

# The University of Iowa Student Government

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## 2018-2019 Voter Registration Plan

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Background

In the past, voter registration has been isolated within UISG and political student organizations with a lack of collaboration between these groups. However, the University of Iowa administration has taken an interest in voter registration and wants to work with us to expand and institutionalize voter registration on campus. Our goal is to make voter registration a regular, normal activity that is done as part of the normal student experience. We want to establish a long-term change in campus culture.

## History

### **2016 Efforts:**

- The Dean of Students, Lyn Redington, sent a mass email to students on September 6, 2016 to encourage them to register to vote
- Residence Education created a webpage about early voting and polling locations that has since been taken down
- UISG participated in the Big Ten Voting Challenge
  - This effort registered 3,218 students to vote
  - Tried to create ties with Homecoming Executives
  - Presented to athletes at Multicultural Focus Groups
  - Implemented TurboVote
- ITS permanently added TurboVote link to the Student Tools menu on the ICON Dashboard ran a news item on the ICON Dashboard for 1-2 weeks
- UISG utilized the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) to hire a fellow to oversee voter registration efforts
- UISG reached out to Doritos, who donated hundreds of bags of chips for “Doritos for Democracy”

### **2017 Efforts:**

- The Dean of Students, Lyn Redington, sent a mass email to students encouraging them to register to vote
- Postcards were put in dorm mailboxes on move-in day. These detailed how to register by paper and through TurboVote. This was moderately successful, and we recommend doing it again.

- UISG implemented an internal voter registration plan with metrics that helped us know the best times and places for registering students to vote.
- UISG reached out to On Iowa! to have time set aside during their program to register students to vote. We interacted with and registered dozens of students.
- UISG partnered with Hawkeye Caucus and University Democrats on the VoterSpree event on National Voter Registration Day that registered 162 students to vote.
- UISG compiled [a list of politically oriented student organizations](#) and reached out to them in an attempt to build relationships and create voter registration coalitions
  - There was little response to our efforts on behalf of College Republicans.
  - Mitchell and Jenna sat down in March with the presidents of University Democrats and Young Democratic Socialists about creating a coalition of voter registration among political oriented student organizations. They were receptive and said that they will pass along this information to the next presidents so we can easily collaborate with them
- UISG developed a voter registration website that is in its final stages and currently being approved by Marketing and Design. This will be featured on the UISG website.
- UISG created a drop off location for completed voter registration forms at the IMU Welcome Desk
- UISG improved communication with Resident Assistance staff, Director of Governmental Relations presented at the RA winter training in 2018.
- UISG hosted the Iowa City Council 2017 Election Forum which attracted 70 people and engaged questions from participants towards the candidates in addition to the already prepared questions. The goal was to get more students informed about the election.

### 2018 Plan

*Goal:* Make the 2018 election voter registration more strategic, comprehensive, and institutionalized. We are going to do so by collaborating with students organizations and administration to ensure the longevity of this plan.

### **On-campus**

- We will hire a CEEP fellow to coordinate and oversee voter registration for UISG, utilizing \$1,000 of the \$10,000 allotted for voter registration to the University of Iowa.
- We will advocate to county officials that Mayflower becomes a polling location, so students living there do not have to leave their building and walk to another location to vote.
- We will work with the resident assistant staff and University Housing and Dining to create a voter registration packet to give to residents for move-in day. The packet will include a voter registration form, information about the voter ID law, non-biased information about the gubernatorial candidates, instructions on how to fill out the form, a page of frequently asked questions, and a self-addressed stamped envelope addressed to the Johnson County Auditor.
- We will further collaborate with the RA staff by advocating for them to receive voter registration training and encouraging civic engagement related residence hall events leading up to midterm elections. These events would potentially include information about the importance of civic engagement and the new Voter ID law, and could include collaboration with the CEEP fellow. These events will occur through coordination with the resident education curriculum and Dr. Shivers.
- We will table at OnIowa! to further increase our reach to first-year and transfer students. Currently, we have reached out to Kate Garrett to reserve tables for August 15-18 from 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. This needs a follow-up in May. Mitchell Dunn and Jenna Pokorny are the follow-up contacts until the new administration. The new administration should reach out to Kate Garrett again in May to expand UISG's presence at OnIowa! Kate said it is difficult to educate OnIowa! leaders.
- We understand that voter registration is not feasible during Orientation. We cannot register students to vote before people potentially know their new housing. Also, the confirmation letter of voting will be sent before people have moved into the dorms, making their registration at Orientation invalid. Instead, we will hand out abridged versions of the voter registration packet and information about TurboVote to students and parents at Orientation.
- Voter registration is also not feasible during Homecoming Week. After checking with Student Legal Services, Homecoming cannot give points to FSL for registering members

as they may gain monetarily which is classified as bribery. We can host events that encourage voter registration and give points to everyone that attends - even if they do not register. The only thing we cannot do is give people something for registering to vote.

- We will host a large-scale event on National Voter Registration Day. We recommend that this be a cookout in Hubbard Park with voter registration occurring simultaneously. The event would include food and potentially free t-shirts. We will reach out to political student organizations in August to promote collaboration such as (but not limited to): University Democrats, Hawkeye Caucus, Young Democratic Socialists of America, College Republicans, 50/50 in 2020, AAUW at Iowa, Hawkeyes of DREAM Iowa, Hawkeyes for Israel, Political Awareness Club, Undergraduate Political Science Association, and Young Americans for Liberty. We will also encourage faculty and staff to participate by speaking about this event in one of the monthly shared governance meetings.
- We will promote faculty and staff involvement in voter registration efforts by reaching out and gauging their interest in involvement.
- We will reach out to IMU services to secure the IMU front desk as a drop off location for voter registration forms. We can spread awareness that the IMU help desk is a location to drop off voter registration forms by sharing on social media and other public places on campus. Voter registration forms collected at the IMU will be given to the UISG office to be turned in.
- We will partner with the cultural resource centers and make it possible for each of these to be drop-off locations for voter registration forms. We will co-host events at resource centers that include registering students to vote, information about the importance of civic engagement, and the new Voter ID Law. These events will be Advantage Iowa and FSL educational approved. We will meet with Tab Wiggins to set up voter registration training sessions with resource center leaders and discuss how to further develop voter registration efforts with the resource centers. Along with that, we will speak with the Center for Diversity and Enrichment and International Student and Scholar Services on how to include them in our voter registration efforts.

- We will work with the communications team to develop an instructional video of students registering to vote. This could include a video with the athletics department or a video of students from all areas of campus voting, to show voting as routine and normal.
- We will build UISG's relationship with the athletics department to encourage messages of registering to vote at university sporting events in the form of videos and messaging on tickets. We will do so by collaborating with Iowa Student Athlete Academic Services through the liaison on the Student Life Committee.
- Partner with Iowa Edge to create programming that incentivizes members to register themselves and their peers to vote.
- We will reach out to Cambus to advertise and promote voter registration within the University of Iowa community. We will use graphics created by the communications team for this.
- Reach out to Art Spisak, Director of the Honors Program. Can reach him at 319-335-1681 or [art-spisak@uiowa.edu](mailto:art-spisak@uiowa.edu). Discuss incorporating the voter registration into the program (potentially the classes). Brainstorm with the Honors Program with ways to discuss civic engagement and voter registration.
- We will reach out to Carrie Wickerhauser at Housing and Dining to put table tents at dining halls, and table in dining halls for voter registration. The table tents should include fast facts about how to register, like the TurboVote instructions and basic FAQ.

### **Off-Campus**

- We will assign UISG members to hang flyers in their apartment buildings and encourage neighbors to re-register as they move in.
- We will work with the Iowa City City Council to mandate landlords give new tenants voter registration information upon move-in. For further research, see what Michigan State University has lobbied for with their city council.
- We will increase collaboration with Tanya Villhauer to encourage students to re-register to vote after they move off campus.
- We will conduct mobile canvassing by UISG members and CEEP director during peak move-in times. This would be accomplished by going to various apartment buildings and leasing offices around Iowa City and registering people as they move in, possibly with water or lemonade (could be a weight concern, but this could be offset with a car,

especially since private parking lots would be unenforced during this time). An area of special notice would be around South Johnson/Van Buren/Dodge/Bowery and other neighborhoods close to campus, as concentrations of students would be relatively dense and a number of leasing offices are located in the area, including Apartments at Iowa, Apartments Downtown, Prestige, and Hawkeye Campus. This would ideally take place in the last week of July and first week and a half of August, when most leases/move-in times begin.

- We will partner with downtown businesses to promote voter registration. Christian Zvokel reached out to Chris at Raygun to create a voter registration shirt that would be passed out at voter registration events. They responded asking for suggestions, and also mentioned a voter registration event they hold in Des Moines. We recommend following up with design ideas and collaborating possible joint registration event in Iowa City.
- We will partner with Neighborhood Ambassadors to encourage registration to vote within the off-campus neighborhoods and collaborate with mobile canvassing efforts.

### **Online**

- Once published, the Governmental Relations Committee will review the voter registration website and simplify if needed.
- Reach out to @uiowa, each of the five undergraduate colleges and their departments on twitter to promote voting on first day of early voting, election day, and National Voter Registration Day.
- Work with the Communications Director to create bi-weekly op-eds in the Daily Iowan about the importance of voting and laws that are relevant to college students, like state appropriations and mental health funding. Coordinate op-eds with the Governmental Relations legislative agenda.
- Meet with the new communications director in May to create a graphics and social media plan for the upcoming year. For guidance on how to structure this initiative, see UISG's efforts in fall 2017 for state appropriations.
- We have spoken with Academic Support and Retention to create a module in Success at Iowa about voter registration that includes graphics, importance of voting, and how to get involved in advocacy. This seems highly unlikely and we do not recommend moving forward with this initiative.

- Talk to Dr. Shivers to have her promote voter registration on vlog, twitter, email to parents, #UIWhatsUp.
- Create a social media campaign entitled #WhyIVote to encourage students to post about their civic engagement on social media.
- Work with campus partners to put voter registration tab on other campus websites.

### **Long Term Advocacy Plan**

- Make voter registration a regular, normal activity that is done as part of the normal moving process. Establish a long-term change in campus culture that normalizes updating voter registration when people move.
- Consider using “Go Hawks, Go Vote” as a future slogan for voter registration.
- Work with Dr. Shivers to re-establish a Center for Civic Engagement that oversees student involvement in their community.
- Work with Dr. Shivers to create a staff position centered on civic engagement and voter registration that will oversee UISG’s year-to-year effort.

### **Stakeholders**

The following members of UISG are recommended to participate in biweekly debriefing meetings:

President

Vice President

Deputy Director of Governmental Relations (contingent upon bylaw vote)

Director of Governmental Relations (contingent upon bylaw vote)

Governmental Relations Committee Chair

CEEP Directors

Two members of the Governmental Relations Committee

We recommend that the Deputy Director of Governmental Relations (contingent upon bylaw vote) spearhead voter registration in conjunction with the CEEP director and Governmental Relations Committee Chair.



## **Things to Watch**

### **Voter ID Law**

- Make sure that the Governmental Relations Committee is read up on the voter ID law, what it means, and what additional restrictions it has, as it is being implemented for the first time during the 2018 elections.

### **Absentee or Non-Voting**

- Some students will want to either register or stay registered at home. It is imperative that the Governmental Relations Committee know how to register absentee voters and the process for requesting an absentee ballot.
- Have a solid plan in place for when students are absentee registered but still want to get involved. We recommend giving them a few voter registration forms to register their friends, write editorials, reach out to legislators, advocate for the university, follow UISG on social media, encourage friends to be civically engaged.
- The aforementioned plan can be improved and we encourage the next stakeholders to continue working through this problem next year.

## **Recommended Budget**

The Office of the President gifted the University of Iowa Student Government \$10,000 to use toward voter registration efforts. This budget is not all inclusive, as we want to leave most of the budgeting to the 2018-19 voter registration stakeholders.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Self-Addressed Stamped Envelopes	\$2500
CEEP Ambassador Event Budget	\$1000
National Voter Registration Day	\$1000
Raygun-Sponsored T-Shirts	\$500
Departmental Grants for Professors	\$1000