



2021 Move-In Voter Registration Strategy
New Voters Project, UNC Chapel-Hill

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
NVP @ UNC: Goals for 2021	4
Move-in Registration Strategy	5

I. Introduction

The New Voters Project (NVP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill aims to make voting accessible for all students. By activating the largest voting block in the country, we can ensure that the voices of the next generation are heard in the political sphere. Returning to campus from a largely virtual world, it is important that we strategize and collaborate to make the largest impact possible this school year. Young voters turned out in record numbers during the 2020 presidential election, and we wish to build upon that momentum this school year.

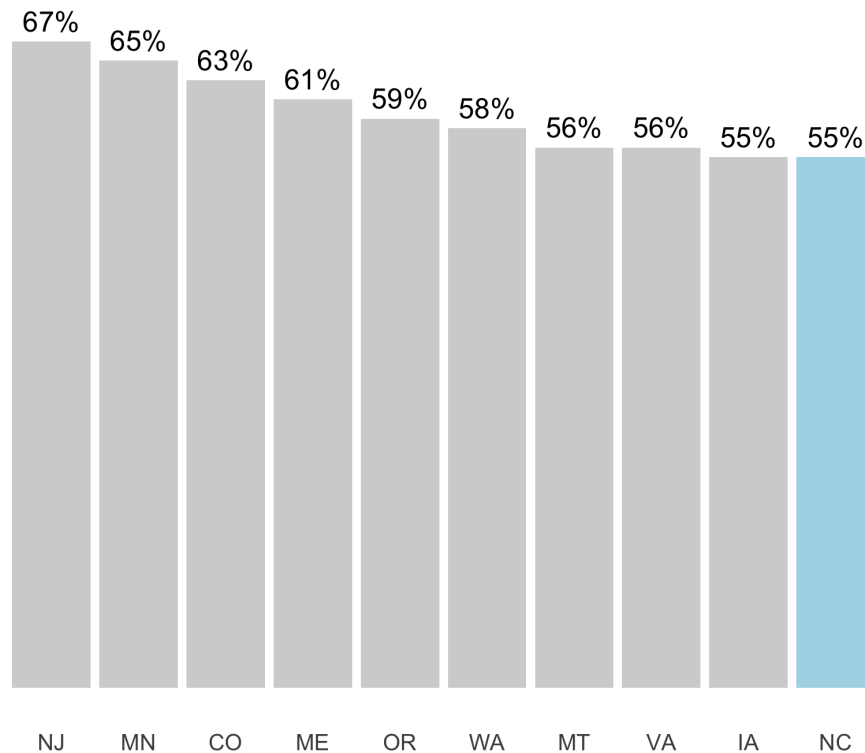
According to data from Tufts University's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, national youth voter turnout in 2020 increased dramatically in 2020. Despite the difficulties presented by COVID-19, 50% of voters aged 18-29 turned out to vote¹. This is an 11% increase from 2016, when only 39% of that demographic cast a ballot. From a statistical perspective this is a marked increase, but more can be done to achieve NVP's vision of a more civically-engaged generation.

In North Carolina, 55% of eligible voters cast a ballot in 2020. Figure 1 below shows how this compares against the top ten states.

¹ <https://circle.tufts.edu/2020-election-center>. CIRCLE notes that this estimate is based on available from 41 states.

Top Ten States for Youth Voter Turnout in 2020

North Carolina tied for eighth.



Source: CIRCLE; Catalist 2020; Census 2019

Fig.1: Top ten states by youth voter turnout. Created in R using data sources listed.

To establish our state as a leader in youth civic engagement, we must take advantage of the many universities in North Carolina. Like many other universities in the state, UNC Chapel-Hill is a strong community hub, with diversity in political thought among an eager-to-engage student body.

This document outlines the voter registration strategy to be followed during move-in week in the Fall of 2021. The weeks before classes begin provide an optimal time to reach students, especially first-years, on campus. Thus, NVP at UNC hopes to start the year off strong with record voter registration.

II. NVP @ UNC: Goals for 2021

We hope to empower historically-underrepresented voters on UNC's campus, across multiple groups. Our goals for the entire 2021-2022 academic year are as follows:

1. Target first-year students. Ensure that first-years have access to registration materials and nonpartisan information while on campus.
2. Get students across all fields of study excited about the democratic process. Ask STEM and business clubs and professors to promote civic engagement.
3. Ensure that every group on campus has streamlined access to the entire voting pipeline, from registration to political learning to actually casting their vote.

More information can be found in the [2021 UNC New Voters Project Campaign Proposal](#), but these are the three areas in which UNC's NVP campaign will focus their efforts.

Our move-in campaign supports the first focus area: getting first-year students registered. Targeting freshman dorms, we can ensure that incoming students who wish to be registered have the necessary tools and information to do so.

The reason for targeting first-year dorms is two-fold. First, it allows us to make the most of our potentially limited number of NVP volunteers. Second, it allows us to come one step closer to reaching our goal of registering 80% of eligible first-year students.

III. Move-in Registration Strategy

On average, UNC welcomes about 5,300 new students every year². These students can be subset into three categories: students who are already registered, students who are not yet registered, and students who are not yet eligible to register. Among those who have not yet registered to vote yet are eligible to do so, motivation to register will vary. Encouraging this population to register is beyond the scope of this document, as much of our mid-semester work will focus on promoting civic engagement.

Table 1 below is a list of dorms used for the Carolina First Year Experience (FYE). Six new dorms have been added to this list for the 2021-2022 school year.

Dorm.Name	Side.of.Campus	Community	Occupancy
Alexander	North	Connor	103
Cobb	North	Cobb	400
Craige	South	Craige	636
Ehringhaus	South	Ehringhaus	640
Everett	North	ULQN	96
RH1-Graham	North	ULQN	192
Grimes	North	ULQN	88
Hinton James	South	HJ	964
Koury	South	Mannings	263
Lewis	North	ULQN	95
Mangum	North	ULQN	90
Manly	North	ULQN	92
Stacy	North	ULQN	93
Ruffin	North	ULQN	95

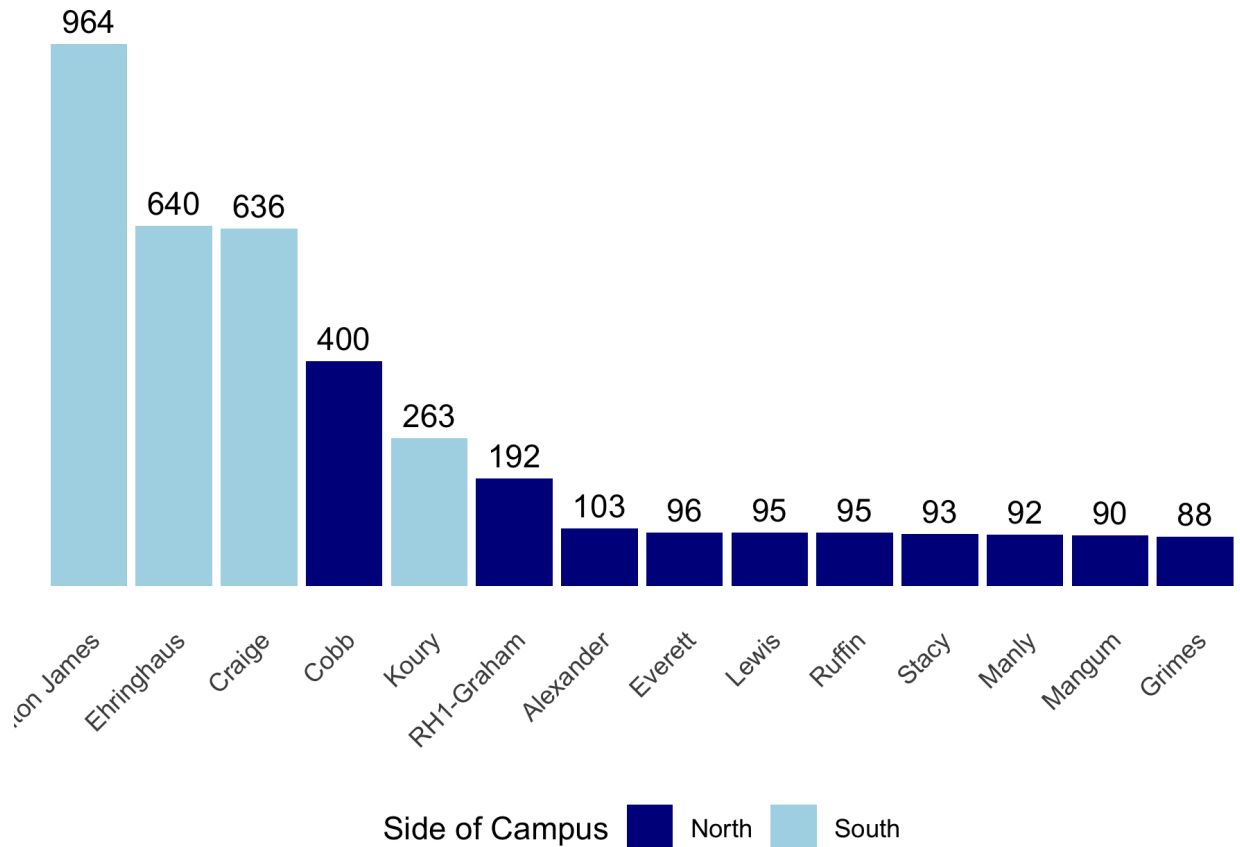
Table 1: First-Year Dorms. Created in R using data from the Carolina Housing website.

² <https://admissions.unc.edu/>

If we have a limited amount of volunteers, we can prioritize the dorms that we canvass based on their maximum occupancy. Figure 2 shows the distribution of these first year dorms by occupancy.

First-Year Dorm Occupancies

South Campus is home to most first-year students.



Source: Carolina Housing

Fig. 2: First-Year dorms sorted by occupancy. Created in R using data from Carolina Housing.

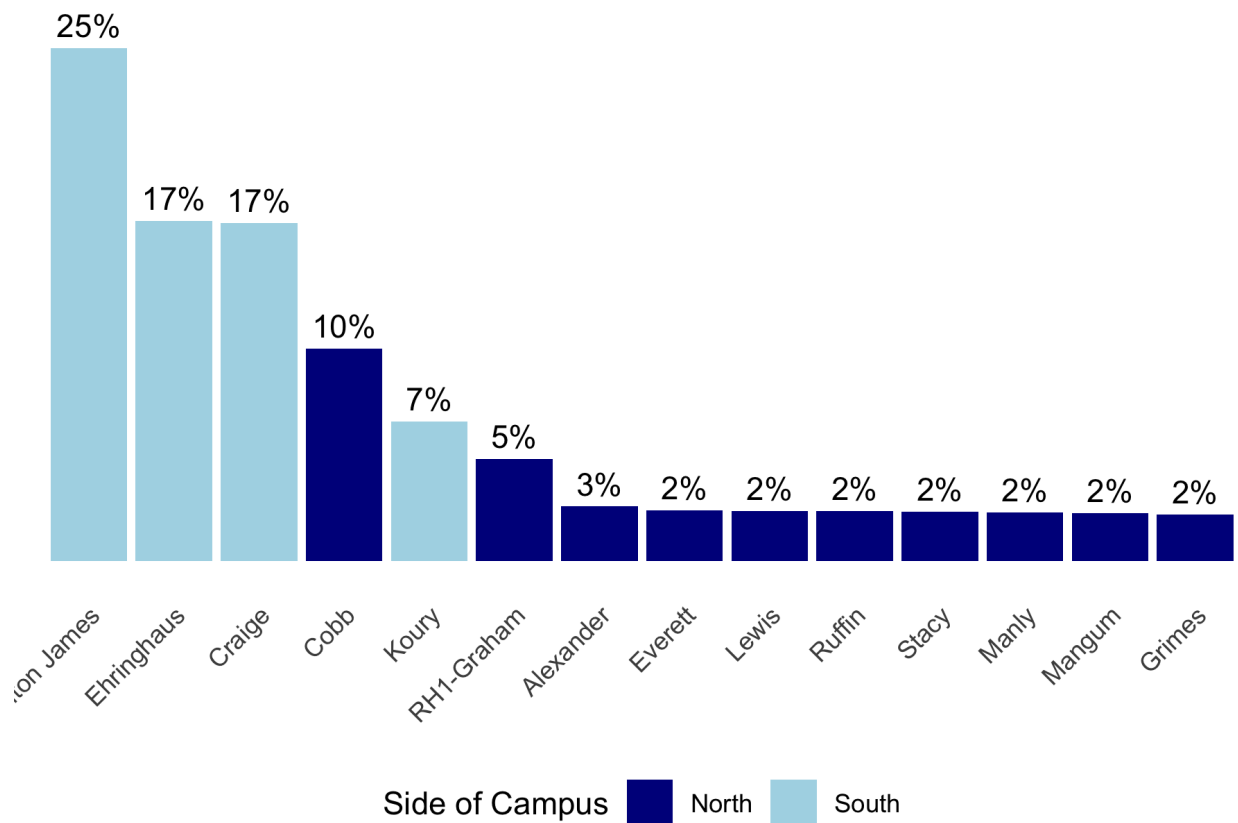
Since the first-year dorms on South Campus have the greatest occupancy, we can maximize our impact by targeting the four dorms down there.

3,000 registration forms were requested from the Orange County Board of Elections. This number was decided upon with the following logic: The maximum occupancy of the First-Year Experience dorms totals 3,847. To support our goal of reaching 80% of first-year students registered, we will evenly distribute about 3,000 forms across these fourteen dorms.

Figure 3 below shows the percentage distribution of the maximum occupancy of FYE dorms.

First-Year Dorm Occupancies by Percent Composition

Around sixty-six percent of first-years will likely be housed on South Campus.



Source: Carolina Housing

Fig. 3: Estimating how the freshman population will be distributed among FYE dorms. Created in R using data from Carolina Housing.

Using these percentages, we can evenly distribute the 3,000 forms as shown in Table 2 below.

Dorm.Name	Side.of.Campus	Community	Occupancy	Percent	Forms.Needed
Hinton James	South	HJ	964	0.2505849	771
Ehringhaus	South	Ehringhaus	640	0.1663634	512
Craige	South	Craige	636	0.1653236	509
Cobb	North	Cobb	400	0.1039771	320
Koury	South	Mannings	263	0.0683650	210
RH1-Graham	North	ULQN	192	0.0499090	154
Alexander	North	Connor	103	0.0267741	82
Everett	North	ULQN	96	0.0249545	77
Lewis	North	ULQN	95	0.0246946	76
Ruffin	North	ULQN	95	0.0246946	76
Stacy	North	ULQN	93	0.0241747	74
Manly	North	ULQN	92	0.0239147	74
Mangum	North	ULQN	90	0.0233949	72
Grimes	North	ULQN	88	0.0228750	70

Table 2: Suggested form counts for each first-year dorm. Created in R using data from Carolina Housing.

After distributing these forms, we will give RA's a few weeks to hand them out at their floor meetings. We can request to pick the forms up from each residential community's office at an appointed date. Larger dorms should be given more time to return the forms, with final collections occurring no later than September 5th, 2021³.

It should be noted that these numbers are simply to provide guidance. Obviously it does not make sense to count an exact number of forms for each dorm, but hopefully these figures serve as a guide to optimize our efforts with potentially limited volunteer resources.

³ September 10th is the statewide deadline for registration for those who wish to vote in the October 5th municipal elections. More here: <https://www.ncsbe.gov/news/events/october-municipal-elections>

Tabling in the Pit allows us to reach a broader audience, not limiting ourselves to freshman dorms. The Carolina Union limits Pit tabling to 10 days per semester⁴. Thus, depending on our mid-semester plan it may be detrimental to use up those days with very few people on campus. With leftover/unfilled forms, we can continue our registration efforts during the first few weeks of classes in the Pit.

IV. Summary

Our Fall 2021 move-in registration strategy focuses on supporting our first-year student registration goals. By prioritizing high-population first-year dorms, we can take advantage of RA floor meetings as vectors for distributing forms. Suggested form counts for each dorm have been provided, with forms handed out totaling 3,000.

By working toward our first-year student goal at move-in, we can focus on general registration before the November municipal elections in as the fall semester progresses⁵. After this initial registration push, we can also shift our efforts toward promoting civic engagement in partnership with UNC's growing vote coalition. Starting our school year strong with new voter registration brings our state one step closer to becoming a leader in youth voter turnout.

4

<https://carolinaunion.unc.edu/services/reserve-space/event-services-policies/pit-solicitation-table-and-site-table-reservation>. It's important to note that this 10-day limit may apply to the entire NCPIRG UNC chapter, not just individual campaigns.

⁵ The registration deadline for the November 2021 municipal elections is October 8th, 2021.