About Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw State University is a comprehensive university recognized for its entrepreneurial spirit, global engagement and sense of community. As Georgia’s third-largest university and one of the fifty largest public universities in the country, Kennesaw State offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate degrees, including an increasing number of doctoral programs. KSU is committed to becoming a world-class academic institution positioned to broaden its academic and research missions and expand its scope on a local, national and global level.

In January 2015, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia approved the consolidation of KSU with nearby Southern Polytechnic State University. The new consolidated university now serves over 35,000 students on two primary campuses located in Kennesaw and Marietta, both within Cobb County. Cobb County has been one of the fastest growing counties within the Atlanta metropolitan area. The university has additional smaller educational sites around the metro area and one international education site in Montepulciano, Italy. In addition to degree seeking students, KSU serves over 17,000 students through continuing and professional education courses.

The university is relatively young, with the Kennesaw campus starting as a junior college in 1963, serving primarily a non-traditional population, predominantly women from the local community. On-campus housing was added to the Kennesaw campus in 2002, and NCAA Division I football begin in 2015. The current NSLVE data only reflects the Kennesaw campus from before the consolidation. The former Southern Polytechnic State University (SPSU) was founded in 1948 as The Technical Institute. The Southern Polytechnic name is retained within one of the 13 academic colleges at the new KSU, housed on the former SPSU campus now known as the KSU Marietta campus.
Overview

KSU’s former president, Dr. Daniel Papp, shared a reflection and concern during a State of the University address noting how the term “academic” has become synonymous with “irrelevant” resulting in a perceived diminished value of academic pursuits and the contributions higher education makes to society. The reflection became a charge and led to the creation of Engage KSU. Through the consolidation process, an even stronger commitment emerged with the creation of the Division of Economic Development and Community Engagement. However, we continue to face the challenge of fully engaging our broad, diverse, and growing student body. This sparked our application to join NASPA’s Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement lead initiative project, and connected that work to our long-standing American Democracy Project work with AASCU. This created an exceptional opportunity for collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. KSU is proud of the good work we have already been doing, but used this process as a vehicle to enhance the democratic engagement of our students, particularly related to voting and participation in the civic life of their communities. Our NSLVE data indicates a 75.9% registration rate for 2012 and 66.2% registration rate for 2014. The voting rates were 51.6% in 2012 and 21.2% in 2014. While these numbers exceed the national averages across all institutional types, our goal was to increase these rates in 2016.

Our three top goals for democratic engagement during the Fall 2016 semester were:

1. Increase the number of students registered to vote through enhanced marketing of TurboVote and increased voter registration and education drives.
2. Increase the number of students who vote through enhanced multi-modal voter education effort.
3. Significantly expand the network of partners engaged in CLDE work, with a particular focus on peer engagement and deliberative dialogues.

While we cannot fully assess whether these goals were achieved until we receive our next NSLVE report, based on the data we were able to collect we have a strong indication that we will see improvements. One particular measure is our TurboVote usage. KSU first began using TurboVote in the Fall 2014 semester. Since joining TurboVote, KSU has had nearly 2500 signups. Of those, over 1000 signups occurred in the Fall 2016 semester. With more than 40% of our total usage having occurred in our one most recent semester, and the remaining less than 60% occurred over the six previous semesters, this clearly demonstrates a significant increase in usage of TurboVote among our students in Fall 2016. Looking across all TurboVote users, KSU made the top leaderboard 10 times in 2016, at one point hitting the number one spot after a successful email blast during the Georgia primary election season.
Coalition

Building on the small American Democracy Project team that had served as primary coordinators of our annual Constitution Week activities, the Office of the Dean of Students assembled a multi-disciplinary team of institutional partners who committed to support this effort and our ALL IN Challenge pursuits. The KSU coalition includes:

- Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students (who also serves as Deputy Registrar for Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration)
- Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Associate Vice President for Economic Development and Community Engagement
- Associate Vice President for Strategic Communication and Issues Management
- Director of Government Relations
- Student Government Association President, SGA Senators, and students from various registered student organizations, fraternities and sororities
- Chair of the Department of Political Science & Faculty representatives
- Assistant Dean of Students for Student Life
- Executive Director for the Center for Student Leadership
- Coordinator for Thrive Leadership Program, Center for Student Leadership
- Director of Student Engagement
- Dean of University College
- Director of First-Year Seminars & Assistant Professor of English
- Associate Director for Student Advocacy
- Assistant Director for Volunteerism and Service Learning
- Coordinator of Assessment and Strategic Planning
- Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies and Assistant Director of Engagement
- Associate Director of Residence Life
- Associate Dean of Library Systems
- Outreach Coordinator, Office of the Georgia Secretary of State

We strategically engaged a wide diversity of students, faculty, staff, and administrators, along with external partners from the League of Women Voters, Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration, and Office of the Secretary of State to ensure comprehensive buy-in and multi-layered support. Internal partnerships across multiple Student Affairs and Academic Affairs units was critical for infusing our marketing efforts in the classroom, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. We also partnered with Alumni Affairs and Parent & Family Programs to reach broad audiences that both contribute to civic engagement in their own right but also have influence upon our students.

With such a large coalition, sub-teams were formed to focus on specific tasks and programs. The full team met monthly, with functional work teams meeting more frequently as necessary. There were periods of greater intensity in September and October with select core team members leading most of the work, and other members serving in consulting and supportive capacities. Communication was challenging at times, but overall the key leaders collaborated excellently to ensure all elements of the plan were executed.
**Fall 2016 Plan Analysis**

Building upon our past traditions, much of our work focused on Constitution Week, a theme programming experience that began on Constitution Day & Citizenship Day (September 17) and concluded on National Voter Registration Day (September 27). The extended week included a variety of speakers, discussions, and registration and education activities to both promote the presidential election and also encourage on-going democratic engagement. Building upon that anchor week, additional programming and service opportunities were added at strategic points throughout the fall to continually keep students engaged.

**Voter Registration:**

Our primary strategy was to maximize the KSU partnership with TurboVote and encourage everyone to create a TurboVote profile, even if already registered to vote, to ease coordination of absentee ballots when needed, change to a new local address to engage local issues, and/or receive election reminders via text and/or email. We pre-loaded the local addresses for all on-campus residents into the system to make it easier and increase accuracy, and provided these details to the county Registrar to ensure there were no accidental rejections due to address match errors. The Office of the Dean of Students created a dedicated Voter Registration and Education website with the links to both TurboVote and the Georgia My Voter Page, and used that page as a landing site to then direct visitors to other related activities. The direct link to that site is [http://deanofstudents.kennesaw.edu/resources/voter-registration.php](http://deanofstudents.kennesaw.edu/resources/voter-registration.php) but given the length of the URL we asked our webmaster to create an easier “mask” site to auto-direct users, so for marketing purposes we promoted the site as vote.kennesaw.edu.

For students preferring to register with a hardcopy form, those forms are always available in the Office of the Dean of Students, and a limited supply were available at every voter registration table and event hosted throughout the semester. However, since the Georgia Secretary of State was heavily discouraging the use of paper forms and highly encouraging the use of their online app, as good partners we always offered online registration options first.

Since Constitution Day fell on a Saturday in 2016, and we have limited on-site classes on Saturday mornings (mostly graduate and premium programs), our programmatic efforts focused on our residential students. We kicked off our Constitution Week within our residential community, focusing primarily on awareness of TurboVote, the value of using their on-campus address for voting, and the deadlines to register or change addresses for the November election. Between our two main campuses we have 5200 students living on campus, though a significant majority of these students are from the greater local area and many leave campus on weekends. Based on feedback from the Residence Life staff, we decided to focus less on traditional face-to-face programming and instead engage social media and other virtual connection avenues. The staff hosted an e-blast Constitution Week kick-off that included target marketing to the 5200 on-campus residents but also provided opportunities for commuter students to connect.

Throughout that week and culminating on National Voter Registration Day, we had multiple voter registration tables set up at strategic high traffic locations across both campuses and used student volunteers to serve as “Roving Registrars” walking around with iPads to encourage students to sign-up for TurboVote on the spot. The Secretary of State provides training materials...
for all volunteers, and we had representatives from the League of Women Voters and Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration present at select tables. The off campus agencies still preferred paper forms, and while supportive of using the Secretary of State’s online app, expressed concern about promoting TurboVote. A few minor conflicts arose, and we adjusted the Roving Registrars to serve as pre-screening canvassers who then directed students to the full-service tables who preferred paper forms or wanted more information about the online app.

Laptops were available at all tables so students could use the app to check their registration status and update or register online immediately at the table.

Since the Roving Registrars were primarily using TurboVote, they did not individually track their interactions, but through the two “lead” registration tables where hardcopy forms were available there were over 120 forms collected during Constitution Week, and through TurboVote just over 1000 new signups were recorded. In addition, at the two “lead” tables just over 200 students were assisted with verifying that they were already registered and no further action was needed. Additional students were served during the programming activities where voter registration forms and iPads for online registration were available, but that data was not tracked uniquely from the overall attendance numbers for those programs.

There was significant marketing of voter registration options, deadlines, and programming. In addition to the multiple dedicated blast emails sent by the Dean of Students to all students, employees, parents and alumni, multiple forms of social media were employed, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat. Some limited promotion was posted on LinkedIn. Each message was tailored based on the time of distribution, with some promoting initial voter registration options, some reminding of upcoming deadlines, and some encouraging verification of registration, proper address, polling location, and/or how to request absentee ballots.

The Dean of Students and SGA President and Vice President created a video for social media and YouTube distribution since the previous year a YouTube video promoting TurboVote was well received. Unfortunately due to technical difficulties the quality of the final product was not sufficient for mass distribution and became solely an internal local promotion among SGA.

One of our initial desires was also to embed TurboVote into the D2L online learning management system, but that system is not locally controlled at the university and the system-level IT support were not able to research feasibility within the necessary timeframe. Hopefully this option can be implemented for future years.

While our voter registration efforts were overall successful, hopefully when the NSLVE data is released we will have achieved our goal of increased registration rates compared to years past. We continue to receive feedback from our students that their high schools heavily promote voter registration before graduating and through the Georgia motor-voter efforts students can easily register when they receive their driver’s license. Likewise, given the diversity of our student body and our largest populations being incoming transfer students and non-traditional students who are all well over 18, these students enter our institution already registered. The efforts to continue verifying that our students are registered and provide avenues for updating registration is still critically important, though may not be as critical as other voter engagement needs.
Voter Education:

Our first priority was making information about voting easier to find. The previous long URL for the university dedicated Voter Registration and Education website was “masked” by our webmaster to create an easy to remember and promote site link: vote.kennesaw.edu. Based on feedback from students that QR codes were “out” we instead created a Snapchat “quick click” icon that was added to all promotional materials (embedded within was basically the equivalent of a QR code) that directed the visitor to vote.kennesaw.edu.

In addition to multiple e-blasts and social media postings directing students to TurboVote and the Georgia Secretary of State’s app and website to access important nonpartisan voting information, the bulk of our programming efforts focused on Constitution Week and key follow up programs thereafter hosted in October and November. Some highlights of our programming efforts include:

- Democracy Wall conversation postings where students could respond to the following three questions throughout Constitution Week, and responses were captured for thematic analysis and to inform future dialogue postings:
  - Why should college students vote?
  - What is the one most important issue facing the US today?
  - How effective is the current US political election system?
- Pathways to Citizenship: a presentation by Jerry Gonzalez from the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials
- Safe Spaces vs. Free Speech: Living the Owl Creed with Civility, a dialogue hosted by the Office of Student Advocacy
- Hacking the Vote: Fact, Fiction, and Falsehoods, hosted by the Georgia Center for Election Systems
- Constitution Trivia Bowl, hosted by The Sentinel student newspaper
- Freedom: Every Vote Counts, co-hosted by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration
- Live Streaming of all presidential and the vice presidential debates
- The Big Conversation: Civility & Civic Engagement, a panel discussion including:
  - New York Times political journalist Thomas Kaplan
  - Better Business Bureau Institute chair and former Southern Company General Council Howard Winkler
  - Siegel Institute for Leadership, Ethics & Character executive director and professor of conflict management, Dr. Linda Johnston
  - Center for African and African Diaspora Studies and professor of political science and international affairs, Dr. Nurudeen Akinyemi
- Election 2016: Panel Discussion on What You Need to Know before heading to the polls, including panelists:
  - Shannon McCaffrey, AJC Political Reporter
  - Tharon Johnson, Democratic Strategist
  - Brian Robinson, Republic Strategists
  - Dr. Kerwin Swint, professor of political science
- Political Science Club & College Libertarians Mock Debate with students representing
the platforms of Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, and Gary Johnson

- Education Unleashed: A conversation with leaders on changing the face of education in Georgia, including:
  - Lt. Governor Casey Cagle
  - Former Lt. Governor Pierre Howard
  - Marietta City Schools Superintendent Emily Lembeck
  - State Senator and Education Chairman Lindsey Tippins

- Political Science Club Post-Election Analysis Roundtable with panelists discussing:
  - Voter turnout and demographics
  - Proposed American foreign policy
  - Legal viewpoints and the future of the Supreme Court
  - Proposed economic policy
  - Campaign and election strategies

Through our partnership with the New York Times Readership Program we provide a certain number of free papers to students and daily digital access passes, and partner with faculty members in key classes to use these resources to engage discussion about the election.

All programming offered directly through the coalition and/or the Student Government Association was specifically designed to be nonpartisan. Other politically and socially affiliated registered student organizations were free to choose whatever programmatic approaches and/or content they wished, though most opted for nonpartisan approaches to engage a broader audience.

Attendance at all programs was robust, with many professors either bringing their classes or offering academic credit for attending. The responses to the temporary Democracy Walls posted in the Student Centers on both campuses were tremendous and sparked the coalition to push for the installation of permanent Democracy Walls. The collective power of key members of the coalition, coupled with a recent library renovation that provided a perfect physical location for installation on the Kennesaw campus, helped finally bring this dream to fruition. A recent NASPA Lead Initiative posting published on January 10, 2017 provides an overview of this project:

https://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/posts/realizing-a-dream-the-democracy

Below is the text from the document posted at the Democracy Walls on both campuses, explaining its purpose and guidelines:

The purpose of a Democracy Wall is to provide an outlet for discussing civic issues, increasing communication across diverse audiences, encouraging thoughtful reflection, and increasing participation in the democratic process. Through this Democracy Wall we actively demonstrate our democratic values, heighten awareness, and encourage all voices to be heard. The Democracy Wall is also a space to encourage idea-generation for proactive change – on campus, in the local community, and across the globe.
Democracy Wall Ground Rules:

1. The most important rule – the “spirit of fair play” prevails. All voices are welcome.
2. Choose words that convey meaning and reflect our educational dignity, i.e., obscenity, cursing, and other indecencies do not serve the purpose of this wall nor the spirit of The Owl Creed*.
3. Civic discourse is respectful in disagreement. We can agree or disagree with arguments and issues without attacking individuals, i.e., name calling or personal attacks do not serve the purpose of this wall.
4. Do not alter or obscure what others have written, but add your voice to the conversation. Feel free to pose your own questions as well as comments.
5. Free speech is not always pleasant speech, but cannot be illegal speech. The Supreme Court has provided guidance on limitations, such as direct threats, incitement, false statements of fact, obscenity, fighting words, etc. If you believe anything posted on the wall is illegal speech, notify the Dean of Students Office immediately at 470-578-6310 or deanofstudents@kennesaw.edu.

The Democracy Wall and these guidelines are based on the Democracy Plaza created on the Indianapolis campus of IUPUI over a decade ago, which has stood as a national model for democratic engagement and civic dialogue. Kennesaw State University will administer compliance with the law based on consultation with KSU Legal Affairs and KSU Public Safety, and compliance with university codes of conduct based on consultation with Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. Periodically the boards will be cleaned to allow for a fresh round of conversations.

* The Owl Creed is an aspirational values statement that was developed by the KSU Student Human Relations Task Force in 1998 and is included in the Student Handbook. The Creed is also posted next to the Democracy Walls.

Ballot Access:

There were two primary focuses related to ballot access:

- the ability to review the ballot in advance to ensure appropriate time to research the candidates and issues, specifically the four proposed state constitutional amendments that appeared on the Georgia ballot; and
- ensure everyone was aware of how to request absentee ballots if so desired and the deadline to submit the request to ensure the completed ballot would arrive in time.

Through our partnership with TurboVote, there is an easy mechanism to request absentee ballots at no cost to students. This was promoted as a key advantage of signing up for TurboVote, and was particularly marketed to on-campus residential students who preferred not to register using their local on-campus address but would not be able to return home to vote at their designated polling location.
Another critical resource that was heavily promoted was the Georgia Secretary of State’s MVP site (My Voter Page - https://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do). The Secretary of State also created an app that could easily be downloaded and used to complete a variety of tasks, including all the features that TurboVote offers. Through this site it is easy to verify voter registration status, poll location, early voting locations, current elected officials, update registration information, request an absentee or provisional ballot, verify ballot status, and review a sample ballot for the upcoming election.

While there was an easy and accessible online option for reviewing the ballot, we understood that students do not always go to the information but expect the information to come to them. To that end, we made paper ballots available at the voter registration tables, and then after the deadline to register to vote we hosted voter education tables with volunteer faculty, staff and student leaders who helped students verify their registration details using iPads and review the sample ballots. In partnership with the Secretary of State and Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration, we received ample supply of free materials to distribution at strategic times in September, October, and November to continually engage our students in ballot awareness.

In addition to the materials distributed, representatives from the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration brought the actual ballot voting machines to both campuses and provided demonstrations of how the technology operates to minimize the anxiousness new voters may experience when going to the polls.

Related to the use of the voting machines is the importance of voter trust in the technology. Having the voting machines available for students to physically touch and test in advance of voting is helpful, but there is still often the concern about the security of the machines. Given the significant media attention around this issue, we felt part of our obligation related to ballot access was also ensuring ballot confidence. Luckily, KSU is the home of the Center for Election Systems, which was established to provide services for Georgia Election Officials and poll managers to assist with the operation of the voting system. The core functions of the Center include outreach, testing, educating, training, consultation, technical support, and ballot building. The executive director of the center agreed to speak directly with our students, despite his busy schedule, and provided an informative and entertaining presentation called “Hacking the Vote: Fact, Fiction, and Falsehoods.”

Voter Turnout:

The Dean of Students coordinated all email blasts and social media postings to promote all of the voter registration, education, and awareness activities that ultimately reinforced the desired end goal: actually voting! Each election cycle there is at least one email blast with appropriate details and reminders, but the volume was increased significantly in Fall 2016. Knowing students do not always check their emails in a timely manner, all activities were also promoted through OwlLife, KSU’s online student activities portal, and other traditional promotion mechanisms were used (distributing flyers around the campuses, asking faculty to make announcements to their classes, encouraging student leaders to use peer-to-peer communication channels).

An important component of our plan was to eliminate actual and perceived barriers to voting. Part of this plan included educating students about the ease and availability of absentee ballots,
but more importantly ensure they understood how polling locations are designated. A challenge
we have faced in years past is students not realizing on election day they can only vote at their
designated polling location and end up unable to vote because they went to the wrong location.
To proactively address this issue we focused first on an early voting campaign to encourage
students who were not choosing an absentee ballot option to go to the advance voting locations
designated for the county. Unlike on election day, the only restriction when choosing a location
for advance voting is that the voters must choose a location within the county in which they are
registered. Since the majority of our students are from the local area, mostly within the county in
which the two campuses are located, this provided easily accessible locations with convenient
hours across multiple days. The state also provided Saturday voting options.

The largest advance voting polling location in the county happens to be located within a
reasonable distance of the Marietta campus, so promotion to those students focused on
convenience, sustainability and wellness. That campus houses our STEM majors, so we tried to
tap into their environmental consciousness by focusing on the ease of bike riding, using the local
bus route, or even enjoying a brisk walk or jog to go vote.

The Kennesaw campus is about 10 miles away from that same polling location, so we offered
shuttle service for the students from that campus who needed transportation. There is already a
regular shuttle route between the campuses, but to minimize the inconvenience of having to
shuttle first to the Marietta campus then transfer to a public bus or walk, we offered a dedicated
direct shuttle from Kennesaw. There was an advance polling location closer to the Kennesaw
campus, but it was only available the week immediately prior to the election and the route to the
closer location was more circuitous and time consuming. Unfortunately the day most convenient
for the students (Friday because of fewer classes) ended up being very popular and instead of
taking the estimated 30 minutes to complete voting as had been the case earlier that week, it
ended up taking over an hour and a half to vote on average. The state created a website to
monitor wait times, and many students who had intended to use the shuttle changed their minds
because of the extended time involved.

For election day voting, we assessed the already existing multiple routes of the university shuttle,
which also services many off-campus housing complexes. For the Kennesaw campus, there are
polling locations within walking distances for the on-campus residential students and along the
shuttle routes for many of the commuter students living in nearby off-campus student housing, so
we decided not to offer any additional election day transportation for that campus. For the
Marietta campus, the designated polling place for students living on campus was not as
convenient for walking and was not located along an existing shuttle route, so we provided a
dedicate direct shuttle from that campus to the polling location serving the on-campus residents.

While the on-campus residential population would likely not be sufficient to support a dedicated
polling place on election day, the population served by the university and surrounding areas
should be amply sufficient to support an advance polling location. The Student Government
Association is researching the feasibility of designating the Kennesaw campus as an early voting
site for future elections. The Marietta campus is not as large and is already close to the county
Civic Center which serves as a primary advance voting location already.
As part of our promotional campaign to reduce perceived barriers, a joint message was distributed to all faculty from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs reminding them of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents policy that allows students to receive excused absences on election day if the only time they are able to vote is during their class time. We also encouraged professors to consider the nature of required academic activities held on election day to minimize potential academic impact to students who had to miss class.

While not directly related to voter turnout, in conjunction with the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration we distributed a call for volunteers to work at the polls. Having students at the polling locations can help ensure a more student-friendly experience and serves to remind other volunteers that university ID cards are a valid form of ID, and the address on a driver’s license (or lack of driver’s license) should not impede the ability to vote. Likewise, students working at the polls are more likely to promote the importance of voting with their peers. We received a fair response from a select number of sororities, but overall did not receive a large response for poll volunteers.

Successes

Overall we have great pride in what our institution was able to accomplish this past Fall. Our top successes include:

- Amazing programming: from Constitution Week to our “Big Conversation” panel to our “Georgia Gang” style discussion of timely issues that directly impact our students, we offered a diverse array of experiences that challenged our students to think broadly and hopefully inspired them to get involved and vote.
- Permanent installation of Democracy Walls on both campuses – and at no cost! Luckily there were plenty of surplus chalkboards that are no longer used in classrooms and a collaborative spirit of colleagues willing to volunteer their time and talents to make this long-standing dream a reality.
- Addition of the Civic Engagement module to our Spring 2017 NSSE assessment. KSU participates in the USG schedule for NSSE administration and the institution had decided to add the Advising module this year. Using this project, we were able to successfully convince the NSSE team to change that module selection to Civic Engagement to help us assess our success from the Fall and better understand the engagement of our students.

While we will not know whether we met our desired goals until we receive the NSLVE data, even if those numbers do not reach our desired levels the spirit that was generated around the institution, engaging in civil and respectful dialogue despite a significantly contentious presidential election, makes this project a success.

Barriers

Despite our many successes, we experienced a number of challenges as well. Our most significant barriers include:

- Unauthorized voter registration activities on both campuses. During past election cycles
we had received reports from students who thought they had completed the voter registration process by completing a form with a random canvasser walking on campus with a clipboard only to find out on election day they were not actually registered. To minimize this issue, many years ago the Dean of Students established a protocol requiring all parties involved in voter registration activities on campus to notify the Dean of Students Office in advance, and this past year required direct coordination of all activities through the Dean of Students office. Despite these efforts, numerous unauthorized individuals and organizations appeared on campus with clipboards and forms to approach students. Some were collecting unnecessary private information, like social security numbers. Others were selectively targeting specific student populations, and some were even sorting the forms based on the race of the individuals completing the form. These practices were very concerning and were occurring on multiple campuses across the state. To address this issue, the Dean of Students distributed a mass message to all students, employees, parents and alumni notifying them of the appropriate mechanisms for registering and requesting that all unauthorized activities be reported immediately. The Secretary of State was also notified. The local media ran a story, which was picked up nationally, and the Dean’s office received inquiries from organizations in New York, California, and across the southeast inquiring about the matter. There is no way to know how many students provided their data to these individuals and whether or not they were legitimately registering students, but this challenge created unexpected media attention that ultimately provided a positive value to our work.

- Despite a large and generally enthusiastic coalition membership, an overabundance of work fell to a small group of individuals who invested significant hours beyond their standard job duties to ensure the work was completed. The student leader efforts waxed and waned depending on the ebbs and flows of semester stress, which is to be expected, but did diminish the breadth of peer influence we had initially anticipated.

- Significant changes in institutional administration. Shortly after establishing the coalition our long-serving president abruptly retired. The interim president was incredibly supportive, and initially anticipated to serve through a complete search process. However, a new permanent president was appointed without a national search, creating significant unrest among the faculty and certain student groups. The incoming new president previously served as State Attorney General, and in that role had supported state actions that some perceived as contradictory to the social justice efforts being engaged on campus. In addition to presidential successions, multiple cabinet-level administrators were released from their roles amid controversy. All of the rapid administrative change and subsequent turmoil and media attention occurring simultaneously with a divisive national presidential election left some feeling as though the democratic process was broken and their voices didn’t matter.

Even though these barriers has some significant impact on elements of our work, overall the coalition was able to process through these barriers and find creative ways to minimize the impact. The turmoil surrounding institutional changes appears to be settling down, and many of the concerned student populations have now had the opportunity to interact directly with the new institutional president and find common ground. We are hopeful the same will ensue at the national level in time.
**Beyond 2016**

Our coalition is committed to instilling a sense of moral obligation for democratic engagement and participation in every election, whether national, state, or local. One tool for achieving this goal will be our Student Creed. The Owl Creed has historically been a static document available in the Student Handbook with little acknowledgement that it even exists. An initial promotion campaign began in August 2016 with our incoming new first-year students at convocation inviting them to sign large post boards displaying the creed. Throughout the Fall at strategically chosen events additional boards have been available for signing by students, faculty, staff, and other members of our extended university community. Given the link to civic engagement we are seeking ways to bring the code to life, engaging a crowdsourcing philosophy to allow the creed to evolve organically to reflect our evolving student body. A new branding campaign for the creed is unfolding this Spring.

Another important mechanism, which is also incorporating the creed, is our Democracy Walls. New questions will be posted periodically on the walls to keep students both informed and engaged in local, state, and national issues.

Given the past political career of our new president, he is deeply committed to supporting the democratic process and utilizing his vast network of connections and resources to enhance the ways we serve and engage our students in this work.

Our foundational work over the years, coupled with our significant enhancements from Fall 2016 activities, provide a strong framework for our future work. The new initiatives from Fall will continue on, strategically planned and assessed to maximize success.

**NSLVE Data**

Our coalition is highly anticipating the arrival of our NSLVE report and will remain actively engaged in assessing the results to determine how best to plan for the future. One strategic partner on the coalition is the Coordinator of Assessment and Strategic Planning, invited specifically to ensure successful assessment of our efforts and integration with larger institution assessment efforts. He was a key partner in getting the Civic Engagement module added to NSSE this Spring. As we did in the past, the NSLVE data will be shared with key administrators and other partners beyond the coalition, including community partners.

We are seeking a 5% increase in both registration and voting rates in 2016 compared to the NSLVE results from 2012. Now that all USG schools are participating in NSLVE we hope to gain some valuable comparative data from across our USG peer group for 2016, along with comparable institutional types across the country. This data will provide critical insight into where best to guide our efforts moving forward.

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