Hokies Vote Caucus
Civic Action Plan
2022

Key Terms and Acronyms

Because use of definitions can vary across the spectrum, we've included a set of key terms that are used throughout this document and higher education. Many of the terms are taken from the Strengthening American Democracy report through Students Learn, Students Vote.

Civic learning and democratic engagement: is promoting education of students for engaged citizenship through democratic participation in their communities, respect and appreciation of diversity, applied learning, and social responsibility.

Civic engagement: is any act intended to improve or influence a community through deliberation, collaboration, and reciprocal relationships and community-building.

Democratic participation: is civic engagement that involves democratic processes (e.g., when an organization puts a matter to a vote and there is democratic participation).

Political engagement or political participation: is civic engagement that emphasizes governmental institutions and/or power (e.g., voting in local, state, and federal elections).

Voter registration: is the process of successfully completing the application to be able to cast a ballot in an election.

Get out the Vote: are organized efforts to increase voter registration.

Voter education: is the curricular and co-curricular activities offered to students and designed to facilitate civic learning and increase participation in elections.

Voter turnout: Is the act of casting a ballot, in any manner (e.g., early, in person, and absentee).

CVP: Campus Vote Project. National non-partisan, non-profit dedicated to helping students gain access to the ballot and increasing voter turnout. CVP is a project of the Fair Elections Center.

CEEP: Campus Election Engagement Project is a national nonpartisan project that helps administrators, faculty, staff, and student leaders at America's colleges and universities engage students in federal, state, and local elections.

SLSV: Students Learn, Students Vote. Promotes civic learning and engagement on campuses across the country by providing a series of key steps and information on best practices that institutions can use to create a more voter friendly campus.

ACC: Atlantic Coast Conference. Virginia Tech's athletic conference.

SGA: Student Government Association

NCoC: National Conference on Citizenship

Executive Summary

This report was prepared by Hokies Vote Caucus student leaders: Maya Mahdi (Student Director), Eisha Kc (Student Assistant Director; CVP Fellow), Preeti Pandey (Student Assistant Director; CEEP Fellow), Brooke Bradley, Jarrett Holmes, Maya Grimm, Shireen Hamidi, and Turner Nesblett and VT Engage Staff: Jessica Davis, Assistant Director for Leadership and Civic Engagement.

In 2021, Hokies Vote Caucus was established within VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning (henceforth, VT Engage). This student program is dedicated to institutionalizing civic engagement at Virginia Tech and making it a part of student and faculty culture. This action plan will serve as a plan of action for the Hokies Vote Caucus to pursue nonpartisan voter and civic engagement at Virginia Tech. The action plan outlines the steps Hokies Vote Caucus can take to reach their goals. Events will be in-person and online to expand audience participation.

This plan ties to broader institutional norms like the Virginia Tech Principles of Community and the university's motto - Ut Prosim - That I May Serve. Furthermore, it is in line with the Student Affairs' Aspirations for Student Learning: curiosity, self-understanding and integrity, civility, courageous leadership, and Ut Prosim. In addition, VT Engage will work to build a student initiative focused on civic, democracy and leadership that will launch in the fall of 2023. This program will teach students the tenets of democracy and build leadership skills so that they may be better activists at Virginia Tech.

Hokies Vote Caucus and VT Engage will be implementing this civic action plan starting August 15th, 2022 and ending May 3rd, 2023. The plan will be updated by the members of Hokies Vote Caucus in December 2022 and April 2023 as a means of ensuring formative assessment to ensure activities meet the current landscape in the fall. On- and off-campus partners will be included in implementing and advising this plan. This plan will have the main focus on the Blacksburg campus, but VT Engage staff are working to expand efforts to the

VT Carilion School of Medicine (VTSCOM) in Roanoke, Virginia and the Innovation Campus in Arlington, Virginia.

Hokies Vote Caucus is open to students of all majors and all years. The student director for Hokies Vote Caucus will work to develop relationships with academic advisors, the Cultural and Community Centers, college department heads, and student leaders to recruit members for a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Diversity and inclusion are important in any voting and civic engagement group because bringing unique perspectives to the table will inspire new solutions and allow us to approach problems from different angles.

Leadership

Hokies Vote Caucus will serve as the managing group of the Democracy Working Group at Virginia Tech. In the 2021-2022 school year, Hokies Vote Caucus worked with the NAACP, Students for Racial Justice, and Young Americans for Liberty. The following organizations will be invited to participate in the Democracy Working Group:

Academic Advisors (with emphasis on Math and Statistics advisors since they had the lowest voter turnout in 2020)	Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi, American (APIDA) Caucus
	Athletic Department
Agriculture and Life Sciences Department	Black Cultural Center
American Indian and Indigenous Community Center	Black Faculty and Staff Caucus
American Indian and Indigenous People's Alliance	Black Organization Council
Appalachian Caucus	Board of Visitors Student Representative
	Closing the Gap
Asian American Student Union (AASU)	College Republicans at Virginia Tech
Asian Cultural Engagement Center	Communications Department

Dean of Students Office	Montgomery County, Floyd County, and Radford City Branch of the NAACP
Disability Alliance and Caucus	NAACP at Virginia Tech
El Centro (Latinx Cultural and Community Center)	NextGen
Give & Take	Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Graduate Student Assembly	Office of Government Relations
Greek Life Council	Office of Residential Wellbeing
Greens at Virginia Tech	Political Science Club
Hispanic & Latinx Faculty and Staff Caucus	Political Science Department
Hokie Pride	Provost Office
Intercultural Engagement Center	Public Administrators at Virginia Tech
International Faculty Staff Caucus	Radford Board of Elections
International Relations Organization at Virginia Tech	School of Public and International Affairs
Leadership and Social Change Residential College	Science Policy Education and Advocacy Club
League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, VA	Secular Students at Virginia Tech
LGBTQ+ Faculty Staff Caucus	Services for Students with Disabilities
LGBTQ+ Resource Center	Student Engagement and Campus Life
Montgomery Board of Elections	Students for Cultivating Change

Students for Racial Justice	Veterans Caucus
Students for Sustainable Practice	Virginia Extension Office
The Office of the President	Virginia Organizing
Town of Blacksburg	Women's Alliance
Turning Point USA	Young Americans for Freedom at Virginia Tech
Undergraduate Student Senate	Young Democratic Socialists for America
United Feminist Movement	Young Democrats at Virginia Tech

Each of these groups can contribute something crucial to our effort to increase civic engagement at Virginia Tech. Student organizations already have a large reach and following and connection to students. Students can hold their peers accountable to vote and create social and cultural change at Virginia Tech. In addition, they will be in charge of posting events and information on social media. Hokies Vote Caucus will reach out to all different types of organizations - not just the ones that directly relate to civic engagement. Activism, social, cultural, service, religious, and political clubs will be included in the Democracy Working Group. This will ensure diversity. While these groups listed above will receive the initial outreach, the working group will be open to any organization that wishes to contribute.

The offices, departments, and administration at Virginia Tech have the authority and resources to implement structural changes which student organizations may not have the power to do. They can reduce the red tape to making change, help with institutionalization, and legitimize any events hosted by Hokies Vote Caucus.

Faculty and staff caucus serve as additional voices and support in the face of the university as they represent the employees - not the administration of the university. Faculty and staff can also serve as experts at educational events and increase the audience to faculty and staff.

Major departments and academic advisors will help Hokies Vote Caucus and the Democracy Working Group to reach target groups. They will also sponsor co-curricular events. They also have the ability to influence what

professors do like awarding extra credit for poll workers, eliminating all assignments due on Election Day, and encouraging students to vote. Campus "celebrities" such as the president, dean of students, and football coach can help with outreach and expand the audience to all students at Virginia Tech. They reflect a unified effort and can provide a publicly available commitment to civic engagement.

Student government is our medium through which Hokies Vote Caucus can make institutional change and it is most reflective of students within university governance.

Community organizations are important in the work of the Democracy Working Group because they expand reach beyond the Virginia Tech campus to the Blacksburg and New River Valley Community. Campus Vote Project and Campus Election Engagement Project provide paid fellows at VT Engage to support Hokies Vote Caucus and the Democracy Working Group. In addition, the Virginia Department of Elections will help facilitate voter registration training for students. We will also work with our local Registrar, Connie Viar, to ensure we are up to date on any changes to voting. Ms. Viar also keeps VT Engage staff up to date on any issues with student voting that may be occurring. Furthermore, the Student Senate coordinates efforts with the County Registrar for the on-campus polling locations which HVC will be assisting with a "Party at the Polls" event.

VT Engage currently has an Assistant Director for Leadership and Civic Engagement (AD-L&CE) who is the faculty advisor of Hokies Vote Caucus and serves as the liaison of the group to upper-level administration. The AD-L&CE also represents Virginia Tech within the SLSV Coalition, the ALL IN Challenge-including the DemocrACCy Challenge, and other off campus partnerships. The Hokies Vote Student Director is a part-time student wage employee charged with directing the Hokies Vote Caucus. Campus Vote Project and Campus Election Engagement Project provide paid fellows as well.

The Assistant Director of Outreach of Hokies Vote Caucus will be in charge of outreach throughout the year. Outreach will be conducted year-round to keep people engaged and recruit new members for the Democracy Working Group. The Democracy Working Group will meet once a month with optional events hosted by Hokies Vote Caucus. The Working Group will take place over Zoom to best accommodate all members. If members are unable to perform their tasks, then they will be asked to send a proxy from their organization in their place. Hokies Vote Caucus will also provide meeting notes to allow those that miss meetings to remain updated and on task. There will be opportunities for Hokies Vote Caucus to work one-on-one with certain organizations on events as well. During the initial meeting the group will establish community norms which will include identifying stakeholder turnover and group accountability.

Commitment

President Sands made a commitment to the ALL In Democracy Challenge. However, this commitment is not communicated well within or outside of the institution. The Student Affairs Communications department is working on a news story to be released in the fall of 2020 to signify this commitment and to highlight the upcoming events in the fall. The Vice President for Student Affairs office has made a commitment to implementing the new initiative focused on civic, leadership, and democracy. VT Engage staff are currently working on applying for funding for a full time position to support the work. This year they will be outlining a curriculum and process for recruitment of students. VT Engage has been working with local news station to highlight the importance of student voting and involvement. Several students including Maya Mahdi and Eisha Kc and AD-L&CE, Jes Davis were featured on the solutionary series here: https://www.youtube.com/solutionaries. Therefore, civic learning and democratic engagement is ongoing, but receiving consistent support through VT Engage and HVC.

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. If civic and democratic engagement were a part of the institutional culture, professors would post voter registration and election information on Canvas and voter registration would be conducted at new student orientation.

VT Engage conducts the university's civic engagement programming through both curricular and co-curricular experiences as a department in student affairs. However, VT Engage is currently understaffed due to vacant positions to have the full university-wide scale it desires. VT Engage is working on hiring three new staff members by the fall of 2022 which should increase the departments' capacity to support the efforts to a greater extent. Hokies Vote Caucus will aim to be a consistent, systemic, and sustainable student organization to promote 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 second action plan produced for Virginia Tech. The first was written by AD-L&CE Jes Davis in 2020 with guidance from the first working coalition strategy meetings.

Furthermore, certain general education (Pathways) learning outcomes include civic learning goals. However, co-curricular events surrounding civic

engagement are minimal. Student organizations often host activism events. The newly established Office of Sustainability promoted events during Earth Weeks surrounding activism, climate change education, and other engagement activities. The political science and philosophy, politics, and economics department host plenty of educational events surrounding civic engagement topics, but attendees are usually political science and other humanities majors. Hokies Vote Caucus aims to host civic learning events and encourage all students to participate through outreach to different college departments, academic advisors, and student organizations. The institution does have a strong commitment to service learning and its land grant mission. This allows for community engagement to be broad and typically focuses on community service or providing operating services to the community. While this is necessary, civic and voting engagement work towards creating systemic change.

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

University Strategic Plan Beyond Boundaries: A 2047 vision
In 2015, Virginia Tech began the process in developing a new strategic plan. Beyond Boundaries: A 2047 vision is the foundation for a vision for Virginia Tech a generation into the future. A vision that reinforces the university's core values and established strengths, while considering two interrelated goals; advancing Virginia Tech as an internationally-recognized, global land-grant and strategically addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing landscape of higher education. Civic learning and democratic engagement fall well within several places of this plan.

Most notably 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 (Virginia Tech, n.d., p 15) One of the goals of this civic action plan is to increase the awareness of an individual's civic identity and the power they possess to create change in their communities. Through this awareness students will be able to increase

excellence in research, discovery, and creativity that will complete their holistic education to impact society at every level.

Strategic Priority 2: Elevate the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference

As a land-grant institution Virginia Tech has a responsibility not only to its students, but also the entire commonwealth. We take this responsibility to the next level through the Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) Difference. The institutional and individual commitment to Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, Virginia Tech will build and support communities of discovery where global citizens engage with different ideas, belief, perspectives, experiences, identities, backgrounds, and cultures (Virginia Tech, n.d., p 17) Civic learning and democratic engagement allow students to understand and challenge social, economic, environmental, and other societal issues impacting humanity. By teaching students various ways to participate in the democratic process and how to engage in civil discourse, we are developing active citizens who will work to create solutions for the public good.

Strategic Priority 3: Be a Destination for Talent

In Virginia Tech'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 (Virginia Tech, n.d., p 19). Sustainable change comes through developing solutions with a diverse group of people coming together to learn and challenge from one another. By hosting spaces for students to engage in deliberative dialogues, students will be able to widen their own perspectives to be a more inclusive environment

Division of Student Affairs Strategic Initiatives

In alignment with the university strategic plan, the Division of Student Affairs also implemented a strategic initiatives plan that is guided by the Aspirations for Student Learning (Student Affairs, 2019). The Aspirations for Student Learning (ASLs) are the learning goals for Student Affairs which are 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 (Kegan (1994) & Baxter Magolda (2001) as cited in (Student Affairs, 2019, p. 1)).

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 PROSIM (That I May Serve). This

civic action plan allows students to explore, practice, and live out these Aspirations through civic learning and democratic engagement.

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 (That I May Serve) as part of our land-grant mission. Leadership is not merely a title or position. It is a process of growth and development for the purposes of effecting positive change for individuals, communities, and society (Student Affairs, 2019, p. 3). This civic action plan is only successful with full engagement of students. Through the development of the Hokies Vote Ambassador program and the CVP/CEEP fellows students will be able to build their knowledge and skills to be leaders in their communities. Furthermore, all students engaging in civic learning and democratic engagement activities will grow their civic identity into a value that prepares them for lifelong voter engagement.

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. Virginia Tech 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 (Student Affairs, 2019, p. 6) 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.

One of the main ways that engagement is measured is through the National Study of Voting Learning and Engagement (NSLVE). Every two years, the university receives a report outlining the voter registration rates and voter turnout rates for students. These rates are then broken down by age and major. VT Engage is working with the university to release demographic information so the rates can be broken down by sex and race and ethnicity. Since HVC is a student program supported through VT Engage the events, initiatives and programs will be measured through the annual departmental assessment process and more information is provided in the reporting and evaluation sections.

Landscape

As an institution Virginia Tech participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. 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.

According to the 2020 NSLVE report, Virginia Tech had an overall voting rate of 73% whereas the average overall voting rate for all institutions was 66%. This was a 15.1% increase from 2016 for Virginia Tech. Student's utilized alternative voting methods such as early voting and absentee voting at higher rates than in 2016. There was a 19% increase in early voting and 20% increase in absentee voting since 2016 among Virginia Tech students. This jump in voting rates could be due to the high polarity of the 2020 election, but also to the increased accessibility of voting during the election. Virginia was one state that increased voter access by establishing drop off spots and removing the witness requirement for absentee ballots. Hokies Vote Caucus hopes to capitalize on the increased accessibility and awareness of elections to increase voter turnout during midterm elections, as in 2018, the voter turnout rate for Virginia Tech was 36.6%. Virginia has statewide elections every year that HVC wants to ensure we are also highlighting our local and statewide races too.

Table 1

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%	12.0%	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%

*Indicates a Presidential Election Year.

However, compared to other ACC universities, Virginia Tech's voting rate does not look very high above others in 2020. North Carolina State University had a voting rate of 80.8%. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had a voting rate of 82%. The University of Pittsburgh had a voting rate of 75.5%. Wake Forest had a voting rate of 78.2%. Virginia Tech can learn from these other universities. Thus, the Assistant Director of Outreach will connect with other CVP and CEEP fellows from each of these universities to get advice and collaborate. The AD-L&CE currently sits on the DemocrACCy Challenge working group which collaborates and builds knowledge across institutions in the ACC.

Civic learning and democratic engagement is included in many general education (Pathways) courses, but students are motivated to take "easy" classes which may or may not be centered on civic engagement. 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 civic engagement 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
VT Engage serves as the main department within student affairs and the co-curricular experience. In addition to advising HVC, VT Engage 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 the residential wellbeing (RWB) model to support students in having conversations across differences that will also contribute to civic learning and democratic engagement as a foundation. This partnership with the RWB model and VT Engage 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 civic engagement.

Since our NSLVE report does not currently 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.

Potential Challenges
        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. Additionally, student leadership and involvement numbers have decreased despite being

back in person for many campus activities. In order 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 VT Engage 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 civic engagement 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 large 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 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.

Internal and External Resources

Internal resources like Gobbler Connect (student organization platform) and Canvas (learning management system) can be utilized to promote voter registration and engagement. They are campus-wide online tools. Students are currently prompted once a semester to ask if they are registered to vote. If they would like to vote there is a link to the TurboVote website for them to get registered. All events are currently advertised through Canvas which is used daily by students to check grades and turn in assignments. This fall we will be sure that there is a banner for registering to vote at the beginning of each semester.

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. 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.

Goals

The long-term vision for the institution is to integrate civic engagement into the processes at the institution and instill it in the culture of students and faculty at Virginia Tech. To be active and informed, students should learn about self-understanding, power dynamics, social justice and inclusion, social responsibility, verbal communication, planning, others' circumstances, collaboration, systems thinking, and reflection application to become active and informed citizens. In addition, the Student Affairs' Aspirations of Student Learning include committing to unwavering curiosity, pursuing self-understanding and integrity, practicing civility, preparing for a life of courageous leadership, and embracing Ut Prosim as a way of life.

Over the next five years, the institution wants to achieve an 80% voting rate during presidential elections - this is 7% more than the 2020 voting rate of 73%. We realize that the remaining 27% of eligible voters may be harder to mobilize than the current voting population. In addition, Virginia Tech hopes to achieve a 50% voting rate during the midterm election years by 2026. Presidential elections have more recognition amongst the general public and therefore, are typically easier to gain enthusiasm of voters. This is evident in the current trends for Virginia Tech students and the US population widely.

Midterm elections on the other hand have a lack of knowledge or understanding of importance to voters. However, COVID-19 has thrust these elections more into the limelight and we are hoping that this is translating to our student population. As we continue to build programming on campus we are wanting to focus on state and local elections in order to build this awareness. To achieve this, there would need to be a 13.4% increase in the voting rate. From 2014 to 2016 there was a 24.6% increase in midterm voter turnout, so this goal is more than reasonable. In addition, Hokies Vote Caucus hopes to retain 10-15 yearly members to help facilitate civic engagement and the Democracy Working Group.

Over the next three years, Hokies Vote Caucus will collaborate with five student organizations for civic engagement events. In the first year of Hokies Vote Caucus (2021-2022), they collaborated with three student organizations - NAACP, Students for Racial Justice, and Students for Sustainable Practice. Over the next year, HVC will collaborate with five different student organizations. Hokies Vote Caucus will also work closely with Closing the Gap - a student organization that hosts dialogue across differences - to support them in their efforts. In addition, Hokies Vote Caucus hopes to propose a bill to the Undergraduate Student Senate to make Election Day a university holiday. Furthermore, a transition plan will need to be created in the next year for

Hokies Vote Caucus to ensure it remains a part of the institution after students graduate.

To make all these goals possible mass advertising resources are necessary. Utilizing Gobbler Connect 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 will go a long way. VT Engage has created a voting module for faculty to add to their courses, but more information about this resource's availability needs to give.

Strategy

Below are the activities planned for the fall of 2022 and their corresponding date and location, planners, target audience, and goals.

Activity	Date and Location	Planners	Target audience	Goals
VT Engage Welcome Week Documentary Screening: Youth V Gov	August 15th in Squires	VT Engage	New students	Build community amongst new students while showcasing young people being active citizens to fight for climate change against the US government.
VT Engage Welcome Week	August 19 at VT Engage House	VT Engage	New and current students	Introduce students to VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning and advertise available programs with an emphasis on Hokies Vote Caucus

GobblerFest Tabling	September 2nd at the Drillfield	VT Engage and Hokies Vote Caucus	Freshman, current students, and student organizations.	Conduct voter registration and education and recruit members for Hokies Vote Caucus. Interact and form relationships with student organizations in hopes of including them in civic engagement events.
HVC Interest Meetings	September 7th and 8th in-person and on Zoom	Hokies Vote Caucus	Students interested in civic engagement and attendees of the GobblerFest and Welcome Week Events.	Introduce people to Hokies Vote Caucus in a low-pressure social setting to hopefully recruit them as members.
Voter Registration Tabling	September 20th in-person location TBD	Hokies Vote caucus	Virginia Tech students	Register students to vote, help students check their registration and order absentee ballots, raise awareness of midterm elections and civic engagement events.
Access to Activism: Design and Accessibility	September 20th on Zoom	Hokies Vote Caucus Disability Alliance and	Architecture and engineering	Introduce people to the history of design and accessibility as

		Caucus College of Architecture Professor Sharone L Tomer	students and the disability community	well as how accessibility is a crucial consideration in design, architecture, and engineering.
Voter Registration Tabling	October 3-7 in-person location TBD	Hokies Vote Caucus	Virginia Tech students	Register students to vote, help students check their registration and order absentee ballots, raise awareness of midterm elections and civic engagement events. Emphasize registration deadline.
Anti-LGBTQ+ Laws Event	October 17th on Zoom	Hokies Vote Caucus LGBTQ+ Resource Center Hokie Pride Students for Cultivating Change	Virginia Tech students	Educate students about Anti-LGBTQ+ laws being passed and activism efforts.
Voter Engagement Tabling	October 28th in person location TBD	Hokies Vote Caucus	Virginia Tech students	Help students make a plan to vote, register for their absentee ballot, get good nonpartisan candidate information. Overall, raise more awareness about midterm

				elections.
Election Day Celebration: "Party at the Polls"	November 8th in-person at Squires	Hokies Vote Caucus USS	Virginia Tech voters	Create a fun atmosphere for students to hang out in after they vote on campus. There will be information about ongoing activism efforts and student organizations can table.
Food Drive	November 12-19 in-person drop off location TBD	Hokies Vote Caucus VT Engage Students for Cultivating Change	Virginia Tech students, faculty, and staff.	Raise awareness about the Market and obtain food items to donate to support students with food insecurity.
Hungry to Learn Screening	November 16th in-person Haymarket Theater	Hokies Vote Caucus VT Engage Kas Church	Virginia Tech and Blacksburg community	Educate attendees about the reality of food insecurity for college students.

To ensure that all students are reached - including underrepresented groups we will have ample outreach with academic advisors, Cultural and Community Centers, student organizations, and college newsletters to advertise the activities. There will also be advertising in areas on campus with high foot traffic. To ensure the correct information is being disseminated, a voter registration training session will be conducted by the Virginia Department of Elections answering questions specific to college students. The HVC will work with VT Engage to produce resources for student organizations and faculty/staff to use with their groups as well.

This will help spread awareness about midterm elections which have lower voter turnout than presidential elections. In addition, it will allow Hokies Vote Caucus and other individuals and student organizations to help guide students in registering for and completing absentee ballots which has been proven to be a

method that many students use. 59% of students voted by mail in the 2020 election, so educating students about alternative voting methods is important. We will utilize the momentum during National Voter Education Week to spread awareness about different voting methods. Furthermore, dialogue moderation training sessions are conducted for all Hokies Vote Caucus members. They are also required to attend three campus or community partner events to broaden their horizons and learn about other organizations on campus.

To make progress on the long-term goals members of Hokies Vote Caucus will meet with the institution's administration and student government. This includes USS, GPSS, Board of Visitors, and the Dean of Students. There will be a member of Hokies Vote Caucus in charge of setting up the meetings and the director will attend them to inform these people and departments about how they can serve the civic engagement mission of the university.

Ideally, we would see a bi-yearly message from the university to students. One message in the fall which encourages them to register to vote, make a plan to vote, and informs them of upcoming elections as well as where to obtain non-partisan information. The second message would be sent during the spring semester to inform students of upcoming primary elections as well as civic engagement/activism events they can be involved in. In addition, the university would award faculty and students a day off on Election Day. While this may not guarantee that students will vote, it sends a message to the student body that the university values their democratic engagement. Hokies Vote Caucus and the forming Civic Learning Democracy Initiative are both year-long programs that ensure civic education and engagement happen year-round and not just during the election season.

Reporting

Reporting will be primarily facilitated by VT Engage as the on campus department overseeing civic engagement initiatives. A survey will go out to student organizations who participate in the democracy working group to better understand their activities and goals as individual organizations. This information will be used internally with the working group, VT Engage, student affairs, and student engagement and campus life office. This action plan will be shared with the Vice President of Student Affairs and their leadership council including the Dean of Students Office. A short form of this report will be made available and hosted on the VT Engage website with contact information to gain the full plan. All members of the democracy working group will receive the report as well. The NSLVE data will be made publicly available on the VT Engage website as well. Furthermore a news story will be going out in the fall semester to further share this data. This plan will be used by the democracy working group to identify gaps in which they have the ability to close and maximize areas of interest. There is currently a google shared drive that members have access to this information as well as additional resources and templates.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an important component to ensure we are on track to meeting the short and long term goals stated above. Furthermore, by being able to demonstrate student participation and learning we will be able to increase institutional support and broaden the depth of the programs. Events and programs where VT Engage is the primary host will be included in the department's assessment and evaluation process. Measures will be developed to support VT Engage departmental goals including;

Goal 1: Enhance student development by fostering community engagement and leadership opportunities that deepen students' understanding of the public good.
Goal 2: Develop effective mechanisms to support community engagement at Virginia Tech
Goal 3: Develop partnerships that promote sustainable community development
Goal 4: Develop effective mechanisms to ensure equitable access to all VT Engage programs.

Individual program and event learning outcomes will be developed over the summer 2022 term by the AD-L&CE Each of the individual outcomes not only map back to VT Engage learning goals, but also to the Aspirations for Student Learning and divisional strategic initiatives. They will work with the Interim Director of VT Engage to develop the mechanisms for measurement that will likely include, survey distribution, interviews, focus groups, or registration information. The Division of Student Affairs assessment cycle will run from July 2022-June 2023. The HVC Student Director and the Graduate Assistant for Leadership and Civic Engagement will assist in supporting the implementation of the assessments and evaluations.

The results of the assessment and evaluations will be shared with divisional and university senior leadership. The Director for VT Engage may also use the results to communicate the work of VT Engage to current and potential donors with support of Student Affairs Advancement. The results will also be included in the end of year report for the Voter Friendly Campus designation. We will also use these results to inform programmatic and event changes. VT Engage staff and HVC students will also have the opportunity to develop conference proposals for professional development at various civic and higher education conferences.