

Hokies Vote!

Abbreviations

CE: Civic Engagement

CLA: Civic Leadership Academy

HVC: Hokies Vote Caucus

NSLVE: National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement

RWBD: Residential Well Being Department

SACD: Student Affairs Communications Department

VT: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

VTE: VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning

VTSA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Student Affairs

Executive Summary

This Action Plan was written by Billy McKeon, Civic Engagement Coordinator for VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning (VTE). VTE is a department in Student Affairs at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VT).

The programs in this report are implemented on VT's Blacksburg Campus. VT has extended campus sites in Roanoke, Abington, Richmond, Virginia Beach, Newport News, and seven additional locations in Northern Virginia. The university is in southwestern Virginia in Appalachia. Appalachia is a geographical region located in the central and southern sections of the Appalachian Mountains of the eastern United States. VT is a public institution that was founded in 1872. It has a total undergraduate enrollment of 31,035 (fall 2024).

The goal of this report is to outline the Civic Engagement (CE) programs that VTE oversaw from June 2023 through June 2024. Through this we hope to create a resource that can be used not just as a benchmark, but also a resource to practitioners in higher education and beyond. We also hope to be able to use our Action throughout our self-evaluation and assessment process.

This report will provide an update on the CE initiatives that began in 2021, which were overseen by Jes Davis, now the Associate Director of VTE. It'll outline changes

made to components of programs and initiatives added to the CE area of VTE. It will provide a timeline of all the CE we were able to accomplish this year.

The motto of VT is *Ut Prosim* (that I may serve), which is a central component to the university's culture. It reminds community members that VT is an inclusive community of knowledge, discovery, and creativity dedicated to improving the quality of life and the human condition within the Commonwealth of Virginia and the world. By creating this report, we hope to improve the ways we embody *Ut Prosim* (that I may serve) in all aspects of our work, and to add to a body of knowledge.

The mission of VT Student Affairs (VTSA) is to promote student learning, life skills, and personal growth through a strong focus on holistic student development and collaborative partnerships that deliver superior service to, and care for, students in the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (that I may serve). VTSA is guided by five key aspirations for student learning: a commitment to unwavering curiosity, pursuing self-understanding and integrity, practicing civility, preparing for a life of courageous leadership, and embracing *Ut Prosim* (that I may serve) as a way of life. These goals, especially civility, are a key component in guiding the way we go about CE.

The vision of VTE is to equip civic leaders to create a more just world. We work to empower students to become civically engaged by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to develop their civic leadership identity.

This Action Plan will be updated next in August of 2024. The plan will be implemented by the CE Student Employees and Democracy Fellows hired by VTE. It's implementation will be overseen by Billy McKeon and Jes Davis.

Leadership

In addition to Jes and Billy, the entire staff of VTE are dedicated to the vision of the office, "...to equip civic leaders to create a more just world." The department is united by this vision and embeds CE into aspects of many of our programs.

Preeti Pandey is the Director of the Hokies Vote Caucus (HVC). In her role, she leads the group in hosting moderated conversations about localized social and political topics. These are called Deliberative and Constructive Dialogues. She also organizes advocacy training, which are collaborative meetings where the HVC can assist groups in their advocacy efforts. Lastly, the HVC works to encourage students to begin a lifelong pattern of CE.

During the Fall Semester, the HVC had four Assistant Directors; Lillie Mitchell, Shireen Hamidi, Eisha KC, and Kate Taylor. Eisha and Kate are 4th year students graduating this semester. During the spring semester, Preeti worked with five assistant Directors: adding Emil Morin, Vicky Sobot, Liam Glavin, and Riley Tucker. During the spring semester, Jordyn Lewis began working with us as a CE program assistant to help

implement the Civic Leadership Academy (CLA), a CE program within VTE. Along with the general body members of the HVC, these students compose our working group.

During the Fall Semester, the members of the HVC contacted professors from departments across campus and requested to give a short presentation to the students in their class about voter registration and the upcoming elections. During this time, they also worked with the Office of Residential Well Being (RWB) to give these presentations and host voter registration tabling events in on-campus residences. VT also houses 25 Living Learning Programs, which are intentional communities that share a common interest, majors, or are identity based for on-campus students to live and participate in a co-curricular living experience. The HVC gave a presentation to several communities about the upcoming 2023 election.

Billy works with the HVC to coordinate their on-campus space reservations with the Event Services, which includes tabling requests and a space for the group to meet for general body meetings. Billy also works with the Student Affairs Communications (SAComms) to advertise upcoming HVC events.

VT is committed to fostering healthy CE at all levels. The Office for Strategic Affairs has developed a Strategic Plan (SP) for the university to achieve a long-term Beyond Boundaries future as a comprehensive land-grant university. [Beyond Boundaries](#) is the foundation for a vision for VT one generation into the future. One of the core values outlined is, “We value the educational benefits of diverse ideas, peoples, and cultures in order to contribute to the equitable inclusion and just engagement of the world’s communities through collaboration and partnerships, guided by open expression, self-awareness, and mutual respect.” CE is an important foundation to a diverse community by allowing different groups within it to make their perspectives voiced and heard. This process includes public forums, contacting elected officials, and more. At VTE, our mission is to, “...to facilitate leadership, service learning, and CE experiences that advance community priorities, contribute to student development, and embody *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve.)” Publishing this report will be one way that we fulfill both missions. It will allow us to share a resource for facilitating CE in different communities, allowing us to serve as a resource for institutions across the country.

This report seeks to outline all the CE programming facilitated by VTE and the HVC over the past year of 2023 (Spring and Fall semesters). This report also seeks to outline the strategies we continue to implement in our work, and the framework for our plans going forward. The plans in this report are implemented on the VT Blacksburg campus.

On March 14th, 2005, VT first endorsed the “[VT Principles of Community](#)” by the Board of Directors and several individuals/organizations. The second affirmation reads...

“**We affirm** the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.”

This is just one of the several university-wide initiatives at VT that the programs within this Action Plan will support. By expanding civic learning about localized social and political issues, we aim to contribute to fostering a civil and respectful climate on campus and beyond.

This plan covers the CE programs for VTE during the 2023-2024 academic year, and also to highlight the work of our community partners. We will also include plans for the upcoming spring semester, and the following 2024-2025 academic year. It will be updated through the upcoming Spring 2024 semester as we implement more CE programs.

Alongside VTE, the HVC will also implement this Action Plan. The HVC is a student-facing program and provides a space for students to discuss current social and political topics and develop their civic identities. The group also encourages students to begin a lifelong pattern of CE by casting their ballot each November.

The HVC hosts weekly meetings at 6:30 pm every Monday, and will use the time to plan events about social and political topics the members are interested in. In addition, VTE will host campus wide events that bring together different stakeholders to foster civic learning or to utilize CE for social justice advocacy.

Commitment

President Sands made a commitment to the ALL In Democracy Challenge.

Educating for civic learning and democratic engagement is not explicitly a part of the pervasive through classroom culture. Professors are left to their own volition to determine whether to encourage students to vote. Even so, few professors do so. Words like “voting” and “democracy” are not common vernacular in non-political-science classes. Even political science professors fail to encourage students to register to vote. Some of this stems from the increased polarization of politics in the US and faculty feeling as though they are unprepared to facilitate conversations.

As a student affairs department, VTE conducts the university’s CE programming through curricular and co-curricular experiences. Hokies Vote Caucus is a consistent and sustainable promoter of civic learning and democratic engagement. HVC will work with student organizations, campus departments, academic advisors, and more to

increase information dispersion and democratic engagement. This is the fourth action plan produced for VT.

This year Jessie McMillan, Assistant Director for Service Learning also worked to support professors across campus with CE facilitation resources when requested.

The implementation of the civic learning and democratic engagement initiatives, while not explicitly, do align with both our institutional and Division of Student Affairs strategic initiatives as well as the Aspirations for Student Learning. This is a division wide framework for student learning and development. Understanding this alignment strengthens the arguments for an increased commitment from senior leadership.

In 2015, VT began the process of developing a new strategic plan called Beyond Boundaries: A 2047 is a vision for VT a generation into the future. It that reinforces the university's core values, established strengths, and considers two interrelated goals; advancing VT as an internationally recognized, global land-grant institution and strategically addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing landscape of higher education. Civic learning and democratic engagement are embedded into this plan in several places.

Most notably it's under strategic priority 1 advance regional, national, and global; strategic priority 2 elevate the *Ut Prosim* (That I may serve) difference; and strategic priority 3 be a destination for talent.

Strategic Priority 1: Advance Regional, National, and Global Impact

This priority is intended to prepare graduates to contribute and lead in a complex world by offering person-centered and purpose-driven student experiences designed to educate the whole person. One of the goals VTE holds when developing students is to understand what a civic identity is, what has impacted the values personal to them, and how to use democratic institutions to advocate for change.

Strategic Priority 2: Elevate the *Ut Prosim* Difference

As a land-grant institution VT has a responsibility beyond its students, but also the entire commonwealth. We take on this responsibility with the phrase *Ut Prosim* Difference. The institutional and individual commitment to *Ut Prosim* in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, VT will build and support communities of discovery where global citizens engage with different ideas, belief, perspectives, experiences, identities, backgrounds, and cultures. Civic learning and democratic

engagement allow students to reflect on their own values and apply them when analyzing social and political topics. By teaching students' ways to be civically engaged, we are also developing active citizens who can create solutions for the public good.

Strategic Priority 3: Be a Destination for Talent

In VT's continued responsibility to meet our land-grant mission, we will also need to attract bold and dynamic faculty, staff, and students to a diverse and inclusive community to be a force for positive change. By hosting conversations and engaging diverse groups in constructive, deliberative, and across-difference dialogue will assist us in developing an inclusive environment. Sustainable change comes through developing solutions with a diverse group of people coming together to learn and challenge one another.

In alignment with the university strategic plan, the Division of Student Affairs also implemented a Strategic Initiatives Plan guided by the Aspirations for Student Learning (Student Affairs, 2019). The Aspirations for Student Learning (ASLs) are the learning goals for Student Affairs grounded in the theoretical framework of self-authorship. Self-authorship is defined as "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity and social relations." This requires individuals to collect, interpret, analyze, and reflect to form their own perspectives and subsequent interactions and decisions. This relates to dialogues we host with students about social and political topics, and when we ask them to reflect on their civic values.

Strategic Initiative: Aspirations for Student Learning

Through the Aspirations students will commit to unwavering curiosity, pursue self-understanding and integrity, practice civility, prepare for a life of courageous leadership and embrace *ut proism* (that I may serve). VTE offers students opportunities in various community settings to live out their values through CE.

Strategic Initiative: Leadership and Service

This initiative is designed to actualize students' leadership through service. All students are potential leaders. Student Affairs strives to create experiences for our students to lead and serve in the spirit of *Ut Prosim* as part of our land-grant mission. Leadership is not merely a title or position. It is a process of growth and development for positive change for individuals, communities, and society. This civic action plan is only successful with full engagement of students. The HVC Assistant Directors act not merely as ambassadors of the civic knowledge the HVC can provide, but also encourage general members of the group to take on projects within the club and to launch advocacy campaigns about the topics they care about. They also seek out social

movements already happening on campus to support, which involves uplifting student leaders in many different spaces and ways.

Strategic Initiative: Diversity and Inclusion

While the alignment of this initiative is the same as the Strategic Priority 3 from the Beyond Boundaries vision. It is still important to recognize the alignment with the Division of Student Affairs. VT Student Affairs is committed to diversity, inclusion, and equity as a value over a good. We are committed to creating a community where all students, faculty, and staff are supported in their growth and learning and are prepared to address issues facing our complex global society. A commitment to diversity and inclusion at every level of program development ensures that we are creating equitable and inclusive structures proactively rather than reactively.

As an institution VT participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). This study conducted by the Institute for Democracy in Higher Education at Tufts University helps colleges learn about their student’s engagement in voter registration and voting rates. We have participated in this study since its inception in 2012.

Year	Registration Rate	Voting Rate of Registered Students	Voting Rate	Voting Rate for All Institutions
2012	78.5%	86.6%	48.2%	48.2%
2014*	71.6%	16.7%	12%	12%
2016	86.6%	64.2%	55.6%	50.4%
2018*	81.5%	43.6%	35.5%	39.1%
2020	90.7%	80.4%	73%	66%
2022*	78.9%	26.8%	21.2%	30.6%

In 2022, VT voted at a rate of 21.2%. This is a decrease of approximately 15% from 2018, and nearly 10 percentage points below the national average. We believe the voting rate will be back up and closer to the 2020 rates given that it is a Presidential

election year this year. Additionally, [studies](#) show that the Midterm Elections have historically received fewer votes than their Presidential Election counterparts.

One trend at VT in 2022 was that younger students (18-21) voted at a lesser rate (16%) when compared with their older peers (22-24) who voted at a rate approximately 3 percentage points higher. In 2022, approximately 1% of students voted early, which is no change from 2018. Early voting is a preferred method for many students, as classes can make it difficult for students to schedule time to get to the polls. However, the younger students who are living predominantly on campus oftentimes do not have access to a personal vehicle. Because of this, VTE will focus on advertising the public transportation methods that are available for students to take to the early voting location.

Civic learning and democratic engagement are included in many general education (Pathways) courses, but students are motivated to take “easy” classes which may or may not be centered on CE. Students have the autonomy to choose which courses to take to satisfy their Pathways requirements, so they are most likely to take classes they are interested in. Thus, there are not many students in classes centered on CE who are not already interested in the topic. Classes include:

Race and Social Justice Classes

ALCE 2414: Identity and Inclusion in Ag and Life Sciences

APS/HUM 1704: Intro to Appalachian Studies

COMM 2094: Communication and Issues of Diversity

ECON 1204: Economics of Race

ECON 1214: Economic History of Diversity and Inclusion

ECON 3034: Economics of Poverty and Discrimination

ENGL 2634: Writing and Social Justice

HIST 1115, 1116: History of the United States

HIST 2264: America in the 1960's

HUM/RLCL 3204: Multicultural Communication

MGT 3444: Multicultural Diversity in Organizations

RLCL/AFST/WGS 2204: Race and Gender in Religion and Culture

SOC 1004: Introductory Sociology

SOC 2004: Social Problems

SOC 2024: Sociology of Race and Ethnicity
SOC 2034: Diversity and Community Engagement
SOC 3314: Social Movements

Understanding and Serving Your Community

ALS 4204: Concepts in Community Food Systems
HD 3024: Community Analytics
LAR 3264: People Community and Place
LDRS 1414: Citizen Leadership
LDRS 2014: Principles of Peer Leadership
SOC 2034: Diversity and Community Engagement
SPAN 3564: Community through Service: Latino NRV
SPIA 1024: Community Service Learning
SPIA 2024: Community Systems Thinking
SPIA 4784: Community Systems Capstone

Civic learning is listed as a learning outcome in the Pathways 7 - Critical Analysis of Identity and Equity - courses. These learning outcomes include:

1. Analyze how social identities, statuses, space, place, traditions, and histories of inequity and power shape human experience in the United States (particularly or in comparative perspective).
2. Analyze social equity and diversity in the United States (particularly or in comparative perspective) through multiple perspectives on power and identity.
3. Demonstrate how creative works analyze and/or reimagine diversity in human experiences in the United States (particularly or in comparative perspective).
4. Demonstrate how aesthetic and cultural expressions mediate identities, statuses, space, place, formal traditions, and/or historical contexts in the United States (particularly or in comparative perspective).
5. Analyze the interactive relationships between place, space, identity formation, and sense of community in the United States (particularly or in comparative perspective).

Pathways courses are open to students of all majors.

Co-Curricular Programming

VTE serves as the main department within student affairs and the co-curricular experience. In addition to advising HVC, VTE staff have spearheaded the Civic Holiday events since the inaugural events in fall 2020. The National Voter Registration Day event: Access to Activism is a student affairs divisional signature event that works to understand the barriers and activist efforts of different groups who have been historically denied the right to vote. Work is also currently being implemented within RWB to support students in having conversations across differences that will also contribute to civic learning and democratic engagement as a foundation. This partnership with RWB and VTE has also led to the planning process of creating a new initiative for civic, leadership, and Democracy (CLDI) which is meant to teach students the tenets of democracy and CE.

Since our NSLVE report does not break down race/ethnicity or gender, we will need to work with campus partners to understand the needs of historically underrepresented or marginalized groups on campus. We will also be working with programming boards and directors of the cultural and community centers to identify needs and develop co-programming and resource sharing to facilitate these opportunities.

The internal barriers that prevent the institution from being successful include limited funding, lack of enthusiasm and efficacy from staff and other campus groups, red tape preventing institutional change, and lack of initiative for professors to encourage students to be civically engaged. To combat these challenges, we will be designing an outreach and communications plan that will include engaging student organizations and faculty/staff groups across campus to get the word out and provide resources. This will be a group effort with VTE staff and HVC student leaders in order to get buy-in from various stakeholders.

External barriers include competing priorities and the ever-changing laws of voting rights for Virginia. Many students are unaware of what CE means and how to get involved. In addition, out-of-state students who do not have an ID from the Department of Motor Vehicles cannot register to vote online. Most students register to vote because it is easy and they can do it online, thus extra effort is necessary to register out-of-state students in Virginia. As for casting ballots, Virginia has decreased barriers by having a long early voting period and various ways to cast absentee ballots. However, as first-time voters many students want to vote in-person on Election Day. This means they may be faced with challenges such as remembering to vote, competing priorities with work and class, or registering with their home address instead of their campus address. Students often mail in their absentee ballots to the wrong Board of Elections address.

Our County Registrar has been gracious in the past to forward these to the correct municipality, but that is not a requirement of her department. Which if not done, may cause delays to receiving ballots.

GobblerConnect is a platform for VT students to post and see events that are happening around campus. It allowed students to sign up for groups and/or events they are interested in. The HVC will utilize this website to partner with other groups on their CE projects. Additionally, SA Comms creates graphics for us to use when advertising our events and programs. Lastly, email lists run by VTE can be used to advertise in this way.

External resources like the League of Women Voters, the Virginia Department of Elections, and the Montgomery County Board of Elections are important in providing nonpartisan information to voters. The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County provides nonpartisan voter guides for voters and conducts voter registration at the local farmers market, which is located adjacent to the Blacksburg campus. The Virginia Department of Elections will conduct voter registration training answering questions more specific to college students. Finally, the Montgomery County Board of Elections will help answer questions specific to Montgomery County voters.

The long-term vision is to embed CE into the student experience, institutional processes, and culture of VT. The vision of VTE is to equip civic leaders to create a more just world. To develop civic leadership, students should learn about self-understanding, power dynamics, dialogue across difference, social justice and inclusion, social responsibility, verbal communication, planning, others' circumstances, collaboration, systems thinking, and reflection application.

Over the next ten years VT wants to achieve an 80% voting rate during Presidential Elections and 50% voting rates during Midterm Elections by 2026. In 2022 the VT voting rate was 21.2%, which was nearly 10% below the national average. This means we would need to increase the voting rate by 28.8%, or more than double the rate of the 2022 Midterms. However, in 2020 students voted at a 73% rate which was higher than the national average for institutions. While this goal is challenging, we are optimistic that adding CE as a core component of the student experience will help us increase our voting rates significantly.

Our biggest need currently is staffing. This year is the first year a VTE staff member has been able to dedicate all their time to CE, which is a significant improvement from last year for our office. We also hired another part-time student employee to help with this programming. While this is helpful, we still struggle in our ability to table on campus,

give presentations to classrooms, and engage with campus more broadly with a team of three. That is why in addition to recruiting volunteers through the HVC, VTE will apply for grants this summer to hire more student employees to help us broaden our reach as a team. This will involve collaboration with Ask Every Student, and The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County.

To achieve our cultural goals with CE, we also need to involve community members. Another reason why this is important is because VT is a public land-grant university. [This type of institution](#) was signed into law in 1890 by President Abraham Lincoln with the Morrill Acts. The act establishes that the mission of these institutions is to bring “science, technology, and the arts to the American people and address society’s problems.”

American voter disengagement is a national issue with over 80 million people still not casting ballot [despite record-breaking voter turnout](#) in 2020. At the same time, the proportion of Americans dissatisfied with the government has remained [historically high](#) for the past two decades. If a high proportion of Americans remain disengaged in our democracy, the government is more likely continue to be distrusted at high rates. This

It is important that we remain a hub for voting and CE resources for students and community members. One way we can do this is by inviting different non-partisan groups onto campus and engaging students in civil dialogue across differences about these topics that are related to voting. Since voter engagement is a national issue that is impacting millions of Americans, this approach also allows us to fulfill our public duty as a public land-grant institution.

To make all these goals possible mass advertising resources are necessary. Utilizing GobblerConnect has been a good first step. In this upcoming year we want to also be sure to, campus-wide emails or notices in the VT Daily News, Canvas, and the student newspaper. Furthermore, public endorsement and promotion of voting from campus celebrities like the President and football coach is also important.

VTE will need access to the demographic voting data of students to know which groups of students on campus need to be reached with voter engagement information. Our long-term vision will require collaboration between community members, students, faculty, professors, and administrators to embed CE into the student experience completely.

The HVC conducted voter engagement largely by utilizing four different methods: on-campus tabling, voting presentations, dialogue events, and creating online resources.

The HVC hosted three different voter registration tables during the Fall Semester. The first was on September 1st at *Gobblerfest*, an event where all student organizations table on The Drillfield and advertise themselves to potential new members. VT hosted a table at the event, which HVC members used to recruit new members and distribute voting information. The HVC tabled on the Drillfield again on September 19th for National Voter Registration Day.

At these tabling sessions there was a “your vote matters” banner, standing signs with voter registration information on the table, “Hokies Vote” stickers and buttons, purple “vote” t-shirts, VTE water bottles, candy, physical voter registration forms, laminated QR codes with links to register to vote online, and a spinning prize wheel. At the table, students would be asked to spin the wheel and answer the question they land on. After answering, we would then ask the student if they were registered to vote. We would give them one of the prizes if they showed us that they were registered, filled out a voter registration form, or registered to vote online from their phone.

The HVC hosted a third tabling event on October 12th with Vote Equality VA. At this event, students were asked if they knew what the Equal Rights Amendment was and if they were registered to vote. If they were, then they were invited to sign the Vote Equality RV and have a free “equal rights” poster.

The HVC hosted its fourth and final tabling event on October 16th on the 1st floor of the Squires Student Center. At the event students were asked to show that they were registered to vote, and to write down an issue they care about on a sticky note and add it to our “we are voting because...” board. If students did both, they were then offered a free donut. The event was called “Go-doNuts for Democracy!”

Preeti Pandey, the Director of the HVC, created a presentation outlining the voter registration process, key dates, and answered common questions that students ask about casting a ballot. She gave this presentation to the Leadership and Social Change Residential College on September 7th. She also presented to the Alpha Chi Omega sorority on September 14th. Lastly, Billy Mckeeon gave the presentation to the captains of every VT athletics team on October 2nd.

The HVC hosted several dialogue events throughout the Fall and Spring semester. These events have three goals. The first is to provide nonpartisan information about a social or political topic of interest to students, either by hosting a speaker from outside the group or by conducting research and presenting the findings. The second is to engage students in a civil discourse about the topic, encouraging them to reflect on their own values as they do so. Thirdly, the events connect students with actionable ways to involve themselves in the work related to the topic.

For example, on April 25th the HVC partnered with the Environmental Coalition on campus to host two representatives from The Sierra Club. They presented non-partisan information about different environmental topics; they discussed these topics with the students and often broke into groups and answered questions from students about how they could become more involved in environmental advocacy. The HVC hosted two dialogue events in the fall, one on housing affordability on September 20th, and another on the *Equal Rights Amendment* on October 4th. In the spring they hosted a dialogue about period poverty on February 14th, and another on an open-burning site near campus on March 13th.

Lastly, the HVC utilized Canva to create digital voting resources about the recently redrawn Blacksburg voting districts. They also catered the graphic to highlight every apartment complex that is predominantly lived in by students. On September 25th, the HVC spent their meeting sending these resources out to different groups across campus.

Reporting

CE as a functional area is rapidly adapting to the different sociopolitical affairs happening across the country. For both reasons, it is important for CE practitioners to share our plans, strategies, and work so that we all continue advancing our common mission. VTE works to share this report both internally at VT and externally to our partners outside the institution.

VTE uses the Action Plan internally to guide our civic programs. Being able to look back on the past year and look at the components of our most popular events assists us in guiding aspects of our other initiatives. Additionally, we share a shortened version of this report with all the departments on campus that are doing any form of student-facing CE. This allows us to share the resources we can provide to campus partners more widely.

This action plan will be shared with the Vice President of Student Affairs and their leadership council. A short form of this report will be made available and hosted on the VTE website with contact information to gain the full plan. The NSLVE data will be made publicly available on the VTE website, and a VT news story publication.

Evaluation

One of the core values of VTE is “increasing equity in every aspect of our work.” One way we do this is by having students swipe into every event with their Hokie Passport. This allows us to track the demographic data of the students we are reaching,

and further understand communities on campus that we are not. Another way we assess ourselves is by asking students “where did you hear about this event?” when RSVP’ing for events on GobblerConnect or in a post event evaluation. This allows us to work collaboratively with the SAComms to ensure equity is at the forefront of our outreach strategy. VTE implements these evaluations to fulfill this core value.

The demographic information we collect includes but is not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, and field of study, a

Aggregate Data is shared with student leaders, VTE faculty and staff, and community partners. This is because we reference the data throughout the planning process for our programming. For example, the HVC saw this year that they did not have members from the College of Science, so Preeti planned a collaborative event with the Environmental Coalition to host The Sierra Club on campus for a conversation about activism. This is one way we ensure that we are increasing equity in every aspect of our work.

Billy McKeon and Jes Davis will carry out this evaluation in collaboration with our student leaders and CVP democracy fellows. The evaluation will happen primarily over the summer and winter breaks but will be monitored throughout the academic year. Jes Davis is part of a working group working on The Carnegie Foundation’s Classification for Community Engagement and will share the Action Plan with the group.

In addition to the demographic data we collect, we also carry out written and in-person assessments with students who participate in our programs. Sometimes this is a form that is sent to students through GobblerConnect, asking them about aspects of their experience such as, “how did you hear about this event?” Other times these are conversations guided by a VTE faculty member, which is what the HVC facilitated during the final weeks of the Spring Semester.