



2020 University of Kansas Voter Engagement Campus Plan

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Executive Summary

The KU Voter Engagement Campus Plan is developed by representatives of the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics (Dole Institute) and the KU Student Senate Student Legislative Awareness Board (SLAB). Since 2004 the Dole Institute has sponsored Civic Engagement and KU Leadership – three weeks of speakers, programs, activities, and voter registration. Along with these events, the Dole Institute partners with SLAB and other student organizations to register voters on the university campus. Kansas has a strong tradition of political engagement, however, like most states, Kansas voters aged 18-29 vote at much lower rates than other voters. 2020 Civic Engagement and KU Leadership aims to address this issue. We also plan to follow-up with Get Out the Vote (GOTV). The Big XII Voting Challenge will be a motivating force to encourage KU students to vote in 2020 local, state and national elections.

Leadership

Efforts to register students will be led by Jessica Geiger, a senior at the University of Kansas. Geiger will work in conjunction with Dr. Barbara Ballard, the senior associate director of the Dole Institute and a Kansas legislator representing the 44th district. Civic Engagement and KU Leadership is sponsored by the Dole Institute and the Civic Engagement Leadership Council, which includes Association of Residence and Scholarship Halls, Multicultural Resource Center, Student Senate, Loud Light, Student Union Activities, sororities, fraternities, KU Athletics, Center for Community Outreach, Alternative Breaks, KU Young Democrats, and KU College Republicans.

The Big XII Voting Challenge will be promoted during voter registration efforts of 2020 Civic Engagement and KU Leadership. As such, Dr. Ballard will be the primary contact person for the Big XII Voting Challenge. We will work with different organizations on campus to ensure that the Big XII Voting Challenge is incorporated into programs and existing activities and that they are representing KU and the competition in a professional manner.

Civic Engagement and KU Leadership is sponsored by the Dole Institute and partner organizations. The Dole Institute sponsors programs such as *Pizza and Politics* and *Discussion Groups* that help bring experts face-to-face with students on various political topics. Additionally, the Dole Institute Student Advisory Board (SAB), a student volunteer

group of over 100 members, will play a major role in voter registration and GOTV.

However, COVID-19 has changed the way we function on the KU campus. We do not know at this time if campus will be open to students. We are waiting to learn our fate. Meanwhile, we are looking at digital opportunities/possibilities, social media and will work with the Douglas County Clerk's Office to accomplish our stated goals.

Commitment

As mentioned previously, the Big XII Voting Challenge will be incorporated into voter registration efforts. This series of programs, events, and volunteer opportunities has been an annual event for over fifteen years. As such, the Dole Institute at the University of Kansas, has a proven commitment to organizing these events year after year. Civic engagement and public service is included in the Dole Institute's mission statement.

"The mission of the Dole Institute of Politics is to promote political and civic participation as well as civil discourse in a bi-partisan, balanced manner."

"[The] Student Legislative Awareness Board was created to give the student body a platform to voice their opinions and protect their interests... SLAB aims to foster a civically engaged student body by, but not limited to: registering voters, lobbying for higher education, informing students on the most recent issues, and ultimately holding elected officials accountable for their actions."

Thanks to a strong partnership between the Dole Institute and student organizations at the University of Kansas, KU possesses a strong commitment to furthering the political awareness and participation of students. The Dole Institute and SLAB fully support participation in the Big XII Voting Challenge, and look forward to a successful voter registration drive and Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign.

Goals

In the 2014 midterm election KU had a voting rate of 21.3%, which was 2.5% higher than the rate for all institutions. While much lower than the 51.3% voting rate achieved in the 2016 election, the 2014 results show that KU students can be convinced to vote. In 2017 the Dole Institute's voter registration efforts registered 640 people to vote. In 2018 we surpassed our goal of 1000 registered voters, but do not have an exact number. However, according to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), the University of Kansas had a 23.6 increased voting rate. 2020 Civic Engagement and KU Leadership will take place from September 20 - October 13. The last day to register to vote in Kansas is October 13th, for the Presidential Election. Additionally, KU's fall break is October 10 - 13. However, we will still promote voter registration on social media through October 13th. Moreover, in order to have a strategic campaign, efforts will take place at locations that are frequented by students. With this in mind, the following twelve goals have been developed: **(Please remember, that we do not know at this time, if our campus will be open or closed.)**

- Increase frequency of tabling at Mrs. E's due to fall break in order to reach on-campus students, most of which are 17 or 18 year-old freshman
- Register students to vote at following program opportunities: Party on the Patio, the Spencer Museum's Backyard Bash, and the Dole Institute's Constitution Day Event
- Partner with the All Scholarship Hall Council (ASHC) to register scholarship hall students
- Either attend, or send materials, to sorority and fraternity chapter meetings to register Greek life students
- Increase frequency of tabling on Wescoe Beach (a high traffic area) due to fall break limitations
- Register students to vote on campus

- Increase KU student voting rate in 2020
- Register 1000 people to vote before October 13
- Create a unified social media effort across student organizations to encourage voting
- Host an event as part of Student Union Activities "Tea at 3" in order to reach students who live off-campus
- Attain high turnout at 2020 Civic Engagement and KU Leadership events, specifically Pizza and Politics and Discussion Groups
- Win the Big XII Voting Challenge

Reporting

The campus plan will be reviewed by Dr. Barbara Ballard of the Dole Institute, the Civic Engagement Leadership Council, co-chaired by Jessica Geiger and a member from Student Senate (SLAB).

Evaluation

2020 voter registration of KU students will be compared to previous years as well as KU student voter turn-out rate. The National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) data will be analyzed to determine if the University of Kansas reached its voting rate goal.