

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

ALL IN

CAMPUS DEMOCRACY
ACTION REPORT



STUDENT
INVOLVEMENT

ABOUT AUBURN



/// FOUNDING

- Established in Auburn, AL in 1856 as the East Alabama Male College
- Morrill Act of 1872 established EAMC as the first land-grant college in the South, renamed the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama
- In 1899 name changed to Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API)
- Finally, in 1960 the name was changed to Auburn University (in keeping with its location and expressing the varied academic programs and larger curriculum of the university)
- Second campus in Montgomery, AL founded in 1967

/// ACCREDITATION

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

/// ALUMNI

- Conferred 327,000 academic degrees
- More than 112,000 alumni living, working, and raising families in Alabama
- 36,000 life members of Auburn Alumni Association

/// RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Research and Development spending in 2022: \$304.4 million
- Ranked in top 11% of research institutions among 915 universities (National Science Foundation's 2023 Higher Education Research and Development Survey)



ABOUT AUBURN

- Ranked in Top 100 for the following specific fields of research:
 - Engineering
 - Mathematics and statistics
 - Physical sciences
 - Non-science and Engineering Research Expenditures (Business administration, management, communications, education, humanities, social work, and human sciences)

/// VALUE STATISTICS

- Rated #1 university for best value and best university in the state of Alabama
- \$6.3 billion annual economic impact to the state of Alabama
- Educates 19,800 Alabama students – the most in the state
- 460% 10-year increase in need-based aid
- 55,000 first-year student applications for fall 2024, all-time high

/// SIZE

- 206 academic buildings, 427 total buildings, 1,841 acres

/// ENROLLMENT (2024)

- Total students: 34,145
 - Undergraduate: 27,907
 - Graduate and Professional: 6,238
 - In-state: 18,201
 - Out-of-state: 15,944
- 49% male, 51% female
- Average high school GPA (fall 2024 first-year class): 4.09
- One-year retention rate: 95%

/// FACULTY PROFILE

- Faculty with terminal degrees: 78%
- Minority faculty: 412
- Student/faculty ratio: 20:1



ABOUT AUBURN

/// ATHLETICS

- NCAA Division I, Southeastern Conference (SEC)
- Over 500 student-athletes who compete on 21 varsity teams
- Men's sports:
 - Baseball
 - Basketball
 - Football
 - Golf
 - Swimming & Diving
 - Tennis
 - Track & Field, XC
- Women's sports:
 - Basketball
 - Equestrian
 - Golf
 - Gymnastics
 - Soccer
 - Softball
 - Swimming & Diving
 - Tennis
 - Track & Field, XC
 - Volleyball
- Spirit Squads: Auburn University Cheerleaders, Tiger Paws Dance Team, Auburn University Marching Band, Auburn University Pep Band
- Mascot: Aubie the Tiger
- 44 Intramural (individual and team) sports offered through Recreation & Wellness
- 42 Club sports offered through Recreation & Wellness



ABOUT AUBURN

/// STUDENT LIFE

- 550+ recognized student organizations
- 1,900+ students study abroad annually
- 2,000+ international students
- University Housing:
 - 24 residence halls across 7 communities
 - 4,900 residents living on-campus
- Greek Life:
 - 28 Interfraternity Council (IFC) fraternities
 - 4 National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) fraternities
 - 4 National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) sororities
 - 18 Panhellenic Council (NPC) sororities
- Student Service Departments:
 - Auburn Cares
 - Auburn University Medical Clinic
 - First Year Experience
 - Greek Life
 - Melton Student Center
 - Parent & Family Programs
 - Property Management
 - Recreation & Wellness
 - Student Conduct
 - Student Counseling & Psychological Services
 - Student Involvement
 - Tiger Dining
 - Tiger ID
 - University Housing
 - Veterans Resource Center



LEADERSHIP

/// This action plan’s development was led by staff from Auburn University Student Affairs and included participation from faculty in the College of Liberal Arts, leadership in the Provost Office, and current students in the Auburn University Student Government Association (SGA). The formation of this group was initiated by Jamie S. Calvert and supported by faculty, staff, and students from different areas of campus (see below) in a shared effort to grow the civic engagement efforts of the university.

Jamie S. Calvert – Coordinator for Student Involvement, Student Affairs

Dr. Mark Wilson – Director of the Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities, College of Liberal Arts

Julie Huff – Assistant Provost for Academic Operations, Facilities & Initiatives, Provost Office

Abbie Hathcock – Auburn University undergraduate student and Assistant Vice President for External Affairs in the Student Government Association (SGA)

Jack McMurray – Auburn University undergraduate student and Director of Civic Engagement in the Student Government Association (SGA)

Ty Torbert – Auburn University undergraduate student and Director of Civic Engagement in the Student Government Association (SGA)

/// Civic engagement and voter registration efforts at the university do not belong to one specific office, department, or unit. One of our action plan’s goals is to centralize the civic-related work of groups around campus to prevent duplication of efforts and amplify each other’s resources.

COMMITMENT AND LANDSCAPE

/// The Auburn Creed embodies the Auburn Spirit and instills in the hearts of every Auburn man and woman the challenge to pursue a fruitful life, contribute to civility, and lead others with honorable actions.

“I believe that this is a practical world and that I can count only on what I earn. Therefore, I believe in work, hard work.

I believe in education, which gives me the knowledge to work wisely and trains my mind and my hands to work skillfully.

I believe in honesty and truthfulness, without which I cannot win the respect and confidence of my fellow men.

I believe in a sound mind, in a sound body and a spirit that is not afraid, and in clean sports that develop these qualities.

I believe in obedience to law because it protects the rights of all.

I believe in the human touch, which cultivates sympathy with my fellow men and mutual helpfulness and brings happiness for all.

I believe in my Country, because it is a land of freedom and because it is my own home, and that I can best serve that country by ‘doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with my God.’

And because Auburn men and women believe in these things, I believe in Auburn and love it.”



COMMITMENT AND LANDSCAPE

/// Auburn University’s Core Curriculum requires students to complete courses that represent a range of disciplines, acquiring an educated appreciation of the natural world, human life, and the interactions between them. In addition to absorbing broad areas of knowledge, students are also required to complete General Education requirements that emphasize foundational skills they will build upon through their undergraduate education. This is meant for students to become lifelong learners and to use their education to solve practical problems. The learning outcomes for the General Education Student Learning programs include:

- Locate, evaluate, and use information
- Read and think critically
- Apply mathematical methods
- Write and revise for a variety of purposes
- Create and deliver oral presentations
- Analyze their own society and its relationship to the larger global context
- Interact in intercultural situations
- Apply scientific principles
- Analyze and value creative artistic endeavors

/// Auburn’s mission statement describes the responsibility to educate students and prepare them for life, drive the development of research and scholarship, and to leverage the value of engagement and outreach.

“As a land-grant institution, Auburn University is dedicated to improving the lives of the people of Alabama, the nation, and the world through forward-thinking education, life-enhancing research and scholarship, and selfless service.”

/// Auburn’s vision statement describes the aspiration for the future of the university, intended to be realistic and ever challenging, while also bold and ambitious.

“To lead and shape the future of higher education.”



COMMITMENT AND LANDSCAPE

/// A culture of civic engagement is observable at Auburn University as evidenced by the formal structures of democratic engagement and relations at the university leadership level.

Like other universities in the SEC, Auburn University has a formal structure for democratic engagement within its university leadership. Auburn University's Office of Government Relations is the chief liaison between the university and elected and appointed officials at both the state and federal levels. As the university's official representative to executive leadership and lawmakers, the Government Relations team looks for ways to be continued partners and good stewards of public resources.

Jared White serves as the Vice President for Government Relations, and CJ Hincy and Christian Staats both serve as Directors of Government Relations. In Washington, D.C., Andrew Newton serves as Director of Federal Relations, overseeing the Office of Federal Relations.

The State Relations team represents Auburn University's interests to the state executive and legislative branches. As a land-grant institution, Auburn University impacts all 67 counties of Alabama and makes a \$6.3 billion economic contribution to the state. The State Relations team works to maintain positive relationships with officials, state agencies and organizations, looking for potential partnerships and opportunities.

In D.C., the Office of Federal Relations works with senior university administrators and academic leadership to develop a federal relations strategy and legislative agenda that advances Auburn interests and priorities; builds and fosters relationships with legislative and executive branch officials and staff; communicates university priorities to government officials; serves as a resource to federal policymakers and staff; and facilitates the exchange of ideas and expertise between Auburn faculty and administrators and federal officials.



COMMITMENT AND LANDSCAPE

/// A culture of civic engagement is observable at Auburn University also through its programming efforts and initiatives.

The Office of Sustainability provides a plethora of online resources to inform Auburn students, faculty, staff, and the community on upcoming election information.

- Information includes, but is not limited to:
 - Dates and deadlines for registration, applying for absentee ballots, and voting
 - Suggested guide for basic steps to voting (designed for first-time voters)
 - Relevant and useful for college-aged students who have yet to vote in a primary or national election
 - Information for photo identification requirements
 - Polling place location tool
 - Absentee voting information
 - Relevant and useful for the many thousands of Auburn out-of-state students who are registered in their home state
- This information is updated to remain relevant with primary and national election years.

Voter registration efforts are crucial to amplify student engagement and participation in the democratic process. For example, the Student Government Association (SGA) and the League of Women Voters host voter registration drives in high-traffic areas such as the Ralph Brown Draughon Library and the Haley Concourse. These drives are organized 3-5 times each semester, ensuring that a large number of students have easy access to voter registration resources and assistance. By setting up in these central locations, these groups play a vital role in fostering a culture of civic engagement on campus.



COMMITMENT AND LANDSCAPE

/// The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Report is a leading venue for nonpartisan, applied research and resources on college student political learning and engagement. The NSLVE provides reports on national voter data, as well as the largest study of college and university student voting. Institutions must opt in to the study, and over 1,250 campuses of all types (community colleges, research universities, minority-serving and women's colleges, state universities, and private institutions) participate – including Auburn University.

Summary of Voting Data for Auburn University:

- Overall Voting Rate (2022): 16.3%
- Change from 2018: -8.6 percentage points
- Registration Rate (2022): 82.1%
- Voting Rate of Registered Students (2022): 19.8%

Trends:

- There was a noticeable decrease in the voting rate and registration rate from 2018 to 2022.
- The highest voting rate was in 2020, which corresponds with the presidential election year, showing increased student engagement during presidential elections.
- The majority of Auburn University students voted in-person in both 2018 and 2022.
- There was an increase in in-person voting from 1,452 in 2018 to 2,636 in 2022.
- There was a significant increase in voting rates from 2014 to 2020 across all age groups, with the highest rates in 2020.
- The 2022 election showed a notable decline in voting rates across all age groups compared to 2020.
- The younger age group (18-21) saw the largest decrease in voting rates from 2020 to 2022.
- The older age groups consistently had higher voting rates but also experienced a drop in 2022.

GOALS

/// LONG-TERM GOALS

- National election voter registration: By 2028, Auburn University's voter registration rate will exceed 92%.
 - The registration rate is the percent of Auburn University's voting-eligible students who registered to vote in a given year.
 - This percentage goal is based on the most recent national election year's registration rate data (2020).
- Campus civic engagement efforts: By 2028, a campus coalition or working group will be developed to reduce duplicated efforts and help centralize the work of different campus entities related to civic engagement and voter registration.

/// SHORT-TERM GOALS

- Midterm election voting rates: By 2026, Auburn University's voting rate will reach 30%.
 - The voting rate is the percent of Auburn University's eligible students who voted on an Election Day.
 - This percentage goal is based on the most recent national election year's registration rate data (2020).

STRATEGY



/// To achieve the long-term and short-term goals of increasing voter registration and engagement at Auburn University, we will implement a multi-faceted strategy that leverages existing resources, fosters collaboration, and engages the student body through targeted initiatives.

Increased awareness about the importance of civic engagement and voter registration among students will be at the forefront of achieving our long- and short-term goals.

- **Campaigns and Events:** Launch campus-wide campaigns and events, such as voter registration drives, informational sessions, and civic engagement fairs, in collaboration with student organizations like the Student Government Association (SGA), the League of Women Voters, and nonpartisan governance organizations.
- **Digital Outreach:** Utilize social media platforms, the university website, and email newsletters to disseminate information about upcoming elections, registration deadlines, and the importance of voting.
- **Educational Programs:** Encourage increased civic education into campus curriculum through workshops, guest lectures, and classroom discussions to emphasize the significance of voting and civic participation.

Work towards making the voter registration and voting process more accessible to all students.

- **On-Campus Resources:** Establish more frequent voter registration opportunities at high-traffic areas on campus, such as the Haley

Concourse, the Ralph Brown Draughon Library, and dining halls, to provide easy access to registration forms and assistance.

- **Absentee Voting Support:** Provide resources and guidance for out-of-state students on how to register and vote absentee, including deadlines and requirements for their home states.
- **Polling Place Information:** Create and distribute guides that include information on local polling places, transportation options, and what to expect on Election Day.

Foster a culture of civic engagement and sustained participation in democratic processes.

- **Campus Coalition:** Develop a standing committee/campus coalition of faculty, staff, and students who work throughout the year to promote civic engagement within their groups and serve as points of contact for voter registration and election information.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local government officials, community organizations, and other universities to share best practices and resources for increasing student voter turnout.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** Regularly collect feedback from students on the effectiveness of our initiatives and use this data to continuously improve our strategies and address any barriers to participation.

By focusing on these three areas, we aim to create a supportive environment that encourages all Auburn University students to become active and informed participants in the democratic process. Our ultimate goal is to exceed a 92% voter registration rate by 2028 and achieve a 30% voting rate in midterm elections by 2026.

EVALUATION

/// To ensure the effectiveness of our civic engagement and voter registration goals and the implementation of our strategies, we will adopt an evaluation plan that includes both quantitative and qualitative measures. This evaluation will help us understand the impact of our strategies, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions for future initiatives.

/// QUANTITATIVE MEASURES

Objective: Track and analyze numerical data to assess the success of our initiatives.

- **Voter Registration Rates:** Monitor the percentage of eligible students who register to vote each year, aiming to exceed a 92% registration rate by 2028.
- **Voting Rates:** Track the percentage of registered students who vote in national and midterm elections, with a goal of reaching a 30% voting rate in midterm elections by 2026.
- **Event Participation:** Record attendance and participation rates at voter registration drives, informational sessions, and other civic engagement events.
- **Digital Engagement:** Analyze metrics from digital outreach efforts, such as social media engagement, website traffic, and email open rates, to gauge the reach and effectiveness of our campaigns.



EVALUATION

/// QUALITATIVE MEASURES

Objective: Gather feedback and insights from students to understand their experiences and perceptions.

- Surveys and Questionnaires: Conduct regular surveys and questionnaires to collect feedback from students about their awareness, accessibility, and engagement with our initiatives.
- Student Organization Visits: Organize visits with various student organization to discuss their experiences with voter registration and civic engagement, and to identify any barriers they face.
- Interviews: Conduct interviews with faculty, staff, and students involved in civic engagement efforts to gather in-depth insights and suggestions for improvement.

/// CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Objective: Use evaluation data to continuously refine and enhance our strategies.

- Data Analysis: Regularly analyze quantitative and qualitative data to identify trends, successes, and areas needing improvement.
- Feedback Loop: Establish a feedback loop where insights from evaluations are shared with all stakeholders, including student organizations, faculty, and administration, to inform future planning and decision-making.
- Annual Review: Conduct an annual review of our civic engagement initiatives, incorporating evaluation findings to update and improve our action plan.



REPORTING

/// Transparent and consistent reporting is essential to keep all stakeholders informed about the progress and impact of our civic engagement initiatives. Our reporting plan includes regular updates, comprehensive reports, and public dissemination of results.

/// REGULAR UPDATES

Objective: Provide timely updates to keep the campus community informed about ongoing activities and progress.

- **Meeting Regularity and Updates:** Establish reasonably regular meetings for campus coalition, with frequency increasing during primary and national election years; publicize meeting notes and updates.
- **Social Media Updates:** Use social media platforms to share real-time updates, success stories, and important information related to voter registration and civic engagement; utilize existing resources within institutional communication channels (campus-wide emails, story features, etc.)

/// PUBLIC DISSEMINATION

Objective: Ensure transparency and accountability by making our findings accessible to the broader community.

- **Website Publication:** Publish all comprehensive reports and key findings on the university's website, making them accessible to students, faculty, staff, and the public.
- **Media Outreach:** Collaborate with the university's communications team to share significant achievements and milestones.

