



## 2024 Action Plan

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**Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College (A-B Tech)  
2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan**

Developed by: Michele Hathcock, Director, Student Life Development at A-B Tech

## Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan developed by Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College (A-B Tech) in Asheville, North Carolina for the 2024 election. The plan outlines strategies to increase democratic engagement among students. This plan will focus on enhancing voter registration, civic education, and voter turnout. The goals for Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College (A-B Tech) for the 2024 election are: Increase voter registration opportunities on campus, engage more students to register and vote through voter education opportunities and activities designed to empower voters with information to support them in access their right to vote as citizens of the United States of America.

## Leadership:

The action plan leadership team includes the following individuals and organizations:

- **Project Lead:** Michele Hathcock – Director, Student Life Development and Title IX Compliance
- **Advisory Committee:** Comprising diverse faculty, staff, students, and community partners. This includes:
  - Tyra Syverson – Coordinator, Student Life Development
  - Dr. Fairley Patton – Vice President, Student Services
  - April Birchfield – Department Chair, Social Sciences and Humanities
  - Kasey Baker – Instructor, Political Science
  - Mariana Flores, President, A-B Tech Student Government Association
  - Ross Fallon, Vice President, A-B Tech Student Government Association
  - Karen Rae, Coordinator, Election Services Buncombe County Board of Elections
- **Community Partners:** Local nonpartisan organizations such as the League of Women Voters and Buncombe County Board of Elections. Along with national partners: All In, National Voter Registration Day, and Students Learn, Students Vote.

## Commitment:

Dr. John Gossett, Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College President signed the ALL IN Presidents' Commitment for Full Student Voter Participation in 2024 as a testament to the institution's dedication to increasing voter education and civic engagement. To actualize this

commitment, the college has developed this action plan as a first-time participant in the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge. The college will allocate resources to support this initiative, including funding from the Student Life department for campus events, staff time, and educational materials. This commitment will be demonstrated through regular campus-wide announcements, integration into co-curricular learning opportunities, and extracurricular student engagement activities. Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College demonstrates its commitment by integrating democratic engagement into the student life experience on campus.

### Landscape:

Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College is a public community college in Asheville, NC that primarily serves the residents of Buncombe and Madison counties, as well as surrounding Western NC communities. The College is a commuter campus that awards certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees and hosts an Early College High School program on site. Our institution is a Predominantly White Institution enrolling over 6,000 curriculum students.

The College joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for the first time in 2024 but has a long history of participation in Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, and campus voter registration drives. The College has recently authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) to receive campus voting data to help shed light on our student rates of voter registration and participation in the elections process. This data will help inform future civic engagement activities.

#### North Carolina Voter Laws:

For 2024, a new state law requires voters to present photo identification when they go to the polls. The State Board of Elections implemented an approval process for colleges to submit their student identification cards for verification as an approved form of identification for voting in NC. Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College student identification cards may be used as an approved form of photo identification for voting in the 2024 elections in North Carolina. This is another example of the College's commitment to removing barriers to increase student access to the voting system.

#### 2024 General Election Schedule in North Carolina:

- Sept. 6, 2024: Absentee ballots in the mail
- Sept. 17, 2024: National Voter Registration Day
- Oct. 11, 2024: Voter Registration Deadline (5 p.m.)
- Oct. 17, 2024: In-person Early Voting begins (same-day registration available)
- Oct 29, 2024: Absentee ballot request deadline (5 p.m.)
- Nov. 2, 2024: In-person early voting ends (3 p.m.)
- Nov. 5, 2024: Election Day (6:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.)
- Nov. 5, 2024: Absentee ballot return deadline (7:30 p.m.)

### Three Approved Voting Methods in NC:

#### 1. Early Voting

Early Voting is available Oct. 17-Nov. 2, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday hours on Oct. 19, 26, and 27 are 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 2 hours are 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Voters may vote at any one of 14 locations throughout Buncombe County. During Early

#### 2. Absentee-by-mail

You can request an absentee ballot now by completing an Absentee Ballot Request form. The deadline to submit an Absentee Ballot Request Form is Oct, 29 at 5 p.m. Absentee ballots will be mailed out beginning Sept. 6. Please note, the deadline to return completed domestic absentee ballots is now 7:30 p.m. on Election Day, which is Nov. 5.

Any North Carolina registered voter eligible for the election may request, receive, and vote an absentee-ballot-by-mail. Registered voters in North Carolina must request an absentee ballot with an official N.C. Absentee Ballot Request Form. There are two ways to access and submit the form:

Online - Request an Absentee Ballot at the N.C. Absentee Ballot Portal.

On paper - print the online N.C. Absentee Ballot Request Form for 2024 currently available on our website. A Spanish Absentee Ballot request form is also available by clicking here. If voters do not have a printer, you may complete an absentee ballot request form at the Election Services office at 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville, 28801, or call (828) 250-4200 for one to be mailed to you.

Voters may return the request in one of the following ways:

- Mail it to:  
P.O. Box 7468, Asheville, NC 28802
- Hand deliver it to:  
Buncombe County Board of Elections office at 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville, NC 28801

Note: The Absentee Ballot Request Form may not be emailed or faxed. Request forms that are hand delivered to the office must be returned by the voter or the voter's near relative or legal guardian or, if you are not the voter or the voter's near relative or legal guardian, the voter requested your assistance returning their request due to disability.

Returning an Absentee Ballot: The deadline to return the completed absentee ballot is Tuesday, Nov. 5 at 7:30 p.m. However, voters are encouraged to return the ballot as early as possible. In addition, voters must provide a copy of an acceptable photo ID when they return their absentee ballot. Specific instructions are provided in the return envelope. You may return your ballot to us in one of the following ways:

By mail: Absentee ballots may be mailed to P.O. Box 7468 Asheville, NC 28802. Ballots must be received by Nov. 5 at 7:30 p.m.

At any Early Voting site: Absentee ballots may be returned to an Early Voting site during the Early Voting period, but not at a voting location on Election Day. Voters will be directed to the Early Voting Help Desk to return an absentee ballot.

In person: Absentee ballots may be returned in person to our office at 59 Woodfin Place, Monday – Friday, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Absentee ballots may only be returned by the voter or the voter's near relative or legal guardian or, if you are not the voter or the voter's near relative or legal guardian, the voter requested their assistance returning their ballot due to disability.

For more information about absentee voting, visit the [North Carolina Board of Elections website](https://northcarolina.ballottrax.net/voter/). Track the status of your mail-in ballot, from start to finish at <https://northcarolina.ballottrax.net/voter/>.

### 3. General Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 5

On Nov. 5, polls are open 6:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. If you are in line by 7:30 p.m., you can vote.

Make sure you know your assigned voting location if you are casting a ballot on Election Day. Remember: During Early Voting, anyone can vote at any Early Voting location, but on Election Day you must vote at your assigned location. If you need help finding your voting location, enter your name at the [Voter Search Tool](#). And lastly, wait numbers will also be available on Election Day. Check it out before you head out the door.

#### Curbside voting

Curbside voting is available in North Carolina for those who are unable to go inside the voting location due to age or disability. Just pull up to the curbside voting sign, and an election official will come out and assist the voter. Curbside voting is available during Early Voting and on Election Day at all voting locations. Anyone voting curbside will be asked to provide an acceptable photo ID.

#### Goals:

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goal for the 2024 election cycle is to foster civic engagement through nonpartisan activities and educational opportunities on campus.

#### Short-Term Goals (By Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> Election Day):

- **President Commitment:** College President signed the All In Higher Education
- **NSLVE Voter Registration and Turnout Baseline:** College commitment to participate in and review data from the National Student Learning, Voting, and Engagement to establish baseline targets for student registration and turnout.
- **Voter Registration:** Collect fifty voter registrations among eligible students.
- **Build Civic Knowledge:** Engage entire student body through weekly "Did You Know" civic awareness pieces in Trailblazer Talk student e-news and link to ask questions for future issues. Work with faculty and local Board of Elections to host speaker series to greater student involvement in the democratic process.
- **Build Level of Commitment:** Obtain 200 voter action pledge cards with student's indication their intent to vote early or on election day.

### Long-Term Goals (over two election cycles):

- **NSLVE Targets:** Establish voter registration and turnout goals after reviewing 2024 data. Increase voter turnout among students by 15% over the next two elections.
- **Build Culture of Civic Engagement:** Routinely incorporate civic engagement components into future student events and activities to foster great student participation resulting in a 15% higher yield on voter action pledge cards in subsequent elections.

### Strategy:

Asheville - Buncombe Technical Community College will utilize the resources in the Ask Every Student toolkit to implement strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

### Strategy for Building Nonpartisan Student Engagement:

- **Voter Registration Drives:** Organize on-campus and virtual registration events with assistance from local Board of Elections officials, Student Government Association, and partner organizations.
- **Civic Education Workshops:** Offer workshops on government functions, election processes, and constitutional rights. Integrate these topics into new and existing co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- **Promote Poll Worker Service Opportunities:** Work with Board of Elections to engage students in poll worker job opportunities as a method for building greater awareness of the operational side of the elections process.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** Launch campaigns to promote voting deadlines, registration, and civic activities.

### Specific Events:

#### 9/10/2024 – Fall Festival – Welcome Back Event

Buncombe County Board of Elections tabling during campus celebration to promote voter registration and nonpartisan education.

#### 9/17/2024 – National Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day

The Student Life department, in collaboration with the History and Political Sciences departments, and Buncombe County Board of Elections, is hosting a Campus Democracy Day. The event includes a day of presentations on Voter Rights, Constitution Myths and Realities, and historical topics including the Debates at the Constitution Convention and Why NC Refused to Ratify the Constitution. The event will include interactive elements including voter registrations and pledge cards.

#### 10/7/2024 – 10/11/2024 – National Voter Education Week

Campus tabling and virtual education opportunities to build knowledge on the registration process, checking a registration status, finding a polling place, accessing a sample ballot, as well as photo ID requirements, and much more.

### **10/29/2024 – National Vote Early Day**

Campus tabling and virtual education centered around early voting locations, and voter registration options during early voting.

### **11/5/2024 – Election Day – We Raise Our Cup to You Celebration**

Stop by the student center, show off your I voted sticker and enjoy free coffee. (Note: sticker or voter participation not required for a free cup of coffee.)

## **Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

- **Metrics and Data Collection:** Track progress using voter registration statistics, event attendance, and participation in civic education programs.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Collect feedback through surveys.
- **Annual Review:** Conduct an annual review of the action plan, assessing the achievement of short-term and long-term goals, and adjust strategies as needed.
- **Comprehensive Evaluation:** Evaluate the impact of the plan by analyzing NSLVE data, assessing changes in student engagement, and reviewing the effectiveness of implemented activities.

By incorporating these specific activities and events, the action plan is designed to be robust, inclusive, and aligned with the rubric criteria, ensuring a comprehensive approach to enhancing democratic engagement among community college students.

## **Reporting:**

Provide updates to College leadership and action plan team through regular progress reports on goal achievement. Once the NSLVE data is received and evaluated, additional updates may be provided to the College community.