

Amarillo College

Democratic Engagement Action Plan

1. Executive Summary

Aaron Faver, Amber Hamilton, and Jennifer Welch developed this action plan. The strategy itself has changed almost entirely since the COVID19 pandemic began. The strategy portion of this document was formed almost completely by Amber Hamilton and Jenna Welch with minimal input from Aaron Faver. In addition, Student Life is the primary mover in this plan, as the pandemic interrupted plans to begin student engagement through any newly founded Political Science Club.

The plan seeks to improve voter turnout on the Amarillo College campus by 5-7% in 2020. The plan will be implemented on all Amarillo College campuses. The plan was developed because in prior years, we have not had a comprehensive plan to tackle this issue, and want to see an increase in civic engagement in our student community. The action plan begins in September and runs until November of 2020. The plan will be implemented through continued meetings, engagement opportunities, and voter registration drives.

2. Leadership

Aaron Faver, Amber Hamilton, and Jenna Welch will be coordinating and overseeing the institutions 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. Responsibilities of the working group are to meet monthly, plan, and help execute the vision.

3. Commitment

Aaron Faver, Amber Hamilton, and Jenna Welch have meetings setup 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 at the moment.

4. Landscape

See above. Our 2018 Midterm data was demonstrative of an increase in student voter turnout. We received a bronze seal for our turnout, but we are 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 of the issue.

5. Goals

a. Long Term:

- i. 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 to work up to.
- ii. We are not sure what knowledge and skills need to be incorporated into our FYS course, if any. We are discussing it.

- iii. 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. When we receive our numbers in 2021, we would like to have moved from bronze to silver.

6. 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 can 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 that gets registered with this group between September 8th and Thursday October 1st, or show proof of registration, will get a voucher for a free Sonic drink and be entered in a raffle to win a \$100 gas gift card.
- d. Voter registration tables will be present at Student Life’s 3 “Fall Fest –To-Go events, one to be held at each of our campuses.
- e. Student Government Association’s (SGA) will assemble and distribute “Voting Toolkits” on Tuesday, October 6th – these will include nonpartisan issue guides for all candidates, list of important election-related dates, and lists of polling locations.
- f. SGA will form 3 short “silly debate” videos to promote the 3 major 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 looking at strategies for that.

7. Reporting

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

8. Evaluation

- a. Evaluation will be done as we assess successes and shortfalls of our planned events. In addition, a major component of this will be looking at our data sets that we get back in 2021, and re-evaluating what was successful and what was not. This will be done by our institutional researcher, as well as our core group of faculty and staff leadership.