All in Campus Democracy Challenge
Middle Georgia State University
Action Plan

Executive Summary

Middle Georgia State University (MGA) is committed to increasing the civic learning and democratic engagement of students, faculty, and staff across all campuses. In order to increase civic engagement and democratic participation, MGA put together an All in Campus Democracy Challenge (ACDC) steering committee to identify different methods that could be implemented across all campuses. This action plan summarizes the goals, activities, and timelines that have been created by the university's ACDC steering committee.

The overall goals of the ACDC committee are to increase both voter registration and voter turnout for university students, faculty, and staff. The committee's initial strategies for increasing voter registration and turnout are briefly described in the strategy section of this action plan. In the strategy section, several proposed campus activities are summarized. This action plan also provides a detailed list of measurable goals to help determine if the program has achieved anticipated levels of success.

This action plan identifies a comprehensive strategy for increasing voter awareness and participation across local, state, and federal primary and general elections. The committee's plan is continuous, as we recommend strategies that can be implemented and analyzed over several election cycles. This plan is also pervasive due to our commitment to implement our recommendations over all of MGA's campuses and across all academic disciplines. In addition, our recommendations are intended to increase voter awareness, registration, and turnout among students, faculty, and staff.

Leadership

The Middle Georgia State University ACDC committee is made up of several members of the faculty, staff, and student body recruited from across the university community including its five campuses. The committee includes:

Dr. Christopher Lawrence (chair)	Faculty member/administrator; Assistant Chair, Department of History and Political Science and Associate Professor of Political Science
Dr. John Hall (recorder)	Faculty member; Assistant Professor of Political Science
Dr. Julie Lester	Faculty member; Associate Professor of Political Science
Dr. Michael Gibbons	Faculty member/administrator; Director of Institutional Research and Associate Professor of Sociology
Sheron Smith	Staff member; Communications Coordinator, MGA Marketing and Communications
Ann Williams	Staff member; Assistant Director for Library Services, Cochran and Eastman campuses
Felicia Haywood	Staff member; Assistant Director for Library Services, Macon campus
Susan "Lizzie" Mathias	Student member; President, MGA Student Government Association; member, MGA President's Torch Society
DeMarcus Beckham	Student member; layout editor, *The Statement* (student newspaper); president, MGA Gay-Straight Alliance; past president, MGA History Student Organization
Jean Parker	Student member at large, Macon and Warner Robins campuses

This plan document was primarily written by Dr. John Hall, with input from the other committee members.

Strategy

The MGA ACDC steering committee held an initial meeting on October 31st, 2017, designed to identify a number of strategies that could be implemented across all campuses in order to increase civic engagement and political participation among students, faculty, and staff.

Dr. Christopher Lawrence, Assistant Chair of the History and Political Science Department, served as chair of the ACDC committee and led a directed discussion of possible ideas that could be implemented in the upcoming academic year. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the principal ideas that were discussed by the committee in this initial meeting. In general, the committees' recommended strategies involve increasing student, faculty, and staff access to civic engagement knowledge and increasing their active participation in the electoral process.

First, the committee agreed it was important to increase access to voter registration literature using the online resources of the university. The committee proposed an increase to voter registration links (specifically links to the Secretary of State's office) on the university's website. Links to voter registration literature could be placed on the university's main website, on the university's Knightly News email newsletter, on online professor/student evaluation forms, and on university provided computers throughout all campuses. The university could also provide information and reminders on the main website calendar informing students, faculty, and staff of upcoming voter registration deadlines and primary and general election dates.

It was also suggested that the committee work with the MGA distance learning staff to provide voter registration information for primary and general elections in the upcoming year on the university's distance learning platform, Brightspace. These links could serve as a valuable tool for introducing students, faculty, and staff to the available infrastructure for becoming registered in the state of Georgia. The committee also recommended coordinating with resident life officials to provide information on obtaining absentee ballots and registration requirements for out-of-state students.

In addition, access to voter registration literature could be increased by producing and handing out postcards that would provide links to voter registration sites. These cards could

contain basic information regarding voter registration literature in the state of Georgia. These cards could also contain QR codes that could link students directly to voter registration literature using their smart phones. These QR codes could directly link students, faculty, and staff to state registration sites, the "My Voter Page" (MVP) on the Georgia Secretary of State's website (mvp.sos.ga.gov), and the federal vote.gov website providing voter registration information for out-of-state students. These cards could dramatically increase the ability of the university to increase voter registration and civic engagement by providing all departments with a highly mobile resource for educating students, faculty, and staff on the realities of voter registration in Georgia.

Secondly, the ACDC committee suggested multiple methods for increasing the awareness of students, faculty, and staff to upcoming primary and general election events. The committee has suggested taking part in the meetings and events of other university organizations across all campuses. For example, one ACDC committee member, Susan Mathias, representing the Student Government Association, will inform other SGA members across the state of Georgia of our work to increase student, faculty, and staff awareness of voter registration at an upcoming state-wide SGA conference. In addition, members of the committee will investigate other university organization activities that can be used to increase voter registration awareness. The committee also recommended university-wide social functions to bring students, faculty, and staff together to learn more about voter registration and primary and general elections.

Another method suggested for increasing civic learning and democratic engagement is the possible introduction of university-provided kiosks specifically used for voter registration. These kiosks could be provided at multiple sites across all campuses and would include a university-supplied computer that would allow students to quickly and easily register to vote.

These voter registration kiosks could be complimented throughout the semester with voter registration drives that would provide university faculty to answer any questions the students may have regarding voter registration. These voter registration drives could be advertised across all campuses and encourage students, faculty, and staff to take part in voter registration and electoral participation. In addition to general questions regarding voter registration, volunteer faculty could inform interested participants of important dates regarding voter registration and primary and general elections.

- Summary of Action Items
    - Increase voter knowledge of registration and elections.
        - Create voter registration links on the university website.
        - Include voter registration links on student-teacher evaluation forms.
        - Provide voter registration/election reminders on the university calendar.
        - Work with distance learning staff and resident life officials to provide information on absentee ballots for out-of-state students.
        - Produce and hand out postcards with voter registration information and QR codes that link students directly to online information.
    - Increase voter awareness of primary and general election events.
        - Coordinate with other university organizations to increase voter awareness.
        - Create university-wide social functions to increase voter awareness.
        - Install university-provided voter registration kiosks on all campuses.
        - Hold voter registration drives on all campuses.

Goals

The ACDC committee has identified several preliminary, measurable goals for operationalizing success in 2018. One of the more obvious measures of success will be determined by the percentage of students, faculty, and staff who are registered to vote in the 2018 federal, state, and local elections. In addition, we will examine the percentage of students, faculty, and staff who actually take part in federal, state, and local elections in 2018. These voter registration and voter turnout percentages will be compared with university numbers from previous elections as reported by NSLVE. We will compare 2018 registration and turnout percentages with previous data from the university, the state of Georgia, and the nation as a whole. In this way, we will be able to compare Middle Georgia State University registration and turnout rates in 2018 with our own past numbers and that of state and national averages.

In addition, we will examine how many voter registration information cards we are able to hand out in 2018. We will also keep track of how many university events we are able to attend where we will hand out additional voter registration information cards. This data can be compared to future elections and identify any possible correlation between increased voter registration/turnout and the number of cards handed out across all university campuses.

The committee has also proposed the possibility of using volunteer undergraduate students in POLS 2101 and POLS 1101 classes to assist in the collection of voter registration/turnout data. These students would be able to gain valuable knowledge of the American electoral process while also increasing their understanding of quantitative data collection and analysis. These possible volunteer students could also be given access to extra credit in their classes at their instructor's discretion.

- Outcome Measures and Goals

- o Compare percentage of faculty, staff, and students who are registered to vote in 2018 primary and general elections to past elections.

- o Compare voter turnout of faculty, staff, and students in 2018 primary and general elections to past elections.

- o Keep track of how many voter registration information postcards are handed out and how many university events are attended in 2018.

Summary Conclusion

The Middle Georgia State University ACDC committee has made several recommendations for increasing voter awareness among students, faculty, and staff. In addition, this committee has introduced several plans for identifying increased voter registration and voter turnout across all campuses. The recommendations made by this committee will be introduced in the Spring semester of 2018 and will hopefully impact voter registration and turnout in the 2018 local, state, and federal elections.

It is our intention to implement several of these strategies to significantly affect the following election events in 2018: April 23rd registration deadline for primary elections, October 9th registration deadline for general elections, and the November 6th general election. This committee looks forward to identifying the best methods for improving voter registration and turnout over the 2018 election cycle and continuing to improve our ideas for future elections.

- Key dates in 2018:
    - o Special election dates: registration (2/20/18), election (3/20/18)
    - o General primary election dates: registration (4/23/18), election (5/22/18)
    - o General election dates: registration (10/9/18), election (11/6/18)