

Virginia Commonwealth University – Civic Action Plan **(DRAFT!!!!)**

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) is a public, urban research university located in Richmond, Virginia. VCU enrolls over 31,000 students and offers over 200 degree and certificate programs. Additionally, VCU is one of twenty-eight public universities with an academic medical center to be designated as having high research activity and community engagement by the Carnegie Foundation. Further, central to VCU's mission is the promotion of real-world learning that furthers civic engagement, inquiry, discovery and innovation.

Overview

During 2018, VCU identified three areas of focus relating to campus election engagement. Those areas were voter registration, voter education and voter participation and those three key areas continue to be the cornerstone of election engagement efforts during 2019-2020 academic year.

Spring 2020 Semester

During spring the spring 2020 semester, the VCU Votes Advisory Council will focus much of its attention on the providing students with information regarding the Virginia Primary, the Presidential Election and Census 2020. Additionally, succession planning is also a top priority as many of our interns will be graduating in May.

Census 2020

At least two events will be held to inform students about Census 2020. The information provided will highlight how the Census impacts funding, redistricting and issues important to voters.

Virginia Primary

The Virginia Democratic Primary will take place on March 3, 2020. Information about the primary will be communicated to students through Student Affairs.

National Speaker for Fall 2020

A prominent speaker will be invited to ignite student engagement in the 2020 presidential election

Leadership

President Rao will be asked to make an announcement about the presidential election to the campus community.

VCU's 2020 Common Book

VCU has selected **One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression Is Destroying Our Democracy** as its Common Book for fall 2020. All first-year students will receive a copy of the book and the university will be hosting a series of activities related to book, including an author visit in October. As a result, the VCU Votes Council will capitalize on the activities to register voters and provide election information to the campus community.

Curriculum

Faculty will be encouraged to have lectures and co-curricular activities related to the Common Book and civic engagement issues.

Information Sharing

In addition to the Monroe Park campus, greater effort will be placed providing election information to students on the health sciences campus.

Long Term Goals

- Further institutionalize voter registration to ensure that all students have information needed to register (e.g., New Student Orientation, Course Registration)
- Create a brand for the VCU Votes Council
- Enhance website and other forms of communication (e.g., social media)
- Foster meaningful discussions around political engagement beyond elections
- Voting becomes a part of a student's VCU identity
- Empower student activism
- Develop more civically engaged student leaders
- Create experiential learning opportunities based on civic engagement
- Seek funding to support activities of the VCU Votes Council
- Establish mini grants for faculty and students to spur activities and research around civic engagement