



ALL IN Democracy Challenge

Civic Engagement Action Plan



Fall 2024 – Fall 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mission of the Student Life Office at Arapahoe Community College (ACC) is to foster development, leadership, and engagement of our students through activities, services and experiences. Our programs, services, and facilities focus on creating opportunities for students to make connections, improve their well-being, build character, develop leadership skills, and elevate their learning experiences at ACC. As the primary office for student engagement efforts beyond – and in partnership with – the classroom, the Student Life Office oversees campus activities, student clubs and organizations, student leadership development, and aspects of Veterans services. As part of our programmatic model, our office embraces the principles of civic engagement and incorporates civic engagement in our programmatic endeavors.

In order to further our work with civic engagement, the Student Life Office joined the ALL IN Challenge in 2016. Since then, we have created multiple opportunities for students to get connected, be informed, and become involved. We continue our participation in the ALL IN Challenge as we seek to continue to make progress in our goals – explained further in this document: to both educate and mobilize our students to vote, engage and sustain collaborations, and utilize involvement from our student leaders. This document was drafted under advisement of ACC's Civic Engagement Coalition, and covers work to be done between the start of Fall 2024 semester and the end of Fall 2025 semester. The purpose of this Action Plan is to guide our civic engagement work, evaluate our success, and communicate our efforts.

LEADERSHIP

Led by the Student Life Office, the Civic Engagement Coalition consists of various representatives from administration, faculty, and students. These members strategize, coordinate, and promote our civic engagement programming efforts. The Coalition will connect on a quarterly basis to evaluate progress made on all goals and subsequent strategies.

As members leave the Coalition, either by choosing to step down or by leaving ACC, it will be the duty of the Chair to replace that member in consultation with the Coalition. Should other key stakeholders or interested individuals be identified, internal to ACC or as a community partner, their addition will also be considered by the Chair in consultation with the Coalition. The work of the Chair to implement such civic engagement program is an element of the job description of the Director of Student Life, thus the work is situated to continue in any vacancy of that position.

Civic Engagement Coalition

- Director of Student Life, National Society of Leadership & Success Advisor, Dan Balski – *Civic Engagement Coalition Chair*
- Senior Coordinator of Student Life, LaMario Fortson
- Coordinator of Student Wellness and Belonging, *TBD*
- Service-Learning Center Coordinator, Communication Faculty, Diana Hornick
- Assistant Director of Marketing, Jess Horning
- Student Government Association Representative, Alexa Fitzpatrick
- Academic Affairs Member: Chris Juarez, Dean of the School of Mathematics and Sciences
- Student Affairs Member: Director of TRIO Student Support Services, Lisa Christiansen
- Student Representative, Janelle Schwarting

Civic Engagement Coalition Leadership Team Liaison

- Dean of Students, Kathryn Mahoney

Civic Engagement Coalition Community Partner

- New Era Colorado

COMMITMENT

Within [ACC's Strategic Plan](#), two of ACC's strategic directions are 'Collaborative Partnerships' and 'Student Success'. In alignment with this strategic plan, Student Life combines our efforts with student leadership development, student organization participation, and volunteerism to create a more engaged student body, enhancing students' academic and social experiences. We also work to cultivate relationships with local businesses and community organizations in the spirit of community engagement and responsibility. We strive to "impact student's personal growth and development through relevant and meaningful co-curricular retention and completion endeavors."

The Civic Engagement Coalition continues to utilize the American Association of Community Colleges definition of civic responsibility to inform our practice. Civic responsibility is the "active participation in the public life of the community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good." Civic responsibility is cultivated through an engaged community. The community engagement initiatives at ACC connect students with the world beyond a potentially passive classroom setting and encourages them to be an active participant for the greater good of our society.

As part of our commitment to civic engagement activities, we have participated in the ALL IN Challenge since 2016. We received a Gold Seal for achieving a student voting rate between 70% and 79% in the 2020 elections. We received two awards for the 2020 Colorado Campus Voting Challenge for having the highest registration rate and the highest voter turnout for a community college. We also received the Best Campus Democratic Engagement Action Plan Award for a 2-year institution in 2021, and received the inaugural ALL IN Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting recognition in 2022. ACC's President, Stephanie Fujii, signed the Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation in 2022. ACC was included in Washington Monthly's 2022 Best Colleges for Student Voting Honor Roll. We have collected data via the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) since 2014, and have renewed through 2023. We have also sought the Voter-Friendly Campus Designation since 2016 and are currently renewed through 2033.

In order to ensure proper awareness is generated, this commitment to civic engagement efforts will be part of our Student Life publications, both electronic and in print. Our successes in such endeavors are also shared with the broader college community, both student and employee, in student communications, employee publications, and during college gatherings. ACC leadership takes pride in our democratic engagement and student voting record, and their enthusiasm in sharing such information and supporting such work makes it clear.

LANDSCAPE

At ACC, Civic Engagement is encouraged on a curricular level through our [Service Learning Center](#). The Service-Learning Center encourages faculty to utilize service projects to enhance our students' educational experience. By volunteering in their communities, partnering with local non-profits, and applying all they learn from the classroom, students develop skills in leadership, critical reflection, civic responsibility, and community engagement, making them more marketable and prominent citizens in the real world beyond college. Courses at ACC currently enhancing their curriculum with Service Learning projects or assignments include: Art, Biology, Communication, Economics, English, and Psychology.

ACC is a member of the Denver-based Campus Compact, an organization of colleges and universities devoted to promoting civic learning and elevating higher education engagement in the region. ACC also has a Volunteering To Learn (ViTaL) Team, created by faculty and composed of members of the ACC community. ViTaL reaches out to neighborhood organizations, and provides volunteer opportunities for our employees so that they can collaborate with local partners prior to sending students out into the field on their own.

On a co-curricular level, the Student Life Office collaborates with institutional constituencies and external partners to provide various programs, explained further in the Strategy section of this document. These programs align with Student Life's programmatic model, which embraces the principles of civic engagement.

In terms of student demographics, ACC is a commuter institution. For Fall 2023, the total student population was 13,785 students. Of those 13,785 students:

- 2,628 were full-time and 11,157 were part-time
- 8,202 were high school students; Colorado has a commitment to concurrent enrollment
- The average age was 20

We do not currently have racial demographics captured as part of our prior NSLVE data, thus I have not included this information. A full breakdown of ACC's student data can be found [on our website](#).

Statistically speaking, the student body at ACC is civically engaged in the democratic process to a large degree. Assessment information taken from the NSLVE shows the following rates for ACC:

- 2012, Presidential Election: 60.9% of students voted; Associate Institutions rate: 44.8%
 - 78.0% Registration Rate, 78.2% of registrants voted
- 2014, Midterm Election: 38% of students voted; All Institutions rate: 18.8%
 - 61.8% Registration Rate, 62% of registrants voted
- 2016, Presidential Election: 65.5% of students voted; Associate Institutions rate: 47.3%
 - 78.1% Registration Rate, 83.9% of registrants voted
- 2018, Midterm Election: 53.4% of students voted; All Institutions rate: 39.1%
 - 78.6% Registration Rate, 68% of registrants voted
- 2020, Presidential Election: 75.6% of students voted; Associate Institutions rate: 56%
 - 86.7% Registration Rate, 87.2% of registrants voted

Based on this data, our election rates improved between the 2016 and 2020 Presidential Election as well as the 2014 and 2018 Midterm Election. In the last 2 reports, we did not see significant differences in voting patterns between the various demographics currently captured in our reports. As of writing this report, we are waiting for the latest NSLVE report to determine whether or not our numbers remained consistent or improved, which we would like to see.

GOALS

The Civic Engagement Coalition would like to continue progress on these goals, which are:

1. We are interested in utilizing best practices to both **educate and mobilize our students to vote** and to find their voice in the democratic process whether at the local, state, or national level. We would like to maintain our student voter turnout of 75% for the next presidential election.
2. We seek to **engage in and sustain collaborations** for civic engagement opportunities with campus constituencies and community partners. We will evaluate success in each activity by the implementation of the goal and through review of student participation.
3. We desire to **utilize involvement from our student leaders** in service to their community and engagement in voter education initiatives. We will evaluate success in each activity by the implementation of the goal and through review of student participation.

STRATEGY

In order to fulfill the intentions of each of our identified goals, various strategies have been put in place. Below, you will find the strategies for each goal, the responsible individual(s), our timeline, and any progress made as of the last update of this plan.

GOAL ONE: EDUCATE AND MOBILIZE OUR STUDENTS TO VOTE

Provide Campus Opportunities for Voter Registration

Provide Voter Registration Awareness

Responsible Individual(s): Dean of Student's Office, Registrar

Timeline: Ongoing

Progress: Voter Registration forms are made available to students in our Student Engagement Center. Forms are available in English and Spanish. In compliance with the Higher Education Act, the National Voter Registration Act, and Colorado law, ACC distributes voter registration information to students via e-mail each September.

Host Voter Registration Events

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office

Timeline: Ongoing

Progress: We will continue to participate in National Voter Registration Day in September of each year. Student Life will also provide voter registration at one major campus event each Fall and Spring semester.

Develop Promotions for Voter Service and Polling Center (VPSC)

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office, Assistant Director of Marketing

Timeline: Complete by end of Summer 2024; Implement in Fall 2024

Progress: We will develop promotions for students on the ballot box and VPSC located on campus as of Spring 2020, as well as for VPSCs in the region.

Participate in National Civic Engagement Programs

Maintain Voter-Friendly Campus Designation

Responsible Individual(s): Director of Student Life

Timeline: Submit Action Plan by May 31st, 2024

Progress: We have sought the Voter-Friendly Campus Designation since 2016 and have renewed through 2024. We will continue our participation.

Continue Participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Responsible Individual(s): Director of Student Life

Timeline: Ongoing

Progress: We continue to collect and review student voting data via the NSLVE. We have reports for 2012-2020. We have renewed our participation through 2033. As we receive a report, we will share the data with the college's Leadership Team. We will also look into including racial demographics in our data collection and reporting.

Increase Awareness of Voting

Develop Communication Plan for Civic Education

Responsible Individual(s): Director of Student Life, Assistant Director of Marketing

Timeline: Complete by end of Summer 2024

Progress: We will develop voting information and civic engagement content to release to students over the course of the Fall semester.

Develop Content for Welcome Week Programs

Responsible Individual(s): Director of Student Life, Senior Coordinator of Student Life

Timeline: Complete by end of Summer 2024

Progress: We will discuss how we can promote civic engagement and voter education for the presidential election throughout our welcome programs, and implement those programs accordingly.

GOAL TWO: ENGAGE IN AND SUSTAIN COLLABORATIONS

Collaborate with Campus and Community Partners to Provide Campus Programming

Partner with Community Organizations for Voter Registration

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office

Timeline: Ongoing

Progress: As part of our programming, we have partnered with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and New Era Colorado. We will continue to partner with these community organizations for upcoming programs.

Coordinate Programming with Campus Constituencies

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office, Faculty, New Era Colorado

Timeline: Ongoing

Progress: We will build relationships with faculty, academic leadership and student affairs colleagues in our programming. We will also work with New Era Colorado to promote opportunities for voter education to be brought to classroom environments and within broader college activities.

Participate in the Unify Challenge: College Bowl

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office, Faculty Partners

Timeline: Ongoing

Progress: We will promote and implement promotions and collaborations for the Unify Challenge to bring impactful programming to their classes, and for additional co-curricular experiences for students. We will recruit faculty partners each semester who are willing to include the content in their curriculum.

GOAL THREE: UTILIZE INVOLVEMENT FROM STUDENT LEADERS

Provide Educational Civic Engagement Events for Students

Continue Constitution Day Programming

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office

Timeline: Complete each September

Progress: Constitution Day is observed each September. Mini Constitution booklets are given out, and additional engagement is included. We will continue to maintain this programming.

Provide Election Programming

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office, Student Government Association

Timeline: Plan by end of Summer 2024; Implement by November 2024

Progress: We will implement educational programming for the 2024 Presidential Elections to ensure students are familiar with candidates, well-informed on ballot measures, and aware of resources to learn more. We will distribute voter education packets to students at campus events. We will also provide programming to view the election results. We have partnered with our Student Government Association for such voter education in the past and will continue to do so.

Engage Students in Civic Engagement Efforts

Maintain Membership of 2-3 Student Leaders on our Civic Engagement Coalition

Responsible Individual(s): Student Life Office

Timeline: Ongoing

Progress: We will recruit and engage student leader representatives who have a passion for civic engagement and serve as members of our Civic Engagement Coalition. We will have them assist with implementing programming leading up to and following the Presidential Elections.

Coordinate Student-Led Fall Voter Turnout Event

- Responsible Individual(s):** Student Life Office, Student Leaders
Timeline: Plan Summer 2024; Implement Fall 2024
Progress: Student Life will work with student leaders to coordinate a voter turnout event during the Fall semester to engage students in the democratic process and encourage them to vote.

Recognize Excellence in Civic Engagement

- Responsible Individual(s):** Student Life Office, Service-Learning Center Coordinator
Timeline: Complete each Spring
Progress: The Student Life Office will continue to recognize students selected for their excellent service-learning work during our annual Student Awards Ceremony. Student leaders may also be recognized for their outstanding contributions to the campus community through our Mountain Mover Award selection.

Support Service-Learning Efforts of our Honors Societies

Promote Community Service to members of the National Society of Leadership & Success (NSLS)

- Responsible Individual(s):** NSLS Advisors
Timeline: Ongoing
Progress: ACC started a chapter of NSLS in August 2017, advised by 1 members of the Student Life Office and 1 fellow employee. As part of membership, NSLS students can participate in service opportunities. We provide recognition for these students at our Fall and Spring Induction Ceremonies.

Support Phi Theta Kappa in their Honors in Action Project

- Responsible Individual(s):** PTK Advisors, Student Life Office
Timeline: Ongoing
Progress: Our chapter of Phi Theta Kappa strives to achieve 5-star status each year. As part of that accolade, our chapter participates in an Honors in Action (HIA) project each year that combines academic research, problem solving, and action-oriented service to address real-world challenges in our communities. We continue to support them in these efforts.

REPORTING

Progress made on strategies within this plan will be tracked and documented by the Chair of the Civic Engagement Coalition. This progress will be reviewed by the entire Coalition when we connect on a quarterly basis. During that time, the Coalition will evaluate progress made on all goals, reflect on successful strategies, and reevaluate any strategies for which we are not finding ourselves to be successful. At any time, progress on this plan will be made available to the campus community through the Chair of the Coalition.

Our NSLVE results will continue to be shared with the Civic Engagement Coalition, with the Student Affairs Leadership Team, and with the President of ACC. Results will also be published on campus for students to see, in an effort to encourage continued voter engagement. NSLVE results along with current and prior ALL IN Action Plans are also available for stakeholders to review [on the ALL IN website](#). These results and action plans will inform future strategies of the Coalition.

EVALUATION

At the end of the Fall 2025 semester, the Coalition will convene to address the extent to which this plan was and was not successful. As part of this evaluation, NSLVE data will be reviewed, along with attendance records, communication plans and promotions, and any feedback and survey documents collected. For efforts which were successful, the Coalition will discuss the reasons for such successes in order to try and replicate those results. Such strategies will be considered for the next version of this plan. For efforts which were not successful, the Coalition will discuss potential reasons for lack of success. If a plan was not successful, and additional resources and/or organization could lead to possible successes, that particular plan will be considered for the next version of our plan. If the Coalition determines an unsuccessful plan to be unnecessary and/or unwanted in the next round of our planning, it will not be added again. The reasoning for such decision-making will be documented in our formal evaluation of this plan.

After we have evaluated the efforts specifically outlined in this plan, the Coalition will address the overarching goals for our plan. If we continue to maintain our pre-existing goals, we will discuss the strategies we want to maintain, whether in a similar fashion or with adjustments. If we change one or more of our goals, we will discuss potential strategies for any new goals. At this point, the potential for new strategies will be discussed and documented. Such strategies will be added to the pre-existing strategies to formulate a new plan.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions on this plan should be addressed to:

Dan Balski, M.S.
Director of Student Life, Civic Engagement Coalition Chair
Phone: 303.797.5667, E-mail: dan.balski@arapahoe.edu
Arapahoe Community College
5900 S. Santa Fe Dr.
Littleton, Colorado 80160

This plan was last updated on December 15th, 2023.