Report IV
Faculty Senate Task Force for Excellence in Equity, Inclusion, and Citizenship

**COMING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP
MODEL CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY CITIZENS**

Circumstances surrounding the Fall 2013 local school board election in Tuscaloosa brought about documentable evidence of UA students fraudulently claiming domicile in Tuscaloosa, illegally voting in the school board election, coercing other students to register to vote, transporting students to polls in limousines, and being offered free alcoholic beverages for voting. These reports, coupled with a rich history of Student Government Association (SGA) elections rife with Election Code violations and ethically questionable campaign practices, have led this Task Force to conclude that, for many, our campus has experienced the proverbial last straw. More than ever before, there is a palpable desire to rally our common values, efforts, and imaginations to develop a new generation of student citizens who conduct themselves according to such a high standard of ethical behavior that the problems identified in the 2013 school board election and throughout the history of SGA elections never repeat themselves.

Through two public hearings, invited testimony, and various interviews with critical figures, much of what we learned about student politics was disturbing and contrary to the standards for which our campus stands. Moreover, although unethical political behavior is most commonly ascribed to the Greek community on campus, we learned that politically wrongdoing is also highly endemic to the independent community involved in campus politics.

In turn, we were pleased to learn of the tremendous concern and commitment of the Administration, and especially the personnel in Student Affairs, to overcoming the problems associated with campus politics. Persistent patterns of action over the years reflected in new student codes of conduct, new election codes, new SGA Constitutions, tough adjudicatory decisions, and a litany of election reforms, leave no doubt that *critical figures on campus and in our community may be frustrated, but are totally committed to and consumed with making campus and community politics more fair, ethical, and inclusive.* These critical figures include, but are not limited to, President Judy Bonner, Todd Borst, Kelli Knox-Hall, Tim Hebson, Steven Hood, Kelly Horwitz, Paul Horwitz, Cason Kirby, Mark Nelson, Landon Nichols, the 2014 SGA officers and their staff, and the 19 faculty members of the Task Force for Structural Reform, a self-organized advocacy group distinct from the Senate Task Force. To many of these individuals, we also owe a huge debt of gratitude for helping us in the development of this fourth and final Task Force report. Our recommendations are as follows:

I. Student-Focused Recommendations

1. **Prohibit campus organizations from requiring students to produce evidence of voting or voting for specific candidates, referendums, or Constitutional amendments in local, state, or national elections.** Clarify in Article III, section B(4.a.2.) of the Code of Student Conduct that requiring students to produce evidence of voting or voting for specific candidates in an off-campus election is a form of harassment that is in violation

of student privacy rights. In the citizenship training recommended in this report, also clarify that requiring organization members to produce screen shots, or photos, of their ballots is a form of harassment that violates student privacy rights.

2. **Prohibit campus organizations from punishing students who refuse to participate in local, state, or national elections.** Add to Article III, section B(2.b.) of the Code of Student Conduct that "forced or coerced participation in off-campus elections" is a form of hazing. Further clarify that forced or coerced voter registration, voting, and participation in or contributions to a campaign are hazing.

3. **Encourage reporting of local, state, or national election violations.** Clarify (in Article III, section B.2.c.) that students with knowledge or evidence of infractions that occurred in local, state, or national elections and who do not provide such information to appropriate investigative channels shall be found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

4. **Clarify in the Code of Student Conduct that the use of coercion or incentives of any physical value to induce students to vote or vote for specific candidates, referendums, or Constitutional amendments in local, state, or national elections is prohibited.** Student organizations are encouraged to take an active interest in civic processes, including elections, but, just like laws guiding partisanship in broader society, the use of incentives—coercion or tangible physical rewards—to affect voter turnout or the way students vote violates the integrity of an election and obstructs the desired democratic outcome of an election.

II. Staff and Faculty Focused Recommendations:

5. **Establish in the Code of Student Conduct that student conduct affiliated with a non-registered student organization can constitute violation of the Code of Student Conduct.** Organizations are given the right to function on campus in conformance with the University's rules of conduct and under appropriate sponsorship and supervision. Students are urged to ask about an organization's registration status and urge their organizations to register with the University so as to enjoy the rights and privileges therein.

   a. **Clarify that students organized to affect elections and other political outcomes, including student groups representing Greeks or independent students, must register with Student Affairs and be supervised** to meet and function on campus property. Further clarify that appropriately registered and supervised political parties or interests groups with known officers and advisors, are *welcomed* on campus as long as they comply with campus regulations and aspire to operate according to the ideals of citizenship for which the University stands and is inculcating in its students.

6. **Support administrative efforts to enforce Code of Student Conduct violations in areas of emerging challenges, such as local, state, or national elections.** These efforts currently exist, and the Task Force members applaud the personnel in Student Affairs for the changes and corrective measures taken since the Fall 2013 local school board election. However, as our student body grows and becomes more complex, the University should monitor its compliance and enforcement resources, and be open to steps such as increased staff or additional resources in the area of student conduct.

7. **Include citizenship training in the leadership development programs on campus.** Leadership training programs abound on campus and could serve as a vehicle for socializing independents and Greeks to a higher ethical standard of behavior in campus and local politics. Directly addressing the problems and solutions with UA campus politics is essential—leadership training must descend from abstractions to embrace the realities of our campus.

   a. **Begin by conducting and sharing an inventory of student leadership programs, in both Student and Academic Affairs**.

   b. **Clarify the stipulations of our Code of Student Conduct in such citizenship training activities,** including violations such as: retaliation against a person who reports a suspected violation of local, state, or national election codes; incentives for voting that impermissibly favor only one candidate as opposed to participation more broadly; requiring proof of voting in local, state, or national elections that violates individual rights to privacy; not cooperating with investigative efforts should student conduct in local, state, or national elections be suspected of malfeasance.

   c. **Implement outcome and assessment measures through the Student Affair's Assessment and Planning Office** to determine whether leadership development programs are meeting their citizenship training goals. Call on the faculty with the expertise to help develop and evaluate these measures.

8. **Include units of instruction on the values and behavior of 21st century, college-educated citizens as a part of relevant required core courses.** We recommend developing new courses and identifying and developing existing courses that naturally address citizenship—especially courses in the humanities (HU) and social and behavioral sciences (SB) areas—so that they include instruction on:

   a. a higher standard of ethical citizenship behavior than simply meeting the letter of local, state, and federal election laws.

   b. age and residency requirements for voting and holding office, as well as one's right to privacy in voting and one's protection from being coerced to vote or register to vote. Privacy rights, free speech rights, freedom of assembly, and voter coercion as it applies to campus and community political participation should all be clearly defined in these units of instruction.

c. practical information about how to register to vote, the location of polls, and means of transportation to polls, such as Crimson Ride that, are effective but less ostentatious, for example, than limousines.

9. **Encourage faculty to create Freshman Compass courses and Freshman Learning Community classes (FRC 101) that provide the training described in the preceding recommendation.**

10. **Begin exploring the long-term potential for coursework in citizenship becoming a new area of required coursework in the undergraduate core curriculum.** Courses in citizenship are becoming increasingly common on college campuses and as core curricular requirements. Required coursework in citizenship would be particularly germane to the unique problems associated with student government at UA.

11. **Add an optional reporting section to the Faculty Activity Report (FAR) that captures faculty efforts to train and guide ethical citizenship among students.**

12. **Support Theta Nu Epsilon (The Machine) coming above ground.** To realize more responsible, accountable, and ethical political behavior in our students, we believe that an appropriate *initial* approach is to support the Machine (and other unregistered political organizations) coming above ground to function as a legitimate student organization with known officers and adult supervision. To begin with aggressive punitive reforms that target 18 to 22 year old Machine members without targeting the wrongdoing of independents is not only discrimination, but doing so also fails to recognize the role of adult stakeholders for the shortcomings of the political culture on our campus.   We therefore recommend the following initial efforts:

    a. **Have the University President, Vice President for Student Affairs, and Dean of Students initiate and lead a dialogue with Machine members in support of the Machine coming above ground.** No three people understand the damaging effects of the Machine better than the University President, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the Dean of Student. Moreover, these three campus executives have the critical position, power, and influence to lead an effective dialogue in support of Theta Nu Epsilon coming above ground.

    b. **Call on influential and respected Greek alumni to support Theta Nu Epsilon coming above ground**. Our investigation has led us to believe that respected former Machine members would have substantial credibility and influence in an effort to bring the Machine above ground. Given perspectives that develop over time, Machine members are more likely to understand (1) how the Machine harms the University and (2) that operating underground is unnecessary for sustaining the level of political success for which the Greeks are accustomed.

    c. **Call on respected, talented student leaders to support Theta Nu Epsilon coming above ground.** Students have a capacity to affect their peers in ways that

administrators, alumni, and faculty cannot. Student involvement in this effort also enhances student buy-in and commitment to the desired end result.

13. **If recommendation 11 fails, we recommend working with the Greek umbrella organizations and sympathetic Greek houses to develop a new Greek political organization**. To assume Greeks houses have blind loyalties to the Theta Nu Epsilon is stereotyping. If the Machine refuses to come above ground after a reasonable period of dialogue, we recommend that the University President, Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, and the Office of Greek Affairs marshal their efforts to create a new Greek political party. Similar to the forces of influence identified in recommendation 11, we recommend that the Administration call on the insight, power, and influence of Greek alumni, student leaders, and especially the officers in Panhellenic, NPHC, and the IFC to help bring this effort to a fruition.

14. **Establish regulations that ensure that party nomination processes for any new or existing campus political parties are democratic, allow for equal access, and are open to public scrutiny**. Party nominees for SGA offices should be determined by a process that can be observed by the general public, that allows for equal opportunity in seeking a nomination, and is determined by a democratic vote of the party members.

15. **University-wide support for civic involvement, including participation in local, state-wide, and federal elections.** The University can encourage the *entire* student body to participate in local, state, and federal elections through providing nonpartisan information on how to register to vote, residency requirements, when primaries and general elections occur, poll locations and hours, finding transportation to the polls, etc.

    a. For students who do not have personal means of transportation, **we further recommend that the University utilize Crimson Ride to transport students to and from the polls**.

16. **Outreach to local officials to establish more town and gown collaboration in the planning and administration of elections.** Establish more of a University presence, or "seat at the table," in addressing such issues as election schedules, poll locations, poll worker training, and the drawing of district lines for city council and school board seats. As legitimate community stakeholders and as a part of their civic socialization, student should be fully integrated into these collaborative efforts.

Appendix A

Recommendations from the Report I that Establish Standards for More Ethical Student Citizenship Behavior in Campus Politics

I.   Enact the following new regulations to prevent obstruction of SGA elections:

    A. No person shall violate the right to privacy in voting by observing how a student votes.

    B. Requiring a student to produce evidence of voting or voting for specific candidates, for example, through voting in front of someone or producing a photo of one's ballot, is prohibited.

    C. Retaliation for reporting election violations is prohibited.

II.   Establish election code language prohibiting coercing students to vote.

III. Develop mechanisms to monitor and enforce new and existing election codes.

IV.   Extend the statute of limitation for being held accountable for voter fraud.

V.   Prohibit mobile voting stations off campus.

VI.   Increase financial penalties for election code violations.

VII. On election ballots, require students to acknowledge having read a list of student voting rights and the Capstone Creed.

VIII. Conduct an annual campus citizenship campaign.