

*Class of 1939*

# Clemson University Campus Democracy Plan

A BROAD-BASED, NONPARTISAN EFFORT AIMED AT IMPROVING THE  
DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT OF OUR STUDENT POPULATION –  
GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE.

THIS STRUCTURE IS DEDICATED TO THOSE DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF CLEMSON UNIVERSITY  
WHOSE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDENT BODY, THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY  
HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THEIR PEERS AS MERITING THIS, THEIR HIGHEST HONOR:

**"THE CLASS OF '39 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE"**

## ROLL OF HONOR

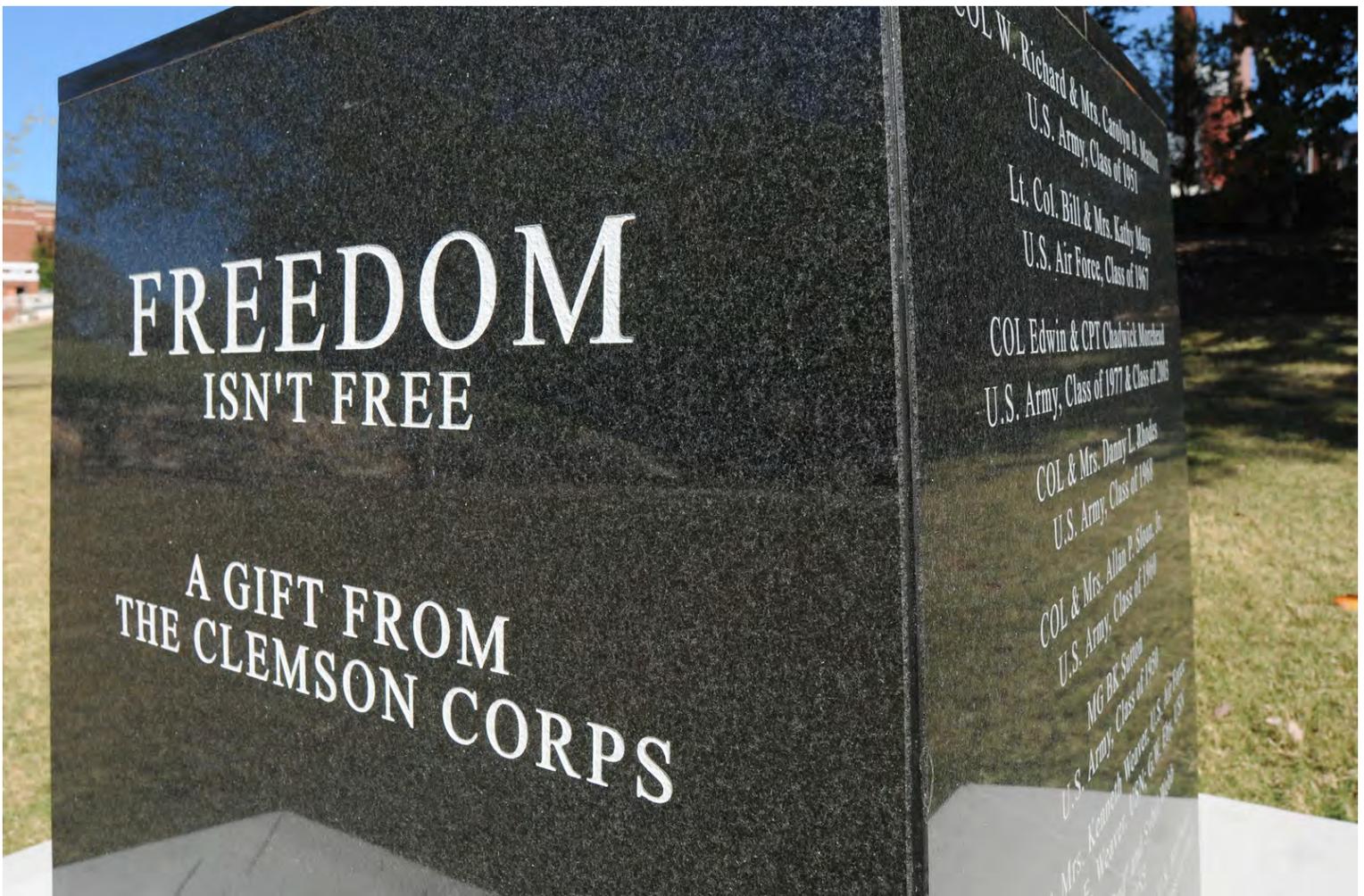
1989 - DIXIE GOOCH GOSWAMI  
1990 - JOEL VINCENT BRAWLEY, JR.  
1991 - JOHN I. IDOL, JR.  
1992 - RAYMOND C. TURNER  
1993 - ASHBY B. BODINE II  
1994 - CECIL OATES HUEY, JR.  
1995 - FRANCIS ANTHONY MCGUIRE  
1996 - R. LAWRENCE LAFORGE  
1997 - CHALMERS MCNAIR BUTLER  
1998 - LARRY LEE BAUER  
1999 - JUDITH MARY MELTON  
2000 - CLIFTON SCOTT MILLER EGAN  
2001 - JERRY ALAN WALDVOCEL  
2002 - ALFRED P. (HAP) WHEELER  
2003 - DOUGLAS KINLY STURKIE, III

2006 - DONALD M. MCKALE  
2007 - ALMA BENNETT  
2008 - WILLIAM T. PENNINGTON, JR.  
2009 - WEBB MORROW SMATHERS, JR.  
2010 - MELANIE M. COOPER  
2011 - RICHARD STEPHEN FIGLIOLA  
2012 - WINDSOR WESTBROOK SHERRILL  
2013 - JOHN BALLATO  
2014 - FRANCES CATHERINE MOBLEY  
2015 - JUNE J. PILCHER  
2016 - ANTONIS KATSIYANNIS  
2017 - TERRY M. TRITT  
2018 - LISA C. BENSON





# I.) Executive Summary



**Who are we?** This action plan was developed over the fall 2019 semester at Clemson University through a coalition that we collectively named "Clemson for Democracy." We are 7 students, 9 staff members, 4 faculty members, and 2 community members on the leadership group.

**What do we seek to do?** We seek to initiate and sustain broad-based, nonpartisan efforts aimed at improving the democratic engagement of our student population - graduate and undergraduate.

**Where do we seek to make an impact?** Our main campus of Clemson University is in the Upstate region of South Carolina, and the majority of our students are connected in face-to-face educational activities here. Through training, curriculum, co-curriculum, programming, and collaborative messaging, we aim to also reach the smaller numbers of students embedded in our innovation campuses throughout the state.

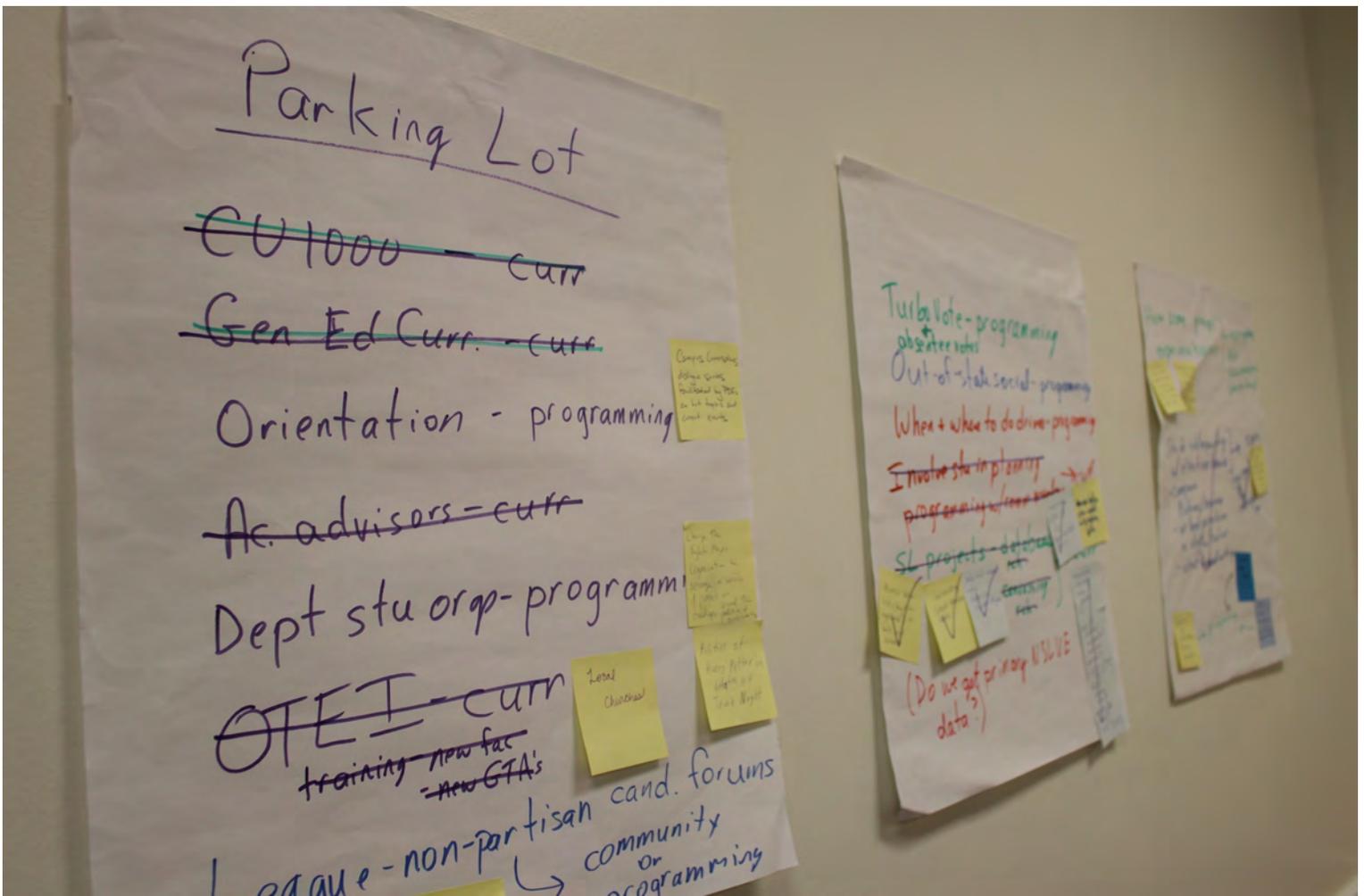
**Why now?** Prior to this year, Clemson University has had no broader group working to improve student democratic engagement. Delving into our institutional data (discussed in sections IV and V below) shows that we have areas where we can improve.

**When will we make an impact?** We have established short-term goals and long-term goals. Our Clemson for Democracy leadership coalition will be tracking and reporting to each other regularly to hold ourselves accountable for both types of goals.

**How?** Our co-leaders from academic and student affairs will facilitate the continued coalition meetings during the implementation phases of our campus action plan. Leaders from individual offices and units

will be accomplishing their tasks according to our strategies outlined below.

## II.) Coalition and Leadership



Our democratic engagement planning coalition - “Clemson for Democracy” - consists of students, faculty, staff, and community members comprising a diverse cross-section of the Clemson University community and surrounding area. The co-leaders are academic Associate Dean Dr. Bridget Trogden and student affairs Associate Director of Student Involvement and Leadership Kate Radford, who navigated the group through fall brainstorming meetings and coordination to create the action plan and are now transitioning to the implementation phases.

The coalition includes students representing the organizations of Clemson University Undergraduate and Graduate Student Government, the student-run newsletter *The Sensible Tiger*, the Information Technology Advisory Board, Greek life, departmental clubs and organizations, campus interns, student affiliates of national parties, and the Pearce Center for Professional Communication.

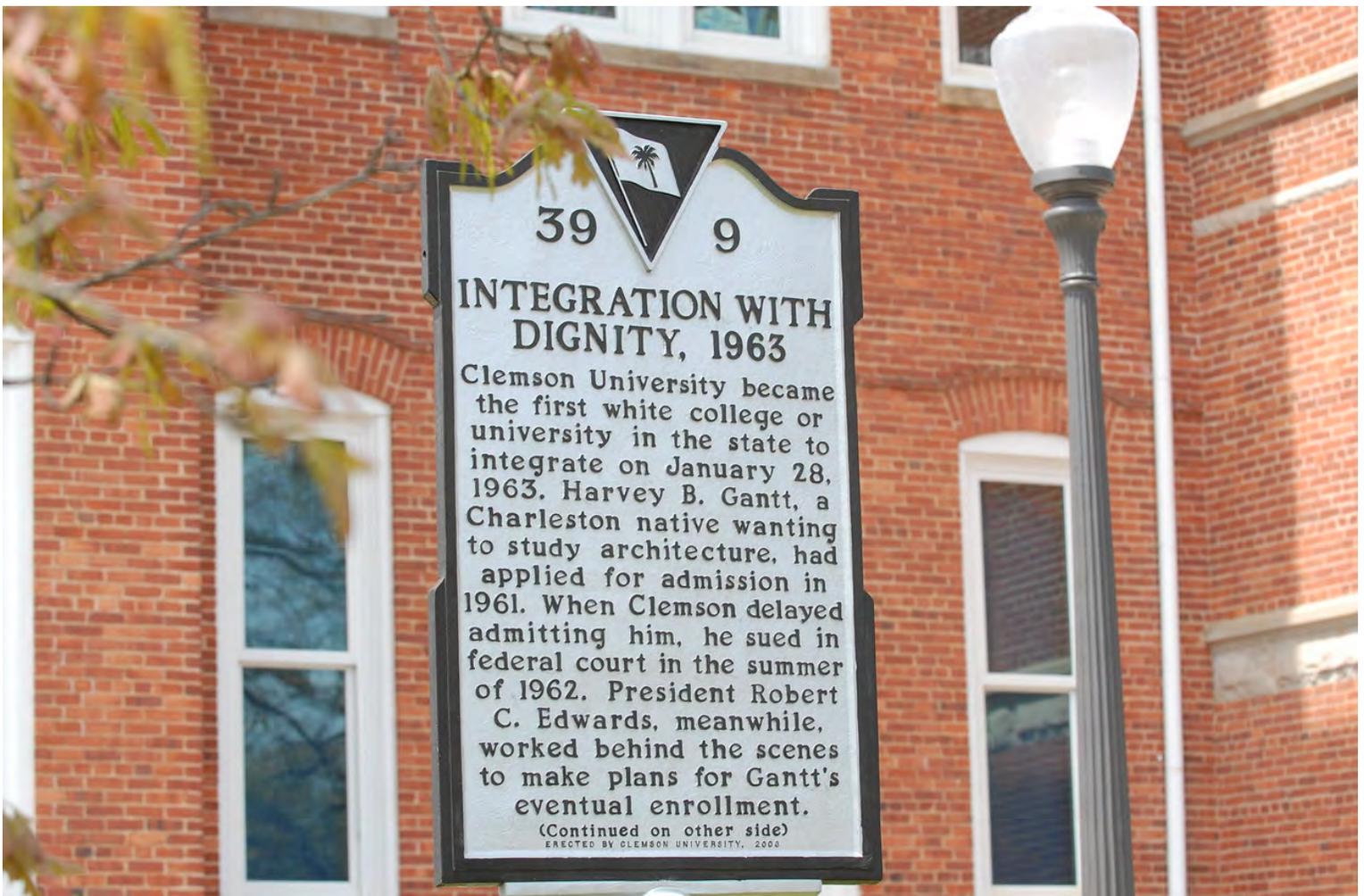
Faculty representatives come from disciplines of political science, sociology, English, economics, science, and University Libraries. The Director of the Office of Teaching Effectiveness and Innovation provided coalition input, and a faculty Teaching Fellow will be instrumental in carrying our work forward.

Staff and faculty representatives from the Clemson Housing & Dining unit, the Gantt Multicultural Center, the Office of Student Involvement & Leadership, the Office of Student Transitions, and Student Athlete Development are part of the coalition. The faculty and staff on our coalition are advisors for student organizations. They teach classes. They are involved in community organizations and have a dedication to diversity and inclusion. They are leaders on and off campus.

Furthermore, we feel especially fortunate to have the support of the Pickens County NAACP and the local League of Women Voters with specific representatives on our coalition. Our community experts provide much depth and breadth of experience to our first ever campus plan and have established connections with the local elections board and elections officials.

To create this plan, we had a series of five focused meetings over the fall of 2019 for vetting and sorting ideas into strategies. We used a modified version of the "Votes and Ballots" templates to guide our planning. These strategies were then utilized to create our five central short-term and long-term goals. The Clemson for Democracy leadership coalition is now moving into implementation phase in the spring 2020 semester.

## III.) Commitment



Clemson University is a public-land grant institution. Our founding and values are inherently related to the concepts of citizenship, with a mission where "Our primary purpose is educating undergraduate and graduate students to think deeply about and engage in the social, scientific, economic, and professional challenges of our times."

We are currently in an era of unprecedented growth and demand, along with a recent Carnegie reclassification as a Doctoral University - Very high research activity (R01), up from an R02 less than five years ago. Many things are changing. Our institutional landscape (discussed in section IV

below) indicates that we may not currently be fully delivering on our citizenship mission, but this action plan is one dedicated attempt to do better.

We would describe our institutional commitment in two ways: through positional leader support and through structural support. Positionally, our Provost and our Vice President of Student Affairs are both aware of and in support of our democratic engagement initiative. Furthermore, Provost Jones helped to champion the creation of the DemocrACCy challenge with all of the ACC-AC (Atlantic Coast Conference-Academic Consortium) Provosts in the fall of 2019, a challenge that Clemson is helping to lead and orchestrate. In terms of our structural support, building our Clemson for Democracy coalition was not difficult; we have multiple campus leaders (as discussed above in section II) who are "all in" for democratic engagement initiatives. As a large campus, our biggest challenge to the coalition will be in continuing to coordinate across units, but we are committed to doing so and working toward our goals and strategies outlined in the sections below.

## IV.) Landscape

Clemson University employs a multi-year, nationally normed survey schedule as one form of indirect assessment for the learning experiences of our student population and for assessing our campus climate. This institutional data is a valuable tool for measuring our students' growth over time and comparing to peer institutions.

- National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE): Given in AY 15-16, 20-21, and on a three-year cycle thereafter. The NSSE, administered to first-year and senior students, collects and compares information on how undergraduate students spend their time and what they gain from attending college.
- Multi-institutional Study of Leadership (MSL): Given in AY 18-19 and on a three-year cycle thereafter. The MSL provides information on the development of socially responsible leadership across several research-based parameters.
- HERI surveys - Your First College Year (YFCY) and College Senior Survey (CSS): Given in 19-20 and on a three-year cycle thereafter. These surveys are given to both first-year and senior students in order to assess academic and personal development.

Many of the questions and disaggregated data within the surveys are appropriate indicators of

Clemson University's democratic engagement climate and point to areas where we need to improve.

[Click here for a comprehensive look at the tables in this section and for our HERI and student learning outcome plans](#)

## Part 1. NSSE.

The table below summarizes the most pertinent questions and student responses on the 2016 NSSE. The NSSE data indicates areas for improvement with regard to curricular and co-curricular democratic engagement. Clemson students are not engaging with societal issues or diverse perspectives as much as students at peer institutions, and they are not examining their own views on these topics (question 2). In comparing first-year and senior students, the institution's perceived role in helping students navigate difference and civic engagement wanes (question 14). As for question 17, we see some positive data and some areas for improvement, such as the emphasis on informed and active citizenship. The NSSE data has been a powerful indicator for continued institutional improvement and we will continue to monitor for changes as our Clemson for Democracy action plan is implemented.

Having trouble reading? Click on the URL button link above.	Average (FY)* (n=816)***	Comparison**
How often have you done the	(Likert scale: 1=never, 2=sometimes)	
problems or issues	2.5	↓
(religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in	2.4	↓
of your own views on a topic or issue	2.7	↓
to describe the following?	(Likert scale: 1=very little, 2=sometimes)	
from different backgrounds (social,	2.9	
and social, economic, or political issues	2.7	↑
How much has your institution contributed to your development in the following areas?	(Likert scale: 1=very little, 2=sometimes)	
in the area of values and ethics	2.7	
in the areas of (economic, racial/ethnic, political,	2.7	
and social issues)	2.7	↑
	2.7	

↑ denotes senior students. \*\*Comparison is based upon two categories: Senior and Undergraduate. An up or down arrow is shown if our student responses showed a significant difference to both peer groups. \*\*\*Response rate was 21% of total cohort.

## Part 2. MSL.

Our institutional data on the MSL shows many areas where we are improving students' holistic and leadership development, but the table below points to areas where we can improve. Primarily, our citizenship scores are lower than we would like. These data are a major impetus for the creation of our Clemson for Democracy group and for the goals that we have set (delineated in section VI). In looking at specific MSL questions, students indicate that they are voting at much higher rates than our NSLVE data corroborates, and we would like to continue to compare the two data sets over time. In terms of other democratic indicators, we see that our students are not engaged at high rates. As a result, we have set specific Clemson for Democracy goals to move the needle on these items.

Having trouble reading? Click

on the URL button link above.

more than for national peer groups over time (pre-college to college senior year), our students of self, collaboration, resiliency, and controversy with civ

political and social action people can take as	%
have participated in at least once in the past two	
local election	28
ion about political issues	49
bout political issues on campus outside of the	56
rganizations or candidates	61
ontact, a politician or a civil servant to express	83
	90
ction group, or candidate's campaign	95

## Part 3. HERI Surveys.

We have not yet given the HERI Your First College Year (YFCY) or College Senior Survey (CSS), but have identified four question sets (with 20 indicators total) that directly align with our goals. We look forward to having our spring 2020 data as a baseline and to compare with our 2023 data to come as we launch Clemson for Democracy.

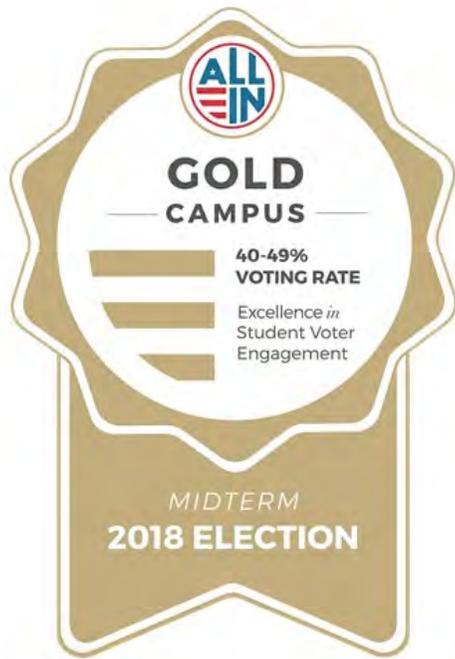
## Part 4. Democratic Engagement and Civic Learning Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

To-date, we do not have institutional student learning outcomes around democratic engagement and civic learning. We have set this as a long-term goal and will work toward implementation and assessment, using the AAC&U Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric to guide our work.

# V.) NSLVE

Clemson University 2014 and 2018 NSLVE  
Campus Report

Clemson University 2012 and 2016 NSLVE  
Campus Report



We are glad to have the opportunity to make our NSLVE data public. Prior to the 2018 midterms, Clemson has never had or used the NSLVE data. In both our Clemson for Democracy coalition meetings and in talking with stakeholders, we see the value of this data to help us better understand our students, their habits, and where we should focus our efforts.

Like the rest of the nation, we are optimistic in learning that student voting rates drastically improved from 2014 to 2018. It is with both pleasure and humility that we accept our Gold Seal for a greater than average student voting rate from the 2018 election. Pleasure because things are better

than we thought...humility because we have only just now begun the hard work of improving democratic engagement.

We found our data to be surprising in some ways and not in others. With regard to the 2018 midterms, a large number of our students are registered to vote (80%). However, of those who are registered, only a little over half (51.3%) actually voted. For the 2016 election, nearly 80% of the students voted, but voter registration was lower (72.8%). We believe - based on this data and evidence from the literature - that focusing our efforts on voter education and voter turnout will be most important for our students, along with providing students with accurate and reliable information on registering to vote either in our local precinct or at their permanent home addresses.

We explicitly utilized our NSLVE data in setting our goals and will explicitly use our NSLVE data in measuring our progress on those goals.

Because of how our IPEDS data is reported, we could not extrapolate from the NSLVE reports much meaningful data on a number of student demographic variables. However, we found the voter breakdown by discipline/major to be quite enlightening. Clemson student data seems to follow

national trends: students studying education, history, and public service professions vote at the highest rates. STEM students vote at the lowest rates, which is especially problematic at a school such as ours where these fields constitute a large percentage of our student population.

As one result of analyzing this data, our coalition has developed strategies specifically aimed toward improving the infusion of real-world issues into our STEM courses and STEM curricula. We are in the midst of curricular revisions (general education revision, high-impact practices and engaged learning), and using our NSLVE data as both an indicator and a lever provides an opportunity for preparing better citizens.

## VI.) Goals

**Goal 1. Voter registration.** In 2020, we intend to increase student voter registration rates by 10% from the last Presidential election to 83% overall. This will be measured through the institution's participation in NSLVE.

**Goal 2. Voter engagement/turn-out.** In 2020, we intend to increase voting rate of registered students

by 5% from the last Presidential election to 85% overall. This will be measured through the institution's participation in NSLVE.

**Goal 3. Curricular connections.** We intend to increase democratic engagement and civic learning in our Clemson graduate and undergraduate academic curricula. We will pilot in spring 2020 and intend that faculty of at least twenty courses have explicitly created voter education activities. In academic year 2020-2021, we intend that faculty of at least 100 courses have explicitly created voter education activities.

**Goal 4. Collaborative programming.** We intend to increase democratic engagement and civic learning in our co-curricular and programmatic offerings. We will integrate voter education activities into our co-curricular and programmatic portfolios such that we reach 10,000 students between spring 2020 and spring 2021, with representation by gender and race that is equal to our student body demographics.

**Goal 5. Long-term goal.** Create University-level democratic engagement and civic learning student learning outcomes by 2022. Work toward implementation strategies for these outcomes such that all students are reached by 2025.

# VII.) Strategies

[Click here to view our working sheet of strategies](#)



## Strategies for Goal 1

Orientation and advising: a.) Orientation advisors will be trained to deliver a basic info session on the importance of registering to vote (and how to's) with all undergrad orientation sessions. b.) Advisors will be prepared with training to incorporate conversations about voter registration/education/turn-out into advising sessions. c.) Incorporate voter registration information into University-level graduate student orientation.

Technology and support: a.) Cultivate the use of TurboVote through Tiger Quest. b.) Add TurboVote to the MyClemson app.

Involvement pathways: a.) Voter registration tables at Tiger Prowl. (Background information: this is the campus involvement fair, held every January and August). b.) Voter registration tables at all service events. c.) Develop and deliver student organization presentations and registration challenges.

## Strategies for Goal 2

Reducing barriers: a.) Incorporate absentee ballot module into study abroad pre-departure orientation. b.) Work with faculty & staff taking University-sponsored trips over fall break to prepare absentee ballot information. (Background information: election day is a no-school holiday in South Carolina, as per state statute. However, Clemson University moves fall break back to accommodate election day every two years, so many social and academic trips are held over fall break.) c.) Relay state-specific information to students about registration and absentee voting during out-of-state socials during new student Welcome Week.

GOTV communication: a.) Develop clear and consistent messaging about voter education through our PR platforms. b.) Implement our social media plan, including student Instagram take-overs. c.) Partner with CAT Bus and the Parking & Transportation Services Unit for signage/PR and GOTV transportation.

GOTV education: a.) Create modules for Residential Education to include voting decisions for residential students. b.) Work with League of Women Voters for training and presentations from the local election boards.

## Strategies for Goal 3

Teaching development for faculty: a.) Develop faculty reading group around teaching for democracy and/or incorporating social issues into courses. b.) Host teaching roundtables specifically for STEM faculty around teaching for democracy and/or incorporating social issues into courses.

Course-based projects and training: a.) Coordinate with the Women's Leadership program on issues-based and service-learning projects in the capstone course. b.) Advertise to faculty a menu of project-

based learning opportunities for democratic engagement. c.) Develop materials and training for new faculty and graduate student teachers of record on student voter registration/education/participation and democratic engagement.

## Strategies for Goal 4

Resources for student organizations: a.) Develop a manual for student organizations to share guidelines for bringing political candidates to campus. b.) Develop a packet to loan out to student organizations for democratic engagement activities.

Cultural programming and diversity emphasis: a.) Voter registration & education during cultural months, with emphasis on issues impacting specific populations (Black History Month, Women's History Month, Pride Week, Latinx Heritage Month, Asian American/Pacific Islanders Month; b.) Feature social and democratic engagement issues through Clemson Libraries displays; c.) Develop democratic engagement night series at Barnes Center. (Background information: this is the after-hours student programming hub on campus.)

## Strategies for Goal 5

Collaboration: Start working toward this goal through alignment of current initiatives.

## VIII.) Reporting



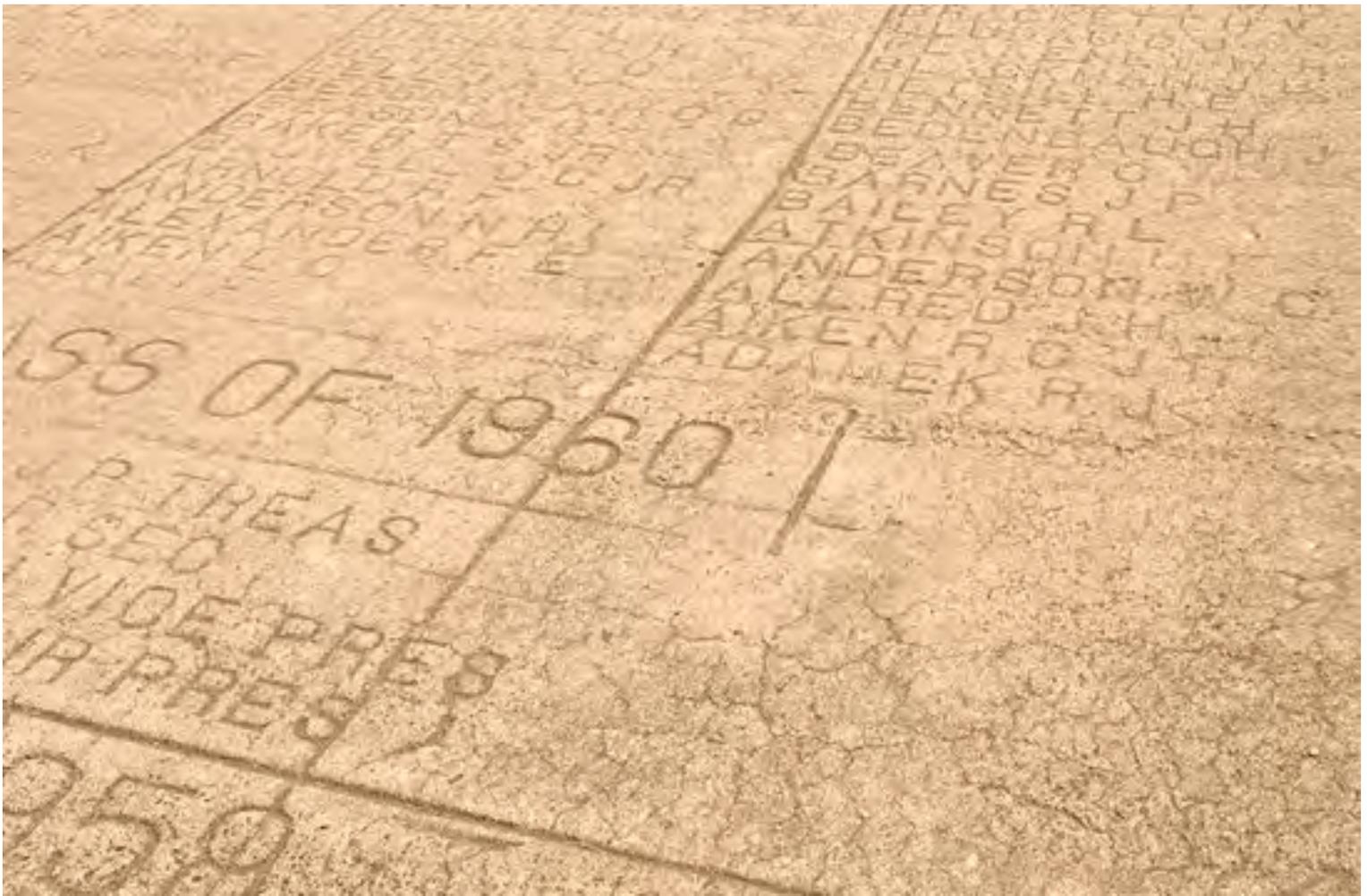
We have intentionally used the Adobe Spark Page format for creating our campus plan, not only for the visual appeal, but also because it allows for:

- The use of URLs for public posting of our NSLVE and institutional data related to democratic engagement;
- The inclusion of our Google Doc, tracking real-time strategies and key contacts;
- Continuous updating as we determine what works for us and what tweaks need to be made to our action plan over time.

Furthermore, we have:

- Established Clemson for Democracy as a group within our student organizations database (Tiger Quest) so that the coalition is searchable and trackable;
- Started the process of creating a static Clemson for Democracy webpage on the Student Involvement and Leadership website for sharing our activities;
- Created the necessary links to the aforementioned website from the Office of Teaching and Effectiveness and Innovation webpage for a faculty audience.

## IX.) Evaluation



We believe that our short-term goals all fulfill the SMARTIE recommendations and we will have regular evaluation to ensure that we are reaching them. We will have regular check-ins three times each semester (beginning, middle, end) with our Clemson for Democracy leadership coalition to make sure we are on track with our strategies that contribute to the success of our goals.

Our long-term goal is more comprehensive. As we work on institutionalizing goals 1-4, we will be laying the groundwork for goal 5. As mentioned in the commitment section, much strategic planning and much change is currently underway at Clemson.

Rather than starting an entirely new area for democratic engagement and civic learning student learning outcomes, we will be working toward aligning this goal with other strategic initiatives.

*Thanks for reading. Want to talk more? Contact Clemson for Democracy via Bridget Trogden (Trogden@Clemson.edu) or Kate Radford (Radford@Clemson.edu).*



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