

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

# 2020 VOTER ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN



James Madison Center  
for Civic Engagement

DUKES  
VOTE





## Executive Summary

The three pillars of engagement at James Madison University (JMU) include community engagement, engaged learning, and civic engagement. JMU institutionalized civic engagement in 2017 with the establishment of the James Madison Center for Civic Engagement (JMU Civic). JMU Civic's mission is to educate and inspire people to address public issues and cultivate a just and inclusive democracy. JMU Civic is a nonpartisan entity that works in partnership with students, faculty, staff, and with community, state and national partners, to support civic learning and democratic engagement. In addition JMU Civic is responsible for the coordination, implementation, and facilitation of programming to embed political learning throughout the campus experience and to institutionalize voter engagement.

Our 2020-2021 Voter Engagement Plan builds on previous plans from 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 based upon ongoing program and student survey assessments, and the Campus Climate Study for Political Learning and Democratic Engagement at JMU. The 2020-2021 Voter Engagement Plan sets additional short- and long-term goals to broaden and deepen efforts and includes contingencies dependent on public health responses to the COVID-19 global pandemic that may limit in-person interactions. Our 2020-2021 Voter Engagement Plan emphasizes opportunities for students to acquire knowledge to make them informed participants and skills to make them more effective participants in democracy.

### **Focus Areas: Ask Every Student for Full Participation**

The primary goal of the plan is to continue to embed civic learning and democratic engagement throughout the campus experience, giving every individual an opportunity to contribute their knowledge, skills and expertise to meaningfully participate in democracy through elections and other forms of civic engagement. For 2020-2021, we are expanding efforts through virtual programming during Summer Orientation. Additionally, we plan to implement broad efforts to expand early voting access to students via satellite voting centers.





## **Increase Registration and Turnout**

Turnout among JMU students has been on the rise, but is typically below the national average for youth turnout according to data from our National Study on Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) report and from CIRCLE estimates of youth turnout. According to our NSLVE report, there was a 300% increase in turnout of JMU students in the 2018 Midterm Elections. Although NLSVE data is not available for 2019 state elections, our own analysis suggests an increase in turnout at precincts that serve students. For the 2020 Elections, we aim to increase voter registration to 90 percent of the student population from 83 percent in 2016 and aim to increase turnout to 60 percent of the student population from 52 percent in 2016. NSLVE data and scholarly research suggests that increasing registration rates can boost turnout rates.

## **Equity and Inclusion**

Representative democracy works best when all perspectives are represented in political and decision-making processes. Yet, not everyone can equally access, express their voice or participate in democracy. Our 2020-2021 Voter Engagement Plan takes seriously inequities in access, voice and participation. We emphasize inclusion and outreach to ensure those from traditionally marginalized and historically underrepresented groups participate. For 2020-2021, thanks to a JMU alum, Woodson Martin, we will have a recent graduate working part-time and two undergraduate democracy fellows dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion.



### **Meeting People Where They Are**

At the heart of our strategy is to connect what individuals care about with an understanding of how they can make a difference on that issue for the benefit of the broader public good. Among the things that can be done on any public problem is registering to vote and voting. In addition, we ask individuals what they can do the day after elections. JMU Civic also hopes to further integrate civic initiatives into campus organizations. At JMU, this includes the vast array of student organizations and off-campus community programs. In 2020, we hope to build upon valued partnerships with the Student Government Association, Fraternity and Sorority Life and other groups in order to create voting actions and messaging that is most appealing and relatable for our students. This summer and during the academic year, we plan to hold strategy meetings with at least a dozen organizations to brainstorm ways to incorporate civic action into the frameworks of their club activities.

### **Expand Community Partnerships**

We aim to build upon our relationship with local registrars and Electoral Boards. We will emphasize opportunities for students to be poll workers, which is especially needed during the COVID-19 crisis given the traditionally high average age of poll workers, which makes them more vulnerable to the coronavirus. We also plan to build further partnerships with community-based organizations and entities, especially the public schools and youth-serving organizations, to form creative new approaches to increasing voter engagement and knowledge. Prior to the 2020 General Election we aim to hold five new voter engagement events off-campus to spread out outreach efforts.



### **Expand student volunteer network**

Voter engagement was long established at JMU exclusively under the Dukes Vote organization title. This group was student-led and was fueled by the individual passions of our students. In 2020, JMU Civic will facilitate a volunteer community giving more students an opportunity to contribute to efforts, especially in cooperation with leaders of the Student Government Association. The aim is to hold bi-weekly volunteer meetings in preparation for the November election with at least 20 Dukes Vote volunteers.

The 2020-2021 Voter Engagement Plan was developed by all of our undergraduate student Democracy Fellows; Aaliyah McLean, Woodson Martin Democracy Fellow; Angelina Clapp, Democracy Program Fellow, in consultation with Dr. Carah Ong Whaley, Associate Director, and Dr. Abraham Godlberg, Executive Director at JMU Civic, with feedback from various student organizations, faculty and student affairs entities throughout the process.

We will begin implementing our 2020-2021 Voter Engagement Plan in June 2020, preparing programming for new and transferring student orientation, and developing modules that faculty and student organizations can customize and use during Fall 2020.

The 2020-2021 Voter Engagement Plan will be publicly shared on all social media platforms, our [jmu.edu/civic](http://jmu.edu/civic) web site, and shared with administration, faculty, staff, and most importantly, directly with students with ongoing opportunities for feedback and suggestions. By institutionalizing civic engagement JMU provides extensive resources and institutional capacity to accomplish the goals laid out in this Voter Engagement Plan. The plan will be facilitated by JMU Civic and implemented by students, faculty and staff working alongside community partners.



## OUR TEAM

Institution: James Madison University

City/State: Harrisonburg, Virginia

Office: James Madison Center for Civic Engagement

Email: [civic@jmu.edu](mailto:civic@jmu.edu)

Phone: 540-568-7549

[jmu.edu/civic](http://jmu.edu/civic)

[jmu.edu/vote](http://jmu.edu/vote)

### **Primary Facilitators, 2019-2021**

Dr. Abraham Goldberg, Executive Director, JMU Civic

Dr. Carah Ong Whaley, Associate Director, JMU Civic

Brianna Caraccio, Administrative Assistant, JMU Civic

Bryana Moore, former President's Office Engagement Fellow, JMU Civic

Sarah Gully, Graduate Assistant

Ryan Alessi, Faculty Fellow (Fall 2019 - Spring 2020)

Cathy Copeland, Faculty Fellow (Fall 2019 - Spring 2020)

Angelina Clapp, Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellow (Fall 2019 - Spring 2020);

Democracy Fellow (2020-2021)

Aaliyah McLean, Student Body President (2019 - 2020); Woodson Martin Democracy Fellow (2020-2021)

Ethan Gardner, Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellow (Fall 2019 - Spring 2020),

Chair of the Legislative Affairs Committee, Student Government Association

Anna Connole, Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellow (Spring 2020-Fall 2020)

and CVP Student Advisory Board Member (2019-2021)

Emily Baker, Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellow (Spring 2020-Fall 2020)

Katrina Tilley, Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow

Mary Tolentino, Woodson Martin Democracy Fellow (Fall 2019-Spring 2021)

Leeyah Jackson, Communications Fellow

Kearstin Kimm, Women Breaking Barriers Democracy Fellow (Fall 2019-Spring 2020)

Drew Persinger, Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow

Tyler Strodnider, Democracy Fellow

Ryan Ritter, Democracy Fellow



## **INTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD**

Dr. Terry Beitzel, Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence

Dr. Lori Britt, Communications Professor, Director of the Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue

Dr. Melody Eaton, Professor, School of Nursing

Dr. Michael Gubser, History Professor

Dr. Laura Hunt Trull, Social Work Professor

Dr. Gwyneth Mellinger, Chair, School of Media Arts and Design

Dr. Dena Pastor, Graduate Psychology Professor, Associate Director, Center for Assessment and Research Studies

Dr. Marshall Pattie, Professor, College of Business, Faculty Advisor to College Republicans

Dr. Emma Thacker, Professor, College of Education

Jordan Todd, Coordinator for Student Learning Initiatives in the Office of Residence Life

Dr. Jamie Williams, Associate Director, Community Service-Learning

## **EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD**

Russ Reeder, Council Chair, Intuition Equity

Matt Carr, Teton County Sheriff's Office

Jamie Lockhart, Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Virginia

Elizabeth Vickrey Lodal, Virginia Board of Education

A. Raleigh Marshall, Microsoft Corporation

Honorable Deanna Reed, Harrisonburg Mayor

Ian Simmons, Foundation for Civic Leadership, Co-Founder and Principal of Blue Haven Initiative

Jennifer Park Stout, Vice President of Global Public Policy and head of the Washington, DC office of Snap Inc.



## OUR TEAM

### ON-CAMPUS OFFICES/DEPARTMENTS

- Office of the President
- Office of the Provost
- JMU Communications and Marketing
- JMU Advancement
- School of Music
- School of Media Arts and Design
- JMU's Orientation Office
- Office of Residence Life
- UREC
- JMU Athletics
- Office of Disability Services
- Engagement Advisory Group
- Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue
- Furious Flower Poetry
- Honors College
- Political Science Department
- College of Education
- Democracy in Peril Speaker Series
- Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Violence
- JMU General Education Program
- Health Policy Collaborative
- JMU Libraries Madison Debate
- Madison Magazine
- Community Service-Learning and Alternative Break Program
- MAD4U
- School of Communication Studies
- JMU Mailing Services
- Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services
- Facilities Management (on-campus precinct)



# OUR TEAM

## STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

- Student Government Association
- Legislative Affairs (SGA)
- Women of Color
- Black Student AllianceB
- OND (Brothers of New Direction)
- D.E.E.P Impact
- College Republicans
- College Democrats
- Virginia 21
- Students Against Sexual Violence
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Fraternity and Sorority
- The Breeze (student paper)
- Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Panhellenic Council
- Interfraternity Council

All internal and external partners have played an essential role in our civic learning and democratic engagement efforts. JMU Civic and Dukes Vote collaborate with various on-campus and off-campus departments and organizations in order to hold programs for students and create mutually-beneficial relationships throughout campus.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## LOCAL PARTNERS

City of Harrisonburg Electoral Board  
Montpelier  
The Hburg Citizen  
Harrisonburg City Public Schools  
UVA's Center for Politics  
Harrisonburg City Council  
Virginia21  
Virginia Civic Engagement Table  
Scholars Latino Initiative  
Church World Service  
Rockingham County Public Schools  
Rockingham County Planning District  
Rockingham County Board of Supervisors  
United Way Harrisonburg-Rockingham

## NATIONAL PARTNERS

Campus Vote Project  
Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)  
American Democracy Project  
Institution for Democracy and Higher Education (IDHE)  
Turbovote  
All In Campus Democracy Challenge  
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators  
Up-to-Us  
Vote Together



## COMMITMENT

The three pillars of engagement at James Madison University (JMU) include community engagement, engaged learning, and civic engagement. Prior to the establishment of the James Madison Center for Civic Engagement (JMU Civic), the university defined civic engagement as preparing individuals to be active and responsible participants in a representative democracy dedicated to the common good. Efforts to institutionalize civic engagement were made concrete in 2017 with the establishment of JMU Civic, which is situated in Academic Affairs thereby tying civic learning and democratic engagement to the core educational mission of the university. JMU Civic's mission is to educate and inspire people to address public issues and cultivate a just and inclusive democracy. JMU Civic is a nonpartisan entity that works in partnership with students, faculty, staff, and with community, state and national partners, to support civic learning and democratic engagement. In addition, JMU Civic is responsible for the coordination, implementation, and facilitation of programming to embed political learning throughout the campus experience and to institutionalize voter engagement.



## LANDSCAPE

Political learning and civic engagement are percolating across the university, from within courses to university-sponsored programs and organizations. Some highlights include:

- Dukes Vote, a student-led initiative supported by JMU Civic, that provides opportunities and programming to build capacity, knowledge, skills, and values that prepare students to be informed participants in democracy.
- Tent Talks, student-led discussions sponsored by JMU Civic and Dukes Vote that are designed to bring difficult issues to public spaces where students, faculty, and staff are prompted to consider pressing problems and how to address them in a respectful and productive format.
- Student Government Association (SGA), dedicated to collaborating with all members of our local communities to advocate for students while fostering a proactive, inclusive environment. The Legislative Affairs Committee operates on a wide range of disciplines pertaining to civic engagement, including voter information, activism, and lobbying on the organization's behalf.
- D.E.E.P. (Diversity Education Empowerment Program) Impact is designed to influence meaningful change throughout the James Madison University campus community through the development of programs and services that heighten awareness, increase knowledge, and celebrate the value of diversity in all forms. Student Diversity Educators create and implement programming that focuses on promoting inclusion, advocacy, and respect in order to equip students with the cultural capacity to change and shape the world."
- Democracy in Peril?" series, sponsored by the Department of History and other departments, focuses on the state of democracy in both the US and abroad.
- The Health Policy Collaborative (HPC) is a partnership between faculty from multiple disciplines. Faculty from the School of Nursing, in collaboration with the Department of Health Sciences, Social Work, Communication Sciences & Disorders, and the College of Business, has developed the HPC to be a conduit for educating students, faculty and the community about health policy.

- The Science Technology and Society (STS) Futures Lab at JMU is a critical approach to STEM inquiry and focuses on social, policy, and ethical issues related to science and technology and what might be done to address issues such as sustainability and climate disruption.
- Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue seeks to create a world that engages in dialogue and deliberation across differences as a cultural norm and as an effective tool for addressing the challenges and opportunities of civic life.
- Madison Vision Series, lecture series that brings scholars, thinkers, and leaders of all kinds to campus for explorations on issues facing our society.
- Two of JMU's General Education Clusters, The American Experience and The Global Experience require students to think critically about their own society and its relationship to a larger global community, and to develop responsible and enlightened global citizenship by examining a wide variety of the processes that shape the human experience.

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## CAMPUS CLIMATE

James Madison University participated in a multi-year research-to-practice initiative to foster student nonpartisan political learning and engagement in democracy. The project, "Examining Campus Climates that Foster Student Political Learning and Engagement in Democracy," seeks to answer the following research question: What structures, norms, human characteristics, and political forces promote campus climates for political learning and engagement in democracy?

The goal of this study is to improve student political learning and participation in democracy. Key findings from the study provide incredibly useful information we are using to inform our approaches to institutionalizing civic learning and democratic engagement. Among key findings of the study:

- Many opportunities exist at JMU for political learning and democratic engagement, but political learning is not pervasive.
- Student interest in political learning and democratic engagement is mixed.
- In-class discussions about political/societal issues are challenging.
- Varying perceptions exist regarding JMU's policies on free speech and activism.
- JMU's political climate is affected by the national political climate.
- Many features of JMU's climate likely affect political learning and democratic engagement on campus.
- While JMU has made advances in becoming slightly more diverse, focus group participants emphasized that JMU needs to engage in more focused and effective work to become more inclusive of the diverse populations already a part of JMU and even more diverse in the future. Thus, although participants appreciate intentions surrounding diversity and inclusion at JMU, they believe more impact is needed.

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# CAMPUS CLIMATE (CONT.)

In order to address the results from the climate study, the following levers for change have been identified by students, faculty and staff:

- Increase opportunities for students to have discussions on political and social issues in classes, co-curricular activities, and public spaces on campus.
- Enhance faculty awareness of and engagement with professional development opportunities for facilitating discussions on political and social issues.
- Motivate students to participate in the opportunities available at JMU and make sure opportunities are widely available across time and space.
- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to continue to use their voices and act on issues they care about; this may require openly revisiting our institutional policies, practices, and requirements for free speech and organizing while recognizing a need to balance freedom and safety.
- Consider how JMU's perceived culture of caring can be an asset for deeper political learning and democratic engagement.
- Continue to build on our successful community service learning, alternative spring break, or volunteer experiences by more explicitly linking them to policies, practices, and democratic engagement.

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# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

In 2017, James Madison University was presented with the Excellence in Innovation award in civil learning and community engagement by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. As a result of JMU's ongoing commitment to civic learning and voter engagement implementation through "Dukes Vote", the university has earned Campus Vote Project and NASPA's "Voter Friendly Campus" designation. In 2019, JMU's President, Jonathan Alger, was recognized by the ALL In Campus Democracy Challenge as a Standout President for "his leadership in cultivating a culture of democracy and voter participation on campus and beyond." Additionally, the JMU Graduate School presents one student yearly with the "Civic Engagement Award," honoring a sustained commitment to furthering civic life.

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# ACADEMICS

Aspects of civic learning are present in many facets of JMU's curriculum and course selection, including:

- Two of JMU's General Education Clusters, The American Experience and The Global Experience require students to think critically about their own society and its relationship to a larger global community, and to develop responsible and enlightened global citizenship by examining a wide variety of the processes that shape the human experience.
- The Health Policy Collaborative (HPC) is a partnership between faculty from multiple disciplines. Faculty from the School of Nursing, in collaboration with the Department of Health Sciences, Social Work, Communication Sciences & Disorders, and the College of Business, has developed the HPC to be a conduit for educating students, faculty and the community about health policy.
- The Science Technology and Futures Lab embraces interdisciplinary collaboration to better understand and address the complexities that arise at the interface of science, technology, and society, with a particular emphasis on the mid- to long-term futures of technological trajectories.
- Finance courses in College of Business emphasize understanding political and decision making structures and processes.
- "Hacking for Democracy" is an education initiative of JMU Civic in partnership with JMU XLabs that applies an interdisciplinary approach to addressing complex challenges facing our society and democracy. Interdisciplinary courses focus on educating about and mobilizing for the 2020 Elections and a complete count in the 2020 Census.

# STUDENT BODY

19,883 undergraduate students and 1,925 graduate students comprise JMU's student population. Both our retention and satisfaction rates are among the highest in Virginia and nationwide, both 90% and 96% respectively.

Additionally, JMU offers over 130 degree programs across numerous academic disciplines.<sup>9</sup> Nearly 500 student organizations are officially recognized by the university, with many (including those previously listed) often taking part in voter registration drives and activism.

Statistics on JMU's student body (Fall 2019)

- In-state/out-of-state ratio: 76/24%
- Male/female ratio: 42/58%
- International students: 2%
- Minority students: 22%
- 77% of admitted freshmen ranked in the top third of their high school class

# STUDENT VOTING RATES

According to data collected in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) by Tufts University for the 2018 Midterm Elections, 81.5% of eligible JMU students registered to vote (up 14.6% from 2014), and 40.2% of those who registered voted (up 27.1% from 2014). When compared to the total student population, 32.8% of eligible voters cast their ballots in 2018 (up 24% from 2014). This voting rate was 6.3 points behind the median rate of all other institutions studied for the same election (39.1%). The fields of study found to have the highest percentage of student voters were Education (56.8%) and Public Administration & Social Service Professions (55.2%) while the fields of study with the lowest turnout were Parks, Recreation, Leisure & Fitness Studies (20.9%); Business, Management, and Marketing (22.4%); and Engineering & Engineering Technologies (23.8%).

Our on-campus voting precinct at the Convocation Center, recently established and utilized by students living on campus, had a total of 474 votes in the 2019 Virginia General Elections, 1,113 votes in the 2018 Midterm General Elections, and 765 votes in the 2017 Virginia General Elections.

From 2014 to 2018, JMU experienced major growth in voter engagement across campus. Below are results from our NSLVE Campus Report highlight JMU student voting rate increases and goals for 2020.

## MIDTERM ELECTIONS

	2014	2018	Change
<b>Total Student Enrollment</b>	21,009	21,969	+960
<b>Total Eligible Voters</b>	20,009	20,795	+786
<b>Number of Students who Registered</b>	13,388	16,952	+3,564
<b>Number of Students Who Voted</b>	1,756	6,818	+5,062
<b>Registration Rate</b>	66.9%	81.5%	+14.6
<b>Voting Rate of Registered Students</b>	13.1%	40.2%	+27.1
<b>Voting Rate</b>	8.9%	32.8%	+24.0

SOURCE - NSLVE CAMPUS REPORT FOR JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY. JMU's NSLVE reports and other assessment measures are available at: <https://www.jmu.edu/civic/assessment.shtml>.

According to our NSLVE data, there are also engagement disparities among the different fields of study at JMU. The following majors had the lowest turnout rates: Business, Management, and Marketing; Engineering and Engineering Technologies; Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies; and Computer and Information Sciences. However, all fields of study had an increase in engagement from 2014 to 2018.

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

We are aiming for a ten percent increase in student voting from 2016 elections for the 2020 elections, but recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic may pose challenges. In order to better engage the majors with the lowest turnout rates, JMU Civic will continue to actively partner with academic units and faculty, and with student leaders majoring in those disciplines. JMU Civic will create discipline-specific messaging and learning modules that can be shared via course modules or through in-person class visits (if possible), following best practices in voter education. Learning modules will incorporate education to address both technical and motivational barriers to voting. For example, we will inform students about voting laws and processes for in-person voting and voting by mail, in addition to connecting why voting matters for the academic discipline or issue they care about. We will also continue to offer programming, such as Town Halls with candidates and other programming further outlined below, either virtually or in-person if conditions permit.

	2016	2020 (Goals)
<b>Total Student Enrollment</b>	21,391	
<b>Total Eligible Voters</b>	20,439	
<b>Number of Students who Registered</b>	17,005	
<b>Number of Students Who Voted</b>	10,618	
<b>Registration Rate</b>	83.2%	<b>90%</b>
<b>Voting Rate of Registered Students</b>	62.4%	72%
<b>Voting Rate</b>	52.0%	<b>60%</b>

*SOURCE - NSLVE CAMPUS REPORT FOR JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY. JMU's NSLVE reports and other assessment measures are available at: <https://www.jmu.edu/civic/assessment.shtml>.*

## VOTING BY RACE/ETHNICITY

	2016	2016	2016	2018	2018	2018	2020 (Goals)
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
<b>Asian</b>	929	336	36.2%	933	238	25.5%	<b>45%</b>
<b>American Indian Alaska Native</b>	27	12	44.4%	23	N/A	N/A	<b>55%</b>
<b>Black</b>	957	527	55.1%	1,026	413	40.0%	<b>65%</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	1,252	656	52.4%	1,386	465	33.6%	<b>62%</b>
<b>Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander</b>	24	11	45.8%	23	N/A	N/A	<b>55%</b>
<b>White</b>	15,726	8,239	52.4%	15,887	5,156	32.5%	<b>62%</b>
<b>2 or More Races</b>	805	411	51.1%	953	290	30.4%	
<b>Unknown</b>	768	-----	-----	1,082	-----	-----	

According to our NSLVE data, voting increased across the board by race and ethnicity from 2014 to 2018. By focusing on creating inclusive partnerships with student organizations by attending their meetings and events, and continuing to partner with JMU's Center for Multicultural Student Service, we aim to increase voter rates by 10 percentage points across the board from 2016 to 2020. We also seek to be intentional in including traditionally marginalized or excluded groups as we develop JMU Civic programming. For example, 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the 15th amendment. For 2020 Constitution Day/Week programming, JMU Civic will focus on the race and the Constitution, to educate about the movements and struggles to create a more inclusive democracy and the contributions of social movements to expanding voting and civil rights.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

## VOTER EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

### TENT TALKS

Weekly presence at key on-campus locations will be conducted in order to reach as many students as possible. Utilizing the Student Success Center, The Quad, and Madison Union, registration and vote-by-mail options will be provided using laptops and paper is provided.

### NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

Due to COVID-19, JMU Orientation is providing Summer 2020 programming. JMU Civic is partnering with Orientation and JMU Service-Learning on virtual programming that will include civic learning and voter registration. JMU Civic is also training Orientation Student leaders on voter registration so they can assist incoming and transfer students with voter registration. Student leaders will be encouraged to take or participate with their undergraduate mentees in JMU Civic & Dukes Vote programming.

### STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

With 400+ organizations at JMU, JMU Civic & Dukes Vote will reach out to every student organization on campus to ask them to ask their members to register to vote or check their voter registration. Dukes Vote volunteers will offer to attend organizational meeting to register voters. We will also participate in Student Org. Night and invite organizations to join the voting coalition, encourage volunteers to sign up, and offer voter registration.

### NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

JMU Civic & Dukes Vote are NVRD partners will provide a day of programming that includes a physical presence in highly trafficked areas of campus if possible, with a goal of registering 500 students.

### OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

JMU's Office of Disability Services offers every student who uses their services the opportunity to register to vote. JMU Civic delivers these registration forms to the local registrar and follows-up with reminders to vote for all those who register through ODS.

### CLASS VISITS AND SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

Through a campus-wide email, JMU Civic & Dukes Vote offers class visits by trained volunteers to all JMU faculty. Class visits incorporate discussion of why voting matters, educates about voting processes and laws, provides time to answer questions, and registers voters in each class. JMU Civic will provide important information regarding registration and elections to be included on course syllabi. Instructional faculty may include the statement as they wish.

## **CANVAS MODULE AND GLOBAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

JMU Civic & Dukes Vote has created a Canvas (course instructional tool) site and provides a module that will be available to all faculty and students with information and links to register to vote and update voter registration. Resources will include videos and powerpoints, as well as social media graphics. JMU Civic will also partner with JMU Libraries and with the Registration system for a global announcements reminding students to check where they are registered and vote on Election Day.

## **DUKES VOTE WEBSITE ([www.jmu.edu/vote](http://www.jmu.edu/vote))**

Dukes Vote's website will continuously be updated with the latest voter information and tools for the public's use. These include links to events, the online voter registration portal, a calendar of important dates, and other information regarding voting laws, polling locations and Voter ID requirements.

## **NONPARTISAN CANDIDATE VOTER GUIDE**

In partnerships with an undergraduate Political Science course, students will produce a nonpartisan guide of the candidates that will be circulated on campus, in the community and posted online. It is a tool for our community to learn more about who is on the ballot and their positions on issues.

## **STUDENT VOLUNTEERS**

JMU Civic & Dukes Vote plan to increase the agency and participation of students from across campus by providing training and opportunities to assist with registration, class visits, tabling, and outreach. The Student Government Association will be a key partner in this endeavor.

## **TRAVELING TOWN HALL**

In partnership with the Office of Residence Life, candidates or representatives of the candidates will be invited to participate in a traveling town hall to dormitories and off-campus housing sites, if feasible. If COVID-19 prevents in-person town halls, JMU Civic & Dukes Vote will conduct virtual town halls using Facebook and Instagram Live.

## **ELECTORAL BOARD AND HARRISONBURG REGISTRAR PARTNERSHIP**

JMU Civic will continue its valued partnership with the local voter registrar and electoral board to ensure the voter registration efforts align with the registrars needs. The local registrar and electoral board provide valuable guidance on registration processes and presentations to our students.

## **CMSS LARGE GROUP MEETINGS**

CMSS Multicultural Student organizations meet monthly as a requirement with all of the executive board members. The organizations come together to learn about upcoming events, and create ways to collaborate together. Dukes Vote will attend to learn more about the organizations and present information for their members to register to vote.



### **PANHELLENIC COUNCIL AND INTER-CULTURAL GREEK COUNCIL MEETINGS**

As many students are involved in Greek Life at JMU, attending the Panhellenic Council will help connect JMU Civic & Dukes Vote to large numbers of students and their social circles to get them registered to vote by doing presentations. JMU Civic will connect with the Inter-Cultural Greek Council focused on ensuring access for traditionally underserved and marginalized communities.

### **CIVIC CORNER**

As a new initiative, JMU Civic & Dukes Vote will propose creating a weekly opinion column for students in *The Breeze*, the student-run campus newspaper.

# REDUCING BARRIERS

## **ON-CAMPUS POLLING PLACE**

Those who live in on-campus dormitories with an address of 800 S. Main St. vote at the Convocation Center on-campus. Maintaining the presence of our on-campus precinct and encouraging its use is a top priority for JMU Civic.

## **EXPANDING USE OF EARLY VOTING SATELLITE VOTING LOCATIONS FOR PRECINCTS UTILIZED BY STUDENTS**

Several barriers exist for students voting under the current system, as many are heavily inconvenienced by traveling to far and unknown locations to cast their ballots on election day. Expanding early voting capabilities via satellite precincts would allow for greater access.

## **ADVOCACY FOR VOTER REFORM LEGISLATION**

In coordination with the Legislative Affairs Committee of the Student Government Association, JMU Civic Democracy Fellows participated in advocacy trips to the Virginia legislature and Capitol Hill in defense of expanding voting access and reducing arbitrary barriers placed between students and voting. This advocacy is also included in online blog posts and in programming over voter reform laws.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Continuous, open dialogue is practiced in order to increase collaboration with the community in which JMU is situated. Harrisonburg is home to a diverse population of people, including a large immigrant and refugee population, with some 25 percent of the population speaking a language other than English. The proportion of foreign born persons in the area is 16.7 percent, compared to 10 percent in the state of Virginia, and 13.7 percent nationwide. We will partner with community-based organizations to create multilingual multimedia information and programming about elections and voting.

## **COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS**

JMU Civic will use its social media channels, podcast, monthly newsletter and active blog to educate and share important civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities and work to address public problems. In addition, we will partner with University Communications to share voting information through university-wide channels. Elections and civic engagement will also be the cover story of Madison Magazine for Fall 2020.

## **PRESENTATIONS FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

Overcoming social and cultural barriers are important when trying to get students involved in civic engagement. We have workshops and presentations that help students debunk these cultural myths and stigmas that will help motivate them to vote.

# GET OUT THE VOTE

## **PARTY AT THE PRECINCT**

In partnership with the Center for Inclusive Music Engagement and Music Education Students, JMU Civic & Dukes Vote will host a day-long party at the on-campus polling location to celebrate and encourage student voter turnout.

## **ELECTION NIGHT WATCH PARTY**

In partnership with Breeze TV, JMU Civic & Dukes Vote will host an Election Night Watch Party combining analysis and entertainment as election results roll in. If an in-person party is not possible, we will offer virtual programming.

## **VAN TO VOTE**

Because of JMU's high percentage of students living off-campus, JMU Civic & Dukes Votes will provide rides throughout Election Day to all polling locations that serve students. This assists in students being able to go to these from the on-campus location if they were mistaken about where to vote as well as providing a way to get to the polls without a vehicle of their own.

## **VOTE TOGETHER**

To promote the collective power of voting, GOTV messaging will encourage community building and taking action with friends and peers. Students will be encouraged to go to the polls or vote-by-mail with their friends and roommates.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS**

The team utilizes our social media platforms and network to share reminders of dates, polling locations, voting tools, and requirements.

## **POST-ELECTION**

In partnership with faculty from the School of Media Arts & Design and Political Science, JMU Civic will host a panel the day after elections to provide analysis about the implications of results for governance.

In partnership with faculty from Psychology, JMU Civic will host a discussion about election results.

## **POLL WORKERS**

We will work with our local Board of Elections to encourage students to be poll workers.

# DISTANCE LEARNING

With the vast impact of COVID-19 on the higher education landscape during the 2020 Spring semester, it is vital that we incorporate plans for handling such an adjustment moving forward. During times of social distancing and health concern, voter mobilization may be more complicated, but not less important.

## SUPPORTING MAIN-IN VOTING

No one should have to risk their health in order to exercise their right to vote. JMU Civic will raise awareness and support mail-in voting measures for the 2020 election season. The Virginia legislature, as of April 2020, lifted the excuse requirement for absentee voting and thus made a major stride for anyone to vote through the mail instead of having to be in-person. This option will be a major focus of our voter engagement programming for our JMU students.

## ONLINE PROGRAMMING

JMU Civic & Dukes Vote believe in meeting students where they are with voter programming. As recommendations remain intact for social distancing and limitations on group gatherings, we will continue to provide programming in an online setting. Candidate forums and town halls can successfully be held through the use of Zoom, Facebook Live and Instagram Live. Social media will be used to not only to stream events, but also to foster conversations in real time and generate buzz beyond the events themselves. It is vital that any event prevented from occurring in-person be reconceptualized for online platforms.

Examples of online Spring 2020 Programming:

- 2020 City Council Town Hall via Zoom and Facebook
- DukesProtectDukes Discussion with Student Government Association via Zoom and Facebook
- How will the 2020 Census impact Our Future?
- 2020 Census Town Hall
- JMU Women in Public Service (interactive panel discussion)
- Virtual Town Hall with U.S. Senate Candidate Daniel Gade
- Coping During Covid
- Ending Systematic Racism and Building an Inclusive Society
- Rethinking Policing and Building Community Trust
- Anti-Racism & Black Agency Through Visual & Performing Arts
- Latino/a/x Leadership Academy Civic Engagement Workshop

## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS AND GOALS**

With the challenges of the online environment, it is vital that our voter initiatives do not lose touch of our enduring core values.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

Not everyone in the JMU community will have equal access to the internet and technology while living at home. The benefit of our on-campus events were that locations varied and were ultimately in places that most students accessed regularly. While we advertise online programming and information on our most popular social media, we also must move forward with outreach for those who prefer not to use online tools or are unable. This includes being a part of university wide messaging that includes physical mailers or putting information on public websites that people don't have to subscribe to or find on social media. JMU Civic and Dukes Vote must be attentive to communities that are not finding information online and create solutions to reach them.

### **DIVERSITY**

As everything moves online, we have to acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of students that may not be available because of the home responsibilities and obligations. We need to acknowledge that not everything can be the same and we have to adjust to meet their needs.

### **INCLUSIVITY AND COALITION BUILDING**

As events are moved online, it could be a unique opportunity to collaborate with a wide range of areas and backgrounds. More partnerships and voices can be gathered as the events no longer have physical constraints and more time flexibility. JMU Civic & Dukes Vote can provide technical assistance and co-host online events.

### **PATIENCE AND EMPATHY**

The nature of this online transition was caused by a somber and worrisome global pandemic. Programming must continue with attention to mental health and an understanding that there is an increased amount of emotional and psychological weight on the community's shoulders.

### **HELPING OTHERS**

As uncertainty looms, JMU Civic will to the best of its ability try to be a resource center for those with questions and concerns. With access to national networks, election information, and administrative tools at JMU, we are able to be a liaison and mode of information for our community. During a global pandemic, this means that we can be a conduit to mental health resources, charities and community programs, and the latest current events surrounding government regulations.

# REPORTING & ASSESSMENT

This plan will be shared with all internal, external, and campus partners in order to further strengthen our civic mission. Additionally, this plan will be posted publicly and sent to national partners, including NASPA, Campus Vote Project, Ask Every Student, and ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. It will be shared with the JMU administration in order to strengthen our efforts of institutionalizing civic engagement. The data shared in this report, including our NSLVE data, and JMU assessments of political learning and democratic engagement are publicly available at:  
<https://www.jmu.edu/civic/assessment.shtml>