

Campus Action Plan

VoteSC

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Action Plan creates a guide for VoteSC's future leadership to build upon. It adds clarity to the work that has been done and the work we'd love to see while establishing some tangible goals to make them happen. Most of the work outlines will occur on and around USC's campus, but we will make a point to incorporate various outside partners. This will include initiatives that work alongside other college organizations and national organizations. Our organization is finally off the ground and were entering a major election year so we want to make sure there is a strong plan in place so that our efforts are effective. In 2020 we'll also have major changes in our organization's leadership, so we want to consolidate our knowledge and plan of action to aid in a smooth transition.

LEADERSHIP

VoteSC along with the Center for the Political Future (Institute of Politics within the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences) are the main groups coordinating democratic engagement efforts at USC. VoteSC is made up of an executive board that includes: Co-Presidents, Directors of Internal Relations, Programming, Outreach, Marketing, Social Media, and a Senior Advisor. The responsibilities of each board member is outlined in our organization's constitution. In addition to our executive board we have general members who volunteer at our events. Currently, our executive board meets once a week and our general member meetings are held as needed. Additionally, we've made a point to be at any necessary partnership meetings on and around campus to strengthen relationships with our coalition members. We're in the process of establishing regular newsletter and email updates to share with our coalition members.

Coalition Members

Internal:

The Center for the Political Future
Political Student Assembly
Undergraduate Student Government
Student Assembly for Gender
Empowerment
Environmental Student Assembly
Black Student Assembly

Asian Pacific American Student Assembly
Latinx Student Assembly
Queer and Ally Student Assembly
International Student Assembly
Graduate Student Government
USC College Democrats
Trojan Advocates for Political Progress

USC GOP
Trojans for Liberty
Trojans for Israel
USC Hillel
Students for Justice in Palestine
Unruh Associates
Academic Culture Assembly
Phi Alpha Delta (Pre-Law Fraternity)
Society of Women in the Law

Residential Housing Association
USC Graduate School of Social Work
USC JEP (Joint Education Project)
Campus Activities (Gabe Valenzuela -
Houses USG))
USC Office of Civic Engagement
Price School of Public Policy (Dean
Knott)

External:

LA County Registrar (Jeff Klein and Dean Logan)
USC Office of Civic Engagement
CA Secretary of State's Office (Lizette Matta)
Young Invincibles
Democracy Works (Turbo Vote)
All In Challenge

COMMITMENT

The Center for the Political Future, one of our key partners, is the main department on campus focused on civic engagement. The center hosts events and conferences designed to create civil dialogue across partisan lines. It also helps connect students to scholarships and internships through public service and civic engagement. USC also has an office of Civic Engagement that we have developed a relationship with. They are a wonderful group and have been supportive of our work, but in the past they haven't done much in the space of voting. Much of their work is related to volunteering and supporting the community members, their business, and community organizations. We are currently working with them to expand our outreach into the community. Overall, our University's mission statement and core values documents acknowledge its role in the community, but there aren't many tangible efforts in the realm of civic and democratic engagement.

LANDSCAPE

In examining our analyze campus demographics data, the NSLVE report, and look to practices at our peer institutions. These include Stanford University, Baylor University, Duke University, University of Chicago, New York University, University of Pennsylvania,

Northwestern University, George Washington University. In examining this data we find that our university experiences some common trends.

Then for the most part, there is a limited presence of civic learning and democratic engagement in our curriculum. Most of these efforts are seen outside of the classroom. There are scholarships and internships through the CPF. Many of the political organizations on campus are a part of VoteSC's coalition and some of them have their own civic engagement efforts (i.e. Trojan Advocates for Political Progress - Phone Banking, Canvassing, rallies; College Dems - Invite local representatives to their weekly meetings, canvassing, rallies) At the same time there is overlapping participation in all of these organizations and many of the participants have a political, public service, or government related major (i.e. Political Science, International Relations, Philosophy, Politics, and Law, Public Policy, etc.)

The University hasn't been explicitly opposed to civic engagement efforts. The main barriers internally have been the changes made to the University's administration. In the past year we've appointed a new University President, Provost, and Vice President of Student Affairs. In addition to the main leadership, many campus departments have undergone internal leadership changes. Given that many of our key partners are getting familiar with their positions, adding additional work has been difficult. More recently some unforeseen incidents in the scope of student life have made outreach, particularly to Student Affairs, difficult, but gradual progress is being made. Additionally, initiatives within the colleges can often be siloed across university departments. In these cases one department's work has gone unseen by other related campus groups and departments, so we are being careful about our communication efforts to avoid this.

As far as external barriers, our main problem has been re-establishing a polling location on our campus. The recent shift to voting centers has been a challenge in terms of space and money. Our campus is limited on venue spaces that would be appropriate for housing a polling location. The one space we have has a limited availability and is costly. We are looking to get these fees waived/covered but we have been unsuccessful in meeting with the VP of Student Affairs who can help with this (see above).

Then our unique campus demographics have posed some challenges. In some cases we've made efforts to remedy them, but they should be reevaluated regularly. For one, we have a large percentage of international students that are ineligible to vote. For these students we have to regularly examine our efforts to ensure that we are inclusive. Additionally, around 40% of our students come from out-of-state and we have to be ready to accommodate each of their voting needs. This can include addressing barriers that aren't present for in-state voters (i.e. early deadlines, stamp needs, ballot notarization, etc.).

Note:

What resources are available to help the institution be successful?

- Money, personnel, professional schools, student organizations

What additional resources are needed to help the institution be successful?

- More buy in from campus administration, departments, and clubs

GOALS

As a nonpartisan student organization, VoteSC seeks to make voting more accessible to students by removing barriers and increasing the information available on voting, elections and civic engagement as well as to promote a campus culture of voter awareness, education, registration and turnout. Our mission is to increase voter turnout and campus civic engagement.

Continuous/Long Term Goals:

- We want students to know the importance of voting.
- We want students to be registered to vote, if eligible.
- We want students to make voting a priority, and cultivate a culture of voting on campus.
- We want to continue to develop ways to incorporate students who aren't eligible to vote
- We want to remedy any challenges students have for voting. (i.e. ballot notarization, stamps, general confusion around the process, etc.)
- We want our efforts to be inclusive of faculty, staff, and surrounding community members. (USC is one of the largest employers in Los Angeles and is located in an extremely diverse community, so it's important that we don't limit our outreach or

resources to just students. At the same time this is something that campus partners and local organizations can help with.)

- We want to raise our registration and Voting Rate
- We want to have voter registration institutionalized through orientation, class registration, housing, or some form of regular student life
- We want to expand our coalition to be more inclusive, especially of underrepresented communities

Short Term Goals:

- Get a vote center on campus
- Cement our partnership with Student Affairs
- Increase institutionalization through Welcome Week and Orientation Activities
- Expand our outreach to the graduate student population and Health Science Campus
- Strengthen our partnership with Athletics
- Expand our coalition to be more inclusive, especially of underrepresented communities
- Host "Voting 101" and other educational and engaging events to reduce voter apathy and resolve misconceptions and concerns about voting

These are the goals we specifically outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding we shared with our University President, Dr. Carol Folt in September and Jack Knott, Dean of the Price School of Public Policy. Dean Knott was the first campus administrator to support our early efforts in 2018 and Dr. Folt is a new supporter of our efforts.

Voter Registration

- Achieve 90% voter registration for eligible students and 90% turnout for all eligible students by Jan. 2021
- Create campus-wide voting initiative, comprised of various and diverse representatives, that expands a voting challenge to peer universities and supports community-based voter engagement outside of campus

Creating a Voting Coalition

- Expand campus voting coalition to encompass more student organizations and campus departments to solicit more feedback and to access more students
- Create Vote SC Advisory Board comprised of USC faculty and administrators to coordinate efforts and leverage connections and communication and to convene all the disparate USC schools

- Form partnership with USC Athletics to engage student athletes and incorporate voting into campus culture
- Work with USC administration to send out campus-wide email blasts, incorporating voting into courses and orientations, and otherwise institutionalize and expand voting efforts, such as through hosting our Turbovote link on the myUSC widget
- Establish a PAC 12 Voting Challenge that would encourage other schools within the PAC 12 Conference to increase their voter registration and civic engagement efforts, using the University of Michigan's Big 10 Challenge as a template
- Expand voting engagement to local community through working with community organizations and schools to provide educational materials and pre-register students to vote
- Work with Graduate Student Government and other partners to better reach graduate populations

Organizational Goals

- Expand social media presence and incorporate educational and motivational materials, such as voter testimonials and infographics
- Establish a culture of civic engagement among students, faculty, staff, and community members through integration into basic school/community functions
- Meet potential voters where they naturally congregate through year-round outreach at pre-existing events
- Become a consistent presence across prominent campus spaces

STRATEGY

Events and Activities in the Works:

- Voter Registration Drives (in Spring and Fall Semesters, and on both campuses)
- Polling Location on Campus
- Campus Wide Emails and VoteSC Newsletter
- Social Media Campaigns - i.e. Voting Deadlines, How to Register, What is the Census, etc.
- Weekly Tabling on Trousdale and Office Hours with VoteSC for students that have more questions about the voting process
- Classroom, Club Meeting, and Cultural Center visits and pitches
- Special Edition of the Daily Trojan - An insert in our campus newspaper with voting resources and FAQs
- Election Countdown on the Media Wall in Wallis Annenberg Hall (School of Communications and Journalism)
- Primary Watch Party with the Center for the Political Future
- Create a Voting Month template for RA's to use in campus dorms

- Partnership with Office of Civic Engagement to reach surrounding community
- Establishing a curriculum for JEP to share with local high schools to help them plan registration drives and start voting organizations on their campus

All of these projects will be planned and staffed by VoteSC's executive board and general members. Some projects will be collaborations with current or future partners. Our efforts are limited to those listed, but activities will be tracked in a separate spreadsheet.

REPORTING & EVALUATION

Most of our marketing and reporting will occur on social media and through our website. Currently we are sharing select NSLVE statistics through social media, but we hope to have that posted on the website soon. We also have data available from our partners at TurboVote, which will be shared throughout our social channels and newsletters to stakeholders as a motivator to continue the efforts to expand voting accessibility on campus periodically throughout the run-up to the 2020 election. We are establishing a newsletter strategy to keep in touch with our partners and coalition members, with several different newsletters targeting different groups in order to ensure we are reaching our audiences as best we can. One newsletter will be weekly, to share with general members and interested students opportunities to get involved with VoteSC. Another will be a bi-weekly newsletter to share with coalition members and a monthly newsletter to share with campus administrators and outside organizations to update them on our progress and encourage them to get involved with VoteSC.

Evaluation of our efforts will be carried out by a committee made up of involved stakeholders. The leadership of VoteSC will sit on the committee, alongside with representatives of campus partners such as the President's Office and the Center for the Political Future, and invites may be sent to other stakeholder partner off-campus. The purpose of this committee is to evaluate the progress on VoteSC's stated goals as outlined above, and to course correct as need may arise based on developments. The committee will review efforts after each election, and use these meetings to develop strategies to tackle voting on campus for the subsequent election. The information gathered will serve to

inform USC's decision-making needs on how to best aid students in voting on campus, and how to encourage a higher registration and turnout rate.

Some methods of data collection and metrics that VoteSC has used thus far include a Qualtrics survey distributed via departmental emails, TurboVote analytics, as well as the top-line data provided by the NSLV report. In the future, VoteSC aims to have more direct data, in order to best utilize and we are currently working on a partnership with several on-campus departments as well as potentially the Census in order to better source our data. Significantly, we aim to know for future election cycles why students are and are not voting, and what are the biggest barriers students are facing to voting on campus, as well as demographic data that can inform how we deploy our efforts to register students to vote.

As outlined in our goals, our performance indicators are mainly in the percentage increase in registered students and students turning out to vote. We have lofty goals in place, and are hoping that our concerted efforts will help us achieve them in the run-up to the 2020 election. Results will be available on our website, social media, and newsletter push.