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Now or Never: The Importance of Civic Engagement in the Commonwealth

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Preparing students to be active and informed participants in civic and political life is a critical outcome of the higher education experience. Indeed, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia recognizes its importance and added civic engagement as a core competency for public colleges and universities to assess in 2017 and more recently affirmed their commitment to strengthening democracy along with dozens of major national higher education associations and organizations.

This work seems more urgent than ever as countless public issues remain unresolved, as democratic principles are being challenged, and as at least one major report has described the United States as a backsliding[iii] democracy. Academic institutions have an opportunity to be part of the solution to these multipronged issues in efforts to best serve our students and our democracy.