



Community. Knowledge. Culture.

A Proposal to Increase Civic Engagement

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Executive Summary

Students want to be engaged in improving their communities. Many colleges and universities over the last several decades have made strong institutional commitments to registering students to vote, educating students on local community challenges and opportunities, and helping students become active and engaged citizens. These efforts have led to major gains in voter turnout and civic engagement across a wide range of institutions, including a record national student voting rate of 66% in the 2020 presidential election.¹

We propose that Louisiana Tech join these other colleges and universities in a concerted effort to increase student civic engagement by developing and implementing a university-wide civic engagement action plan. The implementation of this plan would build on the success of events like Big Event and occasional voter registration drives by making civic engagement a central component of a Tech student's education. This plan could help to reinvigorate student participation in on and off campus clubs and organizations, increase student civic participation, and develop a stronger relationship between Tech and the Ruston and northern Louisiana community. Tech already offers students the best educational value in Louisiana, but in order to provide an unparalleled learning experience for students, Tech must innovate. Cultivating a strong civic engagement identity in students will help to make Tech a pre-eminent public research university with a distinctive identity.

To further this goal, we have outlined the following approach:

1. Prepare to develop a civic engagement action plan by surveying students to identify their civic engagement knowledge and needs. Contact applicable on and off campus partners.
2. Construct a university-wide civic engagement action plan development committee to create a strategic framework for civic engagement on campus.
3. Implement the plan constructed by the civic engagement action plan development committee.

We are seeking presidential approval to complete step 1. Step 1 can be completed using resources already available in the School of History and Social Science and the Waggoner Center for Civic Engagement and Public Policy. In the proposal below, we provide additional details on the need for a civic engagement action plan, the steps to construct and implement a plan, and possible initiatives that could result from implementing such a plan. These initiatives include comprehensive Welcome Week programming, clear and frequent voter education, and opportunities for curricular development, among others.

¹ Thomas, Nancy, Adam Gismondi, Prabhat Gautam, and David Brinker. 2021. "Democracy Counts 2020: Record-Breaking Turnout and Student Resiliency." *The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement* (<https://tufts.app.box.com/v/democracy-counts-2020>).

Our research thus far has shown that Tech students want to be more civically engaged and that they are interested in participating in many of these initiatives. A comprehensive civic engagement action plan will help Tech remain a leader in developing students as leaders and learners.

Vision

Tech 2030 describes Louisiana Tech University's vision as "to be recognized as a pre-eminent public research university with an unparalleled learning experience." Developing and implementing a civic engagement action plan integrates Tech 2030's three key principles — people, knowledge, and culture — in a unique way that would set Tech apart from other universities.

Our vision is for Tech to foster a campus culture of civic engagement that develops citizens whose actions contribute to the betterment of campus, our northern Louisiana community, and society.

We define civic engagement as knowledge of social and political institutions and processes, skills to participate in civic life, and an interest in taking action to better one's community.²

² Adler, Richard, and Judy Goggin. 2005. "What do we Mean by Civic Engagement?" *Journal of Transformative Education* 3(3): 236-253 (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344605276792>).

Imperative Action

“Educating and training citizens in a representative democracy” is a core aspect of the philosophy of accreditation for SACSCOC accredited institutions like Louisiana Tech University.³ SACSCOC recognized the urgency of this work when in September 2021, it signed as a member of the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Movement. This movement, which represents a collaboration between the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) — of which Louisiana is a member — commits signatories to “taking vigorous action” to fulfill the civic mission of postsecondary education. “Civic inquiry and democracy engagement [must be] part of each student’s educational pathway.”⁴ Similarly, as a member of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), Louisiana Tech has committed to being a “steward of place and civic engagement.”⁵

Louisiana Tech, therefore, must provide all students, university-wide with civic engagement education. Our current ad-hoc approach is not sufficient to meet our Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Movement commitment. We also must provide voter education as required by federal law.⁶ We suggest that developing and implementing a comprehensive civic engagement action plan is the best path forward.

Doing so will help to serve the Tech 2030 strategic framework goal of “fostering innovation [among students] that make a difference in our region and around the world.” There is substantial need for developing civically engaged citizens in Lincoln Parish. Local elections suffer from particularly low voter turnout, often lower than 20% of registered voters.⁷ A report by political scientists showed that Louisiana ranked as the 39th most politically engaged state.⁸ This is particularly troubling given that Louisiana has some of the greatest health, education, and welfare

³ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. 2017. “The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.” (page 4, <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/2018-POA-Resource-Manual.pdf>).

⁴ Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Movement. 2021. “Shared Commitment Statement.” (<https://collegeciviclearning.org/sharedcommitment>).

⁵ American Association of State Colleges and Universities. 2020. “Strategic Plan FY 2020-2025.” (<https://www.aascu.org/strategic-plan/VisionandMission>).

⁶ American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. “Voter Registration.” (<https://www.aacrao.org/advocacy/compliance/voter-registration>).

⁷ Daniel. Caleb. 2021. “Renewal Passed.” *Ruston Daily Leader* (<https://www.rustonleader.com/news/renewal-passed>).

⁸ McCann, Adam. 2020. “Most and Least Politically Engaged States.” (<https://wallethub.com/edu/most-least-politically-engaged-states/7782>).

needs of any state in the United States, needs that could become higher priorities were constituents more civically engaged.⁹

In addition, other universities in Louisiana have made major advances toward integrating civic knowledge, education, and experiences into their curriculum. Six University of Louisiana System institutions plus Southern University and LSU have centers or offices for civic engagement and service learning. LSU, Northwestern State, UNO, and Southeastern are members of national non-profit organizations that promote civic engagement through voter registration and civic action. LSU, ULL, Grambling, and Southern all have established voter engagement programs on campus, with SU Votes and GeauxVote LSU as two of the more prominent examples.¹⁰

Resources to help Tech become a leader in civic engagement education are widely available. Tech has long been a member of the American Democracy Project and could become re-engaged in this organization.¹¹ There are opportunities to join non-profit organizations like The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) at no cost that will provide Tech with valuable data about campus civic engagement.¹² Further, the American Political Science Association (APSA) has made a wide variety of civic engagement resources available and has, this year, prioritized civic engagement education as a key APSA presidential priority.¹³

⁹ Plyer, Allison, Alysha Rashid, Elaine Ortiz, and Taylor Savell. 2022. "Executive Summary: Pandemic to Prosperity South." *National Conference on Citizenship*. (https://www.ncoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/21042022_P2P-South-FINAL.pdf).

¹⁰ Southern University System. 2022. "SU Votes." (<https://www.sus.edu/page/su-votes>).
Rodriguez, Perla. 2019. "Are you Voting?" *The Reveille* (https://www.lsureveille.com/news/are-you-voting-lsu-students-and-faculty-discuss-the-importance-of-voting-civic-engagement/article_7a58908e-e498-11e9-99ce-4f8d28484c38.html).

¹¹ American Association of State Colleges and Universities. "American Democracy Project." (<https://www.aascu.org/ADP/>).

¹² Tufts University. 2020. "The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement" (<https://idhe.tufts.edu/nslve>).

¹³ Ishiyama, John. 2022. "An Introduction to the Rethinking Political Science Education Task Force." *Political Science Today*. (<https://politicalsciencenow.com/political-science-today-an-introduction-to-the-rethinking-political-science-education-task-force-by-john-ishiyama/>).

Current Conditions

Louisiana Tech University has programs — both current and former — that help to develop civic engagement among students. The main challenge is that these programs are operated on an ad-hoc basis without a university-wide strategic framework, student input into their development, and measurement of their outcomes.

In the past, Tech has developed a number of initiatives related to civic engagement. Tech was an early member of the American Democracy Project, a consortium of colleges and universities seeking to promote democratic citizenship on campus. Faculty have held loosely coordinated voter registration drives, panel discussions about elections and civic issues, and there have been programs celebrating Constitution Day and other civically related holidays. Though successful, action has not taken place on these initiatives in several years.

One recurring event hosted by the Student Government Association is Political Action Week (PAW). This event has focused on campus-level political issues like SGA elections and has also included a voter registration opportunity. This event may provide a good opportunity to collaborate with SGA to include civic engagement programming.

In 2022, the Waggoner Center for Civic Engagement and Public Policy and the School of History and Social Science began a new effort to help students think about civic engagement through a presidential lecture by Dr. Roosevelt Montás about the value of a liberal arts education focused on promoting democracy and a student-focused conference identifying challenges to democracy and opportunities for civic participation titled “Future of Democracy: Democratic Challenges, Civic Possibilities.”

Tech has several prior civic engagement initiatives upon which to build and increased interest from students in civic engagement as a result of this year’s presidential lecture and the Future of Democracy conference. Coordinated effort is needed to take stock of old initiatives and to develop a comprehensive plan to increase civic engagement on campus. A comprehensive plan is the only way to make civic engagement sustainable, its impacts measurable, and to cultivate an environment of engaged citizenship that makes Tech distinctive among universities.

Approach Framework

To achieve our vision, we must build a sustainable set of civic engagement initiatives that are evidence-based, meet Tech students' needs, and fit with the university's overall strategic framework and resources. Doing so requires collecting information from students, developing a civic engagement action plan to guide programming, and implementing this plan.

Our approach is broken down into three steps:

1. Prepare to develop a civic engagement action plan. This preparation step is necessary in order to collect baseline information by which to measure the impact of our civic engagement efforts and to cultivate student interest in the plan. We estimate that the preparation step will occur during the 2022-2023 academic year. Preparation includes:
 - Surveying students to identify their baseline civic engagement knowledge and needs.
 - Building initial capacity and interest among students to support civic engagement programming.
 - Connecting with and joining organizations that assist universities in promoting civic engagement.
2. Construct a university-wide civic engagement action plan development committee. We estimate that this committee will operate during the 2023-2024 academic year. This committee will:
 - Analyze survey results and engage in a planning process with stakeholders from across the university.
 - Build a unified approach to developing civic engagement.
 - Ensure that the plan has the resources needed to be successfully implemented.
3. Implement the plan constructed by the civic engagement action plan development committee. We estimate that implementation will begin during summer 2024.

Preparation

Before forming a civic engagement action plan development committee, we propose the following three actions:

1. Join and/or connect with civic engagement organizations: the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), the American Democracy Project, and the ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
2. Establish initial opportunities for student involvement and input in civic engagement decisions by forming a School of History and Social Science Student Advisory Board and making civic engagement promotion activities part of HSS student worker job duties.
3. Conduct a survey and associated focus groups sponsored by the Waggoner Center for Civic Engagement and Public Policy to establish a baseline measure of student civic engagement and to assess student interest in and support for future civic engagement programming.

Join and/or Connect with Civic Engagement Organizations

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

NSLVE is a survey conducted by Tufts University on student civic and voter engagement on college campuses. Participation in NSLVE provides validated voter turnout data for students attending a particular college or university at no cost. These resources are critical to tracking voter registration and civic engagement progress on campus over time. Both Northwestern State and LSU are current members of NSLVE.¹⁴

Joining NSLVE is free and can be accomplished by signing an authorization form. Membership is reauthorized every several years. All that is required to join is Dr. Guice's signature on the authorization form.¹⁵ Dr. William O'Brochta, Assistant Professor of Political Science, has agreed to serve as the "additional institutional designee" who receives communications from Tufts University about NSLVE.

¹⁴ 2020. "Student Voting Rates for Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College." (<https://allinchallenge.org/wp-content/uploads/Louisiana-State-University-NSLVE-Report-2020.pdf>).

¹⁵ "Join NSLVE." (<https://idhe.tufts.edu/nslve/join-nslve>).

American Democracy Project

Louisiana Tech is a member of the American Democracy Project (ADP), but does not currently have a campus coordinator to interface with the ADP. Participation in the ADP will give Tech access to training on democracy promotion and civic engagement, access to a network of other institutional partners, and tools to increase campus civic engagement.¹⁶ Dr. Jason Pigg, Associate Professor of Political Science, has served as the campus coordinator in the past, and Tech has benefitted from ADP voter registration efforts, training, and funding. We recommend that Dr. O’Brochta be authorized to reach out to the ADP to determine how Tech can re-engage in the program.

ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge

The ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge is a non-profit organization that encourages colleges and universities to make a serious commitment to voter education and engagement through recognition.¹⁷ Campuses that join ALL-IN commit to increasing student voting rates by developing and implementing a civic engagement action plan. Exemplary campuses receive awards. A similar program is the Voter Friendly Campus designation.¹⁸ Though we are not ready to participate in either of these programs yet, as we have not developed a civic engagement action plan, we recommend that Dr. O’Brochta be authorized to reach out to the ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge to learn more about participating and to prepare for Tech to join the challenge alongside UNO and LSU.

¹⁶ American Association of State Colleges and Universities. “American Democracy Project.” (<https://www.aascu.org/programs/ADP/>).

¹⁷ ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge. “What do Campuses Commit to?” (<https://allinchallenge.org/challenge/commitments/>).

¹⁸ Campus Vote Project. “Voter Friendly Campus.” (<https://www.voterfriendlycampus.org>).

Establish Initial Opportunities for Student Involvement

School of History and Social Science (SHSS) Student Advisory Board

Dr. Jeremy Mhire, Interim Director of the School of History and Social Science (SHSS), has expressed interest in establishing a student advisory board to advise faculty on SHSS programming, to cultivate community within SHSS, and to help with SHSS initiatives. One opportunity for the advisory board is to develop ideas for and to help support civic engagement initiatives.

Dr. Mhire has agreed to set-up a student advisory board with one part of the mission of the board to be supporting civic engagement initiatives. The board will consist of SHSS students, and members will be recruited by a short application process. The full range of majors and minors in SHSS should be represented, and we recommend that around 10 students be recruited to serve on the board for staggered terms. Dr. Mhire and SHSS faculty will establish additional details about the advisory board before beginning to recruit members.

SHSS Student Worker Position

The SHSS currently employs two student workers to help with tasks in the SHSS office. We propose that these student workers be tasked with supporting civic engagement efforts as part of their positions. Doing so would provide those stakeholders implementing and analyzing the student survey described below and developing the civic engagement action plan with support for research and administrative tasks. This would require that SHSS hire student workers interested in promoting civic engagement activities. Therefore, we recommend hiring student workers from majors within SHSS and asking applicants about their vision for civic engagement on campus. We also recommend that the Director of SHSS discuss how supporting civic engagement efforts is part of the student worker position description. The Director of SHSS and the student workers should come to an agreement on specific duties that student workers will complete to support civic engagement efforts. These duties will move from supporting the initial survey, to supporting the civic engagement action plan development committee, to organizing and running civic engagement events as this proposal is implemented. Student workers — including those on federal work study — are encouraged to engage in voter registration and civic engagement initiatives as part of their regular job duties.¹⁹ Dr. Mhire has agreed to discuss supporting civic engagement initiatives with SHSS student workers.

¹⁹ Cooper, Michelle. 2022. “Requirements for Distribution of Voter Forms.” (<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2022-04-21/requirements-distribution-voter-registration-forms>).

Survey Students About Civic Knowledge and Engagement

Relevance and Purpose

The purpose of a student survey is to establish a baseline for civic engagement on campus which will then be used to develop the civic engagement action plan. If, for example, a surprisingly high number of students are registered to vote already, then the plan will emphasize post-registration engagement, like Get-Out-The-Vote efforts. On the other hand, if the survey reveals students are not registered and/or lack knowledge about how to register, that would be the focus of the plan.

Development and Distribution

The survey will include standard measures of civic knowledge, civic participation, and interest in civic engagement. Survey questions will be written by SHSS faculty and vetted by students, including the SHSS Advisory Board, if possible. The survey will be sponsored by the Waggonner Center for Civic Engagement and Public Policy. The survey will be distributed via e-mail using a Qualtrics link and take no more than 5 minutes to complete. Students will be required to provide their e-mail to ensure that they only submit one response, though responses will be anonymous. In addition to e-mail recruitment, members of the SHSS student Advisory Board and SHSS student workers will approach students in common places, promote the survey in classes, and work with student organizations to ensure that members know about the survey. The goal will be a response rate at or above 10%. Participants who successfully complete the survey could be entered to receive Declining Balance rewards.

In addition to fielding a survey, students will be invited to participate in focus groups that help to capture students' visions for civic engagement on campus. Focus group participants will be recruited from a question on the survey asking about interest in participating in a focus group. Clubs and organizations on campus will also be targeted for focus groups. Focus groups will be conducted by SHSS faculty.

Both the survey and focus groups will be approved by the University Human Subjects Use Committee before implementation. Sample survey and focus group questions, along with a survey recruitment e-mail are provided in the appendix.

Analysis

Completed survey responses and focus group responses will be analyzed by SHSS faculty and delivered to the civic engagement action plan development committee for further use. In particular, students in the Pols 345: Scope and Methods in the Social Sciences course may wish to assist in conducting focus groups or to analyze focus group results as part of the qualitative project in this course. Additionally, SHSS Advisory Board members may wish to help with analyzing the student survey.

Develop Civic Engagement Action Plan

Once the survey has been completed and the results analyzed, we propose establishing a committee to develop a civic engagement action plan. A committee is necessary for this task because the plan would be implemented university-wide and, therefore, would need to include input from individuals across the university.

We propose a committee structure that includes an executive or steering committee and appropriate subcommittees. Members of the executive committee will chair the subcommittees which would be composed of individuals with specific expertise in the subcommittee topic. Potential subcommittees include: voter engagement programming, curricular development, civic engagement communication, and assessment.

Executive committee membership, including a chair of the executive committee, should be appointed by the President. We suggest that the executive committee should consist of faculty and students with some student affairs staff members. The chair of the executive committee should be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. We anticipate that the executive committee will have about 10 members.

Students should be asked to apply to be a member of the executive committee or a subcommittee. The objective in having an application process for students is to find individuals who are interested in and have expertise in developing civic engagement programs. These students may be, but are not necessarily those who are on SGA, hence the need for an application process to ensure a broad representation of student interests and skills.

The committee would go about developing the plan in several steps. First, the committee would review the results from the survey and other research materials already collected. Second, the committee would research existing civic engagement action plans in place at other institutions and interview leaders of these efforts as necessary. Third, the committee would develop a draft plan that would subsequently be workshopped with stakeholders and revised based on their feedback. Finally, the committee would finalize the plan and transition its work to the team that would be charged with implementing the plan.

To achieve these goals, the committee will meet bi-weekly with an estimated duration of the 2023-2024 academic year, though this period could be extended or shortened as needed.

Potential Civic Engagement Action Plan Items

The civic engagement action plan development committee will research and propose a step-by-step process to increase civic engagement on campus. We have researched items that have been shown to effectively increase civic engagement when implemented at other universities. We present several such items here to provide readers with ideas about the types of solutions that may be included in the civic engagement action plan.

Civic Engagement Website

- Purpose: Civic engagement resources need to be located in a centralized place that is easily accessible. All printed materials and other forms of communication should direct to a website that contains information on voter registration, elections, voter engagement, and civic engagement initiatives, among other topics.
- Development: The university would provide a vanity URL that would redirect to a comprehensive website containing civic engagement information. This could involve repurposing latech.edu/vote to include more than a voter declaration form as it currently does. We suggest creating space on the Waggoner Center for Civic Engagement and Public Policy website to fulfill this purpose and designating individuals to maintain content on this site.

Voter Registration

- Purpose: The 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965 requires that Tech engage in good faith efforts to register voters. Voter registration is a necessary first step toward developing engaged citizens.
- Development: Voter registration could consist of a table or booth strategically located on campus, campus-wide e-mails and social media posts, scripts delivered to certain relevant classes, and registration drives in clubs and fraternities/sororities. Voter registration drives can also include election information and can expand to the greater Ruston community. These drives will shift into Get-Out-The-Vote efforts during election season. Information about absentee voting for both Louisiana and other states will be included.

Educational Programming

- Purpose: Individuals who are registered to vote face challenges in learning what is on the ballot, developing strategies for evaluating candidates and issues, and finding ways to connect to civic engagement activities. Educational programming can provide an opportunity for students and community members to learn more about civic engagement beyond voter registration.
- Development: The Waggoner Center could lead panels with local elected officials, group discussions about democracy and engagement, and other activities and initiatives to promote civic knowledge and to cultivate engaged citizens. Some locally elected officials like Mayor Ronny Walker have already expressed interest in attending such events.

Welcome Week Programming

- Purpose: Welcome week is a required event for all Tech students. During welcome week, students could be taught how to register to vote and provided with a short, interactive program on the Ruston community and why civic engagement and voting is important.
- Development: Orientation staff would coordinate these initiatives and evaluate whether civic engagement could become a small part of the welcome week program. Voter registration and education can occur during OrgBrowse; Lincoln Parish Library has expressed interest in assisting with this initiative.

Common Civic Engagement Module

- Purpose: All students must be provided with the opportunity to engage in their community. The only way to ensure equitable participation by all students is to incorporate civic engagement into a course that all students must take in order to graduate from Tech.
- Development: A short module on voter registration and civic engagement would be developed for use in a common course (either FYE or COMM 101). This module would need to be designed and approved by the committee overseeing whichever common course program was selected. At least at the beginning of this initiative, the minimum time devoted to the module could be as little as 30 minutes and could include scripted and pre-recorded materials in

order to ensure that all students receive the same accurate and reliable information.

Common Core Civic Engagement Course

- Purpose: A short module in an existing FYE or COMM course may expose students to the concept of civic engagement, but it is insufficient to teach students what it means to be an engaged citizen. Engaged citizenship means accumulating civic knowledge and putting that knowledge to use by interacting with the community. To achieve this goal, we propose creating a new common core course on civic engagement.
- Development: There have been discussions within the School of History and Social Science about replacing introductory courses in different disciplines with common core courses. One such course would be on American political thought with the goal of developing students who carefully considered what democracy means. A second course would focus on civic engagement. This course would teach students practical skills about how to engage in their local community. Topics like making a plan to vote and writing to and meeting with elected officials would be discussed. The course would require students to work together to identify a problem in the local community that they believe should be solved and developing and implementing a plan to solve it using newly learned civic skills. In other words, the common core civic engagement course would teach students to be active participants in their local community. This course would be developed by the SHSS and taught by existing SHSS faculty. The course would be phased in over time, starting with majors taking the course, then replacing introductory SHSS courses with the course, and finally becoming a required course for all Tech graduates.

Appendix

Appendix A: Sample Survey Items²⁰

1. Please indicate how often you:

*1= None/Never 2= Once each school year 3= Once or twice each semester
4= about once a month 5= nearly every week*

- a. Participate in one-time service activities
 - b. Participate in campus events sponsored by the university/your department or college/your major
 - c. Participate in student organizations
 - d. Participate in community politics (campaigns, poll work, etc.)
 - e. Consume local news (through the Internet, television, newspaper, radio, etc.)
 - f. Consume national or international news (through the Internet, television, newspaper, radio, etc.)
 - g. Discuss politics, social, or community issues
 - h. Express your opinions on issues or policies to others
2. Please estimate the number of courses that you have taken at Tech that have included engaging with the local Ruston community (often called service learning or civic engagement).

3. Likert Scale Items:

1= Strongly disagree 5= Strongly agree

- a. My experiences at Tech have helped me learn a lot about opportunities to become involved in my community.
 - b. I would estimate that most other students at Tech know less about community civic engagement than I do.
 - c. My experiences at Tech have helped me realize that it is important for me to vote and to be politically involved.
 - d. My education at Tech has motivated me to stay up to date on the current political issues in the community.
 - e. My education at Tech has prepared me to address issues in my communities through the democratic process.
4. Voter Participation:
- a. Are you registered to vote? (Yes, No, Not eligible to register)
 - b. [If yes] In what ZIP Code are you registered? (Text box entry)

²⁰ Adapted from

<https://www.smsu.edu/resources/webspaces/campuslife/civicengagement/Assesment/civic-engagement-survey-2019.pdf> and https://www.schev.edu/docs/default-source/institution-section/GuidancePolicy/assessment/civic-engagement-meeting-2017/hamm_2016-civic-outcomes-survey

- c. [If yes] Have you voted in a local, state, or federal election? (Yes, No, I have not been registered long enough to vote yet)
 - d. [If yes] Did you vote: In person on election day, In person via early voting, absentee, other (please explain)
 - e. [If no] Why not?
5. Civic Knowledge:
- a. What individual or group of individuals has the responsibility to make the final decision on whether a law is constitutional or not? (President, Supreme Court, Congress, Don't know)
 - b. How much of a majority is required in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to override a presidential veto? (4/5 or 80%, 2/3 or 67%, 3/5 or 60%, 1/2 or 50%, Don't know)
 - c. Louisiana has how many Congressional districts? (Text box response)
 - d. What is the Mayor of Ruston's name? (Text box response)
6. Demographics:
- a. My major (or intended major) is in: COLA, COE, COES, CANS, COB
 - b. I plan to graduate in: 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 or later
 - c. How old are you? (Number entry)
 - d. I am: Male, female, other
 - e. How many hours do you work for pay per week?
7. Would you be interested in participating in a focus group to discuss your vision for increasing civic engagement at Louisiana Tech? (Yes, No, Maybe)

Appendix B: Sample Focus Group Discussion Prompts

These are prompts for a semi-structured focus group, meaning that these questions are simply starting points to prompt conversation.

1. What does civic engagement mean to you? Where did this definition or perspective come from?
2. When someone invites you to participate in “civic engagement” how do you feel? Why?
3. Describe some barriers that have prevented you from learning about civic engagement?
4. Have you ever contacted an elected representative? If so, what was the experience like? If not, why not?
5. How confident are you in your understanding of general government processes? What are some processes you feel that you understand and some that you are less sure about?
6. How do you feel when discussing topics related to politics?
7. Have you ever had a civic conversation with someone about a controversial issue? If so, what was that conversation like? If not, how do you think that conversation would go?
8. How did you come to learn about registering to vote and voting in an election?
9. How do you feel when you walk by someone campaigning for an issue or who wants to talk to you about community/political issues? Can you give an example of when this has happened to you?

Appendix C: Sample Mass Communication

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Good afternoon, Bulldogs.

Voting and civic engagement are essential ways to make positive changes in our community. Louisiana Tech is creating a civic engagement action plan to help you, as students, to become more knowledgeable about your community, the voting process, and civic participation. We need your help as we begin developing this plan to give students access to vital information that will help you make informed decisions about your community's future.

We are conducting a short survey to gain a better understanding of student knowledge about and interest in civic engagement education. Your responses will directly influence the civic engagement initiatives that Tech develops. We are relying on student voices to guide this project. At the end of the survey, you will be invited to participate in a focus group to brainstorm civic engagement initiatives you would like to see implemented at Tech.

Survey responses are anonymous, and the survey will take no more than 5 minutes to complete. Survey questions will ask about your perceptions of and interest in civic activity, not questions regarding your political beliefs. Respondents will be entered to win Declining Balance rewards. The survey will be available until XXX date.

Have a great week, Tech Family.