

# Cultivating Engaged Citizens & Thriving Communities

at Washington University in St. Louis

Spring 2018 - Fall 2019 Democratic Engagement Action Plan



Washington University in St. Louis

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GEPHARDT INSTITUTE FOR  
CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# Overview of the Gephardt Institute

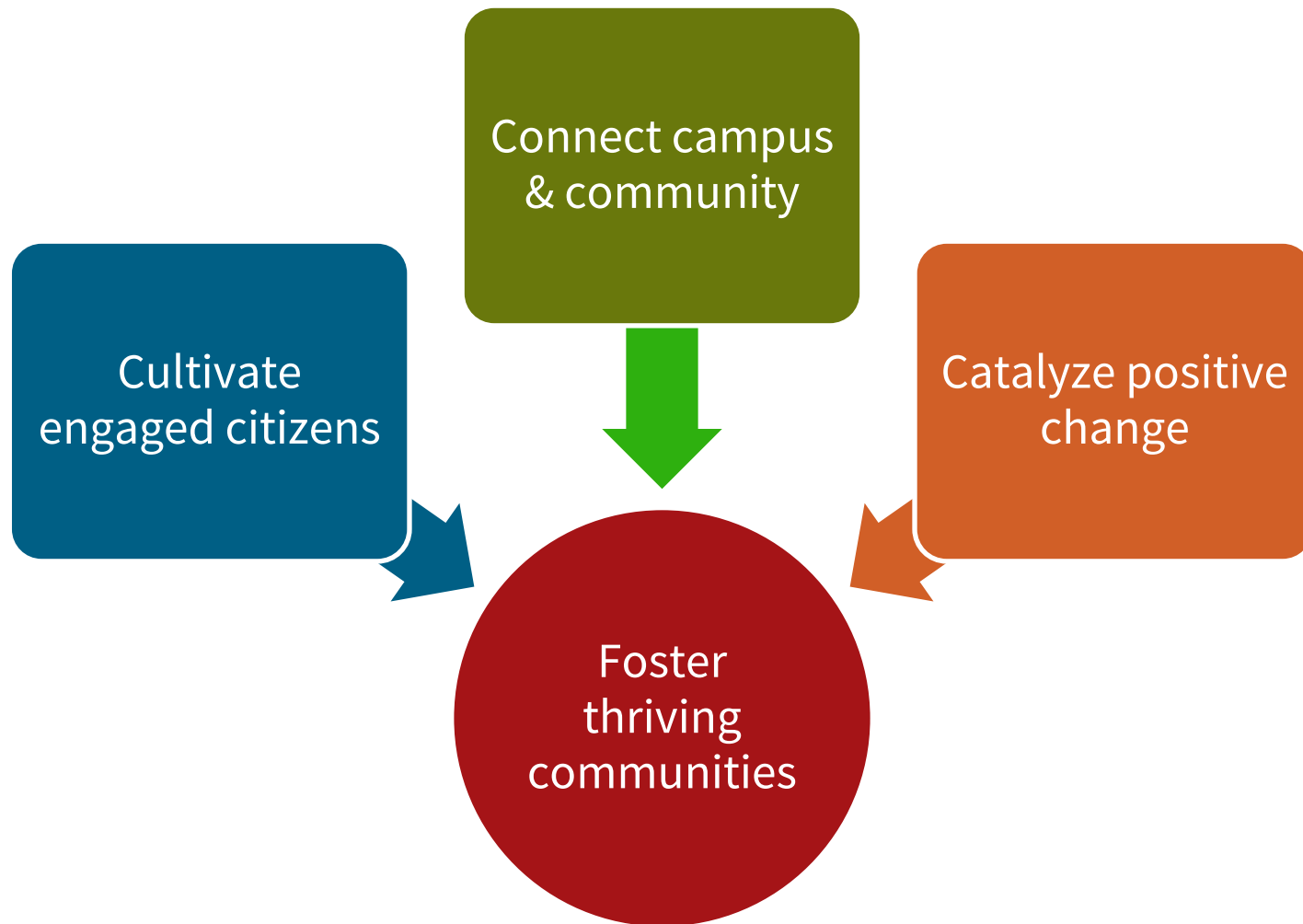
## **Mission**

The Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement cultivates engaged citizens, connects campus and community, and catalyzes positive change to foster thriving communities.

## **Goals**

1. Advance the WashU mission through community engagement
2. Foster community impact based on regional priorities and local community needs
3. Infuse civic engagement throughout the WashU experience
4. Cultivate a sense of regional citizenship
5. Engage university and community partners as co-educators in applied learning
6. Educate students for lifelong engaged citizenship

# Gephardt Institute Vision



# Reinvigorating Higher Education for the Public Good



“Our work is to ensure that higher education is contributing to the health and strength of our democracy....the work of developing the kinds of citizens and communities we need if we are to deliberate together in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable democracy for all.”

- Andrew Seligsohn, Campus Compact President

# Civic and Community Engagement

**Partnership** Reading the newspaper  
Advocacy Serving in the armed forces  
Attending Community Meetings  
**Collaboration**  
**Community Engagement** Government Careers  
Applying coursework/discipline knowledge to solve real world problems  
Supporting local businesses  
Volunteerism Activism Voting **Philanthropy** Giving blood  
**Being a good neighbor** Engagement



# Democratic Engagement Values Stem From Our Founder

“What is at the core of why our democracy functions as well as it does? In the end, it is because of the presence of our citizens, engaged in our governance and in the communities they live in – helping people who need help and being involved in the dialogue that has to go on in a democracy.”

“If there was ever a time we needed the Gephardt Institute to produce citizens, it is now. The presence of the Gephardt Institute is more important than it’s ever been.”

*Congressman Richard Gephardt*



February 2017

# Democratic Engagement Approach

The Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement leads Washington University's Democratic Engagement efforts including:

- **Civic and Community Engagement** programming offered for students, faculty, staff, and alumni of the university
- **Voter Registration** offered year-round in partnership with TurboVote with targeted voter registration drives and communications prior to elections
- **Voter Education and Engagement** through nonpartisan events and panels; resources to provide nonpartisan information about election issues and candidates; academic courses focused on political participation, Common Ground Grants addressing issues of polarization for the campus community and Deliberate Democracy workshops
- **Voter Turnout** including coordination of an on-campus polling place with the Office of Government and Community Relations and St. Louis County Board of Elections and targeted communications related to voter turn out

# Target Audience for Action Plan

This democratic engagement action plan will guide the work of the following:

- The Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement including 12 professional and 21 student staff
- Gephardt Institute's Assistant Director for Student Engagement and Service who supervises a Voter Engagement Coordinator, Gephardt Fellow, and WashU Votes student volunteers to offer voter engagement events, voter registration outreach, and voter turnout strategies
- A six month Voter Engagement Coordinator and part time Gephardt Fellow
- Collaborating campus offices and departments including the First Year Center, ResLife, Student Affairs, Graduate Schools, etc.
- Student leaders in Student Union, the Graduate Professional Council, and politically affiliated student groups and WashU Votes volunteers
- Marketing and communication efforts across Public Affairs, WashU Votes, the Chancellor's office, and the Gephardt Institute



# Democratic Engagement Structure

## Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement

Civic and  
Community  
Engagement  
Programs  
(Led by staff and  
student interns)

### Voter Engagement Steering Committee:

Supports strategy, development of plans,  
and monitors outcomes  
(Led by Assistant Director for Student  
Engagement and Service & Voter  
Engagement Coordinator)

### Common Ground Grants

Addresses  
polarization and  
needs related to  
campus climate  
(Committee of  
students and staff)

“Just Do It”  
political  
participation  
courses  
(Taught by the  
Gephardt Senior  
Fellow)

Curricular and  
co-curricular  
programs build  
a foundation for  
democratic  
engagement

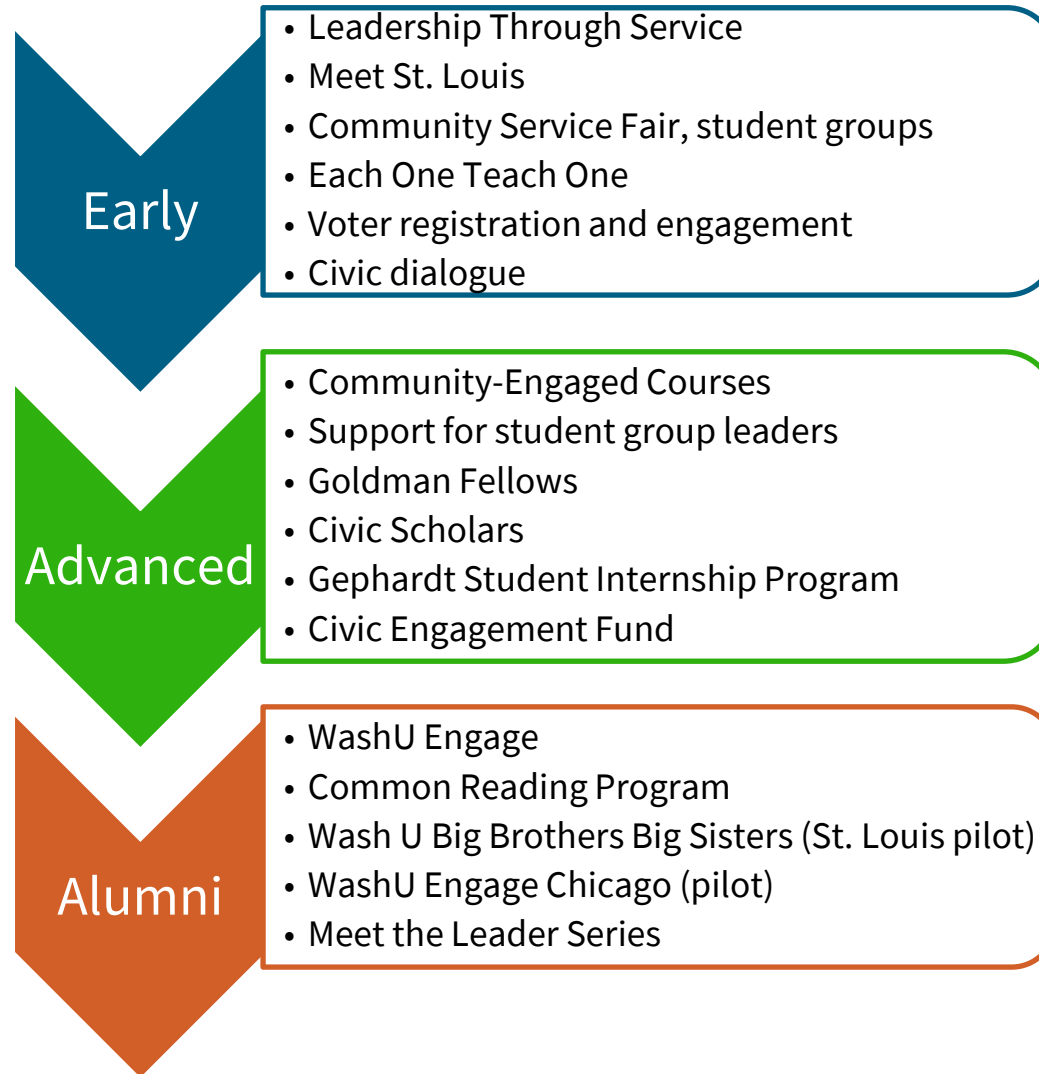
WashU Votes  
student group of  
volunteers lead  
voter  
registration,  
education &  
turn out efforts

The Steering  
Committee  
members will  
coordinate  
efforts with  
faculty, campus  
offices, &  
departments

Recipients can  
be undergrad +  
grad students,  
faculty, staff, &  
community

Students enroll  
in a fall  
semester or  
spring semester  
course to learn  
to run for  
political office  
or turn passion  
into policy

# Gephardt Institute's Civic and Community Engagement Programs



# Approach to Voter Engagement

At Washington University, we believe:

- It is important for students to learn both the process of political participation and democratic engagement
  - This is not about voting in single elections, it is about creating an identity of being an engaged citizen over a lifetime
- **Politics 365**
  - Engagement extends beyond presidential elections
  - We want to establish a campus culture that fosters civic discourse and teaches students to dialogue across difference
- **Non-partisan**
  - We can talk about political engagement AND be inclusive

# Voter Engagement Steering Committee

The Gephardt Institute convenes student volunteers, collaborating campus offices and departments, and key staff through a campus-wide Voter Engagement Steering Committee

- The team email list includes 120 people
- Composition includes undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and campus administrators
- Members receive information including copies of engagement plans and reports via email, and are invited to quarterly meetings to provide input on strategy, opportunities for collaboration, planning, and monitoring progress
- Identify a subset of Steering Committee members to volunteer with WashU Votes to conduct voter registration, voter education, and implement voter turn out strategies prior to election days
- Identify a subset of Steering Committee members to spearhead and coordinate efforts with academic departments, faculty, and offices

# WashU Votes Implements Voter Registration and Voter Turn Out Efforts

- All programming and information related to volunteering, voter registration, and engagement carries the WashU Votes logo shown below
- <https://gephardtinstitute.wustl.edu/voter-registration/> is the centralized portal for voter registration, events, programming, and election day information
- WashU Votes originated as a collaboration between Campus Life, Public Affairs, Student Union, Graduate Professional Council, and Gephardt Institute when WashU hosted the Presidential Debate in 2016- currently Gephardt leads the group

**WASHU**  
**VOTES**

# Data Driven Planning: Voter Registration

NSLVE CAMPUS REPORT | Washington University in St Louis

Gephardt Institute used data from the national [NSLVE Report](#), WashU NSLVE reports from 2012, 2014, and 2016, and TurboVote to inform goal setting and strategy for voter registration and turn out

## YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

### Voting and Registration Rates

2016 Voting Rate

**52.5%**

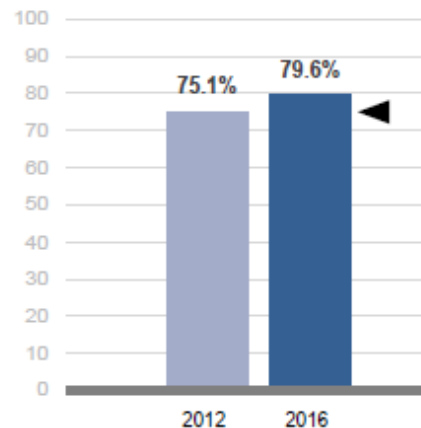
CHANGE  
FROM 2012

**10.9**

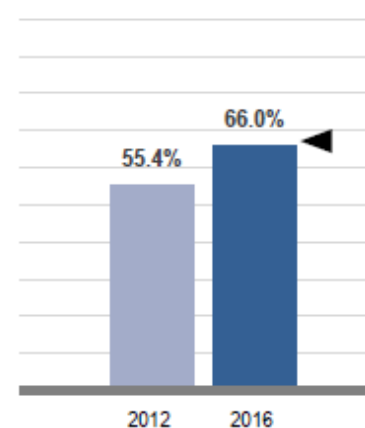
2016 VOTING RATE  
FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

**50.4%**

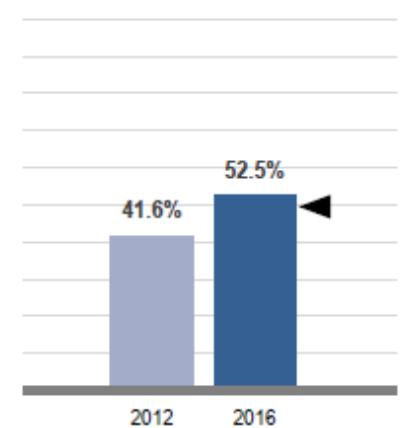
Registration Rate



Voting Rate of  
Registered Students



Voting Rate



◀ All Institutions, 2016

# Data Driven Planning: Voter Registration

Gephardt staff analyzed trends in student demographics, voter registration rates, and voter turn out to set goals for 2018, and to continue the trend of positive growth

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2016</b>	Change
Total student enrollment	<b>13,641</b>	<b>14,522</b> ↑	<b>881</b>
Age under 18/Unknown	(84)	(59)	
IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens	(2,007)	(2,663)	
FERPA records blocked	(581)	(539)	
Total eligible voters	<b>10,969</b>	<b>11,261</b> ↑	<b>292</b>
Number of students who registered	<b>8,240</b>	<b>8,963</b> ↑	<b>723</b>
Number of students who voted	<b>4,566</b>	<b>5,912</b> ↑	<b>1,346</b>
Registration rate	<b>75.1%</b>	<b>79.6%</b> ↑	<b>4.5</b>
Voting rate of registered students	<b>55.4%</b>	<b>66.0%</b> ↑	<b>10.6</b>
Voting rate	<b>41.6%</b>	<b>52.5%</b> ↑	<b>10.9</b>
Difference from all institutions	<b>-5.3</b>	<b>+2.1</b>	

# 2018 Voter Registration Goals

- Increase our total eligible student voter registration rate from 79.6% in 2016 to 84% by 2020 during the next presidential election
- Increase the registration rate from 63.2% in 2014 to 68% in 2018 or during mid-term election years
- Complete 50% of all new voter registrations using the online TurboVote platform
  - Of 8,963 students who registered in 2016, 3,227 registered using TurboVote (36%)



# Voter Registration Strategy

The Gephardt Institute ensures voter registration is offered campus-wide in partnership with TurboVote, made by the nonpartisan non-profit Democracy Works, to offer online or paper voter registration via [Wustl.TurboVote.Org](https://Wustl.TurboVote.Org). Through Gephardt's efforts we:

- Embed the TurboVote link into Webstac, the portal accessed by all students to update contact information and register for courses
- Distribute the link through First Year Student publications
- Link to TurboVote through a first day of school email, move-in check lists, and communications leading up to Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day
- Offer communications and reminders for spring and fall elections
- Present and table at Pre-Orientation, Orientation, Activities Fairs, Resource Fairs, and at the Med School in the first forty days of school



# Voter Education and Engagement

- Offer resources to students that are non-partisan tools that educate about voter ID laws, voting rights, ballot issues, voting methods, candidates, voter registration, polling place locations, and participation in elections
  - Link to [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) and [nonprofitvote.org](http://nonprofitvote.org)
- Work with the Gephardt Institute's marketing and communications team for ongoing communication about participation in the democratic process
- Collaborate with campus partners including the Clark-Fox Policy Institute, Law School, Political Science Department, the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics, and Student Affairs to hold political education and voter engagement events leading up to mid-term elections in November 2018
- Partner with the Sam Fox School faculty to implement voter education and engagement campaigns through visual art and media classes



# Voter Education and Engagement

**Offer Common Ground Grants** between \$50-\$1,000 along with capacity-building support for applicants. In a climate of increasing polarization and division, these grants are designed to catalyze the campus community in developing strategies to repair, address, and prevent polarization. The Common Ground Grants aim to foster a spirit of inquiry, build bridges, support civic and civil dialogue, and offer opportunities for reconciliation and learning across differences. Grant projects should foster a campus culture that is inclusive of diverse identities, political ideologies, and perspectives. Special consideration will be given to grant proposals that are designed collaboratively and focus on addressing ideological divisions.

**Target Audience:** Washington University undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty who can apply in partnership with community members or alumni.

## **Criteria:**

- Proposals reflect a non-partisan and non-polarizing effort to engage the campus and/or local community across political spectrums, and encourage learning across differences
- Proposals provide meaningful opportunities for members of the Washington University community and/or St. Louis community to learn, dialogue, and catalyze positive responses to polarization
- Proposals focus on strategies to address , repair, and prevent polarization

# Voter Education and Engagement

## **Offer Deliberate Democracy Trainings**

According to the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement's report, *A Crucible Moment*, a strong foundation in civics education "can help increase the number of informed, thoughtful, and public-minded citizens well prepared to contribute in the context of the diverse, dynamic, globally connected United States."

In order to realize a more civically engaged generation of young people, we need to start at the basics of building a strong foundation in democracy. Beyond voting, students report a lack of knowledge as a significant barrier to creating change in our democracy. This includes a lack of basic civics, government accountability tools, and the range of actions they can take. Further, they do not view public service, taking action on beliefs and values, or engagement in political life as viable career options.

To equip students with knowledge and appreciation for the process of democratic engagement, the Gephardt Institute will offer Deliberate Democracy trainings that culminate in a certification.

**Target Audience:** Washington University undergraduate and graduate students

# Data Driven Planning: Voter Turn Out

NSLVE CAMPUS REPORT | Washington University in St Louis

Gephardt Institute used data from the national [NSLVE Report](#); WashU NSLVE reports from 2012, 2014, and 2016; and St. Louis County Board of Elections report to analyze past turn out rates, set goals, and set strategy for the 2018 mid-term election

## YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

### Voting and Registration Rates

2016 Voting Rate

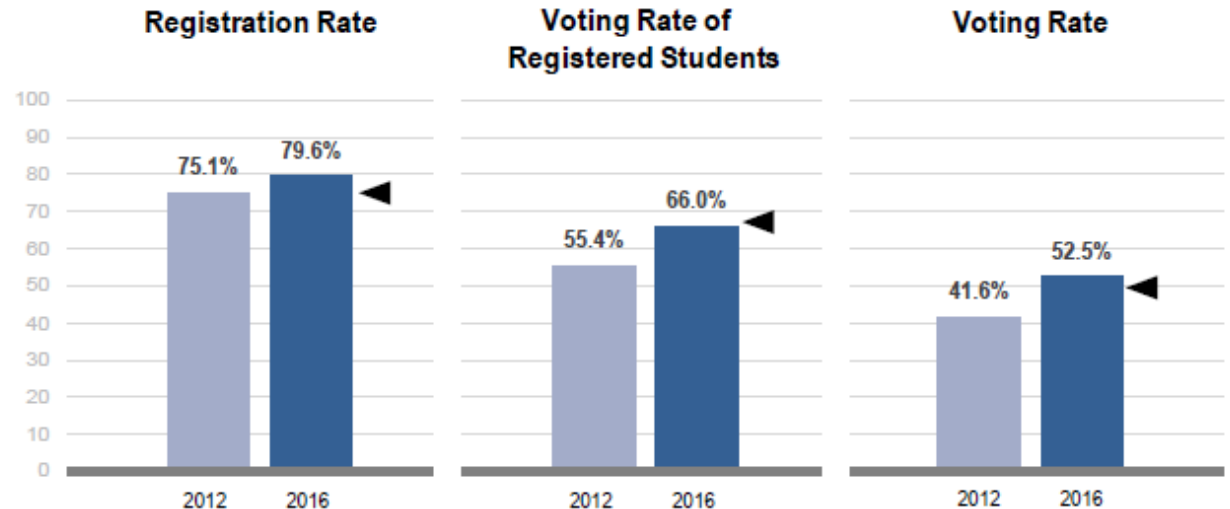
**52.5%**

CHANGE  
FROM 2012

**10.9**

2016 VOTING RATE  
FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

**50.4%**



◀ All Institutions, 2016

# Data Driven Planning: Voter Turn Out

## YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

### By Age Group\*



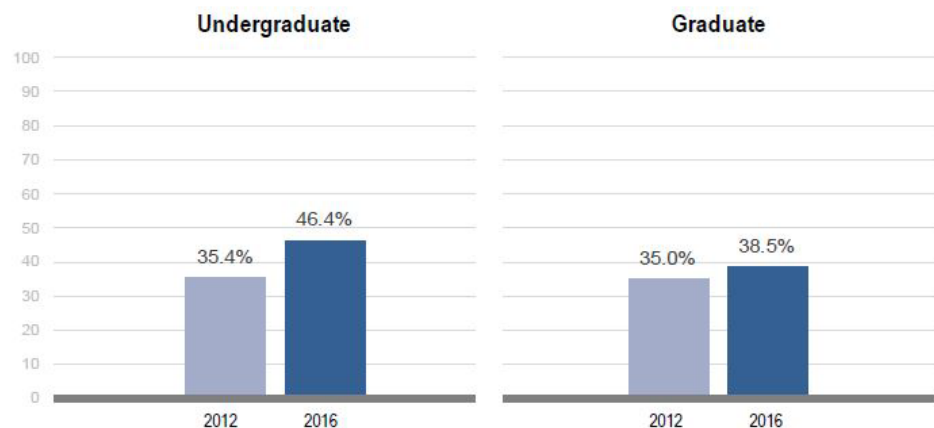
### By Voting Method (2016 data)

71.7% In person, Election Day  
 19.3% Absentee  
 8% Mail  
 1.1% Early Vote

## NSLVE CAMPUS REPORT | Washington University in St Louis

## YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

### By Education Level\*



	2012			2016			Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Undergraduate	6,988	2,471	35.4%	6,998	3,244	46.4%	↑ 11.0
Graduate	5,984	2,093	35.0%	6,923	2,668	38.5%	↑ 3.6

# Voter Turn Out Goals

- Host an absentee voter celebration for 200 students and cover the cost of postage for the 19.3% of students who mail in ballots
- Increase the voting rate from 15.7% (2014) to 20% in the 2018 midterm election
- Maintain the 2012 voting rate of 95% for those living on in campus dorms on the Northside and voting in Missouri, and 85% for those living on campus in the South 40 and voting in Missouri during Presidential Election years

# Voter Turn Out Strategy

- Charge the Voter Engagement Steering Committee to plan and implement a voter turn out strategy for upcoming elections that emphasizes voting as a part of a student's identity, and that creates a positive atmosphere of engagement leading up to and on Election Days
- Work with the office of Government and Community Relations to host an on-campus polling place in the Athletic Center, conveniently serving on campus residents
- Work with the Gephardt Institute marketing and communications team to implement a digital, print and social media strategy to increase voter turn out leading up to Election Days. Include maps of local polling places that correspond to student housing





# Voter Turn Out Strategies

- Send communications to 100% of students through an email from the Chancellor leading up to election day
- Work with the *Student Life* newspaper and WashU's magazine *The Record* to publish at least 3 stories encouraging participation in the democratic process and reporting on WashU student engagement levels
- Work with faculty to make announcements in class encouraging voter registration and participation in elections
- Distribute information about the state voter ID laws when students register in Missouri using TurboVote and in advance of election days to decrease students voting provisionally or not voting at all on election days

Election Day Reminder

[View this email in your browser](#)



## Make Your Vote Count



November 7 is Election Day! Washington University encourages all of our students over the age of 18, as well as faculty, staff, and alumni, to participate in the democratic process by exercising the right to vote if eligible.

Do you have a plan? [Vote 411](#) is a nonpartisan site for identifying your polling place, learning about what will be on local ballots, and researching candidates and issues. To learn more about specific laws and to access resources on voting, visit [NonprofitVote.org](#) and use the "Voting in Your State" tool.

For more information about events and resources related to voter engagement this fall, please email [WashUVotes@wustl.edu](mailto:WashUVotes@wustl.edu) or visit [gephardtinsttute.wustl.edu/vote](http://gephardtinsttute.wustl.edu/vote). To register as a voter in the next election or change your address, visit [Wustl.Turbovote.org](http://Wustl.Turbovote.org).

# Timeline for Implementation

- Phase 1: Build the Voter Engagement Steering Committee and WashU Votes teams, solicit input and campus buy-in for the 2018 Voter Engagement Plan
  - Now- May 2018
- Phase 2: Offer communication reminders for voter registration and participation in spring elections
  - January- April 2018
- Phase 3: Connect with campus partners to plan fall events, establish plan to host a polling place, prepare back to school communications
  - May-August 2018
- Phase 4: Get word out about WashU Votes, Civic and Community Engagement Programs, and Voter Registration
  - August 25<sup>th</sup> – October 12<sup>th</sup>
- Phase 5: Activate voter turn out messages and strategies
  - October 12<sup>th</sup>- November 6<sup>th</sup>
- Phase 6: Debrief results, review NSLVE reports, envision the future
  - November 9<sup>th</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup>
- Phase 7: 2019 Voter Engagement Planning
  - November 15<sup>th</sup> - December 15<sup>th</sup>

# Data Sources for Assessment

- WashU participates in the NSLVE
- St. Louis County Board of Elections provides the university with data regarding students who register with their university address and who vote locally in Missouri
- TurboVote produces reports on voter registration
- PULSE survey data from 2013, 2015, and 2017
- Gephardt Institute implemented Civic-Minded Graduate surveys
- Attendance and survey responses for participants in events, Deliberate Democracy workshops, and panels

# Evaluation and Ongoing Planning

## The Gephardt Institute staff will:

- Head the process of synthesizing voter registration data from TurboVote and election data from NSLVE reports to measure 2018 outcomes and progress towards goals
- Share data with key Voter Engagement Steering Committee stakeholders, university leaders, and WashU Votes volunteers
- Solicit feedback from key partners including St. Louis County Board of Elections, faculty involved with Voter Engagement events, and the Common Ground Grant committee to continuously improve efforts
- Evaluate specific initiatives, strategies, and activities for effectiveness and provide recommendations for change
- Document and author reports related to democratic engagement

# Point of Contact

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My pronouns are She, Her, Hers

Engaged Citizens, Strong Communities  
[gephardtinsttute.wustl.edu](http://gephardtinsttute.wustl.edu)