



## **ALL IN Challenge Action Plan 2020** **LU Action Plan to Increase Civic Learning, Political Engagement, & Voting Rates**

### ***Executive Summary***

Lincoln University of Missouri (LU) is an HBCU land-grant institution founded in 1866. Since its beginning, the mission has been to empower individuals for democratic citizenship. While there have been innumerable changes, LU remains committed to that mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Most recently, after many years of trying, we finally established a polling site on our campus in 2018. That same year, we became a Voter Friendly Campus designee.

The 2020 LU engagement plan was developed by the members of our action coalition listed below. In preparation, we reviewed our Voter Friendly Campus 2018 report, NSLVE data from 2012-2018, and other campuses' plans and reports for ideas and/or best practices. The plan remains a work-in-progress as the uncertainty associated with the pandemic will impact many of our fall decisions. We will add virtual strategies recently learned from the many organizations that are working to mobilize students, youth, and people of color.

The practical purpose of our plan is to educate, mobilize, and increase the turnout of our students on Election Day 2020. The larger, over-arching purpose is to empower students to become more civically engaged in their communities moving forward. This plan is meant to be implemented on LU's campus, yet, we will integrate digital or virtual organizing tools if campus does not fully open in the fall.

The plan will be implemented in three phases.

- First, we will focus on voter registration from August 17 through October 3 (the last day to register before the election). Activities at this stage will include tables at residence hall move-in, freshmen orientation, and opening convocation (Sept 10). There will also be general education classroom visits and a campus-wide contest among organizations to see who can register the most members. We will also place tables in the residence halls bi-weekly in order to assist students with absentee ballot requests and processing.
- The second phase will be voter education from September 26-November 2. We will begin by engaging students on current events (virtually and/or in person) and encouraging them to share their own views and comments. We will also host issue and/or candidate forums in September and October and invite both the Jefferson City and campus communities. Nonpartisan voter guides and sample ballots will be widely advertised and disseminated during this time.
- Lastly, the get-out-the-vote phase will consist of running shuttles from the student union down to the campus polling place; sending commuter students reminders of polling place locations and hours; issuing challenges to campus organizations regarding turnout (similar to registration challenges); and holding a party at the polls with food and prizes.

## ***The Landscape of Lincoln University***

Lincoln University of Missouri is a historically black, 1890 land-grant, public, comprehensive institution that provides excellent educational opportunities including theoretical and applied learning experiences to a diverse population within a nurturing, student-centered environment. Founded by black Union soldiers at the end of the Civil War (1866), it was designed for the special benefit of freed African-Americans. In 1890, Lincoln became a federal land-grant institution to further agricultural study. With these two designations, it seemed a natural consequence that after desegregation, a different underserved population would come to Lincoln: whites from lower socio-economic strata. We have stayed true to the soldiers' dream of access and opportunity by educating for the democratic ideal; serving ethnic minorities, the economically disadvantaged, and those who were not adequately prepared for college work earlier in their education.

Lincoln possesses two primary assets with which to advance civic engagement. The first is our location. We are situated in the state capital Jefferson City, Missouri. Our proximity to the capitol provides us the unique and fortuitous opportunity of bringing those from disadvantaged backgrounds together with those who hold the most political influence in our state.

Secondly, Lincoln is a small school, approximately 2000 students, with a meaningful history. Our small class sizes facilitate interaction and community building. The relationships that are borne here create a vast network of citizens locally, state-wide and internationally. The ethnic diversity of our students, roughly 50% Caucasian and 50% African-American, also sets the stage for meaningful exchanges that further those traits we deem important for 21st-century citizenship.

Our campus is well-situated for improvement. Our NSLVE data for the last presidential election of 2016 showed voter turnout amongst students at 40.7%; yet the percentage of registered students was 77%. These rates are unsurprising in that many student organizations sponsor voter registration drives throughout the year; however, this effort does not carry over into voter turnout efforts. Getting students to the polls will be the primary focus of our efforts this year.

## ***Campus and Community Coalition***

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Ben Arnold and Alphonso Sanders, Provost and Vice President Academic Affairs  
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Anita Cole and Mahlik Good, Honors Program  
Mike Downey, KJLU Campus Radio Station  
Jean Dugan, MO League of Women Voters  
Carlos Graham, Campus and Community Liaison  
Steve Korsmeyer, Cole County Clerk Office  
Amy Miller, Student Success Center  
Tammy Nobles, Career Services  
Octoria Ridenhour, Office of Student Engagement  
Omar Safir, Pi Sigma Alpha, Political Science Honors Fraternity  
Bryan Salmons, LU Faculty Senate  
Kelli Todd, LU Staff Council  
Earnest Washington, Student Government Association

***Strategies for Action***

*Voter Registration*

- During Student Orientation Week, August 17-21, we will include voter registration opportunities and information for all incoming freshmen.
- The weekend before classes start, August 22-23, we will offer registration opportunities and information for all students as they move into the residence halls.
- September 7-11, we will visit classrooms across campus to offer registration opportunities and information, particularly for students who do not reside on campus.
- September 10 is Lincoln's Opening Convocation where our campus-wide messaging will begin; including memes, social media posts, television monitor messages and announcements on the learning management system regarding voter registration and upcoming mobilization events on campus.
- Our Constitution Day (Sept. 17) presenter will be focused on Lincoln's important history in the Civil Rights Movement and our students' ability to make a difference this election day.
- The approximate week between Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day will be a campus-wide challenge: majors, student and Greek organizations, residence halls, athletic teams, and students, staff and faculty will all compete to see who has registered the most members of their respective groups. There will be various prizes awarded.
- In addition, during September, students who wish to use their campus address to vote will be given registration assistance in each residence-hall lobby.
- We will receive bi-weekly updates from the County Clerk regarding new voter registrations.
- We will post the deadline of October 3 for general election voter registration. It will be publicized as the "drop dead day" for Blue Tiger Voices to have a say in who will be our next president.

### *Voter Education*

- We will hang civic engagement boards with attached markers where students can respond to important questions related to political, economic or social current events.
- Our debate team will host 3-4 issue forums in September and October and invite the Lincoln and Jefferson City communities to attend/participate.
- Similarly, we would like to host candidate forums as the election nears. Lincoln houses our community public-access channel and KJLU Radio where we may televise and stream these forums.
- Our Honors Program will assist in the dissemination of Local Nonpartisan Candidate Guides which will be circulated via our library, learning management system, and around campus via departmental offices.

### *Ballot Access*

- Place “What’s At Stake?” signage around campus with QR codes that link to nonpartisan voter education websites and a sample ballot.
- In October, we will host debate-watch parties where students may also ask questions of political science faculty when context is needed.
- Because a large portion of our residence hall students are from out-of-state, we will assist with absentee ballot acquisition and mailing via tables in each residence-hall lobby bi-weekly in September and October.
- We will offer commuter students the opportunity to sign up for polling location and hours that will be sent to them via email and text.
- On Election Day, we will run shuttles from residence halls and the student union to the student activity center polling place.

### *Getting out the vote*

- Student and organization registration challenges will also be used as a similar competition on Election Day.
- Utilize student leaders as poll workers on Election Day.
- Memes and placards all over campus with reminders regarding precinct hours and a link to finding your polling place if you are a commuter student.
- Text and social media chains will advertise the Party at the Polling Place on Election Day.
- We have precinct at our student center and will host an Election Day party adjacent to the actual polling space. Democracy games, food, and drink will be provided. Included in the festivities will be an Instagram white board “I vote because” photo opportunity.
- At the Poll Party, we will also help commuter students identify the hours and locations of their polling places.

### ***Timeline***

July 1-Aug 17:	Building coalition ties and solidify campus arrangements, gather needed resources
August 17-21:	Week of Welcome Freshmen Orientation Activities
August 22-23:	Residence Hall Welcome Activities
August 27-31:	Finalize Classroom Visits
September 7-11:	Classroom visits across campus
Sept 13-Oct 10:	Messaging campaign regarding registration and mobilization events
Sept 17-22:	Constitution Day to National Voter Registration Day Events as mentioned above
Sept 26-Oct 19:	Issue forums on campus
October 24:	Early Vote Day ballot education
Oct 22-Nov 2:	Candidate forums & debate watch parties
November 3:	Party at the Polling Place
Nov 4-Dec 15:	Assessment and posting of our activities for public consumption on our website

### ***Success Goals***

#### *Short-term:*

- Turnout at events prior to and on Election Day increase over 2018 measures.
- Successfully publicize events, issues, and voter information efforts and outcomes.
- NSVLE participation matrices increase.

#### *Long-term:*

- Overall increase in student engagement on campus in the next academic year.
- Increase collaboration of Student Activities and Academic Affairs.
- Increase in institutionalization of civic mission across campus.

\*Our sincerest gratitude for sharing virtual and digital strategies over the last few months!\*