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Center for Leadership and Service

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

A VISION FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT UALBANY

PRESENTED BY: CHERYL SIMMONS
UALBANY VOTES COMMITTEE CHAIR
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY- CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Voting is an important part of being a US citizen. Elected officials make important decisions that directly affect our lives. Voting is our chance to choose the decision makers and tell them what we want.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Leadership as Service has a mission is to create an inclusive and respectful environment that challenges students to become positive agents of social change whereby students are empowered to lead and follow as example, engaged in the community, and recognized as world class leaders. To achieve our vision of inspiring students to serve our communities through leadership, we look to create a new campus culture that will increase voter education, registration, and turnout while expanding the reach our civic engagement.

In previous years different departments and offices within the UAlbany community have had great results in increasing civic engagement with in their units, but reaching beyond the students that typically use their services has been low. This action plan will help us create a complete and collaborative culture around civic engagement on and off campus beginning in February of 2018 and running through to the end of the year.

UALBANY VOTES COMMITTEE

Member	Department
Cheryl Simmons	Center for Leadership and Service
Beth Conrad	Center for Leadership and Service
Martha Asselin	Center for Leadership and Service
Jameelee Ford	Residential Life
Sheri Stevens	Community and Public Services
Maritza Martinez	Educational Opportunity Program
Luke Rumsey	Neighborhood Life
Zakhar Berkovich	Undergraduate Student Services _ Rockefeller College
Mary McCarthy	School of Social Welfare
Kaylynn Enright	Student Association Civic Engagement Division
Anna Agnes	College Republicans Student Group
Jill Reid	Marketing and Communications
Emily Matott	College Democrats

LEADERSHIP

The role of the UAlbany Votes Committee is to identify areas of improvement for the civic engagement work already being done on campus and come up with innovative and inclusive ideas that we can implement throughout the year that will create a culture for civic engagement through the entire campus. This committee includes relevant stake holders from all corners of the university and strategically selected individuals from the student groups and offices that have committed to increasing civic engagement as proven by the 2017 UAlbany votes' campaign. The specific responsibilities of this committee is to continue collaboration while widening the vision and reach of campus wide civic engagement efforts by using the skills, connections and experience to make these plans a reality. We will commit to meeting once a month to be sure the messages, branding and intent is the same and to keep each other accountable for our duties as it pertains to the action plan.

COMMITMENT

The University at Albany's strategic planning process will align strategic imperatives the campus collectively identified during the 2016-17 academic year with the work of our forthcoming comprehensive fundraising campaign, the University's branding initiative, and key institutional priorities.

Across the strategic planning process, several key institutional pillars have emerged:

- Student Success
- Research Excellence
- Diversity and inclusion
- Globalization
- **Public engagement and community outreach**

President Rodríguez has asked Provost James Stellar and Vice President for Student Affairs Michael Christakis to lead our strategic planning efforts through an expanded [strategic planning committee](#). It is critical that the further development of the strategic plan be inclusive of thoughts, ideas, and perspectives that fully represent the campus community and key stakeholders in order to drive the University forward as an actively engaged, innovative, and dynamic institution of higher education. This plan will be called into action beginning April 2018 inclusive of all campus departments, offices, groups and external stakeholders.

The strategic plans mission is to generate knowledge, serve as an engine of opportunity and cultivate inclusive excellence and global competence for **the betterment of the Capital Region, New York State, the nation and subsequently the world**. The vision is to be the national model for a diverse public research universities driven by a unique constellation of academic and research assets that addresses society's most critical challenges.

The strategic plans insists as it pertains to public engagements and community outreach that we must increase our effectiveness as an indispensable partner and anchor institution for our region, ensuring our work reflects the needs of the community. We will do this by establishing UAlbany as a national model among publicly engaged urban research universities; **cultivating a campus culture that embraces public engagement and community outreach**; and creating a high impact, publicly engaged research cluster designed to address specific societal challenges.

LANDSCAPE

Civic learning and democratic engagement are overall campus learning outcomes.

CURRICULUM, PROGRAMMING AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Civic learning and democratic engagement is present in many aspects of the curriculum and programming on the Ualbany campus. Examples include but are not limited to:

The Center for Leadership and Service, create an inclusive and respectful environment that challenges students to become positive agents of social change, whereby students are empowered to lead and follow as example, engaged in the community and recognized as world class leaders.

Learn to lead. Be a leader. Serve through leadership.

We are the office that has been charged with creating a hub for voter education, registration and engagement on our large campus while collaborating with all offices to create a civically engaged campus culture. We participate in Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day and other national engagement initiatives. We are currently part of The National Study for Learning, Voting and Engagement, All in Democracy Challenge and the NASPA Lead Initiative on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement.

The Department of Educational Theory and Practice- Dr. Levy is an assistant professor of Educational Theory and Practice. His research explores how educational programs can support civic and political engagement among youth and how such engagement can in turn foster academic and life skills. His dissertation, which explored adolescents' political efficacy and engagement during a Model United Nations program, won the 2012 Exemplary Dissertation Award from the National Council for the Social Studies, and he is currently conducting studies exploring students' experiences in discussion-based government courses at several high schools.

The Community and Public Service Program (CPSP) provides students with opportunities to engage with public, non-profit, and campus organizations in exchange for elective credits. Settings include healthcare, education, criminal justice, social services, state government, and social action, to name a few. With more than 400 organizations to choose from, CPSP, administered by the School of Social Welfare, offers a wide range of opportunities for students from all majors to serve in the community. The CPSP service learning experience positively influences the capacities of public and non-profit organizations in the Capital Region while students develop or strengthen their individual commitments to community service and civic engagement. In addition, CPSP courses help students integrate their service experience with future academic and career goals.

The School of Social Welfare. In keeping with social work's historic and enduring commitments, the mission of the School of Social Welfare at the University at Albany is to further social and economic justice and to serve people who are vulnerable, marginalized, or oppressed. This mission is implemented through education, knowledge development, and service that promotes leadership for evidence-based social work with a global perspective.

The Department of Political Science provides students with an opportunity to explore political institutions and processes at the local, state, national, and global levels. With a faculty of 25 innovative and accomplished scholars, the Department offers a comprehensive curriculum covering the fields of American politics, international relations, comparative politics, public law, political theory, and public policy. Our diverse course offerings and committed faculty provide undergraduate and graduate students with a unique opportunity to develop the critical thinking and communication skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century.

The Department of Public Administration and Policy provides graduate and undergraduate students the skills and insights necessary to participate in the management of public and nonprofit organizations and the creation of public policy. Our curriculum offers more than 30 areas of specialization, including IT/e-government, homeland security, financial market regulation, non-profit management, local government management, public finance, and health policy. The diversity of our offerings reflects the diversity of our faculty: 24 experts drawn from seven fields, plus a set of master practitioners who bring their wealth of experience to the classroom.

The Office for Public Engagements mission is to support the University's capacity to do public good, locally and globally, through the advancement of research, teaching and community engagement initiatives that address societal issues.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) encourages all students to register to vote in local, state and national elections. DRC is an approved National Voter Registration Act location and can provide you with NYS voter registration forms and assistance in completing and submitting them.

The Educational Opportunity Program requires that all student enrolled in there program register to complete a voter registration form and the EOP Office goes over them to be sure they are completed correctly and will even hold on to a registration form until an underage student is eligible to register.

The Student Association has a division dedicated to civic engagement and they work closely with the Center for leadership and service to put out programing and tabling efforts to increase voter registration.

Additionally many of our student groups, Greek life and co-curricular offices provide civic engagement opportunities, programing and educations.

POLITICAL CLIMATE BASED ON DATA

As a participant in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSOLVE) we are privy to data that allows us to learn our student requisition and voting rates. From this information we are better able to more broad sense of the campus climate as it relates to all students in attendance rather than all students that live and choose to vote with their on campus addresses.

According to the NSOLVE 2012 & 2016 Campus Report (Presidential Elections) in 2016 we had 15,547 students enrolled and eligible to vote. Of those eligible we had only 34% registered to vote. Of those registered to vote only 52.9% actually voted, bringing our total campus voting rate down to 39.1%. This number is quite shocking for a campus that seems progressive in civic engagement but compared to the average for all participating institutions (50.4%) we are only about 10% off.

The study found that most of our students that vote are graduate students and with age both the voter registration and voting rates increase. Additionally part-time students have higher voting rates than full time students. Perhaps the part-time students are living and working in the community, therefore feel more included to practice their civic duty. Women also have higher voting rates than men registered.

Many of the student who voted are coming from the following fields of study:

Education

Public Administration and Social Service Professions

Health Professions

History

CAMPUS CLIMATE

All things above considered we as a university are working toward becoming amore civically engaged campus, however there are a few internal and external barriers that prevents the institution from being successful. Civic education and engagement is in fact happening all over our campus but only in certain pockets and often without collaboration. In addition to that the voter registration process for NYS residents is more complex than any other state. Most of our students are full time and not from the local areas. With that it is difficult to get them engaged in local elections that effect the communities surrounding campus but it's also difficult to engage them in local elections in their home towns due to the distance and nuances of voting from afar.

The institution has many resources available to help up be successful in the next year including but not limited to our connections with the Board of Elections, our constituents through government relations and some funding for programming through Students Affairs and Student Administration. Additional resources we could use to be more successful would be more student ambassadors to help us create a new nonpartisan culture around civic engagement.

GOALS

LONG TERM

- Incorporate civic education and democratic engagement into the general education curriculum by 2020
- Surpass the voting rate national average by 10% by 2020
- Move to half day of classes on Election days so the entire campus can participate in the Parade to the Polls.
- Create a political Scholar Series that occurs annually
- Have voter registration information submitted to student with acceptance package.

SHORT TERM

- Add a voter registration option to the site where student must go to register for classes.
- Add a voter registration notice during housing signups
- Add voter registration as part of the move in process
- Add voter registration as part of the student ID card process.
- Obtain Voter Friendly Campus designation
- Register 75% of incoming students to vote during orientation
- Have SA President send out an email to all students charging them with registering to vote
- Have President Rodriguez deliver a call to action as far as voter education, registration and engagement is concerned.
- Utilize Luke in Neighborhood life to access and inform students that live in the off campus college communities. Connections are made every 2 weeks and reach at least 1,000 students
- A Call to action during major campus events- Freshman Convocation, First home athletic games, Homecoming...etc.
- Host Civic engagement informational awareness events.
- Include Voter registration as part of orientation
- UAlbany Votes table at Danetopia
- Partner with the Andrew Goodman Foundation on funding and training for student ambassadors.
- Introduction events that introduce students to candidates in our local community
- Include a civic engagement session in RA training that emphasizes the correct way to complete a voter registration form and information on why it is so important for all students to vote.
- Table during prime times in the dining halls and campus center
- Monopolize UAlbany Alum pillars to highlight currently elected officials for one semester and invite those individuals to campus to speak about the work that they do.
- Promote elect Her, to encourage women to run for office
- Identify which major areas are our students looking to vote in and bring in those local elected officials for similar programing
- Utilize our most popular leaders on campus to promote civic engagement.
- Info blasting on TV's and Poster in high traffic zones on campus
- Utilize the CAPS Awareness strategies for reverse campaigning
- Survey to find out why students are or aren't voting and why, and potentially what questions do they have about the process.
- Video and Social Media Campaign leading up to election day
- 2nd annual voter registration campaign
- Treat Student Association elections the same way we would Election Day as a way to get student civically engaged with elections that directly impact their campus life.

- Swag! We intend to brand UAlbany votes in the form of attire, gifts poster and education formats so it clear that we are all on the same page and the university is committed to spreading the same message in order to create a civically healthy campus climate.

STRATEGY

FEBRUARY

- Promote Elect Her Conference

MARCH

- Work on branding of the UAlbany Votes initiative
- Work on developing the applications or widgets to allow seamless voter registration through housing sign ups, class registration, etc.
- Work on partnership with the Andrew Goodman Foundation.
- Complete application for National Voter Friendly Campus Designation
- Get students excited and informed about the Student Association General Elections, the individuals running and what that means from the University.
- Voter Registration tabling during prime times in the dining halls and campus center
- Work on monopolizing the UAlbany Alum pillars to display Student Association elections for Spring and our local Election positions for Fall

APRIL

- Install new developments and applications on websites for housing signups
- Table at "The Big Event" A Great Day of Service"
- Create a more detailed Civic Engagement Website
- Survey students to find out why they do or do not vote, what is stopping them from voting or registering them to vote. What questions do they have that can be addressed now or in the future? Footage can be used for the digital media portion of the fall campaign
- Plan a "Parade to the Polls" pilot event

MAY

- Prepare and plan civic engagement awareness events for fall
- Identify which areas our students are primarily coming from outside of our local community and contact the locally elected officials in those areas to speak to students about what they do and plan to do for their communities.

JUNE

- Implement Voter Registration during Orientation
- Implement Voter registration during the ID card process
- Implement Voter Registration during sign up for classes
- Plan to 2018 Voter Registration Campaign
- Connect with CAPS to come up with a Reverse Campaign poster series
- Implement branding of UAlbany votes on swag apparel and poster

JULY

- Implement Voter Registration during Orientation
- Implement Voter registration during the ID card process
- Implement Voter Registration during sign up for classes
- Purchase swag and apparel items to give out to registered students during opening weekend activities.

AUGUST

- Implement Voter Registration during Orientation
- Implement Voter registration during the ID card process
- Implement Voter Registration during sign up for classes
- Voter Registration tabling during prime times in the dining halls and campus center
- Civic Engagement session as part of RA Training
- Utilize Voter Registration as part of the move in process
- Call to action by University President all major opening weekend event like Freshman Convocation, and the candle lighting ceremony
- Voter registration Tabling at Danetopia
- Begin the 2018 Voter Registration Campaign

SEPTEMBER

- Get students excited and informed about the Student Association General Elections, the individuals running and what that means from the University.
- Host Student Association introduction events so the student body will get to meet and understand better what their elected officials do.
- Call to Action by Student Association President Campus wide and in person at the first home athletics game.
- Host Civic Engagement awareness Events
- Voter Registration tabling during prime times in the dining halls and campus center
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OCTOBER

- Host an introduction events that bring local elected officials on campus where students can meet with them and discover what they do and how it effects the local community and in turn the campus community.
- Voter Registration tabling during prime times in the dining halls and campus center
- After Registration Campaign ends, begin social media and digital campaign leading up and advertising Election Day and the importance of voting.
- Advertise the Parade to the Polls pilot event

NOVEMBER

- Voter Registration tabling during prime times in the dining halls and campus center

- Have a Parade to the Polls event on Election Day!

DECEMBER

- Report on the findings of the 2018 Civic Engagement Action Plan
- Evaluate this year's efforts and determine what worked, what didn't and where we can improve/evolve
- Create a new Action plan for 2019

REPORTING & EVALUATION

REPORTING

This Action plan will be shared internally with the individuals in the committee and with any other internal constituents upon request. The plan will be shared externally with the All in Democracy Challenge and the Campus Vote Project. At this time there is no plan to go public with the Action plan however the data used to inform the plan will be shared as part of our video, social media, and awareness campaigns.

EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is to confirm what our successes and fails were for the duration of the action plan timeline. We want to show a clear increase in voter education, registration and engagement on our campus comparative to the 2016 and 2017. The Center for leadership and Service will carry out the evaluation in December of 2018 and will share the results with the committee and potentially the campus community in January of 2019 at the start of the semester. We have not yet determined how the information will be shared to both the committee and the campus at large but we intended to announce with bells and whistles our successes from 2018.

In order to efficiently evaluate our action plan we need to collect all data possible from any programming, registrations and events that we offer. This means having students swipe into invents so we have their UAlbany specific information. Having all students register, reregister and update information on Turbo Vote which will also track their student information. We must calculate the attendance at all civic engagement events and programs. We will have already expressed what our goal reach is and report to how many students we have actually reached. Once we have the NSOLVE data for 2018 we can thoroughly evaluate the extent of our reach as it pertains to student voting.

ACTION PLAN SIGN-OFF

The undersigned accept this Action Plan as described herein.

Print First and Last Name	Title	Signature	Date
Print First and Last Name	Title	Signature	Date
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Print First and Last Name	Title	Signature	Date
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Print First and Last Name	Title	Signature	Date
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Partner (Printed Name)	Partner (Signature)		Date
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Partner (Printed Name)	Partner (Signature)		Date
Print First and Last Name	Title	Signature	Date
Print First and Last Name	Title	Signature	Date
Partner (Printed Name)	Partner (Signature)		Date

Note: Additional signatures might be required if the document changes significantly per the committees request.