the [Election Experience website](#)
  - 75% of classrooms will be provided with information on registration and voting
- To create and sustain momentum regarding registration and voter turnout
  - Attendance at events will increase from September to November by 20%
- To increase awareness and knowledge of the political process
  - Participants in campus presentations and discussions will increase the complexity of their comments

- Participants in the voter suppression discourse and the better angels training will report an increased understanding of the political process
- To increase knowledge of current political issues
  - Students will ask informed questions in presentations and brown bags
- To use this 'crucible moment' to allow students to see the value and need for active citizenship
  - In the miniconference, students will develop calls to action.

The long term goal is to create a civically engaged campus environment that encompasses voting and elections, but also includes the building of individual and institutional citizenship.

### **NSLVE**

Student voting rates reported by the National Study of Learning Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) for 2014 indicate that, at a 60.8% voting rate, Parkside was 14% higher than the average for all other participating institutions ( N= 850) in the study, awarding our institution a bronze seal. However, in 2016, these numbers declined: the lesson we learned from this was that it is not enough to make one time or sporadic efforts at civic engagement. Consistent commitment is necessary. We interpreted our decline in voting to be strongly related to the registration rate, since registered students voted at nearly the same rate as 2012. Therefore, in 2018, our biggest push was in voter registration.

Results from 2018 demonstrate that we were able to increase our voter registration rate by 6% and our voting rate of these registered students improved by 23% over 2014.

2018 Voting Rate

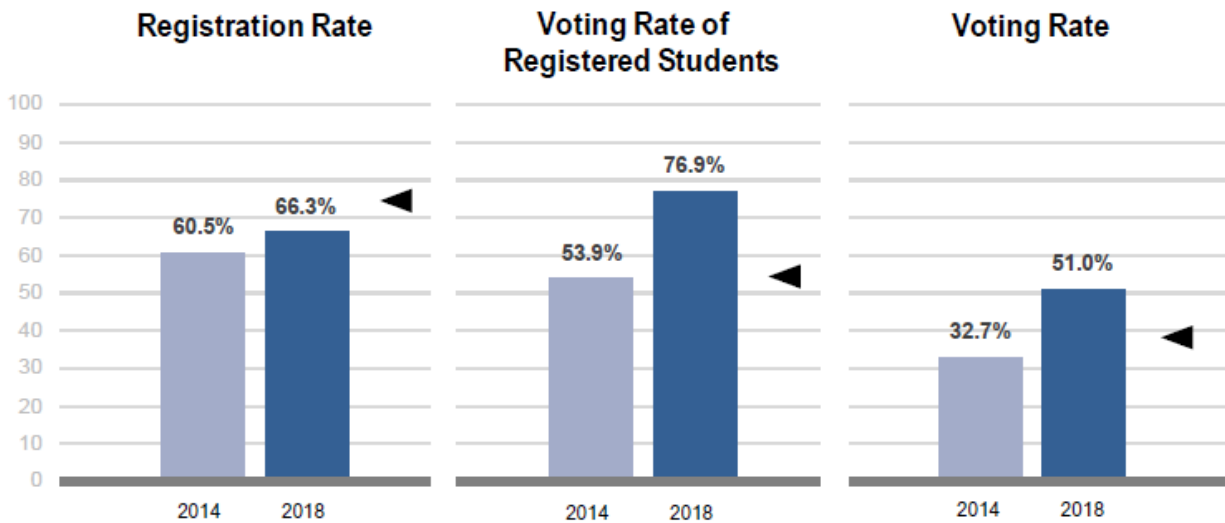
51.0%

CHANGE  
FROM 2014

+18.3

2018 VOTING RATE  
FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

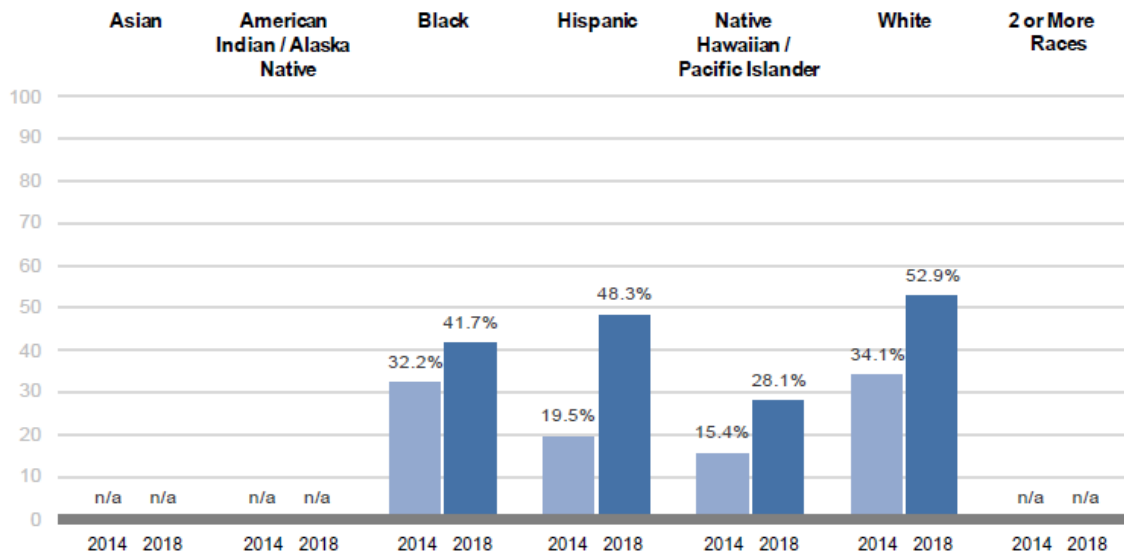
39.1%



Also, we discovered in 2016 that there was a decrease in voting across all races/ethnicities, but the largest drop recorded was for African American students (-14%), which we tried to address in 2018. This was an especially targeted role for our Partners from NextGen Wisconsin. Our 2018 results demonstrated improvement across all races/ethnicities, comparing the results to 2014.

YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | MIDTERM ELECTIONS

## By Race/Ethnicity\*



There were also consistent increases in voting from 2014 to 2018 across all age groups, ranging from 12.7% in the 50+ group to a high of 21% in the 18-21 age group. We hope to build upon this increasing engagement in the younger age group in 2020.

Due to our voting rate of 51% being significantly higher than the national average of 39.1% (N >1000 institutions) we received the platinum seal of excellence for voter participation. UW Parkside was one of 60 institutions nationwide to receive this recognition, along with UW Milwaukee, UW Madison, and Alverno College.

### Strategy for 2020

Select courses across campus (Criminal Justice, Geography, History, International Studies, Politics Philosophy and Law, Sociology/Anthropology) have committed to coordinating portions of the election experience course materials with other courses. Throughout the semester, events will be sponsored by these departments that are directly and indirectly related to the Election Experience. Class material will apply to the election coverage and discussion on

campus, and the class itself is informed/enhanced by other disciplinary contributions to the course. Finally the Election Experience course will be at the core of the engagement, and will have the highest opportunity for the development of civic responsibility.

Events planned for the Fall semester (see table) include:

1. televised presidential and vice presidential debates with simultaneous (through google chat) and post-debate analysis;
2. Brown bags.

Each week, faculty from disciplines across campus are invited to present a topic from their discipline that relates to the election and/or political issues. In the past, we have had presentations from Geography, Economics, Political Science, Philosophy, etc.

3. Speak-outs.

These are designed to be student-driven. Student organizations are encouraged to pick a time and date, and host a free speech, open mic session to encourage activism and social awareness.

4. Engagement Events.

Wordshop, a hands- on content analysis of news reporting sources) and Election Day Celebration. These are two events that have been identified at this point. We are anticipating that we will also have events on Vote Early Day, and National Voter registration Day.

5. Voter registration information and assistance to register on site.

Again, we have discovered in the last 8 years that, on our campus, registration is the hurdle we need to beat. At UW Parkside, a high percentage of folks who register also vote. Using data from the NSLVE report for the 2016 election, we note that 78.6% voted in person on Election Day. Absentee voting was at 12.9%. Early voting and mail in ballots, combined, accounted for just over 3%. Given the particular situation we face in the Fall, we must make a much more concerted effort to convince folks to vote early or to use a different method. Vote Early Day is on October 24<sup>th</sup>, and that will be a target date that we will work with our interns to celebrate and promote.

6. Speakers series.

Every presidential election, we are lucky to host Dr. Charles Franklin, Director of the Marquette University Law School Polls, who gives us a timely snapshot of the campaigns. This year, due to the currency of the redistricting debate in Wisconsin, we will be hosting [Fair Maps](#), an organization located in Madison Wisconsin dedicated to analyzing and interpreting the redistricting debate. Our third speaker event is more of a training/workshop for students and others who are interested in becoming more adept at political engagement discussions. [Better Angels](#) provide workshops to help people with political divergent views have respectful conversations that avoid the pitfalls of conflict and competition. Finally, on October 26th UW Parkside partners with Carthage College and the [Coalition for Dismantling Racism](#) to offer a discursive session on voter suppression.

5. Displays

The Election Experience students will present a poster display on Women in Politics, to commemorate the 2020 Women's Vote Initiative, and at semester end, will present a mini-conference with poster displays on political issues raised in the election with calls to action



<b>EVENT</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>ENGAGED</b>	<b>PRIMARY FUNCTION</b>	<b>COVID-19 ADAPTATION</b>	<b>Point</b>
<b>Debates</b>	occasionally	50-100	Increase knowledge of political issues	On campus event may move to at home viewing with google chat	College office
<b>Brown Bags</b>	Weekly through November	40-50	Increase knowledge of political issues	On campus, will be video captured and available on the Election Experience Website	Politics Philosophy and Law
<b>Speak outs</b>	Occasionally	25-50	To create and sustain momentum	Pop up events on campus; can be modified to blogs	Student Organizations
<b>Wordshop/ Election Day Celebration</b>	1-2 /semester	20-50	Increase active citizenship	Can be done online, and shared in a page on the Election Experience Website	Politics Philosophy and Law
<b>Voter registration</b>	Continuous specific events/ attached to other events	100+	Info on registration and voting, facilitation of registration	Will be supported through links on the Election Experience Website	Center for Community and Business Engagement, Interns from AGF, CEEP, and AES
<b>Speakers:</b>	5 main external presentation /workshops,	50-75	Increase knowledge of political process	Hybrid event. Live stream speaker with smaller live audience ( Election Experience class)	College office and Center for Community and Business Engagement
<b>Displays: Women in Politics/ Mini-conference: presentations and poster displays</b>	2	250-500	Increase knowledge of political process and political issues	Designed to be a campus walk through, posters created by students can be display in an online gallery	The Election Experience students

The preceding table represents a discrete listing of activities. However, the overall strategy is to create a semester long celebration of political engagement. The intent is that each of these events is not a stand-alone activity; rather it is part of a buildup of interest and engagement towards the election and, hopefully, continuing long after. Atmosphere building activities include: 1. The open invitation for participation in all events- student, faculty, staff, and community members, 2. The creation of a button collection to commemorate major election events on campus, 3. Functional connections between our campus interns (AGF, CEEP, AES) and the students in the Election Experience class.

### **Reporting**

As a longtime partner with NSLVE, our voting results will be collected through them. Our goal is to register 100 new voters on campus. This goal will be stated, and reported on at the end of the semester. Attendance to all events will be tracked to assess the number of people whose issue awareness has increased. Also, a final report of activities will be sent to the Campus Election Engagement Project in Wisconsin. The students in the Election Experience class will be responsible for critically evaluating their campus experiences in a series of reflections and analyses.