

WAKE FOREST  
UNIVERSITY

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ACTION PLAN



CAMPUS  
DEMOCRACY  
CHALLENGE

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# OVERVIEW

## WAKE FOREST

Wake Forest University is a highly selective, private university in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Often described as a "collegiate university," Wake Forest combines a liberal arts core with innovative professional and graduate programs. The University embraces the teacher-scholar ideal, prizing personal interaction between students and faculty. It is a place where exceptional teaching, fundamental research and discovery, and the engagement of faculty and students in the classroom and the laboratory are paramount. The university motto, *pro humanitate*, inspires an institutional commitment to civic engagement and the development of the whole person – intellectual, moral, spiritual and physical. The Office of Civic and Community Engagement is the hub of community-based activity at Wake Forest University. In the spirit of *pro humanitate*, we engage community partners, faculty, staff, and students to create meaningful social change. The Office aims to leverage resources, build capacity, and incubate community initiatives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and beyond.

## DEACS DECIDE

Deacs Decide is a highly collaborative, campus-wide political engagement project with representation from student affairs, academic affairs, and students. Our aim for the 2020 presidential election is to build partnerships with surrounding institutions, promote early voting, establish the Deacs Decide Fellows Program for student engagement, develop informed voters, and increase voter turnout rates. Deacs Decide offers a variety of opportunities to create relationships across difference, examine issues critical to American elections, build competencies for engaged citizenship, and experience American democracy. Students lead deliberative dialogues, participate in "teach-in" sessions with faculty, and register others to vote.

# LEADERSHIP

## DEACS DECIDE STEERING COMMITTEE

Shannon Ashford, Associate Director,  
Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Jackson Blodgett, Student Government  
Representative, WFU 2020

Daniella Feijoo, Presidential Fellow, Office  
of Wellbeing

Marianne Magjuka, Assistant Dean and  
Executive Director, Office of Civic and  
Community Engagement

Deb Marke, Assistant Director  
Office of Civic and Community Engagement

Jonathan McElderry, Assistant Dean and  
Executive Director, Intercultural Center

D’Najah Thomas, Associate Director,  
Office of Residence Life and Housing

Sophia Pappalardo, Wake Forest  
University J.D. Candidate, 2020

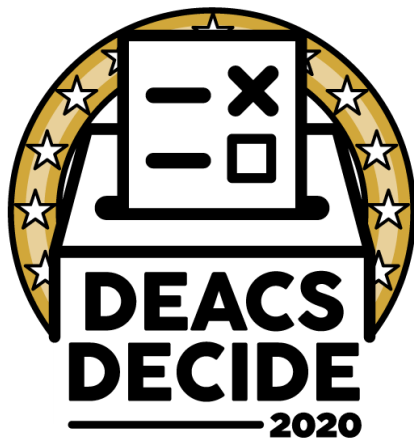
Penny Rue, Vice President, Campus Life

Dexter Sharp, Associate Director, Student  
Engagement

Tion Taylor, Assistant Director, Residence  
Life and Housing

Anne Winfrey, Student Government  
Representative, WFU 2020

**POTENTIAL COMMUNITY** Democracy NC  
**PARTNERS** Forsyth County Board of Elections  
League of Women Voters  
North Carolina Campus Compact  
North Carolina Center for Justice  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
You Can Vote North Carolina



## DEACS DECIDE 2020 FELLOWS

The Deacs Decide Fellowship provides students with the opportunity to directly engage with nonpartisan civic engagement and working on the ground. The Fellows will reach out to their peers; register students to vote; create and distribute educational materials (such as nonpartisan candidate guides); develop programming to help others navigate the ever changing voter laws; and organize and carry out Deacs Decide events. Assisted by a collaborative team of faculty, staff, and student volunteers, the Deacs Decide Fellows will bring their own passion and energy to have a powerful impact on nonpartisan electoral engagement. Applications have been received and will be reviewed, Fellows will be interviewed the first week of classes (Jan. 2020) and announced the following week. The Fellows will meet weekly during the Spring Semester.



# context

Wake Forest by the Numbers

**8,401**

**TOTAL ENROLLMENT**

*Wake Forest is a private, highly selective, four-year university in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In Fall 2018, the undergraduate enrollment was 5,225*

**20%**

**NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTS**

*Wake Forest is a national university, drawing undergraduates from the South (50.6%), Northeast (26.4%), Midwest (6.2%), and West (5.9%). About 10.8% come from other countries or territories.*

**73.2%**

**PERCENTAGE REGISTERED IN 2016**

*Voter registration is a strength of election engagement efforts at Wake Forest. During 2016 presidential election, 73.2% of students were registered to vote; however, only 41.1% of registered voters actually voted in 2016.*

**41.1%**

**2016 VOTING RATE**

*Only 41.1% of students voted in the 2016 presidential election. The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) reports a voting rate of 50.4% for all institutions in 2016.*



# goals

## Short Term Goals

- Build partnerships: with surrounding institutions such as Winston-Salem State University, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and Salem College to create college-led initiatives for community voter engagement.
- Promote early voting by identifying key neighborhoods to provide early voting shuttles for residents in Winston-Salem.
- Establish the Deacs Decide Fellows Program for students to lead voter education and engagement throughout campus and Winston-Salem.
- Create a comprehensive communications plan highlighting local voting information, creating voter guides and leveraging social media to develop informed voters.
- Educate students around the changes with Voter ID laws.
- Establish Wake Forest University as a polling location.
- Increase voter turnout rate by 10 points, from 32.5% to 42.5%.

## Long Term Goals

- Increase voter participation for eligible voters to over 60%.
- Identify opportunities to engage students who are not eligible to vote (undocumented and international students).
- Identify ways to support student's electoral engagement while studying abroad.
- Develop or identify ongoing opportunities for students to become engaged in other aspects of political engagement (lobbying, canvassing, campaign engagement)

# strategy

## Fall 2019

- Establish Deacs Decide Steering Committee.
- Identify successes of midterms and areas of opportunity.
- Launch Fellows Applications.
- Programming
  - A Conversation with Bill Kristol.
  - Deliberative Dialogue: A Broken Political System.

## Spring 2020

- Become a polling location.
  - Attend Forsyth County Board of Election Meetings.
  - Develop proposal and gain support from admin and SG.
  - Attend precinct meetings.
  - Make a proposal to the BoE.
- Development of online voting education resources.
- Tabling for on-campus registration.
- Leveraging social media for voting information and education.
- Programming
  - Deacs Decide 2020 Kick Off!
  - Candidate debates and debate watching parties.
  - Meet the (local) Candidates event.
  - Voter Registration Drive.



# strategy

## Fall 2020

- Tabling for on-campus registration.
- Community voter registration guide.
- Recruit poll monitors and poll monitor training.
- Work with local community organizations to coordinate getting community members registered to vote
- Work with local community organizations to organize.
- Coordinate with other colleges and universities to coordinate voter registration and develop a college coalition.
- Coordinating with faculty to develop syllabus toolkits.
- Coordinating on-campus educational programming to develop informed voters .
- Voter ID Voter Education Conversations around issues relevant to college students today