



TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY™

CIVIC LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN FOR VOTER REGISTRATION, EDUCATION, AND ENGAGEMENT 2018-2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas Woman's University (TWU) is the nation's largest public female-focused university. As a female-focused and very diverse campus, TWU understands the need for civic education across our student body. By developing a campaign using social media and other technology platforms, engaging student leaders to become voter educators and advocates and collaborating extensively across campus to create civic education events, TWU hopes to create a campus ethos of civic engagement and to raise the voting rate of our first-year and sophomore students as well as our underrepresented populations.

LEADERSHIP

The Civic Engagement Task Force, within the Division of Student Affairs, will be overseeing the institution's efforts to increase civic learning and democratic engagement. The Civic Engagement Task Force includes:

- Associate Vice President for Student Engagement
- Assistant Professor for History/Government
- Assistant Director for Residence Education
- Assistant Director of Fit & Recreation
- Director of Communication for Student Life
- Director of Civility and Community Standards
- Associate Director for Diversity, Inclusion, & Outreach
- Coordinator for Civic Engagement
- Peer Advisor for the Civic Engagement Living-Learning community
- Student representatives from SGA, RHA, Barristers (pre-law), and Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science Honorary)

We will strategically engage a wide variety of students, faculty, staff, and administrators, along with external partners, such as, but not limited to:

- The Texas League of Women Voters
- The Texas Tribune
- Denton County Board of Elections
- City of Denton and other locally elected officials
- The Center for Women's Leadership in Business, Politics, and Public Policy (TWU)
- Social Justice Peer Educators (TWU) Southern Poverty Law Conference campus group
- Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences
- Faculty engaged in our SENCER (Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities) Center

Texas Woman's University (TWU) is the nation's largest public female-focused university. With campuses in Denton, Dallas, and Houston, Texas, our 2016-2017 total student enrollment was over 15,000 students. Denton serves as our main campus with an enrollment of 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Our motto is "We Learn to Do by Doing". TWU's current civic engagement initiatives include a bi-annual voters' drive with corresponding publicity about voter registration and a shuttle service on election days to the closest voting site. Our TWU faculty sponsor a Constitution Day.

TWU is a participating institution in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement with a 2016 voting rate of 51.9%. Our campus demographics clearly impact our voting percentages. The average student age at TWU is 27. In 2016, our voting rates for ages 27 and above ranged from 49.3% to 75.3%. Approximately 1/3 of our student population are graduate students. Our voting rate for graduate students in 2016 was 58.9% as compared to our undergraduate student voting rate of 46.7%. TWU is a Hispanic-serving institution and had a 2016 Hispanic student voting rate of 45.8% as compared to a 58.2% voting rate of our Caucasian students and a 55.1% voting rate of our Black students. Finally, TWU has a female enrollment of 88% as compared with our male enrollment of 12%. The 2016 voting rate for our female students is 51.8% as compared to the male student voting rate of 43.4%. We truly believe in our institutional purpose, "Educate a woman, empower the world."

GOALS

At Texas Woman's University, our 2018-2019 civic learning and democratic engagement goals focus on the following:

Increase civic engagement across a diverse population. Texas continues to see rapid population growth, especially in urban areas and in underrepresented populations. An engaged citizenry is essential in order to address the challenges of demographic change. As a female-focused and very diverse campus, TWU understands the need for civic education across our student body. Currently, our campus has a voting rate of 51.9% of the eligible

voting population. This is slightly above the national average, but still only half of the eligible voters. Our non-traditional students vote at a higher percentage rate than our traditional age (18-22) student participation and we have seen a dip in the voting rates of our black and Latino/Latina student participation.

TWU's overall goal is to meet or exceed the national midterm goal of a 29% overall voting rate. We will focus on our first-year and sophomore students since our 2016 first-year student voting rate (40.4%) and the 2016 sophomore voting rate (42.9%) was lower than our upperclassman rate (48.9%). Since the black student voting rate decreased from 60.8% in 2012 to 55.1% in 2016, TWU will also work to increase the black student voting rate in order to meet the 29% overall voting rate goal. As a Hispanic-serving institution, we will also need to focus on the Hispanic student voting rate. The 2016 Hispanic student voting rate was 55.1%. These campus goals will target some of our weaker turnout populations.

Enhance our civic education. We will focus on educating students on the importance and logistics of voter registration, the electoral process, and different viewpoints on issues during each election cycle. Education will help explain the “why” voting is important. The campus culture at TWU has not been conducive to the development of College Republican, College Democrat, or other politically-affiliated student groups. Non-partisan civic education, issues education, and dialogues have been more effective and show signs of being more impactful with our student population. With a more educated student population, we hope to see an increase in voter turnout, early voters, and attendees at city council meetings, letters sent to our representatives, etc. TWU's goal is to increase the number of civic education initiatives and activities as measured in the Strategies and Standards section below.

STRATEGIES AND STANDARDS

Area #1: Increase civic engagement

Goal #1: Create the “Boldly Vote” PR campaign.

Strategies:

1. Create a voter education PR campaign that plays off of TWU's “Boldly Go” slogan, including a logo and other marketing materials.
2. Utilize social media (Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter), our Campus Labs Engage platform, TurboVote for voter education, student newspaper (LASSO); videos; online (Canvas or Blackboard) module on voting, and opportunities during orientation and Pioneer Camp to educate.
3. Create a marketing campaign targeting our underrepresented populations in conjunction with our Social Justice Peer Educators.

Standards:

1. Create the “Boldly Vote” logo and marketing materials. Introduce on Constitution Day (9/17/2018)
2. Include Turbo Vote on “Boldly Go” landing site in Campus Labs Engage platform by National Voter Registration Day (9/25/2018).

3. Implement marketing campaign for underrepresented populations in September 2018.

Goal #2: Increase educational opportunities regarding voter registration across campus.

Strategies:

1. RHA will work with Resident Assistants to develop voter registration programs for their residents..
2. Develop civic engagement focused material for specific UNIV 1231 courses including voter registration, researching policies & platforms, and other topics deemed relevant at the time.
3. Work with Social Justice Peer Educators & other organizations representing underrepresented populations (LULAC, NAACP, NPHC, etc.) to host two voter registration events specifically targeting underrepresented populations.
4. SGA will develop voter registration events and initiatives on all three campuses.

Standards:

1. RHA and the Residence Life staff will host voter registration programs in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019.
2. Voting registration modules will be created for the UNIV 1231 classes for the Lead Maroon LLC, President's Leadership Council LLC, and the Civic Engagement LLC by Fall 2018.
3. Social Justice Peer Educators and SGA will host voter registration events by May 2019.

Goal #3: Have a polling site on the Texas Woman's University (Denton) campus.

Strategies:

1. Establish contact with the City of Denton and Denton County election committees.
2. Find out the dates, hours, and other site stipulations. Reserve campus space.
3. Meet with representatives of the City of Denton and the Denton County elections committees.

Standards:

1. Establish contact with election committees in Spring 2018.
2. Obtain logistics and make reservations for Spring 2019 in Summer 2018.
3. Obtain final decision by January/February 2019.

Area #2: Enhance civic education through student engagement activities

Goal #1: Create a "Speak Up" series that will vary from social media, to tabling, to roundtable discussions, to speakers for the purpose of encouraging students to engage in campus, local, state, and national issues.

Strategies:

1. Engage with faculty and student groups to host a campus-wide Constitution Day.
2. Engage with faculty and student groups to host a campus-wide National Voter Registration Day.
3. Work across campus to offer a monthly "Speak Up" event/program on relevant topics.

Standards:

1. Create Constitution Day schedule by August 1, 2018.

2. Create National Voter Registration Day schedule by August 1, 2018.
3. Create tentative 2018-2019 “Speak Up” schedule by August 1, 2018. Will choose topic, format, & dates at the beginning of each semester.

Goal #2: Engage student leaders to demonstrate the importance of civic engagement.

Strategies:

1. As part of the “Speak Up” series, SGA will create a series of polling options to get student opinions on various university and issues.
2. SGA and RHA will initiate voting drives for SGA and RHA campaigns, as well as develop means to educate students about other campus civic engagement opportunities (tuition hearings, student service fee hearings; Austin lobby group; student regent; etc.)
3. The Barristers (pre-law) and Pi Sigma Alpha will take the lead in organizing Constitution Day.
4. Students will be involved in fun voting registration promotional events on all campuses, such as prize patrols, tabling, etc.
5. Voter education trainings will be developed for student leaders.

Standards:

1. The SGA and RHA initiatives will be developed during Summer 2019 for implementation in Fall 2018.
2. A Constitution Day schedule will be developed by August 1.
3. Recruit students/student groups for promo events and have a calendar of voter registration promotional events by September 1, 2018.

RESOURCES

One part of our plan is to use social media and other technology platforms to engage students. We will develop our “Boldly Vote” voter registration/education brand and use Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to spread the word. A Campus Labs (formerly Org Sync) landing page can be created for the “Boldly Go” initiative, complete with access to TurboVote and to information on local, state, and federal elections. Using the Canvas online teaching platform, we can create voter education modules for specific UNIV 1231 sections, but general enough that interested course instructors could utilize the modules in their classes.

Another focus of our plan is to engage student leaders to become voter educators and advocates. TWU has an engaged student population and several groups with an interest in this area, such as, but not limited to Student Government Association, Residence Hall Association, the Barristers (pre-law), Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science Honorary), and the Social Justice Peer Educators. This groundswell of support provides the opportunity to expand awareness across the student campus community, including our Dallas and Houston campuses.

A third aspect of our plan is to collaborate extensively across campus to create our “Speak Up” series. There are several campus constituents already engaged similar work, such as, but not limited to the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Outreach; the Office of Civility and Community Standards; the Center for Student Development; the SENCER initiative; and multiple

academic programs and departments. We see inclusion in the Campus Democracy Challenge as an opportunity to engage with partners across campus to collectively focus on voter education.

EVALUATION

Texas Woman's University will use several methods to evaluate our progress which include, but are not limited to:

- TWU has used our 2016 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report to develop voting goals and will continue to use NSLVE to evaluate our voter participation progress. The 2018 NSLVE report will be able to assist us in identifying additional areas for improvement on our campus. We will continue to work towards a campus with greater voter participation.
- Data collection for voter registration numbers will be counted each time there is a tabling or other voter registration event.
- Participation rates and participant program evaluations will be collected for each educational event.

REPORTING

Texas Woman's University will use use several options for reporting our results, which include, but are not limited to:

- Utilizing our Campus Labs/Engage platform program page to promote and report on Turbo Vote and our voter registration progress
- An article and ad in the Lasso (student newspaper)
- Updates via social media
- Voter participation display in our student union & across campus
- Presentations to SGA, RHA, and other campus constituents and leadership.

TIMELINE

Fall 2018

- Create the "Boldly Vote" logo and marketing materials
- Create a "Boldly Vote" landing site in Campus Labs.
- Host a Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day.
- Partner with academic colleagues and student leaders to encourage civic engagement by hosting 4-5 "Speak Up" programs.
- Partner with student leaders to host voter registration events across campus.

Spring 2019

- Partner with academic colleagues and student leaders to encourage civic engagement by hosting 4-5 “Speak Up” programs.
- Partner with student leaders to host voter registration events across campus.
- Engage with city and county election officials to establish polling site at TWU.

Fall 2019

- Host larger events during Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day.
- Partner with academic colleagues and student leaders to encourage civic engagement by hosting 4-5 “Speak Up” programs.
- Partner with student leaders to host voter registration events across campus.

Spring 2020

- Begin shifting focus towards national elections in November.
- Focus initiatives to include educating the student body about the different candidates.
- Utilize the “Boldly Go” campaign and “Speak Up” series to generate voter interest..

Fall 2020

- Utilize student groups and academic colleagues to host educational events about political views and candidates.
- Re-evaluate Social media to determine other ways to engage students and increased social media resource push
- Add voter registration tables and other voter registration initiatives, especially early voting on-campus

Spring 2021

- Analyze efforts once NSLVE Report is published