

ALL IN Action Plan to Increase Voter Turnout and Engagement at SIUE

SIUE officially joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge on September 27, 2016.

About SIUE

*SIUE is a **nationally recognized university** that provides students with a high-quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live.*

<http://www.siue.edu/about/>

SIUE's Mission

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is a student-centered educational community dedicated to communicating, expanding and integrating knowledge. In a spirit of collaboration enriched by diverse ideas, our comprehensive and unique array of undergraduate and graduate programs develops professionals, scholars and leaders who shape a changing world.

<http://www.siue.edu/about/mission.shtml>

Why We Joined

Part of joining means our campus commits to:

- *Improving democratic engagement, increasing student voter participation rates, and graduating students with a lifelong commitment to being informed and active citizens.*
- *Convening a campus a campus-wide committee that includes members from academic affairs, student affairs, and the student body.* <http://www.allinchallenge.org/#eligibility>

These commitments are consistent with our university's mission, vision, values, and practice. In fact, one of SIUE's core values is **Citizenship**. At SIUE we define this value as:

- *Social, civic and political responsibility — globally, nationally, locally, and within the University*
- *Active partnerships and a climate of collaboration and cooperation among students, faculty, staff, alumni and the larger community*
- *Sustainable practices in environmental, financial and social endeavors*

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A number of organizations on our campus have worked to increase voter education, engagement, and turnout among students in previous election years but our efforts have not been coordinated together until SIUE decided to go ALL IN and join the Campus Democracy Challenge.

Our Committee

Students

Carmen Connors, Student Government, External Affairs
Carson Dodd, Political Science Association, College Democrats, College Republicans
Colin Kerr, Political Science
Emily Lange, Political Science
Natalie Reczek, Student Government, External Affairs
Casey Ringenberg, Political Science
Luke Zobotka, Political Science

Staff

Jay Davis, Cougar Village Community Director, Residence Life
Sarah Laux, Assistant Director, Community Engagement. Kimmel Student Involvement Center

Faculty

Dr. Ken Moffett, Associate Professor of Political Science; Civic Education Project@SIUE
Dr. Laurie Rice, Associate Professor of Political Science; Civic Education Project@SIUE,
Campus Contact/Coordinator

Overview of Action Plan

While we've had good rates of voter turnout at the precinct located on SIUE's main campus, the NSLVE reports show our overall voter participation rates of 43.3% in 2012 and 16.5% in 2014 lagged behind our peer institutions. The committee also noted that these rates were significantly lower among students majoring in the sciences and engineering. We aim to increase these rates through targeted campaigns to increase voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout.

Our Action Plan

Challenge 1: *Getting students registered before voter registration deadlines.* (October 11 paper; **October 23** online) Students cannot vote if they are not registered. Thanks to court rulings about same day voter registration in Illinois at several different points this fall, the deadlines have been a moving target, which has provided added challenge to our committee.

- **Action Point 1:** *Voter registration table at debate watch parties*
- **Action Point 2:** *Voter registration table in Peck Hall, the main classroom building for the College of Arts and Sciences.*
- **Action Point 3:** *Voter registration table in the Engineering Building to target students majoring in engineering.*
- **Action Point 4:** *Voter registration in the Morris University Center (student center)*
- **Action Point 5:** *Tabling after 10/11 using Student Government tablets to register voters online*

- **Action Point 6:** *Drop-in voter registration at Kimmel Student Involvement Center.*
- **Action Point 7:** *Coordinated social media blitz to as many organizations as possible about online deadlines.*
- **Action Point 8:** *Chalking voter registration deadlines around campus.*
- **Action Point 9:** *E-mails to student list-serve with voter registration information and deadlines.*
- **Action Point 10:** *E-mails to residence hall list-serves with voter registration information and deadlines.*
- **Action Point 11:** *E-mail to faculty discuss list-serve challenging faculty to support the university's commitment to citizenship by providing information to their students on how to register online and the deadline for doing so.*

Challenge 2: Letting students know they can vote absentee. Many students are registered to vote in their home communities and lack time to make a trip there on Election Day. They do not know that they can request absentee ballots or how to do so.

- **Action Point 1:** *Distribute paper copies of absentee ballot requests*
- **Action Point 2:** *Class announcements*
- **Action Point 3:** *Spread word on social media*
- **Action Point 4:** *Provide information when tabling at events.*

Challenge 3: Informing Voters. Feeling like they don't know enough about the candidates can be a barrier to young adults voting. While students hear a lot about the presidential candidates, they don't hear much about other offices at stake. Some don't know there are other positions to vote for besides president. Others are unhappy with the choice of presidential candidates and don't know they can vote for other offices without voting for president.

- **Action Point 1:** *Collect candidate information and develop candidate information flyers. Distribute these when tabling at events and make available at front desk of all residence halls.*
- **Action Point 2:** *Bulletin boards with candidate information in residence halls.*
- **Action Point 3:** *Promotion of information sources such as ballotpedia on residence hall list-serves*
- **Action Point 4:** *Debate watch parties for presidential debates and for the vice presidential debates.*
- **Action Point 5:** *Constitution Day Program- Presidential Election*
- **Action Point 5:** *Phi Kappa Phi's Presidential Candidates and Foreign Policy Forum*
- **Action Point 6:** *Debate between College Democrats and College Republicans.*
- **Action Point 7:** *Collegiate 100: Rock the Vote*
- **Action Point 8:** *Student involvement in Arts and Issues: Cal Thomas and Juan Williams*
- **Action Point 9:** *Articles and op-eds in The Alestle (student newspaper).*

Challenge 4: Publicizing Early Voting. Some students have all their classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and go straight from class to work. They don't think they can fit in time to vote on Election Day. SIUE is an early voting location for Madison County – students registered here can vote when it is convenient.

- **Action Point 1:** *E-mail information to student listserve.*
- **Action Point 2:** *Share information on early voting in The E-Today.*

Challenge 5: Getting out the Vote.

Getting students registered was only part of the challenge. According to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report, 60.8% of registered SIUE voters voted in the 2012 presidential election. GOTV efforts are a critical component of our plan.

- **Action Point 1:** *Pepsi Banners for the day before election day hung near main road through campus/parking lots - Don't Forget to Vote Tuesday*
- **Action Point 2:** *Spray paint the rock with Vote!*
- **Action Point 3:** *Put slides on voting on student involvement pages and greek life pages*
- **Action Point 4:** *Social media campaign - reach out to as many students and student organizations as possible with reminders to vote and reasons why people should vote*
- **Action Point 5:** *Encouragement to vote in political science classes*
- **Action Point 6:** *Battle of the FIC (Focused Interest Communities in the residence halls) bonus points for pictures with I Voted stickers*

Challenge 6: Targeted GOTV efforts.

We looked at data from the 2016 Student Election Survey (pre-election) and discovered that this year students majoring in education and engineering were less likely to intend to vote. We also discovered majors in nursing, math and science, education, and engineering were among the least likely to have been asked by someone to vote.

- **Action Point 1:** *Ask Student Senators representing the School of Engineering and the School of Nursing to send out an encouragement to vote to students in their schools.*
- **Action Point 2:** *Outreach to Wellness, Education, and Engineering FICs*
- **Action Point 3:** *Outreach to academic student organizations representing students in nursing, engineering, education, math, and science majors.*

Post-election plans

We will use data from the 2016 Student Election Survey (pre- and post-election), conducted by Dr. Ken Moffett and Dr. Laurie Rice, to help us track the effectiveness of current efforts, identify proven practices, and further refine our efforts in future elections.

