



**University of Nebraska- Lincoln  
Campus Action Plan**

## **Introduction:**

### **a) University**

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln, chartered in 1869, is an educational institution of international stature. Nebraska, a member of the Big Ten Conference and the Big Ten Academic Alliance, is classified within the Carnegie “Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity” category. UNL is a land-grant university and a member of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). The university is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The University of Nebraska was founded on February 15, 1869.

### **b) NSLVE Data**

According to the Tufts University National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report, which measured voter registration and participation rates at over 750 colleges nationwide. 78.5% of students at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln were registered to vote in the 2012 presidential election, 52.6% of students voted on Election Day.

### **c) Committee/Coalition**

For the 2016-2017 academic year the Government Liason Committee of the Association of Students at the University of Nebraska has led the action pieces for the All In Campus Democracy Challenge along with the Center for Civic Engagement. In the future, we hope to build a more comprehensive campus wide committee to better serve the goals of this program.

## **Voter Registration:**

### **a) TurboVote**

By partnering with ASUN, the Center for Civic Engagement, Nebraskans for Civic Reform, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs this committee was able to provide the use of TurboVote software for all University of Nebraska students and faculty. The use of this online program at voter registration events and booths allowed UNL students to easily register to vote online and request absentee ballots. Additionally, once they signed up through turbovote they were able to receive information about upcoming elections and where their polling place is located. Finally, the use of TurboVote by this university allows our committee to track the number of newly registered voters on our campus throughout each year. The link to TurboVote was provided to students through voter registration booths, as well as located on the online student Blackboard portal for approximately six weeks. We had hundreds of students register to vote using this software, and thousands of students utilize the system for items such as absentee ballots and election information updates.

### **b) Big Red Register Day**

Members of the ASUN Government Liaison Committee, and the nonprofit organization, Nebraskans for Civic Reform held a voter registration event on September 28th. The event helped students register to vote and also help students who wish to request absentee ballots through TurboVote software. During the event, there were several Registered Student Organizations, like Young Democrats, College Republicans and Huskers for Social Democracy, sharing information on the upcoming election and key areas of interest for college students. The event is part of Vote B1G, an initiative to register 30,000 Big Ten students to vote this year. Big Red Register Day led to 410 new students being registered to vote as well as over 1,000 students passing through our TurboVote software.

### **c) JGMC Stoll Off Voter Registration**

Provided voter registration efforts at the annual “stroll off” event which is facilitated by the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center and OASIS (Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Studies). This event took place on September 8th and voter registration began around 5p.m.

### **d) Who’s Who Voter Registration**

Voter registration efforts were provided at the annual “Who’s Who” event, the UNL Honors program’s new student welcome. This was a great chance to capitalize on reaching out to first year students and was successful. This event took place on September 11th from 6-8p.m.

**e) Registration Drive-Student Athlete Involvement Fair**

The Center for Civic Engagement hosted a voter registration drive at the student athlete involvement fair. This event was very successful at registering student athletes and helping them to find out information on absentee ballots, as well as out of state voter information as many of our student athletes are out of state students.

**f) Residence Hall Voter Information**

In collaboration with the 160 residence hall assistants, ASUN shared voter registration information with on campus students. RA's distributed information on registration deadlines, online registration portals, as well as information on how to request absentee ballots and polling site locations.

**g) Daily Nebraskan**

On September 27th, 2016 The Daily Nebraskan published an article titled *ASUN committee to register UNL students to vote*. The article, published in a popular student newspaper, detailed efforts made by the Government Liaison Committee to register peers to vote. It gave details for an upcoming voter registration event and how students could attend. The Daily Nebraska also published many other articles highlighting civic engagement events on campus, as well as an article with information on voter registration deadlines.

**h) College Republicans Voter Registration**

UNL College Republicans, a Registered Student Organization at the University of Nebraska, informed students at the University about how they can register to vote or request an absentee ballot and also publicized deadlines for registering and mailing in early votes. This was accomplished through the use of social media, announcements made during meetings, and through speaking to students at campus involvement events.

### **i) Social Media Engagement with RSO's.**

Hundreds of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat posts were made regarding election events, debates, and public forums. UNL boasts over 500 Recognized Student Organizations enabling social media to reach nearly every student. Social media's capabilities to allow students to share information by the touch of button enables engagement to reach beyond the UNL campus and Lincoln community.

The Recognized Student Organizations that ASUN Student Government primarily worked with were College Republicans, Huskers for Social Democracy, and Young Democrats. ASUN Student Government recorded over 1,100 Facebook likes and over 2,000 Twitter followers. College Republicans have over 1,000 Facebook likes (up 1% a week before elections) and nearly 350 Twitter followers. Huskers for Social Democracy have nearly 370 Facebook likes. Young Democrats have over 560 Facebook likes (up .7% a week before elections) and over 500 Twitter followers.

### **Voter Education:**

#### **a) Center for Civic Engagement Website**

The Center for Civic Engagement utilized their website to share voter registration and education information. Under the TurboVote page link students had access to voter registration links, information on how to get absentee ballots, as well as non partisan information on candidates and ballot issues.

#### **b) EN Thompson Forum- David Brooks - Mel**

The 2016-17 E.N. Thompson Forum Series on World Issues, "Crossing Borders," explores the relevance of borders in our modern world—both how they define us and, increasingly, the ways in which we ignore them in the interest of commerce, education and personal freedom. On October 4th, 2016, New York Times Op-Ed columnist and professor at Yale University, David Brooks, spoke on UNL's campus about the 2016 election. As a regular analyst on PBS NewsHour and NPR's All Things Considered, he is a keen observer and commentator on politics and foreign affairs. He provided context on the candidates and political process, in particular the surprising twists that were a hallmark of this election year.

#### **c) The Great Gun Control Debate**

The University Program Council hosted The Great Gun Control Debate, one of many political debates and lectures at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The debate, featured speakers John Lott and Paul Helmke, and took place in the

Nebraska East Union on Oct. 27. The speakers debated whether the United States should adopt more stringent gun laws to reduce the murder rate.

#### **d) Death Penalty Debate**

On October 25, 2016, a debate over whether Nebraskans should vote to retain or repeal the death penalty on the November 8th ballot was held at UNL's student union as a part of the Sorensen Seminar Series. The event was sponsored by the Public Policy Center and co-sponsored by the Center for Civic Engagement, the Department of Political Science, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. The debate featured State Senators Beau McCoy and Colby Coash, and was moderated by Nebraska Educational Telecommunications reporter and producer Fred Knapp.

#### **e) Voter Education Seminar**

On October 20th UNL hosted the 2016 Voter Education Seminar. This panel discussed the 2017 Nebraska legislative session and the issues that are likely to define the session. K-12 education, corrections, behavioral health, an aging population, Medicaid, higher education and a host of other issues will demand the attention of senators in an environment of declining tax revenues and calls for cuts in tax rates. The panel included Sen. Adam Morfeld who represents the 46th District in Lincoln, Tiffany Seibert Joekel, Policy Director with Open Sky Public Policy Institute and Mark Intermill, Advocacy Director with AARP Nebraska.

#### **f) RSO Debate Watch Parties**

Various Registered Student Organizations (RSOs), particularly the College Republicans and Young Democrats, hosted watch parties for their members to view the series of presidential debates. These events gave students the opportunity to discuss presidential politics in real-time, leading to more informed decisions.

#### **g) OASIS Election Day Watch Party**

The Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Services is hosting a watch party for students to attend on election day. The event is located in the Union and offers refreshments, all students were invited to join in, as the next president is elected.

#### **h) Union Social Media Event**

On Election Day, the Government Liason Committee is hosting a booth in the Union where students can share why they vote. Students will write their response on a whiteboard, take a photograph and it will be shared on social media, via the ASUN accounts.

## **Civic Engagement:**

### **a) Constitution Day**

The Government Liason Committee of ASUN hosted a Constitution Day Panel on September 17th. The panel consisted of UNL Dean of the College of Law Eric Berger, and Senator Adam Morfeld. The panelists discussed the value of the constitution, its importance to students, and how students can start to play a role in government while they are in college.

### **b) Coalition for Civil Discourse**

With the diversity of perspectives and ideas on campus, it is important to always recognize that differences of opinion do not need to escalate where civil discourse is abandoned. Recognizing this need, the Office of Student Affairs organized this event including discussions and workshops to better understanding of civil discourse. This event took place on September 20th in the City Campus Union.

### **c) What is the Future of Democracy**

The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, ASUN, Political Science Department, and Nebraskan's for Civic Reform sponsored the What is the Future of Democracy event in the Nebraska Union on October 24th. Congressman Jeff Fortenberry was a key component sharing his perspectives on democracy going forward. Students had an opportunity to submit short videos sharing their ideas, and those selected were able to share their thought and ideas with the crowd that evening.

## **Assessment:**

1. We plan to utilize our NSLVE data for 2016 and compare it against our 2012 and 2014 data to evaluate where we have made progress, as well as what areas to continue to focus voter registration efforts on.
2. We will utilize our TurboVote data to strategically design next year's voter registration efforts, in hope to reach our sections of campus with low voter turnout.
3. We plan to evaluate our Campus Engagement Plan to look at general areas that could use additional programming, and work to develop new events to meet those demands.
4. We will form a coalition of individuals from across campus to increase voter registration and turnout as well as general civic engagement on campus.