



**WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY**

**20
22**

**ALL IN
DEMOCRACY
CHALLENGE
ENGAGEMENT
PLAN**

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY'S
OFFICE OF CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



OVERVIEW

WAKE FOREST

Wake Forest University is a highly selective, private university in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Often referred to as “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. While electoral engagement is a cross-campus collaboration, the work is housed in the Office of Civic and Community Engagement.

The Office of Civic and Community Engagement (OCCE) 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. Due to the unique positionality of OCCE, the action plan can be implemented not only within the campus community but also in the broader Winston-Salem community.

The All in Democracy Challenge Action Plan has been developed by co-directors of Deacs Decide, Dr. Marianne Magjuka, assistant dean of students and executive director of the office of community and civic engagement, and Deb Marke, assistant director of advocacy and social justice education in the office of civic and community engagement. For the purposes of this action plan, we will use midterm (2018) to midterm (2022) data and goals.

DEACS DECIDE

Deacs Decide is a collaborative, campus-wide political and electoral engagement project comprised of a coalition with representation from students, student affairs, and academic affairs that will implement the 2022 action plan. The overarching goals are to increase voter registration and turnout in the 2022 midterm elections particularly in comparison to previous midterm elections, to provide clarity and information on the ever-changing sociopolitical landscape in North Carolina in relation to redistricting, empower peer to peer leadership and engagement through the Deacs Decide Fellows program and to develop an engaged and informed campus community, particularly in non-presidential election years. Deac Decide plans to offer a variety of opportunities to build relationships across differences, examine issues critical to American elections, build competencies for engaged citizenship, and experience American democracy. The groundwork for this plan began in the fall of 2021 and will continue until November 18, 2022. Moving into 2022 we anticipate continuing to provide in-person, virtual, and hybrid programming while remaining flexible as we continue to move through the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic.

LEADERSHIP

Erin Adamson
Interim Director, Women's Center

Josie Ansbacher
Deacs Decide Fellow Representative, Class of 2022

Savannah Baber
Program Coordinator, Intercultural Center

Ashley Hawkins Parham
Program Manager of Wellbeing, Office of Wellbeing

Kayla Lisenby-Denson
Associate Director, LGBTQ+ Center

Marianne Magjuka, Ph.D.
Deacs Decide Co-Chair
Assistant Dean of Students and Executive Director, Office of Civic & Community Engagement

Deb Marke
Deacs Decide Co-Chair
Assistant Director, Office of Civic & Community Engagement

Ann Phelps
Director of Programming, Leadership and Character

Drew Skilton
Student Government Representative, Class of 2023

Hu Womack
Instruction & Outreach Librarian, ZSR Library

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Forsyth County Board of Elections

League of Women Voters

MUSE Winston-Salem

North Carolina Campus Compact

You Can Vote North Carolina



THE STEERING COMMITTEE

In order to achieve 100% voter participation, everyone needs to take ownership of Deacs Decide. Folks who express interest in being a part of the committee are welcome to join the team. When they step off the committee for whatever reason- capacity, exiting the University, etc. - we request that they tap or recommend another individual. At all times, we have representatives from Campus Life, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Office of Civic & Community Engagement, and Academic Affairs. We request that the Student Government has representatives on Deacs Decide and let them go about doing that in the way that makes the most sense for them. In addition, the Deacs Decide Fellowship Program was launched in 2019 as a way to intentionally increase peer-to-peer mobilization, which asks students to apply to participate in Deacs Decide. A small panel of faculty, staff, and students interview and select a cohort of fellows. In this way, students are always at the center of Deacs Decide and lead the initiative in key areas: communication, registration and GOTV, programming, academic initiatives, and off-campus engagement.

DEACS DECIDE FELLOWS



The Deacs Decide Fellowship provides students with the opportunity to directly engage with nonpartisan civic engagement and work 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.

UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT

Through the 2020 election, commitment and support for democratic engagement increased in visibility from senior administration, student programming, and in the classroom. The President's Office sent out emails about the 2020 election and how students could go out to vote, the University social media shared all Deacs Decide information on voting, voter registration, and absentee ballots across platforms, and University Communications and External Relations was pivotal in developing a campus-wide social media plan on voting, highlighting the success of Deacs Decide, and creating videos and other promotional materials. Additionally securing a polling location was truly a campus-wide effort. Faculty utilized a module on voter registration and voting information in classrooms and there has been a significant increase in classes with a focus on civic and democratic engagement.

Wake Forest is currently in the midst of two transitions- welcoming university president Dr. Susan Wente in July of 2021 and will be welcoming Dr. Shea Kidd Brown, new Vice President for Campus Life on January 1, 2022, Deacs Decide looks forward to sharing the importance of democratic engagement and seeking a presidential commitment in the future. The Office of Civic & Community Engagement continues to commit professional staff time to support and engage Deacs Decide. Staff has also engaged with colleagues across the ACC in the DemocrACCy Challenge, discussing best practices, sharing ideas, and supporting the work of election engagement.



WAKE FOREST
UNIVERSITY



context

Wake Forest by the Numbers

8,618

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

Wake Forest is a private, highly selective, four-year university in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In Fall 2021, the undergraduate enrollment was 5441.

18%

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.

73.4%

PERCENTAGE REGISTERED IN 2018

Voter registration is a strength of election engagement efforts at Wake Forest. During 2018 midterm election, 73.4% of students were registered to vote; however, only 44.3% of registered voters actually voted in 2018.

32.5%

2016 VOTING RATE

Only 32.5% of students voted in the 2016 presidential election. The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) reports a voting rate of 39.1% for all institutions in 2018.

LANDSCAPE

Wake Forest Landscape

Wake Forest University is an inaugural participant in the National Study on Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), a study of voter engagement and turnout based at Tufts University. In 2020, the last Presidential election 91.5% of eligible students were registered to vote, and 85.6% of registered students voted, with an overall voting rate of 78.2% an increase of 30 points from the 2016 presidential election. Wake Forest joined universities across the country in the ALL IN Democracy Challenge and was awarded North Carolina Campus Voting Challenge Most Improved Voter Turnout Award for the State Challenges, DemocrACCy Most Improved Voter Turnout Award for the Athletic Challenges Awards, earned a Gold Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and designated a Voter Friendly Campus. The 2020 election was unprecedented in many ways, but the mobilization across campus contributed to this overwhelming success. Deacs Decide hopes to continue to carry this election into midterms which historically (on-campus and nationally) have less voter turnout.

North Carolina Landscape

North Carolina has been at the heart of gerrymandering cases. Wake Forest University and the surrounding community have been affected by gerrymandering, with the Reynolda campus being divided down the middle into two different precincts in 2019, making it crucial that students are updating their voter registration and staying abreast of changes to their polling locations. For this reason, Deacs Decide successfully convened a committee and established an early voting location on the Wake Forest University campus. The polling location was located within walking distance of campus and accessible not only to students, faculty, and staff, but to the surrounding community as well.

North Carolina has continued to go through a contentious redistricting process with the maps finalized and passed on November 4, 2021. Several organizations have gone on to sue the state over the maps that have been passed. In late December the NC Appellate courts paused candidate filings for state and federal elections and most recently have announced moving primaries from March to May while the case goes to trial. Additionally, the North Carolina legislature has proposed a slew of anti-voter legislation akin to those passed across the country that increases barriers to the ballot and rolls back voter's rights. All of which will have a disproportionate impact not only Black and brown North Carolinians.

In Winston-Salem/Forsyth County, about 24 percent of residents aged 18 to 24 voted in the 2018 midterm election, compared with 72 percent of residents aged 65 to 84. This gap in electoral participation is stark and must be addressed. In addition, White, non-Hispanic residents had higher participation rates in the 2018 election than African American or Latinx residents. About 53 percent of White residents voted in 2018, compared with 48 percent of African American and 18 percent of Latinx residents. Deacs Decide is committed to registration and GOTV efforts both on-campus and off-campus. Students designed several events to register community members, specifically in marginalized communities, and are investigating ways to provide transportation to the polls.

ACTION PLAN

**GOALS
2022**



Short Term Goals

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- By fall 2022, the institution will make a commitment to asking every first-year student to register to vote for upcoming elections during the first six weeks of the semester.
- The institution will make a commitment to increase voter registration and voter turnout by 30 points from the 2018 midterm election.
- The institution will make a dedicated commitment to increasing the number of minoritized student voter registration and turnout by 30 points from the 2018 midterm election.
- By fall 2022 secure a university presidential commitment.
- Create a comprehensive communications plan, including local voting information, voter guides, and social media campaigns to develop informed voters.
- Keep students, faculty, and staff abreast of changes to voting laws, polling locations, and voter identification requirements throughout the election cycle and beyond.
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Long Term Goals

- Increase voter participation for eligible voters to 100%. Identify opportunities to engage students who are not eligible to vote (undocumented and international students).
 - Secure funding (whether through a partnership with a civic organization or through grant opportunities) to provide a stipend for Deacs Decide Fellowship.
 - Secure funding to be a statewide host for an institute or leadership development opportunity to support underrepresented (LGBTQ+, religious minorities, people of color, women and other gender minorities, etc) running for office.
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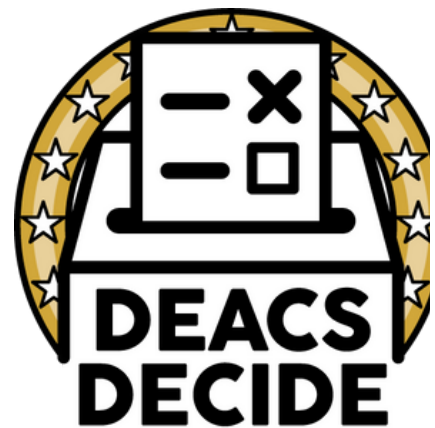
STRATEGY

Spring 2022

- Re-establish and re-engage Deacs Decide Steering Committee with representation from across campus by mid-March.
- Development of voter registration module with Z. Smith Reynolds Library Staff and encourage faculty to use the module in their spring classes
- Work with Director of Orientation to get voter education content featured in virtual orientation module
- Analyze NSLVE data, using data to inform Voter Friendly Campus plan for 2022 midterms.
- MLK Day Voter Registration Drive at annual MLK Day of Service event, hosted by Wake Forest University and Winston-Salem State University
- Recruit student volunteers to support voter registration events on campus
- Make presentations at chapter meetings and student organization meetings about voter registration
- Voter registration drives, training other students to lead voter registration.
- Begin to develop Voter Registration pack information to be distributed to residence halls
- Programming focused on redistricting and voting laws in NC with faculty and community partners (e.g., panel discussion with faculty and community leaders)
- Host deliberation on political polarization and ways to address dysfunction in government using the National Issues Forum issue guide, A House Divided.
- Promote early voting for the primary (voting day for the primaries falls during WFU finals)
- Dialogue & Deliberation Conversations with different student organizations

Summer 2022

- Host a Deacs Decide intern during the summer to prepare marketing materials, social media campaigns, and packets for orientation and Welcome Week
- Encourage Deacs Decide intern to reach out to community organizations and prepare for community voter registration drives



STRATEGY

Fall 2022

- Voter Registration modules shared with First Year Experience and First Year Seminar faculty
- Voter Registration Packet released for “room drop” in residence halls
- Welcome to the Forest Voter Registration Drive during Welcome Week
- National Voter Registration Day tabling and event on September 20, 2022.
- Partner with Student Government, Alpha Phi Omega (service fraternity), and other student organizations across campus to mobilize students to register.
- “Dorm storm” on-campus to go door-to-door with voter registration cards.
- Set up registration stations at high traffic areas across campus.
- Develop social media campaigns and include high-profile members of WFU and WS community.
- Vote Early Day
- Party at the polls with ballots and biscuits.
- Tabling for on-campus registration weekly throughout fall semester in the Benson University Center or in front of the Pit (dining hall).
- Work on distributing the voting guide.
- Recruit poll monitors for polling location and host training with Democracy NC.
- Work with local community organizations to coordinate getting community members registered to vote
- Work alongside Forsyth County Board of Elections for early polling location for the general election.
- Coordinate with faculty to develop syllabus toolkits. According the NSLVE data, target specific academic departments to see if we can work on campaigns and information relevant to the following areas:
 - Communications 23.8%
 - Computer and Information Sciences 21.5%
 - Liberal Arts/Humanities 27.6%
 - Philosophy
 - Mathematics & Stats 14.5%
 - Health and Exercise Sciences 23.4%
 - Physical Sciences 24.3%
 - Physics, chemistry, astronomy
 - Business, Marketing, Management 27.7%
 - English 28.1%
 - Social Sciences 23.7%
- Coordinate on-campus educational programming with academic departments to develop informed voters.
- Utilize data to develop programming relevant to college students.



Reporting

Through the pandemic, the Office of Civic and Community Engagement has worked diligently to re-vamp and strengthen our communications internally and externally by writing stories and press releases that are released to students, faculty, staff, community partners, and alumni through newsletters. We have also strengthened our relationship with the University's Communications and External Relations team. This partnership has been key in sharing information about our office initiatives, particularly with Deacs Decide. This relationship will be key in disseminating the plan across campus. The Action Plan and NSLVE are always linked on the OCCE website, shared on social media, and shared directly with Deacs Decide Fellows, the Deacs Decide leadership team, and various academic and campus departments.

The action plan is our driving force in executing and planning for the midterms. As we are planning programs, events, and building partners coming back to the goals set in this plan will be key in building a coalition that will assist with the heavy lift of increasing voting rates in the midterms.

Evaluation

Our evaluation and reporting strategy has a few key components:

- Qualitative interviews with Deacs Decide Fellows;
- Program evaluations following every program or event sponsored by Deacs Decide;
- Registration tracker in residential halls and on-campus following registration events;
- NSLVE data-informed campaigns to engage academic departments in Fall 2022

Using a rubric designed by the Office of Civic & Community Engagement, Deacs Decide Fellows will rate their own civic competencies at the beginning and end of the summer experience. Staff will engage fellows in qualitative interviews to better understand their learning and the impact of the fellowship. This information will inform future decisions about the fellowship program.

Beginning in Spring 2022, staff in the Office of Civic & Community Engagement will administer surveys following each program sponsored or co-sponsored by Deacs Decide. Survey questions will include demographic questions, feedback on the quality of the event, and questions about whether participants learned something new, heard a different perspective, and/or identified ways to engage politically. Staff and Deacs Decide Fellows will review this data and make changes to events and programs, as needed.



We will track voter registration numbers from on-campus drives in the Benson University Center and Pit (dining hall). After each weekly session, volunteers will add the number of registrations to the tracker in the Office of Civic & Community Engagement. In addition, Deacs Decide Fellows will engage Resident Assistant (RA) teams in each residence hall to provide a registration tracker in the halls. When students register to vote via dorm storm, those numbers will be updated in the halls on bulletin boards. Deacs Decide fellows will also reach out to the nonpartisan civic organizations like You Can Vote, which often register voters on campus, and ask for number totals to add to the tracker. In this way, Deacs Decide fellows will have a sense of voter registration numbers in the fall semester. We will do a check-in after orientation in August, after National Voter Registration Day, and after every two weeks of voter registration tables to gauge numbers and adjust location and strategy as needed.

Finally, we will use NSLVE data from 2016 and 2018 to identify the academic departments in which students have a lower voter turnout. We will approach faculty in these departments to develop targeted approaches to engage students in the department. For example, students in the social sciences (e.g. political science, anthropology, sociology) had a voting rate of 23.7 percent. Given the explicit curricular focus on understanding cultures, societies, and politics in these disciplines, this is a staggeringly low rate of voter turnout. We might decide to employ a social norming campaign with posters in the buildings where courses are taught, an accountability buddy system, and/or direct discussion in classes. These tailored approaches will be recorded and reviewed with 2022 NSLVE data.