ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Strategic Plan
Emory University – Atlanta Campus
DRAFT: December 15, 2019

Background and Summary
Voter turnout among young people, including college students, often lags overall voting eligible population turnout in elections. Emory students are no exception. In recent years, the turnout rates for eligible Emory students have been below or at the national average for colleges and universities in each year. Many members of the Emory community have been aware of this problem and engaged in addressing it. Going back at least to the 2008 elections, students and staff have set up voting registration tables, organized debates and candidate appearances, canvassed for candidates, and helped people get to the polls. These efforts were, however, fairly fragmented and short-lived.

In response to heightened political awareness and the need to strengthen student voting and related civic engagement efforts, a group of Emory staff, faculty and students began coordinating under the loose umbrella of what would become the Emory Votes Initiative (described in greater detail below). Initially, their focus was on assisting Emory students on the Atlanta campus to register and turn out to vote in the 2018 mid-term election. The group of over thirty interested campus members, mainly from the Atlanta campus at first, met monthly to increase student voter registration events, assist students with registration issues, communicate about where and when to vote through signage and emails, walk voters to the polls, transport voters to polls on Cliff Shuttles, and identify more community members across the campuses who would help all individuals at Emory to "operationalize their civic duty."

The experience of the 2018 election is reflective of the substantial efforts in the past in our community to make sure that voters are registered and that they are able to access their polling places. Our community, from students to faculty to administration, is broadly supportive of civic engagement and voting efforts, however, attempts to institutionalize this support on an ongoing basis have largely been absent. To leverage and coordinate the immense enthusiasm across the university for civic engagement, Emory University joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in July 2019. Participating will have myriad benefits for the campus in line with the university's recent strategic framework. Most immediately, increasing efforts to facilitate student engagement through voting and civic participation will enrich student experience and help to make Emory an "academic community of choice," in line with Pillar 2 of the plan. It will also serve to amplify the voice and impact of the Emory community in Atlanta, Georgia, and beyond. Finally, working to increase student engagement promotes the university's commitment to producing critically-thinking, ethical citizens and nurturing future leaders in the public and private sectors.

This document, developed by the Emory Votes Initiative, outlines our strategy for increasing our campus turnout for the 2020 primary and general elections.

Organization and Personnel
The development and implementation of this strategic plan will be led by the Emory Votes Initiative (EVI). During the fall of 2018, a grassroots group of staff, faculty, and students came

together to coordinate voter registration and turnout efforts in the midterm elections. After the election, participants sought to institutionalize the knowledge and experience that had been gained from 2018 election. The Emory Votes Initiative is dedicated to fostering a more civically engaged campus by increasing voter education, providing awareness programs, and empowering our community with informed political resources. Emory students, staff, and faculty developed this non-partisan initiative to strengthen and centralize voting efforts on campus. Since its inception, EVI has received strong support from the Office of the Provost and the Office of Campus Life which has been critical in lending administrative and financial support to the group.

The group is led by a steering committee with representation from staff, faculty, and students: Alex Bolton (Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science); Allison Burdette (Professor, Goizueta Business School); Rick Doner (Professor, Department of Political Science); Scott Foster (Director of Academic Technology, Oxford College); Rachel Haines (student, Candler School of Theology); Rhiannon Hubert (Assistant Dean and Director of Student Involvement and Leadership, Oxford College); Suzanne Onorato (Assistant Vice President, Student Life); Ben Palmer (Student Government Association President); James Roland (Director of the Office of Community and Civic Engagement); Taylor Spicer (Programs Manager, Office of Sustainability Initiatives); Katie Vigilante (Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Oxford College). The steering committee is supported by part-time graduate and undergraduate student interns on both the Atlanta and Oxford campuses: Rachel Haines (Atlanta), Zishan Sajid (Atlanta), Kassie Sarkar (Atlanta), and Jordan Spires (Oxford).

The steering committee meets on a monthly basis. The entire EVI group meets about once per semester to discuss ongoing issues, communicate about opportunities to become involved, brainstorm about outstanding issues, and develop the group's overall priorities.

In the coming months, the Office of the Provost and Campus Life have budgeted for a 0.5 FTE staff line to work on EVI and help to facilitate its activities across the university. We anticipate this individual will play a critical role in achieving the goals set out here and in supporting EVI's participation in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. Hiring and recruitment for this position is planned for winter 2019.

Goals
Our specific goals for the 2020 election are:
- Voter registration rate of 85% among undergraduate and graduate students
- Voter turnout rate of 65% among undergraduate and graduate students

In the longer term, we see our efforts as an integral part of Emory's commitment to educating civically engaged and ethical global citizens. Our students will go on to become leaders in the public and private sectors. In fostering a culture of civic engagement on campus, we can help our students to develop the skills to ensure their voices will be heard now and into the future.

Landscape
Emory University has roughly 15,000 students, about half graduate and half undergraduate. The undergraduate student population is divided between the Atlanta campus and Oxford College of Emory University in Oxford, GA. Our NSLVE reports provide a number of important insights

into recent voter turnout that can help to guide our efforts. The table below lists the registration and turnout rates for Emory and all universities that participate in NSLVE.

Year	Emory Reg. Rate	Nat'l. Reg. Rate	Emory Turnout	Nat't. Turnout
2012	72.7%	69.0%	40.6%	46.9%
2014	62.1%	64.9%	17.9%	19.1%
2016	75.1%	70.6%	47.4%	50.4%
2018	76.4%	73.3%	41.1%	39.1%

In general, Emory's registration rates have been either near or above national averages. However, except for the 2018 midterm elections, Emory's turnout rates have been consistently below average nationally.

The 2018 NSLVE reports also provide additional insights that will guide our efforts moving forward about the state of voter engagement in the Emory community:
- Graduate student turnout significantly exceeds undergraduate turnout.
- About half of students that voted in the 2018 midterm elections voted by absentee ballot.
- The lowest turnout rates were recorded among students studying computer science, mathematics, and the physical sciences.
- Asian and Latinx students had lower than average turnout rates while white and black students had higher than average turnout rates.

Support and Partnerships
EVI has received strong support from our administrative, academic, and student partners around campus. The EVI, is an initiative that is housed in the Office of the Provost and Campus Life. It has in the past and present received significant financial commitments from both as well as the Office of Community and Civic Engagement to fund its operations. In the 2018 election, Transportation and Parking Services also provided substantial support to the effort to have shuttle services that took members of the Emory community to the polls.

The academic administration beyond the Office of the Provost has also taken actions that materially support EVI's efforts. EVI has reached out to all of the academic deans across the university seeking their support for the initiative and their affirmation of support for faculty in their units that are engaged in EVI's work. All of these communications have been well-received, suggesting strong support the different schools for EVI and a broader commitment to Civic Engagement.

Student groups have also been important partners for EVI, particularly the undergraduate and graduate student government associations. We hope to expand the reach of our student outreach efforts in the future, with a particular eye toward including groups that have traditionally been underrepresented in civic engagement on our campus.

The Plan
Technology: TurboVote

In July 2019, EVI with financial support from the Office of Community and Civic Engagement, contracted with TurboVote, a technology platform created by Democracy Works that facilitates voter registration, disseminates information about deadlines and polling places. Emory has a dedicated TurboVote portal (emory.turbovote.org) that allows members of our community to sign up. Since the launch of this Emory-specific portal, there have been over 700 sign-ups.

We see TurboVote and its integration into our activities as central to the success of our plan. As the numbers from NSLVE suggest, the proportion of Emory students who are registered to vote is relatively high, and above the national average in every year for which we have data (though there is still clearly room for improvement). This is a testament to the successful past efforts at registering voters by student and staff groups. However, there does appear to be a disconnect when it comes to actual turnout. This suggests there are other intervening factors between registration and turning out to the polls that lead registered students to not cast a ballot. We hope that TurboVote will help to bridge that gap, at least in part, through providing information that lowers the costs of voting. It is especially useful insofar as it provides reminders about absentee voting, including about deadlines for requesting ballots and information about how to do so, given that approximately half of Emory students use this method of voting.

One goal that our group has is to seek out ways to integrate TurboVote into existing academic technology. A link to the portal has already been integrated into OrgSync, and we are exploring ways to further embed TurboVote into other student-facing platforms such as OPUS and Canvas. Doing so will give students greater opportunities to see TurboVote information as part of their normal academic activities.

Communications Strategy

EVI recognizes that communicating with the Emory community is key to achieving the goals we have set out, and as such this is an area where we are actively seeking to improve our efforts. Communications about the events we are having as well as how to become involved with the group itself are essential for ensuring that our community is aware of the opportunities for civic engagement that exist on our campus and why it is important for everyone's voice to be heard in the political process.

The EVI steering committee has identified a number of goals related to communications that we are seeking to achieve in advance of the 2020 elections that will make the group more effective by delivering our message to external audiences:

- We are currently working to develop an Emory-branded website that will serve as a central hub for information about EVI, events we are hosting and sponsoring, ways to become involved, and materials that will help our community participate in the political process.
- Our group has created social media accounts on a number of platforms, including Twitter and Facebook, that we plan to use to push out messages from EVI.
- Development of a short video or series of videos to educate the Emory community about the importance of civic engagement, the nuts-and-bolts of voting, and how to use TurboVote. Our plan would be to distribute these through multiple platforms, including a website and social media.

- Ongoing development of flyers and handouts that can be posted around campus to alert the community to the power of their voice, EVI events, and TurboVote. Several flyers have been produced already for the Atlanta and Oxford campuses, but we anticipate that these will continue to be created and adapted as we move into 2020.
- Advertising for EVI events and resources on electronic signage in buildings around campus. This will require designing and adapting existing materials to be used in this form.

Civic Engagement and Voting in the Classroom

Faculty have a unique role to play in fostering civic engagement on campuses. They have regular times in which they can directly engage with students. Educating globally minded leaders in the private and public sectors is an essential pillar of Emory University's mission. However, many faculty do not necessarily see clear connections between the work they do in the classroom and this goal of the university. While some faculty, for instance in political science, may see these connections readily in their teaching, they may be more difficult to make in some fields, particularly the natural sciences and mathematics. Indeed, a recent study found that only 18% of surveyed faculty at private and public universities around the country thought "teaching and encouraging students to become agents of social change – which explicitly involves issues of voting and civic behaviors like protesting and organizing" was an essential pedagogical goal.[1]

To address this, faculty on the EVI steering committee have convened a faculty working group with representatives across the university's academic divisions, including in the College of Arts and Sciences, Oxford College[2], the School of Nursing, and Goizueta Business School. Within the College of Arts and Sciences, we have made a special effort to recruit faculty from physics and biology, fields that our NSLVE reports indicate have among the lowest student turnout rates in the university. Members of EVI have reached out to all of the academic deans across the university and the College of Arts and Science Faculty Senate to enlist their support for our efforts and to ask them to encourage their faculty to be supportive more broadly of EVI's goals. The responses to these entreaties have been uniformly positive, and many of the members of our faculty working group were directly recommended by their academic deans. We see this academic administrative support as crucial for gaining buy-in from faculty moving forward.

The discussions within this faculty group have generated a number of goals that we hope to achieve in the run up to the 2020 election that are centered on bringing civic engagement and voting directly into the classroom

First, the faculty working group is creating a repository of short modules that faculty across different disciplines can draw on to bring discussions about government, public policy, and civic engagement directly into the classroom. For instance, one member of the faculty working group, Helen Baker (School of Nursing) included a number of assignments in her course on global public health aimed to educate her students about the importance of voting for nurses. Other modules that we are developing include discussions of funding for scientific research, funding for the arts, the nature of scientific evidence used in the regulatory process, how census

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[1] https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/04/25/civic-engagement-and-social-change-not-priority-faculty-members-opinion

[2] Oxford College is submitting an action specific to their campus but operates under the EVI umbrella.

categories shape and reflect social and racial identities, and more. Our hope is that by creating these short modules, faculty will more readily see how they can integrate material about civic engagement and voting in the classroom and lower the barriers to doing so. This, we hope, will serve to make these themes more central to the Emory academic experience. By the fall of 2020, we hope to have these modules posted on the EVI website, where they can be accessed both by Emory faculty and faculty at other institutions.

Second, our group is looking for ways more directly to incorporate TurboVote directly into the classroom and encourage faculty to have their students sign up. Some successful pilot experiences last semester will inform our understanding of how to do this. In the fall of 2019, Goizueta Business School Prof. Allison Burdette offered extra credit to her class for signing up for TurboVote, resulting in over one hundred new registrations at the site. On the Oxford campus, Prof. Katie Vigilante created a competition wherein the first-year discovery seminars that all freshman are required to take competed for prizes to see which class could have the greatest numbers of sign ups. This also proved to be successful, particularly when faculty dedicated a small amount of class time to allowing students to sign up for TurboVote and discussed the importance of civic engagement. We are currently working with the Atlanta campus College of Arts and Sciences to incorporate a similar TurboVote encouragement into freshmen seminars. We have also distributed information to department chairs (through the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences) about TurboVote and encouraging their faculty to introduce it to their students. We can measure the success of these efforts by observing whether they lead to greater TurboVote registrations or not, which makes them a particularly valuable part of our efforts.

Third, we also have a goal to hold an event on civic engagement in the classroom through the Center for Faculty Development and Excellence (CFDE) in the spring of 2020. CFDE is a university-wide office that support the research and teaching activities of faculty in each academic division. This event would therefore have a wide reach and we hope be useful for faculty in many disciplines, particularly those where civic engagement has traditionally been less central to teaching.

Finally, EVI members have been reaching out to department chairs in the College of Arts and Sciences (which houses the faculty that interact most with undergraduate and PhD students) about EVI and TurboVote. Representatives have given brief presentations at department faculty meetings about these topics as well as to gather information about the types of materials that would be most useful for faculty in those to disciplines for introducing ideas about civic engagement into the classroom.

<u>Engaging the Staff Community</u>
Civic engagement in the broader staff community is also central to building our campus's culture of political participation. Students interact on a regular basis with staff all over the campus and view them as role models. By exemplifying Emory's commitment to civic engagement and voting, Emory's staff can play an integral role in increasing voter turnout throughout our entire community. The steering committee has identified a number of opportunities that may serve to increase voting among staff members:

- We hope to encourage Transportation and Parking Services to stock voter registration forms in their offices. All staff and faculty that park on campus interact directly with this office, so this is an ideal place to have information about voting and how to register to vote.
- Signs at parking garages and in building common areas that have information about TurboVote and voter registration as well as QR codes that allow people to easily access links with more information
- Emory Human Resources now offers all new hires a brief orientation program. We are hoping that civic engagement can be included within that orientation, either as part of the program, or in materials that are distributed to new employees (e.g., voter registration forms and/or flyers about TurboVote in information packets)
- Presentation to the Staff Council to enlist their support for civic engagement and turnout efforts

Orientation and Residence Hall Events

We plan to replicate and extend our involvement in orientation programs in 2020. This past fall, our orientation efforts focused primarily on having an active tabling presence at undergraduate events during the orientation period. This allowed us to help new students get registered for the first time, update their registration, or learn about the process of registering. We are also planning to have additional events that are tied to residence halls in advance of big voter registration deadlines in February and September (for the primary and general elections, respectively).

Transportation

As our NSLVE report suggests, there is a relatively large drop off between our registration and voting rates. One effort that we first undertook in 2018 was to have the Cliff Shuttles operate from central campus locations to common polling places around campus while the polls are open. We are hoping to operate a similar set of routes on Election Day 2020. We are also contemplating doing a transportation even during the early voting period to a DeKalb polling location so that students who are unable to go to polls on election. We need to start reaching out to partners in Transportation and Parking Services as soon as possible to establish the feasibility, cost, and planning needs to do shuttles for the 2020 election.

Outreach to Student Groups

We also are hoping to plan a number of events in the coming year that are geared toward students that inform them about voting, how to register, and remind them of important deadlines for the coming year. A central goal of these events is to inform students about TurboVote and encourage them to sign up:

- We want to make presentations in all of the residence halls in advance of the primary election that provides information to students about how to register to vote, important deadlines, and how to request absentee ballots. This latter point is important because about half of Emory students have voted via absentee ballot in past elections. Helping them to understand the ways that process differs and giving them access to information about deadlines and ballot request forms is essential to our efforts. The residence halls are an important way to reach students because many first- and second-year undergraduate students live there.

- We are planning to reach out to other student groups to ask to make short presentations at their meetings to increase awareness about EVI, the ALL IN Challenge, and the resources available to students to increase student engagement. In the past, members of EVI have presented at various student meetings, including Greek organizations, residence advisors, and the College Council. We also hope to use these outreach efforts as a way to make contacts with students that have been underrepresented in civic engagement (or at least in voting) on our campus based on the NSLVE reports.
- We plan to continue tabling efforts throughout the school year to reach students at different events, including Wonderful Wednesday. At these events, we will have voter registration materials available, encourage students to sign up on TurboVote and check or update their voter registration status, and work with them to create individual voting plans.
- We are planning other potential events that might more generally increase civic engagement and be an opportunity to reach students throughout 2020, including events where students can come to access materials to request absentee ballots, debate-watching parties, and others. These types events can help add a social or "fun" element to voting and civic engagement that may encourage people to participate.
- Finally, we are planning to have a number of communications and events centered on the 2020 Census. We hope that we can integrate broader themes of civic engagement and voting into those, though we recognize that the audience for the Census communications is broader than for voting.