

INTEGRATING VOTER REGISTRATION ACROSS CAMPUS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In the beginning months of 2016, TurboVote partners across the country conducted and aggregated research to identify best practices for integrating voter registration with campus web infrastructure. The TurboVote team is excited to take the lessons we have learned and work with institutions' Information Technology (IT) departments to register more student voters than ever before.



“IT voter integration is like having a fully-staffed voter registration table in the busiest area on campus, 24 hours a day, seven days a week”

The IT Integration Study

With funding support from the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation, in service of its goal to foster citizens’ active interest and participation in political life, TurboVote conducted our IT Integration Study to answer two main questions: What is the IT landscape of communication and education technology on campus communities? How does that relate to campus voter registration and engagement? Answers to these questions promise to guide how IT integration with voter registration tools can best be accomplished on campuses across the country.

Democracy Works, the makers of TurboVote, consulted with a lead research team at the University of North Georgia. Historian Renee Bricker and political scientist Nathan Price constructed a survey to be administered at a variety of higher education institutions. The lead research team consulted with IT professionals to develop effective survey questions and acquire accurate technical information for the report. Project leaders identified survey respondents from six target groups: IT, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Communications, Faculty, and Student Organizations.

The survey was administered in collaboration with project leaders at 24 campuses that use the TurboVote technology to engage their student voters. Respondents from these categories answered questions designed to yield information about the IT landscape of higher education institutions, to gauge knowledge and understanding of TurboVote, and to measure willingness to better integrate a program like TurboVote into that IT landscape. Respondents were also queried about obstacles and barriers to integration and promotion.

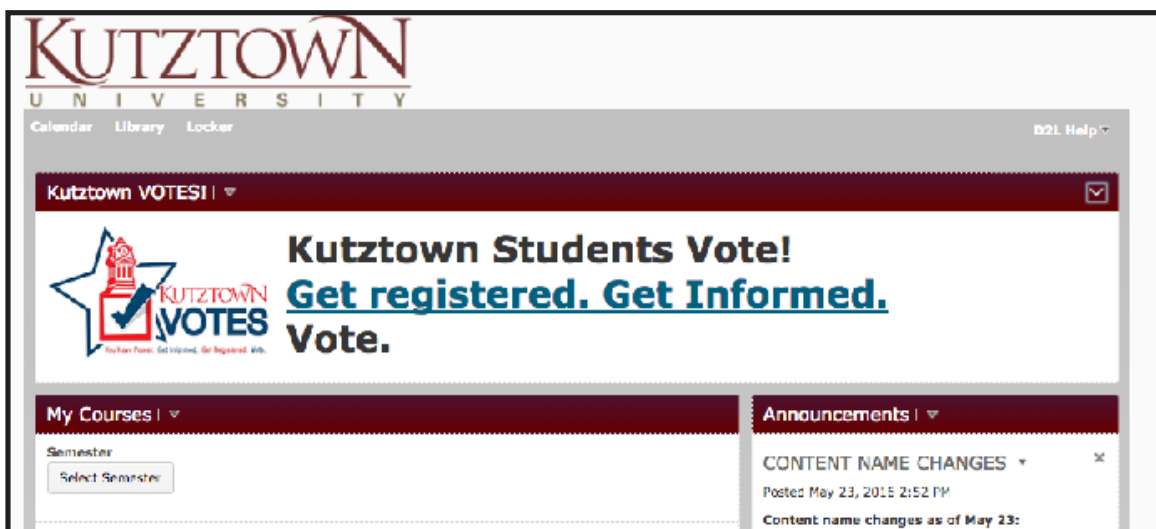
Responses were collated and synthesized to produce recommendations that institutions of higher education can consider to improve student voting and political participation.

What we learned

Classroom integrations, links within student portals, and mass emails are the best opportunities for collaboration with IT departments to promote voter registration. There are also barriers to these tactics, and campus implementers are the key to successfully overcoming potential barriers.

Study Findings

- Incorporating voter engagement tools into campus Learning Management Systems (Blackboard, Sakai, D2L, etc.) can help register thousands of voters. Integrations require IT and faculty working collaboratively, as well as Learning Technology Interoperability (LTI) compliance, in some cases.
- Faculty involvement is critical. Survey results indicate that faculty are supportive of voter engagement and willing to promote voter engagement to their students through integration with course pages and syllabi.
- Partners should make voter registration a relevant activity, especially when it may seem outside the scope of a department. Learn how to get the participation of a fine arts professor or the chemistry department in voter registration efforts.
- Securing administration support helps ensure success. A president or provost exerts significant influence and their emails are less likely to be overlooked by students and other stakeholders. Their participation in voter engagement activities might include a simple email reminder to students about voter registration that gets the attention of students.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Kutztown University prompts students to register to vote on D2L, KU's learning management system supporting both online and in-classroom instruction. To bring this integration live, Leah Cassellia, the Director of the Office of Student Involvement, reached out to fellow faculty in the Office of Distance Education with three things: the "Kutztown Votes" logo, call-to-action language, and their campus TurboVote link.



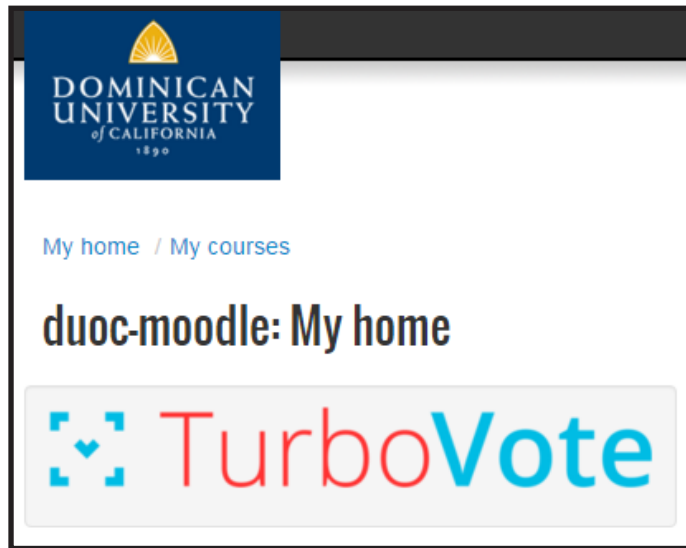
STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Indiana State University opted to place a resource for voter registration within their MyISU student portal. In order to create this badge on the homepage, Assistant Professor of Political Science Carly Schmitt looped TurboVote staff into an email thread with Technology Infrastructure Services faculty so we could quickly answer any of their questions.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Lone Star College, a community college system home to approximately 85,000 students in Texas, became a TurboVote partner in 2015. During the 2016 election season, Director of the Center for Civic Engagement Dr. John J. This worked with IT staffers to include a call-to-action banner on their student portal to register to vote. The result? More than 1,000 TurboVote signups in just one week.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Working through their IT Services Executive Director, Dominican University of California placed a TurboVote link on Moodle, the open-source learning platform on campus. Now, when students are completing coursework online, they can get registered to vote or sign up for election reminders, too.



STORIES FROM THE FIELD

In fall 2016, Harvard University's Institute of Politics (IOP), in partnership with the Harvard Registrar's Office, incorporated voter registration into the mandatory online "check-in" process completed by all undergraduate students. As a result of the integration, nearly 1,400 undergraduates registered to vote or requested absentee ballots through TurboVote while also updating relevant information for the upcoming academic year.

Next Steps:

- Schedule a phone call with relevant stakeholders to brainstorm and identify best prospects for web-based voter registration activities on campus.
- Obtain administrative support for your proposal, a vital step in moving the project forward.
- Work with IT staff to identify various roadblocks and propose solutions. These barriers can include bureaucratic processes and security questionnaires.
- Set ambitious but achievable registration goals for your IT integration campaign.
- Review progress and integrate based on the specific needs of your campus.

The TurboVote Team Can Help As:

- **Connectors.** Successful IT integrations at TurboVote partner schools inspired us to conduct our IT integration study. We're happy to leverage existing relationships with these partner schools to connect your IT staff members to individuals from other higher education institutions that have implemented web-based voter registration activities.
- **Experts.** We've been involved in campus registration activities long enough to have a sense of what works and what doesn't. We'll work with you to identify promising integration ideas and steer away from strategies that are less likely to succeed.
- **Advocates.** Obtaining administration support requires allies. We're happy to participate in internal campus communications as needed and vocalize the importance of high-impact campus registration activities.
- **Data Scientists.** If data is available through your campus's voter registration tool, we'll show you how to use tracking & analytics tools to define & measure success.



IMPORTANT ANNUAL MILESTONES

Spring: Begin outreach to campus stakeholders and obtain permission to move forward with IT integrations.

Summer: Build a relationship with campus IT staff and successfully integrate voter registration into IT infrastructure.

Fall: Register thousands of students via the digital processes they navigate on a day-to-day basis!

Winter: Assess progress and obtain institutional approval to keep voter registration links live past the presidential election period.

TurboVote is the flagship product of Democracy Works, a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the idea that voting should fit the way we live.

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