Democratic Engagement Plan

2020 - 2021

Executive Summary

The Democratic Engagement Plan for East Carolina University (ECU) was written and developed by Tara Kermiet, Associate Director in the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) and Alex Dennis, Assistant Director in CLCE. The goals were developed using data from the 2012/2016 and 2014/2018 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) reports and from assessment results from previous democratic and voter engagement programming offered by our center. The goals and implementation strategies were discussed with members of the Democratic Engagement Coalition (see Overview & Leadership section) before being solidified in this plan. The plan was then reviewed by the Director of Intercultural Affairs and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Involvement & Leadership before being submitted.

This plan will guide the work that will be implemented at ECU by CLCE and other campus departments and units beginning fall 2020. When creating this plan, we wanted to focus on increasing the voting rate of our students by institutionalizing voter registration on campus in a variety of ways. We were very intentional with regard to the student demographic groups that we would like to target and for which to create additional programming due to their previous low voter turnout. We hope to accomplish our short- and long-term goals related to these issues, across both East and West campuses. This plan was developed in order to coordinate our efforts on campus and to ensure that we are using best practices and intentionality regarding our goals and strategies. The strategies outlined below for our short-term goals will be implemented immediately and throughout the next couple of years, while the strategies and initiatives outlined in our long-term goals will drive our work over the next five years. We expect to revisit this plan each summer to assess the current state of our efforts and to modify our goals accordingly.

Overview & Leadership

The primary responsibility of democratic engagement falls under the responsibilities of the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) within Student Involvement and Leadership (SIL) at East Carolina University (ECU). The Associate Director and Assistant Director for CLCE supervise and advise democratic engagement efforts across campus. The Assistant Director supervises two Andrew Goodman Foundation (AGF) Vote Everywhere Ambassadors, two Campus Vote Project (CVP) Democracy Fellows, and one Service and Leadership Assistant (SLA) for Citizen U.

Director, Intercultural Affairs (staff)	Dr. Dennis McCunney
Associate Director, CLCE (staff)	Tara Kermiet
Assistant Director, CLCE (staff)	Alex Dennis
AGF Vote Everywhere Ambassadors (students)	Amrina Rangar TBD
CVP Democracy Fellow (students)	El Perry Jordan Stallworth
SLA, Citizen U (student)	Seth Lemon

While CLCE is not solely responsible for hosting, promoting or implementing democratic engagement initiatives, this is the only entity on campus where democratic engagement is included within the mission and vision of the center. Other entities on campus working with legislative officials or promoting democratic engagement include Student Affairs, the Political Science Department, and Student Government Association.

Additionally, CLCE established the Democratic Engagement Coalition, building upon the work of the inaugural Voter Engagement Coalition which was organized for the 2016 general election. The purpose of the Democratic Engagement Coalition is to bring together faculty, staff, students and community members who are passionate about democratic and voter engagement work and to help advise and give direction for the work that needs to be done on our campus and within our community. The Democratic Engagement Coalition is tasked with developing new partnerships, brainstorming new programming, and covering all aspects of voter and democratic engagement work. The Democratic Engagement Coalition meets 3-4 times per year.

Assistant Director, CLCE	Alex Dennis (Chair)
Professor, School of Communication	Dr. John Howard
Associate Professor and Chair, Political Science Department	Dr. Alethia Cook
Leadership Studies Director & Professor, Political Science Department	Dr. Jonathan Morris
Executive Assistant, Central Reservations Office	Teresa Baro
Associate Director, Ledonia Wright Cultural Center	Shaun Simon
Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs	Dr. Erik Kneubuehl

Deputy Director, Pitt County Board of Elections	Tony McQueen
Public Safety Supervisor, ECU Police Department	Stephanie Carnevale
President, Student Government Association	Caleb Gass
AGF Vote Everywhere Ambassadors	Amrina Rangar TBD
CVP Democracy Fellow	El Perry Jordan Stallworth

Commitment

ECU's mission is to be a national model for student success, public service and regional transformation. As demonstrated by our motto, *Servire*, service is at the heart of the university. ECU is committed to inspiring our students to be engaged citizens and be a national model for developing the leadership of faculty, staff, and students through engaged research and service.

The fundamental purpose served in requiring students to take general education courses at ECU is to have students develop an understanding of aspects of the human condition that are not the primary focus of their major field of study. General education exposes students to the broad range of human knowledge, while enabling them to acquire key skills and to gain critical competencies that prepare them to understand societal problems and seek solutions. On that foundation, students then build expertise in one or more academic areas, developing the capacities to establish themselves in the work world and to contribute to society as engaged and well-informed citizens. This foundation and its integration with specialized learning in the students' majors enable them to live broadly informed, responsible, and meaningful lives; at the same time, this preparation is essential to good citizenship in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world.

The CLCE reports to the Division of Student Affairs at ECU. The Division of Student Affairs provides programs and services that optimize student learning and leadership, builds a safe supportive and welcoming campus community, fosters the emotional growth and personal development of students, and makes a positive contribution to the overall student experience. Directly tied to the strategic plan, by 2022 the Division of Student Affairs plans to fully develop and embed civic learning and democratic engagement on campus through a framework of programming and action that includes understanding of democratic values, capacities to engage diverse perspectives and people, and commitment to collective civic problem solving. Related to this strategic plan objective are the following unit actions:

1. Promote student civic learning and democratic action through focused engagement in 1) intergroup and deliberative dialogue, 2) service-learning, and 3) collective civic problem solving projects.

2. Enhance the Division's influence in the field of student affairs by supporting the development of staff to be leaders in student affairs and their respective functional areas with specific focus on addressing common problems, empowering people to act, strengthen communities, and generate new knowledge.

The mission of the CLCE is to provide opportunities for the campus community to learn, serve and lead with our community as active citizens and advocates for positive social change. Service, leadership and democratic engagement commitments range from one-time events to weekly, semester-long opportunities to intensive immersion experiences. All opportunities are designed with an educational focus to support students as they learn about themselves and their community, take action through leadership and civic engagement, and advocate for lasting positive social change.

Landscape

ECU participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). NSLVE began in 2013 and now provides federal voting rates for more than 1,000 colleges and universities and over 9 million students. NSLVE is a signature initiative for the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education (IDHE) at Tufts University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life. The mission of IDHE is to shift college and university priorities and culture to advance political learning, agency and equity.

The voter registration and voting rates in our report reflect the percentage of our students who were eligible to vote and who actually voted in the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, as well the 2014 and 2018 municipal elections. These results are based on enrollment records ECU submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse and publicly available voting files collected by Catalist. Institutional voting rates are also adjusted based on data submitted to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Race and ethnicity data was not submitted by ECU, therefore our NSLVE report does not include that information.

2012 & 2016 NSLVE Analysis

The 2016 ECU report includes our numbers from the 2012 election, which provides us with a basis of comparison. According to the report, we saw an increase in our total student enrollment, total number of eligible voters, number of students registered, and the number of students who voted. The voting rate of registered students increased by 1.4%, which is on pace with other institutions in the study. While the number of students who voted increased in the 2016 election, our overall voting rate remained constant at 46.2% and our voter registration rate dropped slightly from 71.9% to 70.2%. This slight dip could be attributed to the irregularity of the 2016 election, which was very negative and divisive. New voters, especially Gen Z, do not respond well to such negativity and divisiveness, which may have caused some to not participate at all in the election process.

One-stop voting (commonly known as "early voting") allows any registered voter to cast an absentee ballot in person on select days prior to Election Day and has been an important initiative

in North Carolina for several years. The number of our students who voted "early" increased by 3.6% between the 2012 and 2016 election. Early voting was definitely the most popular method of voting for our students, accounting for 58.9% of total votes. Absentee ballots were down by 3%, which could indicate that more of our students are now registered in Pitt County and voting early. This increase is also a good indicator that our initiative to encourage students to vote early is in fact working and our need for a polling place on our main campus is critical.

When accounting for age, our vote totals increased for every age group except one; 18-21 year old student voting rate dropped by 2.4% compared to the 2012 election. Age groups of 22-24 saw an increase of 2.9%, 25-29 saw an increase of 4.3%, 30-39 saw an increase of 3.4%, 40-49 saw an increase of 2.3% and 50+ saw an increase of 3.4%. Overall, young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 have the lowest voter turnout of any other age group, which will be a target group for our work for the 2018 midterm elections and beyond.

When accounting for gender, our vote totals dropped for men and women but there was definitely a larger drop for women than men. The voting rate for women decreased by 10.2% and for men it decreased by 6.5%. This is very interesting because one would assume that having a female presidential candidate on the ballot would increase female interest and participation but clearly the results show this did not occur at ECU. Female students will be a target group for our work for the 2018 midterm elections.

The NSLVE report breaks down student voting data by student's field of study, which showed that Library Science majors voted at the highest rates (75.8%), followed by History (57.1%), English (55.7%), and Education (51.8%). The STEM majors (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) had the lowest voting rates, all less than 50%. This corresponds with national trends, therefore STEM majors will be a target group for our work as well.

2014 & 2018 NSLVE Analysis

ECU's voting rate increased by 13.1%, from 16.6% in 2014 to 29.7% in 2018. This is 9.4% below the voting rate for all institutions and 11.1% below the voting rate for public research institutions. Our registration rate increased by 4.1%, from 68.7% in 2014 to 72.8% in 2018. The voting rate of registered students increased by 16.7%. This is a good indication that if a student is registered, they will be more likely to vote.

The number of our students who voted early increased by 17.9% between the 2014 and 2018 elections. This was the most popular method of voting in 2018, accounting for 48.1% of total votes. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who voted in-person or on election day declined by 18.4%.

When accounting for age, our vote totals increased for every age group between 2014 and 2018. Age groups of 25-29 saw the largest increase of 14.8% (23.1% to 37.9%), followed by 18-21 year olds with a 13.5% increase (7.3% to 20.9%), 22-24 saw an increase of 11.9% (13.8% to 25.7%),

30-39 saw an increase of 13% (37.4% to 50.4%), 40-49 saw an increase of 9.5% (51.1% to 60.6%), and 50+ saw an increase of 8.3% (62.1% to 70.4%). Overall, young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 have the lowest voter turnout of any other age group, which will continue to be a target group for our work moving forward.

The voting rate for women and men both saw an increase (13.5% increase for women; 12.4% for men).

Library Science majors continued to vote at the highest rates (61.1%), followed by Multi/Interdisciplinary STudies (43.9%), Liberal Arts/Sciences and Humanities (38.4%), Education (37.4%), and Foreign Languages, Literatures and Linguistics (35.3%). Parks, Recreation, Leisure and Fitness Studies voted at the lowest rates (17.3%), followed by Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Protective Services (19.3%), Family and Consumer/Human Sciences (21.3%), Physical Sciences (22.4%), and Psychology (24%).

Goals

ECU is currently prioritizing the work of democratic and voter engagement efforts on campus and has the support of upper administration and national partners such as the Andrew Goodman Foundation (AGF), the Campus Vote Project (CVP) and the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition (SLSV). Internal barriers for student voting include a current lack of institutionalized voter registration and general outreach and awareness on campus of the Pirates Vote initiative. External barriers for student voting include the current COVID-19 pandemic, continued advocacy for our One Stop Early Voting site on campus, and the current climate of divisiveness and distrust of democratic institutions. Internal and external barriers, along with the data gleaned from our NSLVE reports helped shape our goals and strategies outlined below.

Completed and/or Ongoing
1. Solidify an on-campus one-stop early voting location in the new student center for the 2020 election. (completed & ongoing)
2. Conduct eight voter registration drives per semester, equally distributed across East and West campus. (completed & ongoing)
3. Advocate for the inclusion of election dates and deadlines on the university calendar by 2020. (completed, implementation for fall 2020)
4. Develop a Democratic Engagement Coalition, composed of faculty, staff, students and community members, to advise and institutionalize democratic engagement efforts on campus. (completed)
5. Expand election shuttles to include one-stop early voting, in addition to Election Day. (completed)

Short-Term
1. Increase the voting rate to 50% between 2016-2020 for presidential elections. (in progress)

2. Increase the voting rate of students ages 18-21 to 40% between 2016-2020 for presidential elections. (in progress)
3. Collaborate with Student Activities & Organizations and Greek Life to facilitate at least one voter engagement workshop per year. (not started)
4. Increase awareness and branding of the Pirates Vote initiative on campus. (NEW - in progress)
5. Utilize social media to better share information regarding elections, voting, and DE events/programs. (NEW - not started)
6. Create a sub-committee within the DE Coalition to address the Ask Every Student initiative and find a way to institutionalize voter registration on campus. (NEW - not started)

Long-Term
1. Increase the student voting rate by 10 percentage points between 2016-2024 for both presidential and midterm election years. (in progress)
2. Add at least one civic education/democratic engagement learning outcome to the COAD 1000 curriculum by 2022. (in progress)
3. Institutionalize voter registration on campus by adding voter registration information into Pirate Port. (in progress)
4. Expand programming for STEM majors, females, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanic students. (not started)
5. Graduate 160 "Citizens" from Citizen U by 2022. (in progress)
6. Facilitate two faculty development workshops per year focused on incorporating civic learning and democratic engagement into their curriculum. (in progress)
7. Establish a liaison model for democratic engagement outreach to departments and divisions on campus. (not started)
8. Lobby for the inclusion of race and ethnicity data to the National Student Clearinghouse so that ECU's NSLVE report reflects these demographics by 2022. (not started)

Strategy

Ongoing Goal 1: Solidify an on-campus one-stop early voting location in the new student center for the 2020 election.
- Continue to attend Pitt County Board of Election (BOE) meetings.
- Coordinated a letter writing campaign in support of the new polling site.
- DE Team presented to BOE on April 23, 2019 regarding moving the One-Stop Early Voting location from the Willis Building to the Main Campus Student Center.
- Use NSLVE data and other means of assessment to provide a clear rationale for why it is important to have a polling location on the main campus.
- Coordinate with campus partners regarding logistics.
- Solidified Main Campus Student Center One-Stop Early Voting polling site for 2019 Municipal Election & 2020 Primary Election.
    - 775 total voters in 2019 Municipal Election (18.2% of Pitt County One-Stop voters)

- ○ 1,763 total voters in 2020 Primary Election (14.1% of Pitt County One-Stop voters); 70.6% of the 18-25 age group voted at the ECU site (the highest demographic turnout for the site)

Ongoing Goal 2: Conduct eight voter registration drives per semester, equally distributed across East and West Campus.
- Continue to work with the Central Reservations Office and the Democratic Engagement Team to brainstorm best locations and times with high student traffic.
- Create voter registration tabling kits that include voter technology (laptops & mobile printers) and ensure that team members and volunteers are properly trained regarding NC voter laws and basic customer service skills.
- Work with Student Affairs marketing to create a comprehensive marketing strategy to reach more students and to increase tabling productivity.
- Partner with campus departments and student organizations to incorporate voter registration at various campus events.

Short-Term Goal 1: Increase the voting rate to 50% between 2016-2020 for presidential elections.
Short-Term Goal 2: Increase the voting rate of students ages 18-21 to 40% between 2016-2020 for presidential elections.
- Coordinate with campus partners to institutionalize voter registration.
- Hold a minimum of eight voter registration drives per semester.
- Provide transportation to and from polling locations on election days and during One-Stop Early Voting (as needed).
- Educate students on issues related to voting via workshops and presentations.
- Continue to lobby the Pitt County Board of Elections for a polling location in the Main Campus Student Center..

Short-Term Goal 3: Collaborate with Student Activities & Organizations (SAO) and Greek Life to facilitate at least one voter engagement workshop per year.
- Develop the workshop materials and presentation.
- Coordinate with SAO and Greek Life to plan logistics and implementation.
- Present to leadership of recognized student organizations about voter engagement, encouraging them to schedule a presentation for their entire organization.

Short-Term Goal 4: Increase awareness and branding of the Pirates Vote initiative on campus. (NEW)
- Request that ECU Creative Services create an identifier for Pirates Vote that can be used on marketing materials.
- Utilize this new identifier for all related marketing materials, including a new table cloth and updated website.

Short-Term Goal 5: Utilize social media to better share information regarding elections, voting, and DE events/programs. (NEW)

- Utilize newly created Pirates Vote identifier in all social media posts regarding elections, voting and DE events/programs on the CLCE accounts of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
- Assign one member of the Pirates Vote team as the social media coordinator, tasked with these weekly posts.
- Due to COVID-19, the Pirates Vote team will create materials for distribution on social media, such as short videos and graphics explaining to students how they can register to vote, the methods of voting, and how to be an informed voter.

Short-Term Goal 6: Create a sub-committee within the DE Coalition to address the Ask Every Student initiative and find a way to institutionalize voter registration on campus. (NEW)
- Meet with the Ask Every Student coach that is assigned to our campus to begin to discuss the obstacle of institutionalizing voter registration on our campus.
- Select a few members of the DE Coalition, a representative of the First Year Transitions office, and a representative of Campus Living to convene a sub-committee tasked with finding a solution to institutionalizing voter registration on campus.
- Brainstorm list of existing systemic processes that occur on campus that could be an entry point for voter registration.

Long-Term Goal 1: Increase the student voting rate by 10 percentage points between 2016-2024 for both presidential and midterm election years.
- See strategies for Short Term Goal 1 (above)

Long-Term Goal 2: Add at least one civic education/democratic engagement learning outcome to the COAD 1000 curriculum by 2022.
- Added a section of the COAD 1000 textbook that covers voter and democratic engagement information.
- Created a democratic engagement lesson plan for COAD 1000 instructors.
- Research first-year seminar curricula of peer institutions to gain a better understanding of what should be included with regard to civic education and democratic engagement.
- Meet with the First Year Programs office, COAD 1000 instructors and the university curriculum committee to advocate for this addition and to understand the process for revising the curriculum.
- Develop the learning outcomes and write the chapter that will be added to the COAD 1000 textbook.

Long-Term Goal 3: Institutionalize voter registration on campus by adding voter registration information into Pirate Port.
- Addition of an online platform for voter registration on Pirate Port, either utilizing the AGF platform or Turbo Vote through the new Engage platform.
- Meet with the Pitt County Board of Elections, the Registrar's Office and Information Technology and Computing Services to decide on what information should be included on Pirate Port and how it can be technically implemented.
- Create a course module in Canvas that includes information about voting and the election.

*Long-Term Goal 4: Expand programming for STEM majors, females, African-Americans,
Asian-Americans, and Hispanic students.*

- Continue to update existing programs such as the Dinner & Dialogue discussion series and Trending Topics film series to include curriculum and issues that are important to these groups of students.
- Create an outreach presentation that can be used to educate faculty about the importance of including civic education in their class curriculum.
- Organize focus groups comprised of students from these target populations to develop new strategies for encouraging their peers to become engaged in our democratic process.
- Utilize Engage to contact student organizations (from the target populations) and offer to attend their next meeting to share voter registration and democratic engagement information with their members.
- Partner with campus units such as Greek Life and Intercultural Affairs to market and implement new programming.

Long-Term Goal 5: Graduate 160 "Citizens" from Citizen U by 2022.

- Increase marketing and/or outreach on campus so that the program becomes more visible.
- Expand program to include early college high school cohort.
- Review assessment data and feedback session data in order to update curriculum so that the program stays relevant and interesting.
- Explore ways to incentivize completion of the program.
- Explore future sponsorship opportunities to enhance the program budget.
- Offer a travel opportunity to Washington, DC bi-annually for Citizen U alumni or a possible Alternative Break Experience (ABE) that includes civic and democratic engagement opportunities.

Long-Term Goal 6: Facilitate two faculty development workshops per year focused on incorporating civic learning and democratic engagement into their curriculum.

- Develop the workshop curriculum (outcomes/objectives) in consultation with the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition (SLSV), NC Campus Compact, Department of Political Science, Office for Faculty Excellence and the Democratic Engagement Coalition.
- Work with Student Affairs marketing to create a marketing strategy to effectively promote the workshop to faculty.
- Enlist the support and assistance of the university curriculum committee and the Office of Faculty Excellence to create a comprehensive list of courses that include democratic engagement themes.
- Explore ways to incentivise the inclusion of civic learning and democratic engagement in the classroom, such as mini-grants to faculty from CLCE.

Long-Term Goal 7: Establish a liaison model for democratic engagement outreach to departments and divisions on campus.

- Develop a list of departments and divisions on campus that should be assigned a Democratic Engagement liaison.
- Create a guide for the liaison model (expectations, goals, etc.) with the assistance of the Democratic Engagement Coalition.
- Create the structure for the liaison model, assign members of the Pirates Vote Team and train them on their role as liaisons.

Long-Term Goal 8: Lobby for the inclusion of race and ethnicity data to the National Student Clearinghouse so that ECU's NSLVE report reflects these demographics by 2022.
- Contact universities and colleges that include this data and inquire as to how having this data has impacted their NSLVE reports and democratic engagement plans.
- Develop a rationale for why race and ethnicity should be included in the NSLVE report for ECU and how this information could be utilized to improve our institution's voting rate.
- Meet with Student Affairs administration, Student Affairs Assessment and the Registrar's Office to share our rationale and develop a timeline for the inclusion of race and ethnicity data to the National Clearinghouse and NSLVE reports.

These efforts will require collaboration with the following campus departments and units: Office of Student Transitions, the Division of Student Affairs, CLCE Pirates Vote Team and the Democratic Engagement Coalition, Intercultural Affairs, Information Technology & Computer Services (ITCS), the Registrar's Office, Campus Living and Dining, and the Department of Political Science. In addition we will need to continue to work closely with the Pitt County Board of Elections and our national partners, the Andrew Goodman Foundation, Campus Vote Project, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, and Campus Compact.

Reporting

This plan will be shared with the CLCE staff, members of the Democratic Engagement Coalition, [posted on the website of the CLCE](#), and incorporated into reports to upper administration, including the Student Affairs Leadership Team and Student Affairs Executive Council. Additionally, we intend to share highlights from this plan with key stakeholders through presentations. We will also share the NSLVE report on the CLCE website. Where applicable, we will share updates and information through social media channels and official university news outlets.

This plan will be shared as needed with external organizations such as the ALL IN Challenge, Campus Vote Project, Andrew Goodman Foundation, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, and Campus Compact.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be critical in knowing if our democratic engagement efforts are effective in increasing student participation in the areas of voter registration, education, and participation. It will also aid us in knowing whether or not we are achieving our short-term and long-term goals. Additionally, we would like the evaluation to give us information that will help us continue to

improve student democratic engagement, build stronger coordination for democratic engagement efforts, and to better advocate for institutionalizing democratic engagement work on our campus.

The CLCE will lead the evaluation process, building on the foundation that has already been set. We will continue to track attendance at events/programs, assess outcomes using event/program evaluations, and work with NSLVE and our local board of elections to obtain data for comparison to previous years. We intend to gather information throughout the process, and make adjustments to programming and outreach based on the data. We will also do an overall evaluation with all data once we receive our 2020 NSLVE report to assess our success in meeting the goals we have set out in this plan. We will share the information gathered through key stakeholders, members of the Democratic Engagement Coalition, reports to upper administration, and social media and university news outlets as appropriate.

Questions about this plan should be addressed to:

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