

# Arizona State University's Commitment to Active Participation in Our Democracy

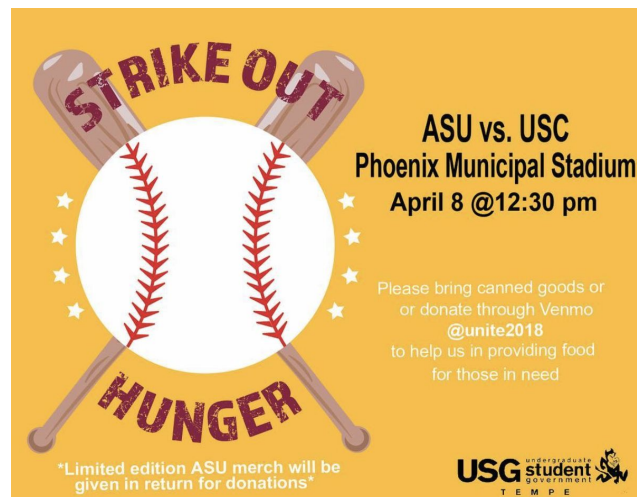


## What it means to be a Sun Devil at Arizona State University:

**ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.**

The ASU charter inspires the actions and intentions of the Associated Students of Arizona State University (ASASU). We believe Civic Engagement by the student body is a way for us to assume our fundamental responsibility to the community. We understand the term Civic Engagement is defined by a list of actions like volunteering, voting, and an open dialogue with our peers.

The Undergraduate Student Government- Tempe (USGT) hosted a ASU Baseball game where students and guests were encourage to give back what they could to the community.



## Overview

ASU recognizes its role as the student body's representative and we are committed to maintaining channels of communication between students and the administration.

Our efforts aim at voicing students' concerns and interests at local, state and national levels of government. ASASU also provides a means by which students can gain experience and training through active political participation. We provide a number of student-run services and advocate for student initiatives including campus environment, health and wellness, community outreach and special events. ASASU also facilitates the distribution of funding from the student activity fee to clubs and organizations.

ASASU has outlined a civically engaged student body as a top priority. Although ASU is One University spread among four physical campuses, it is the duty and work of organizations on each campus to implement our shared goal.

ASASU has identified a number of democracy challenges to tackle during the 2018 Midterms. Further, ASASU has also outlined several long-term goals directed at creating a sustainable system of democratic engagement and education. Our actions and goals are rooted in a few simple, yet impactful values:

- 1) ASASU not only upholds but lives by our fundamental responsibility to the community.
- 2) ASASU, as a nonpartisan organization, advocates for the right of all students to cast a vote in their democracy as unobstructed and accessible as possible.
- 3) ASASU promotes the idea democratic engagement is not limited to voting but also encompasses open dialogue among the student body as well as an active conversation with our elected representatives.

As a governing body representative of both 60,000 undergraduate and 10,000 graduate students, we understand and know we cannot do this alone. Which is why partners and stakeholders across all four physical campuses are crucial.



# The Stakeholders

- **Undergraduate Student Governments**

**(USG):** The USG's on the Tempe, Downtown, West, and Polytechnic campuses have been charged by the University and ASASU to implement our goals among the Undergraduate Student populations.



- **Graduate & Professional Student Association:**

Similarly to USG, GPSA shares the same mission to implement our goals among the Graduate Student Populations.



- **Changemaker Central ASU:** Is both a concept and a physical space on each campus for like-minded students dedicated to social change in our local and global community. Changemaker projects range from civic engagement to providing volunteer opportunities for all students.

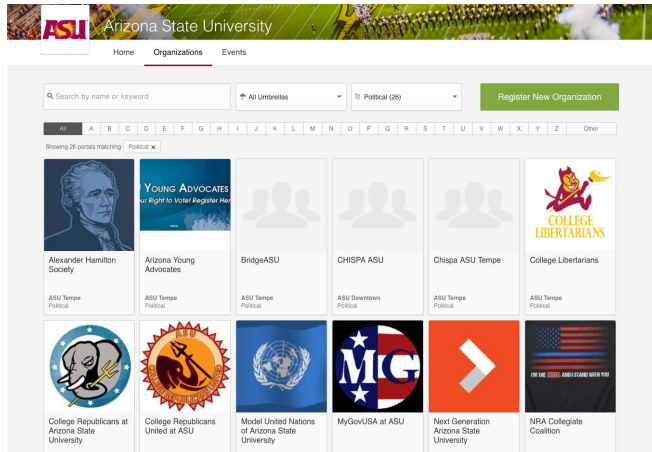


- **Ed Pastor Center:** A student-centric hub of activity that promotes, publicizes, and encourages political engagement and public service among ASU students and the broader community. The center embodies ASU's commitment to being an active agent of change, addressing society's problem. Students can access resources such as scholarships, internships, seminars, and other leadership opportunities to further public service and civic engagement.



# Political Culture at ASU:

## Outside the Classroom:



ASU has built an environment for students and faculty to engage in their democracy and with one another. On the student side, there are 26 registered political clubs that represent a wide spectrum of political thought. These political organizations organize and host events showcasing their beliefs and ideals. ASASU encourages these organizations to interact and continue an open dialogue to exchange and contrast beliefs.

## In the Classroom

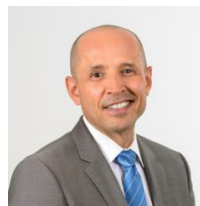
At the academic level, the university is home to the School of Politics and Global Studies, School of Civic and Economic Thought, and the College of Public Service and Public policy to name a few. Among those academic structures are countless majors dedicated toward building solutions to the country's most pressing political and policy issues.

Teaching some of those courses are current Arizona political figures such as:

**Congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema (D - AZ 9) and current Senatorial Candidate**



**Gubernatorial Candidate David Garcia**



**State Senator Sean Bowie (D - LD 18)**



## Around Campus:

ASU facilitates an annual Social Embeddedness Conference where faculty and staff across the University exchanges ideas to become community engaged. There, faculty and staff covered crucial topics like civic engagement, community-centric research, and PreK-14 outreach

## Highlights Since the 2016 Election :

The past academic year proved to be a successful year for ASASU and our goals. Although this year did not have a federal or state wide election, ASASU, in partnership with fellow on-campus organizations, dedicated itself to engaging students in areas outside of voting.

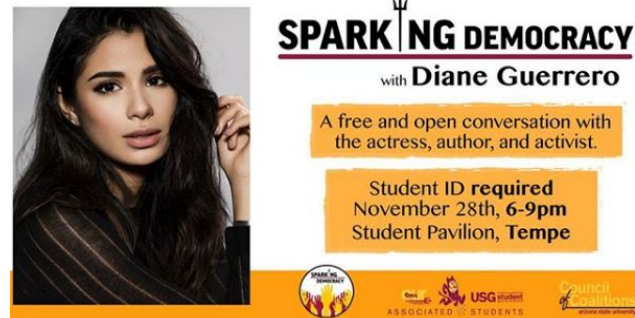
### 1) National Voter Registration Day 2017:

ASASU continued our annual commitment to voter registration and hosted an engaging day for the Student Body. There, ASASU presided over a tabling event where nearly all major political clubs and organizations could also engage students. The Secretary of State's office, Maricopa County Recorder's office, and the Citizens Clean Elections Commission were present to provide resources and answer student questions.



### 2) Fourth Annual Sparking

**Democracy:** This signature event highlights political awareness through special guests coming to campus. In 2016, senatorial candidates and presidential delegates on the ballot spoke with students. In 2017, ASASU partnered with the Council of Coalitions (COC), a group aimed at advocating and representing underserved and underrepresented identities, to host another annual event aimed at democratic engagement. Diane Guerrero, a cast member on Netflix's hit show Orange is the New Black, spoke with students on the importance of advocacy, specifically on the topic of Dreamers.



### 3) Dialogue on Campus: Throughout the year, ASASU hosted events revolving



around the idea of improving an open dialogue with one another and elected representatives. For example, the Sustainability Director hosted a “Social Equity Roundtable” where students were able to discuss the University’s Sustainability policy. Further, State Representative Athena Salman came to campus to teach students on best practices to contact their legislator.

- 4) **University Policy:** Often forgotten in the catch-all term of Civic Engagement, student involvement in University policy is a shared idea between ASASU and University administration. Every quarter, a USG on one of the campuses hosts a University President Town hall where students can not only ask questions from the President but from Deans and administrative officials.



- 5) **Annual ASU Day at the Capitol:** When the Arizona Legislature is in session during the Spring Semester, student leaders travel to the AZ Capitol. There, student leaders have lunch with state representatives and senators to discuss issues affecting the student body. ASASU also interacts with the process by viewing an active session in one of the houses.



- 6) **Campus Collaboration:** In the Spring semester, ASASU, along with Changemaker ASU and My Gov USA, hosted a Civic Engagement Summit aimed at collaboration. There, student leaders exchanged ideas, goals, and engaged in policy conversations. The summit also offered to distribute \$10,000 in community action grants. The grants were offered to student organizations dedicated to civic action in our communities.



### 7) **Equitable Political Representation:**

Near the end of the spring semester, ASASU organized and hosted the inaugural Women in Leadership dinner. This ballroom dinner event invited women political leaders from both sides of the aisle and at all levels of government to tell their story. Former Texas State Senator Wendy Davis, Arizona Secretary of State Michele Reagan, and Tempe Vice Mayor Arredondo Savage told their stories of empowerment to encourage more women to run for office.



## **Our Goals**

When developing our goals, ASASU analyzed the data from the past Presidential and Midterm elections to find areas of growth. The General election data for 2016 demonstrated marked improvements over 2012 and remains a point of pride for ASASU. In comparison to 2012, the 2016 voting rate improved by 11 points to nearly 59% and the total registration rate jump to 84%. However, we are aware 2018 is a midterm election and those have historically been low turnout across nearly all demographics, especially college students. In fact, the NSLVE report from 2014 reported a total voting rate of 19%. However, even more dramatic is the voting rate for the 18-21 age group, which stood at 13%, a 28 point drop from the 2012 numbers.

### **Short Term**

#### **1. The data paints a clear picture: our organization must and will work hard this election cycle to prevent a repeat of the 2014 data.**

- a. Our goal is to meet or surpass an 11 point increase. A gain of 11 points is attainable given the historical 11 point jump between the 2012 and 2016 general elections. The goal has been easier to reach because the Tempe Campus has been designated as countywide ballot center. Meaning, voters from every corner of Maricopa

County, where all of ASU's campuses and home to 2.2 million registered voters, can drop off their mail-in ballots. This is a significant and positive change from the precinct voting designation.

## **2. Increase participation from comparatively less-engaged majors and colleges**

- a. According to our own NSLVE 2014 data, the social sciences majors and colleges voted at significantly higher rates. Our organization is committed to seeing as many students as possible are voting. Therefore, we are committed to working with our college council partners in preparing college specific voter education materials. For example, a document called "the reasons why STEM majors should vote and questions to ask" could contain where research dollars come from, or a document aimed at art students could inform them that the City of Tempe has an art tax where developers pay into a fund that is used to install works of art across the city.

## **3. Democracy Beyond the Ballot Box (DBBB)**

- a. DBBB is rooted in the idea that active participation in our democracy does not start or end at the ballot box, but is an ongoing conversation with elected representatives and our peers. ASASU is committed to hosting democracy oriented events where elected representatives, policy wonks, social activist, etc can join the conversation with the tens of thousands of students located on all of ASU's campuses.

## **Long Term**

### **1. Permanent On-campus Ballot Box**

- a. ASASU is committed to breaking down barriers that make it harder for students to vote and participate in their democracy. Although the Tempe campus has been deemed a countywide ballot center for the 2018 Midterms, ASASU is working hard to ensure this is not a temporary distinction. The organization is advocating for a permanent on-campus ballot box which can be used during federal, statewide, city, and special elections.

## **2. Resident Assistant (RA)/Community Assistant (CA) Voter Registration Training**

- a. During fall move-in day, ASASU welcomes students by offering resources to register to vote and basic voter education. However, move-in day is often a stressful and emotional time where civic engagement becomes an afterthought. Which is why ASASU is advocating for voter registration (VR) and basic education be included in RA/CA training to support our on-campus students. In Arizona, voters must register nearly a month before election day, which is RA/CA trained in VR can help facilitate an increase in voter turnout.

## **3. ASASU organizational wide training**

- a. ASASU is representative of the university's student leaders and it is crucial that all members of our organization are trained in VR. We strive to ensure that if a student asks a campus President or a USG intern for VR help, both can do so without hesitation.

## **4. Continue Signature Political Events**

- a. ASASU remains committed to continuing our longstanding political and policy events. During election years, ASASU hosts and plans events like National Voter Registration Day, Sparking Democracy, and policy-centric speakers. We both value and understand the positive impact these types of events have on increasing civic engagement on campus.

## **Events**

1. Primary Election Ballot Center (August 1 - 24)
2. ASU Move-in Day Voter Registration (August 11 - 13)
3. ASU Welcome Back Events (August 13 - 18)
  - a. Ex. Culturefest, Rainbow Welcome, and Tiki Luau
4. ASU Community Walks (August 21 - 22)

- a. Student leaders and ASU administration walk off-campus housing to welcome back students and encourage citizenship and a connection to community.
- 5. National Voter Registration Day (September 25)
- 6. Sparking Democracy (TBD)
- 7. General Election Ballot Center (October 10 - November 2)
- 8. Democracy Beyond the Ballot Box Events (Spread between Fall and Spring)
  - a. Ex. How Contact your Legislator, Town Halls, and Community Roundtables
- 9. ASASU Civic Engagement Tabling (Spread between Fall and Spring)
- 10. ASU Day at the Capitol (Spring Semester)
- 11. Civic Engagement Summit (Spring Semester)
- 12. Women in Leadership Dinner (Spring Semester)

## Contact:

For more information or follow-up regarding the ASU Democratic Engagement Plan please reach out to ASASU Coordinator Jaime Ingrisano ([jaime.ingrisano@asu.edu](mailto:jaime.ingrisano@asu.edu) or 480-965-1241) who is the campus primary contact for the ALL IN Challenge.