

Amarillo College

Engagement Action Plan

1. Executive Summary

Aaron Faver, Amber Hamilton, and Jennifer Welch developed this action plan. Student Life is the primary mover in this plan, as the pandemic interrupted plans to begin student engagement through any newly founded student organization centering around civics.

The plan seeks to improve voter turnout on the Amarillo College campus by 5-7% in 2024 and will be implemented on all Amarillo College campuses. It was developed because, in prior years, we did not have a comprehensive plan to tackle this issue, and we want to see an increase in civic engagement in our student community. The action plan begins in September and runs until November 2024. The plan will be implemented through continued meetings, engagement opportunities, and voter registration drives.

2. Leadership

Aaron Faver, Amber Hamilton, and Jenna Welch will coordinate and oversee the institution's work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement. Mr. Faver, Mrs. Hamilton, and Ms. Welch are co-chairing the group. The working group is currently being enrolled and added to. Members will be selected based on their abilities and opportunity to engage with students. The working group's responsibilities are to meet quarterly to plan and execute the vision.

3. Commitment

Aaron Faver, Amber Hamilton, and Jenna Welch have meetings set up with our institutional leadership about integrating our plans into the newly drawn strategic vision of the college. This is as much as can be said on this topic.

4. Landscape

See above. Our 2020 general election data demonstrate the need for higher student voter turnout. Our turnout in 2018 received a bronze seal but is still well below the national average. Sorting through this is a complex issue, and we are attempting to understand the cultural, economic, and political dynamics.

5. Goals

- i. Long Term: The impact desired is higher voter turnout. Our long-term goal is to attain a platinum seal, but that is going to take a while.
- ii. The institution is wanting to accomplish a dramatic number of things within 10 years. Student success, retention, and overall engagement is something our institution holds incredibly close to the chest.
- b. Short Term:
 - i. While we hoped we would move from bronze to silver status in 2020, the data and turnout did not bear this out. We believe this is due to the

pandemic, but it is unclear as to what potentially macro and micro trends were in play.

5. Strategy

- a. 8-week social media campaign called “Your Vote Matters” – Facts about various elections that were decided by a handful of votes.
- b. 8 weeks of videos to be included in the Weekly Dig (Student Life Newsletter) – Various bipartisan topics, such as election basics, how friendships survive opposing political views, how the Electoral College works, and why Americans vote on Tuesday.
- c. Voter Registration Hub is in the Student Life “Burrow.” Everyone there is a registrar with both Potter and Randall County.
- d. Voter registration tables will be Amarillo College’s annual Resource Fair and other tabling events throughout the fall semester.
- e. Student Government Association (SGA) will assemble and distribute “Voting Toolkits” in October. These will include nonpartisan issue guides for all candidates, a list of important election-related dates, and lists of polling locations.
- f. SGA will form 3 short “silly debate” videos to promote the three significant debates.
- g. Student Life will support a new student organization, Voter’s Voice, to host various educational programs for all students.
- h. Communication from our deans to faculty and students, and perhaps from our whole cabinet, regarding the importance of registering and voting.
- i. Make a short video with Randall County on how to use a voting machine.
- j. We want to increase faculty buy-in and are evaluating strategies.

7. Reporting

- a. We will share via email and in meetings. The plan and the data may be made public, depending on our meeting with our administration in a few weeks.

8. Evaluation

Evaluation will be done as we assess the successes and shortfalls of our planned events. In addition, a significant component of this will be looking at the data sets from the 2022 midterms that we get back in 2023 and re-evaluating what was successful and what was not. Our institutional researcher and our core group of faculty and staff leadership will do this.

- ii. The desired impact is higher voter turnout. Our long-term goal is to attain a platinum seal, but that will take time.
 - iii. We are unsure what knowledge and skills need to be incorporated into our FYS course, if any. We are discussing it.
 - iv. The institution wants to accomplish a dramatic number of things within 10 years. Student success, retention, and overall engagement are things our institution holds incredibly close to its chest.
- c. Short Term:
- i. While we hoped we would move from bronze to silver status in 2020, the data and turnout did not support this. We believe this is due to the pandemic, but it is unclear what potential macro and micro trends were in play.

6. Strategy

- a. An 8-week social media campaign called “Your Vote Matters” – Facts about various elections decided by a handful of votes.
- b. 8 weeks of videos to be included in the Weekly Dig (Student Life Newsletter) – Various bipartisan topics, such as election basics, how friendships survive opposing political views, how the Electoral College works, and why Americans vote on Tuesday.
- c. Voter Registration Hub is in the Student Life “Burrow.” Everyone there is a registrar with both Potter and Randall County. Anybody registered with this group between September 8th and Thursday, October 1st, or showing proof of registration will get a voucher for a free Sonic drink and enter a raffle to win a \$100 gas gift card.
- d. Voter registration tables will be at Student Life’s 3 “Fall Fest-To Go events, one to be held at each of our campuses.
- e. Student Government Association (SGA) will assemble and distribute “Voting Toolkits” in October. These will include nonpartisan issue guides for all candidates, a list of important election-related dates, and lists of polling locations.
- f. SGA will form 3 short “silly debate” videos to promote the three significant debates.
- g. Student Life will host a social media contest in which students can take a selfie with their “I Voted” sticker to be entered to win a \$250 gift basket.
- h. Communication from our deans to faculty and students, and perhaps from our whole cabinet, regarding the importance of registering and voting.
- i. Make a short video with Randall County on how to use a voting machine.
- j. We want to increase faculty buy-in and are evaluating strategies.

9. Reporting

- a. We will share via email and in meetings. The plan and the data may be made public, depending on our meeting with our administration in a few weeks.

10. Evaluation

- a. Evaluation will be done as we assess the successes and shortfalls of our planned events. In addition, a significant component of this will be looking at the data sets we get back in 2023 from the 2022 midterms and re-evaluating what was successful and what was not. Our institutional researcher and core faculty and staff leadership group will do this.