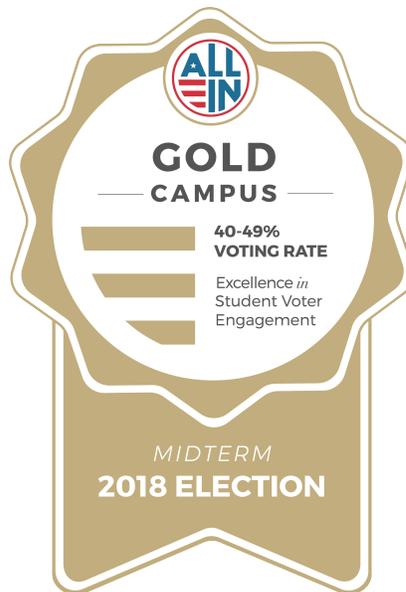


Columbus State All In Action Plan



Executive Summary

Columbus State University is a diverse non-partisan sector of students that represent all political groups, organizations, and the student body. All In committee plans to promote civic engagement, political literacy, and political involvement amongst students at Columbus State University through a series of events and campaign projects. This committee strives to enhance the ability of all students to understand the political system, allowing them to gain a stronger comprehension of how the U.S. political system was designed. We aim to display how politics affects students' lives and how they can make a change in the future. We seek to explain political processes, including elections, policies, and other domestic issues. We function as a resource for Columbus State University students to understand U.S. politics without bias or inaccuracy.

Background

The Columbus State University All In committee was created in the year of 2019, under the supervision of Dr. Reese and chaired by student, Curtis Walker. The committee was designed to develop a campus-wide initiative to promote and encourage political literacy and civic engagement amongst the student body. Recognizing the lack of political awareness of many students, our committee centered itself in identifying ways to improve the ways in which students see politics. Not only changing their perspective of politics in general, but clarifying parts of the system so that students are able to reach their own conclusions in discovering how they view politics and find their own ideologies.

Leadership

Curtis Walker - Chair

Quincy Puryear- Co-Chair

Secretary- Madison Miller

Dr. Chip Reese - Faculty Advisor

Landscape

Established in 1958, Columbus College began serving students as a small entity, not yet accredited as a four year college. Progressing in 1965, the Regents approved the institutions application to become a four-year college. Following approval, Columbus College established itself as the home of the might rebels. The rebel mascot paraded in After the first successful four-year graduating class in 1970, masters and specialist degrees were soon added to the college. During those years, Columbus College had a completely different

Mission

The mission of Columbus State University is to cultivate a politically active student body that is capable of not only understanding, but acting on their political ideologies. It is our desire to help students develop their critical thinking skills by supplying accurate, non-partisan information in which the student is able to think for themselves. Creating a politically literate campus will allow students to become engaged in the political process and potentially develop future leaders. Our committee strives to also create an environment in which students feel comfortable in voicing their opinions, ideas, and solutions to various political scenarios. Fostering a campus that allows not only freedom of speech but one that supports having healthy dialogues which increase both political knowledge and understanding. Allowing students to become confident in their ideologies and willing to take action on their beliefs in a productive way.

Ballot Access

Recognizing that Columbus State University is not an authorized polling location, and noting Georgia's voting policies, our committee plans to promote ballot access in a strategic manner. First our committee plans to increase ballot access by addressing voter registration. Through increasing the amount of students registered to vote, a greater number of college students will be able to receive ballot access in times of an election. Secondly, our committee plans to inform students of voter requirements when they are to go to the polls. This includes but is not limited to, voter registration, voter identification, polling location, ballot previews, and voter verification. Using these methods students will be prepared as they go back to their home districts and vote. This not only improves their confidence and willingness to vote as they are effectively prepared, but it also reduces the chance that students may be denied access to polling locations.

Voter Turnout

In order to increase voter turnout, Columbus State University plans to use this committee as a tool in educating and encouraging students to vote. Columbus State student voter turnout relies on voter confidence and understanding the system in which they are working in. This committee plans to address these issues by creating educational events and small projects that teach students how the political process works. When there is a greater understanding, there is a greater willingness to take action. By providing students with the information, helping them understand it, and giving them the tools and means to act on their own beliefs, there will be an increase in Columbus State University student voter turnout.

Goals

Recognizing the complexities in which the United States political system is currently in, and acknowledging the overwhelming amount of news spread through multiple forms, the primary goal of this committee is to simplify politics for our students. Being that our society today has proven to be highly partisan and politically minded, many students at Columbus State University feel overwhelmed by the amount of information they are forced to take in. In addition, the term “fake news” has created a national dialogue over what to believe is real news over inaccurate information. The overwhelming amount of information and the insecurity of knowing whether or not the information provided is accurate causes many students to either stress or become frustrated when discussing politically related topics.

In order to reduce this issue, Columbus State will first strive to simplify political information so that it is understandable for the students of Columbus State University. By decreasing the amount of information thrown at students and evaluating sources for accurate news articles, our committee acts as a filter for students to interpret political information for themselves without causing strains. In addition, this will help students to become more politically engaged as they are better able and comfortable in the facts they receive. Thus making them more likely to discuss politics with other students, and develop a cycle of effective political dialogue.

Columbus State not only wishes to increase student political literacy, but also strives to make students politically active. Our committee sets as its second goal, to increase registered voters amongst the student body. Following educating students on the political process, the simplest form of political activism would be to exercise their right to vote. In order to do so, students must first be registered voters within the state they reside. By increasing the amount of students that are registered voters on campus, we in turn increase the amount of students that become politically active through voting.

To further encourage students to become politically active, our committee strives to promote a greater campus discussion of politics. Students are given the right to express their beliefs on campus and our committee would like to present opportunities for students to do so in a safe and open-minded environment. By engaging in open dialogue students will be able to become comfortable in speaking what they find to be important in relation to the political system . It also offers a time for other students to learn about different perspectives while discussing their differences in an appropriate manner.

Barriers

To increase student voter participation within upcoming elections, it is important to note complications which we expect to face. Being that many students of Columbus State University do not reside within the Columbus or Muscogee County area, students may register on campus, but must vote within their designated districts. Recognizing Georgia’s strict voter fraud prevention laws, students will be expected to vote within their home districts as shown when they register to vote. The location accessibility to

voting polls serve as a barrier which may negatively impact student voter turnout. As students return home to vote, our committee will not be able to remind students to vote as they are in their voting district. Election day voting also serves as a barrier in which many students may procrastinate in voting. By doing so, students are forced to wait in typically long lines, brace for unforeseen weather, and potentially be denied the opportunity to vote with no time to make the needed corrections. Noting that absentee ballots serve as a useful tool to vote without physically going to a polling location, this method of voting serves as a barrier as well. Students are unable to know if their ballot was received and are unaware if their vote counted. Within our campus, students need to know and feel that their vote was taken and through that their voice was heard. Absentee ballots do not provide this resolution for students and may in turn decrease their likelihood to vote in future elections. In addition, other barriers for student voting include proper voter registration and completion within the given time, identification to be shown at polling locations, and Georgia's recent removal of more than 300,000 registered voters in which many are college students. These serve as barriers to our efforts as the voting process while highly secure, is also confusing and excessive to many students attending Columbus State University.

Strategy

In order to combat the noted barriers to our efforts, we have found that early awareness and consistent assistance are key. Students of Columbus State University struggle to understand how and why the voting process is complex. Not only do they not understand, but when they ask it is often too late to make proper corrections. In order to prevent these types of issues, we find it pertinent to address them in advance. Beginning with voter awareness, our committee strives to inform students of why it is important to vote. We plan to address that topic in various ways, through historical facts, future impacts, and explaining the power one has with their vote. We then plan to address the voting system within the state of Georgia. Highlighting issues such as voter suppression, voter fraud, and the removal of over 300,000 registered Georgian voters from the registration list. During this time we plan to inform students about these issues and how they can prevent these issues from occurring to them at polling locations. Following that process our committee plans to conduct voter registration drives in which all members are trained and capable of assisting students in the registration process. We will conduct multiple drives throughout the spring semester and heavily emphasize their importance within the fall 2020 semester, prior to Georgia's registration cut off date. Prior to the cut off date, our committee will inform students through advertising and email updates as to when the registration period will close in order to vote in the upcoming election. Recognizing that many students may be unaware what office they will be voting for, our committee plans to assist by presenting students with their potential ballot information. Using Georgia's voter registration and verification website, students will be able to access what their voter ballot will look like prior to the election day. In elections with greater attention and



publicity, for example: the 2020 presidential race, our committee plans to give insight into what the candidates are like and what they will do if elected into office. This will be done in an accurate and non-partisan way which will not only encourage students to vote as they seem fit, but also explains to student voters what they may or may not be voting for. Most importantly our committee will strongly promote early voting for all Columbus State University students. Planning to post reminders and updates for students as they go home throughout the early voting period to ensure that their vote will be counted. This committee will not strongly endorse absentee ballots as there is not a method in which Georgia has allowed absentee voters to know that their ballots were received. In order to allow students the gratification of knowing their votes were inputted, we will focus mostly on early voting. Using absentee ballots will be promoted as a last resort.

Evaluation

In order to note the progress of the Columbus State University's All In committee. The committee plans to conduct self evaluations by documenting All In activities to be reviewed in the future by committee members at the end of our efforts for the year. Feedback from students and faculty are welcome in order to benefit the future of All In. While we are self evaluating, we do also have the benefit of data from the state office of Georgia Secretary of State , that shows increases in voter registration and participation by students in age brackets that are the most affected by shortages in civic engagements and participation. Using the given All In can measure the progress and alter the course of action to reflect what works best based on what was found in the evaluation.