

# UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

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# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT PLAN

# 2018-2019



## **Collaboration Partners**

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### *The Hinckley Institute of Politics*

The Hinckley Institute of Politics at the University of Utah was established in 1965 through the generous bequest of the Noble Foundation and Robert H. Hinckley. The Hinckley Institute of Politics at the University of Utah is dedicated to engaging students in governmental, civic, and political processes; promoting a better understanding and appreciation of politics; and training ethical and visionary students for careers in public service. The Hinckley Institute of Politics was founded with the vision to “teach student respect for practical politics and the principle of citizen involvement in government.”

The Hinckley Institute provides a wide range of impactful programs for students, public school teachers, and the general public.

As a nonpartisan organization, the Hinckley Institute strives to promote involvement across the political spectrum—specifically through voter registration and turnout efforts, political forums research, and a wide variety of political experience through classes, internships, and volunteer opportunities



## *The Andrew Goodman Foundation*

Andrew “Andy” Goodman and two of his contemporaries were young adults committed to equality, voting rights, and social justice—they died fighting for those very commitments during Freedom Summer 1964.

Established to continue Andy’s legacy, The Andrew Goodman Foundation (The AGF) inspires through a story that touches diverse Americans—Jews and Christians, young and old, blacks and whites—and empowers young people to fully participate in the Democratic process. Through the Vote Everywhere and Hidden Heroes programs, The AGF sets Millennials on the path toward civic engagement and greater political power.

The Andrew Goodman Foundation at the University of Utah student group was established in 2015. Since its founding, The AGF at the University of Utah has registered nearly 1,200 student voters, engaged in state policy discussions, contacted state and local political leaders, and worked to secure an on-campus voting location for future elections.



THE  
**ANDREW  
GOODMAN**  
FOUNDATION



## *The Associated Students of the University of Utah*

ASUU stands for Associated Students of the University of Utah. All registered students are members of ASUU. Involvement in ASUU makes college life easier and more enjoyable. ASUU provides assistance with on-campus childcare, tutoring and legal services for students. Throughout the year ASUU hosts free concerts, movies, dances, and other events designed to enhance campus community. ASUU also coordinates with over 600 student groups and clubs to offer more ways for students to connect with other students that share their interests.

- Executive Branch

The ASUU Executive Branch consists of the elected executive officials of ASUU as well as their appointed cabinet, who serve one-year terms. Executive elected officials include the President, the Vice President of University Relations, and the Vice President of Student Relations. Their appointed executive cabinet consists of 11 student leaders who are responsible for a range of boards and committees. The executive branch works with the student body to accurately represent and provide support for all students of the University.

- Legislative Branch

The ASUU Legislative Branch consists of the Senate and Assembly. The Senate is composed of 18 Senators, one elected from each college to serve one-year terms. In addition to writing legislation that positively impacts student life at the University, Senators chair College Student Councils, student governing bodies for each individual college that advocate for the student experience within their college and appropriate funds for student travel. The Assembly is composed of 36 representatives elected from each college at the University in proportion to the number of students enrolled in that college. Assembly Representatives work in conjunction with Senators on writing legislation for the general student body, and independently work to appropriate funds to the various student groups and organizations on campus for event planning, marketing materials, and other aspects of campus community-building.

- Judicial Branch

The ASUU Judicial Branch is comprised of the Supreme Court and the Attorney General. The Supreme Court consists of six Associate Justices and one Chief Justice, who are appointed for the duration of their time as students at the University. The Supreme Court has the power of constitutional review on any action taken by any and all members, groups, and bodies of ASUU. The initiation of such action must be by a member of ASUU. The Supreme Court holds the power to subpoena, the power to order, the power to enjoin, the power to compel by sanction on penalty, the power to render findings, and—subject to approval of the Assembly and Senate—to propose Judicial Branch Bylaws and procedures. The Attorney General is an elected position, serving a one-year term. The Attorney General acts as ASUU counsel and advises the legislative and executive bodies on compliance with the ASUU Constitution and Bylaws.



## **Overview**

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2018 is shaping up to be an exciting election year across the country, and Utah is no different. With a race for U.S. Senator, all four seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, and several local legislative seats open, this election cycle will prove to have a significant impact on Salt Lake City, local regions throughout the state, and in our nation's capital. In 2016, our institution helped thousands of students and community members engage in the democratic process by hosting on-campus debate watch parties, using an online voter registration platform to register over 1,800 students, and helping over 3,000 people vote with an on-campus polling location at the University of Utah. Since that record year, we have continued with our efforts to encourage our campus community to engage in civic learning and democratic engagement.

According to the University of Utah's most recent NSLVE data, while voter registration rates were down, voter turnout rates were up. Our student voting rate was 6.3 percentage points above the national average, and voter turnout for students registered to vote was nearly 78%. With the continued spotlight on local and national politics, and more students looking for ways to get involved, the University of Utah is set to have another successful year and to even continue to increase the success of student involvement.

As one of only three campuses in the PAC12 and the only campus in Utah that is a part of the Vote Everywhere campus network, the University of Utah and the Hinckley Institute are national leaders in registering students to vote and get out the vote efforts. Because of our success in getting students civically engaged, the University of Utah was one of three campuses in the State that received the designation as a Voter Friendly Campus by the Campus Vote Project last year. Having registered thousands of students to vote, securing an easy-to-use online voter registration platform, and incorporating voter registration as a part of the University of Utah's new student orientation, the Hinckley Institute has helped countless students to become civically engaged citizens.

The Hinckley Institute of Politics at the University of Utah, the Associated Students of the University of Utah, and the Andrew Goodman Foundation's Vote Everywhere Project have teamed up in helping the campus become more engaged in issues of politics, voting, and democracy. With work from stakeholders in each of these organizations, the University of Utah is hoping to complete the following plans and achieve the stated goals listed below.

## **Plans**

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### New Student Orientation (NSO)

- Throughout 2016 and 2017, representatives from the Hinckley Institute, AGF, and ASUU have met with and strategized with Orientation Leaders from the University of Utah to incorporate VR into the orientations for students. During the 2017 NSO cycle, each new student was required to download an app to get information about university programs. This app contained a link to register to vote through the University of Utah's TurboVote site. Additionally, VR cards were given to the Student ID card office to be distributed to students as they received their ID cards. While the 2018 NSO cycle has been changed, we will continue to work to ensure that voter registration efforts is a part of process.
- These efforts proved to be successful in the 2016 election as voting rates among first-year students saw the most significant jump.

### Permanent on-campus polling location

- During the 2016 election cycle the University of Utah confirmed an on-campus polling location through the Salt Lake County Clerk’s Office. Thousands of students and community members alike cast their ballots at this central location. This was the first time in the University’s history that students were able to vote on campus. Despite this incredible success in its first year, the polling location was taken away for the 2017 election cycle. Through significant work by various stakeholders, the polling location is set to return for the 2018 elections. All collaboration partners agree that we want this polling location to be a permanent fixture on campus; students should know that on election day they can always vote on campus and not have that vary by year.
- This effort is being spearheaded by ASUU Government Relations Board members, AGF Student Ambassadors, and engaged alumni, with consultation advice from University of Utah’s Vice President of Government Relations Jason Perry.

#### Weekly Voter Registration Drives

- Through the ASUU Government Relations Board, AGF Student Ambassadors, and Hinckley Student Ambassadors, we will staff a weekly voter registration drive at the Union Building—one of the busiest buildings on campus.
- We have the space reserved every Tuesday from 11:00am-1:00pm. This time is right during the lunch break for most students and one of the biggest cafeterias on campus is in the union building.
- These weekly drives will add a level of consistency among our other larger events and opportunities.

#### Campaign Carnival

- In addition to voter registration, we want to help voters make informed decisions. The Campaign Carnival will be hosted in the Union Ballroom on October 16 from 10:00am-2:00pm. This will be an opportunity for campaigns from Salt Lake, Utah, and Summit counties to come to campus and provide platform/policy details to students and community members.
- To ensure nonpartisanship, we will invite all candidates from all parties in the major races affecting students.
- The Union Ballroom is the largest room in the Union and should provide enough space to host all of the campaigns.
- This will give students the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the different candidates’ positions on the issues that are most important to them.

#### MUSS Board

- The Mighty Utah Student Section (MUSS) is a body of over 6,000 students who faithfully attend University of Utah Football games throughout the season. As a part of their registration for the MUSS, each student will receive a packet of information. We plan to work with the MUSS Board members to help include voter registration information in the pack of info given to each student. Similar to our work to give VR information to students as they picked up Student ID cards, this will hit a significant portion of the student population, and reach a different base of students than those who are typically contacted through many of our efforts.

- ASUU Government Board Director and AGF Ambassador Michaela Lemen has a connection with the MUSS Board and will work to get this plan underway.

#### TurboVote collaboration

- Since 2016, The University of Utah has worked with TurboVote to provide an online and easy-to-use voter registration platform tailored to needs of the University of Utah. During 2017, the AGF Student Ambassador team worked to customize TurboVote to the University of Utah, including: changing the primary color to red, including the U of U logo, and prepopulating all of the dorms' addresses into the platform. One of the most frequently asked questions through our experience is that students do not know the physical address of their dorm; this customization of TurboVote will address that problem.
- One additional function of TurboVote that has proved useful in the past and will continue to be helpful in the future is the ability to create unique links for different groups on campus. Leading up to the 2016 election, the AGF ambassadors were able to create and distribute unique registration links to each house on Greek Row so as to keep track of registration numbers from each individual house and host a competition.
- TurboVote's link is extremely easy to distribute. With access to the University of Utah student database through the Hinckley Institute, voter registration links can be sent to specific student populations.

#### Voter Friendly Campus and All-in Campus Challenge

- To help encourage and motivate our students to continue on in these causes, we are looking to join these two exciting national opportunities to expand collaboration partners and resources. Joining a group of campuses from across the country with similar goals and plans will help our students remain motivated when things get difficult.

#### NSLVE data usage

- While we have always looked at our NSLVE data, we have not used this data to inform our plans or goals. Data driven plans are measurable and informed; NSLVE reports provide this data.
  - For example: voter turnout rates were lower amongst graduate students than amongst undergraduate; Sophomore students were the least likely to vote; Computer Science majors were the least likely to register or vote; etc.
- Understanding and analyzing these trends can help us make informed plans to direct our efforts to the areas that may be the most productive.

#### Other opportunities

- While those listed above are the key focus areas for our efforts this year, depending on how successful they go and how quickly we are able to complete them, we have several other plans and potential opportunities that we may also work on.
  - Voter Registration in a permanent spot on campus
    - Consistency is key. We would like to have permanently placed iPad in a high traffic area of campus that is only used to access voter registration sites. This

could be a permanent voter registration station. It wouldn't require manpower and could be working all the time, requiring only periodic checkups and upkeep. While person-to-person interaction is probably the most effective way to register students, this could reach more students with minimal time requirement from our ambassadors.

- Election Day as a University Holiday
  - This is a long term project and may begin with individual departments rather than a university-wide holiday. AGF Ambassadors would like to encourage university faculty to either cancel classes on Election Day or provide no penalty for students who miss classes on that day. While this is an ambitious goal, we have the support some faculty members. We may begin this on a small scale, i.e. political science department, to attempt to gain some traction amongst more staff and faculty.
  - While there may be several difficulties with implementation, faculty buy-in, implementation, and making sure that students actually vote are a few that are on the minds of the ambassadors.