

California State University, Fresno 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Submitted by: Lisa A. Bryant (with Terree Stevenson, Tanis Matlock-Elder and input from the Fresno State Civic Engagement Committee Members)

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by California State University, Fresno in California for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goals for California State University, Fresno for the **2024 election** are:

- 1) Register at least 300 new voters through campus efforts and by participating in the CA Ballot Bowl.
- 2) Host at least 5 campus events to engage and educate students about the 2024 elections.
- 3) Increase visibility of information on where to vote, when to vote, and what the ballot issues mean.
- 4) Promote civility and inclusion for all.
- 5) Have a visible and inclusive response to Election Day results.

Ongoing goals for 2025-2026 are listed below.

Leadership:

Our current leadership team includes the following, campus groups, and organizations:

Dr. Lisa A. Bryant, AB 963 Coordinator, Professor and Chair of Political Science,
Michael Lukens, Executive Director of Government Relations
Terree Stevenson, AVP for Student Affairs/Dean of Students
Tanis Matlock-Elder, Associate Dean of Students
Lauren Nickerson, AVP for University Marketing and Communications
Dr. Naomi Bick, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Faculty Advisor Student League of Women Voters
Dheeshana Jayasundara, Professor, Social Work

Marcus Crawford, Professor, Social Work
Luis Sepulveda, ASI Officer/Advisor
Marco Florez, ASI Vice President of External Affairs
Mia Zamora, President, Student League of Women Voters
Kaywanna Williams, President, Fresno State NAACP
James Kus, Fresno County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (pending)

Commitment:

While this is the first election cycle that our institution has developed a nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan for the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, we have a longstanding campus commitment to encouraging civic engagement and voter participation on our campus. Fresno State has had a voting location on campus since March 2020, when Fresno County adopted the Voter's Choice Act. Prior to that, we had a voting location on campus for the 2012 presidential primary and election. Our vote center is currently located inside the Student Recreation Center, which is accessible to both students and the public. Fresno State has participated in the NSLVE reporting since 2014 and will continue to do so.

Our university is a Carnegie classified Community Engaged Campus and community and civic engagement is reflected in our student learning and development. All students at Fresno State, regardless of major, are required to take a course on American and California Government and Institutions (PLSI 2) and on American History (HIST 11/12) to help create a foundation of understanding about how our government works and why the people's role in government is so important. We have a battery of service learning courses that connect our students to the community and help them develop their role as future leaders of the Central Valley. Our campus boasts one of the only college chapters of the League of Women Voters in the country and we have several active non-partisan clubs on campus such as the NAACP. Our department of Social Work also uses their community ties to encourage voter registration and participation and even hosts drive through registration events before elections.

Our President, Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, is a current signatory to ALL IN's Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation and he even helped with and promoted our National Voter Registration Day registration drive this year, which was spearheaded by the College of Social Sciences.

The athletics department at our institution have been involved in our nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts by utilizing social media, posting flyers and information in locker rooms and other athletics spaces to educate on registering to vote, civic responsibility, the impact of voting, and the difference and importance of local, county, state and national topics, etc.

Landscape:

Fresno County Voting Rules:

Fresno County is a Voter Choice Act County in California. Voters have vote centers where any voter can vote at any location in the county. Vote centers are open up to 11 days prior to Election Day. The vote center located on the Fresno State campus is open for 4 days prior to and including Election Day. There are 53 vote centers located in Fresno County.

All voters in the state of California receive a vote-by-mail ballot 28 days prior to Election Day. Ballots may be returned via the USPS, dropped off in-person at a vote center, or returned in one of the county's 63 secure ballot drop boxes. Fresno State has a ballot drop box located near campus and student housing at the Campus Pointe shopping center

California has same day registration, which allows voters to register and vote a provisional ballot on Election Day. Same day registration can be done at any vote center. California also allows online voter registration. A voter in California only needs to show their ID the first time they vote, otherwise, voter ID is not required.

Upcoming election dates are:

November 5, 2024 (Presidential General Election)

June 2, 2026 (California Primary Election)

November 6, 2026 (California Gubernatorial General Election)

Our Campus Population:

California State University, Fresno is a public 4 year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2023. Our institution is designated as the following: Minority-Serving Institution, AANAPISI, Hispanic-Serving Institution

California State University, Fresno currently has 25,497 students, 48% of which are first-generation students. As of Fall 2023, 60.3% of our students are Hispanic/Latino, 15.8% are non-Hispanic white, 11.7% are Asian, 2.9% are Black and .3% are Native American/Alaskan Native. Approximately 3% of our students are international students and not eligible to vote. Our students are mostly traditional college-aged students and 77% are between 18 and 24 years old.

Our campus registration and turnout data by demographics are as follows:

In the 2022 midterm election, our voting rate was 26.5%, which was down 12.7 points from the 2018 midterm election. Our registration rate in 2022 was 75.2% of students, and our voting rate among registered students was 35.3%. We were lower than the national average voting rate of 30.6% for 2022, though our decline from 2018 to 2022 was not as large as the national average decline.

In the 2020 presidential election, our campus voting rate was 66.2% and our registration rate was 83.4%. The voting rate among registered students was 79.3%.

Comparing our institution with other public, 4-year institutions, we were 1% higher than average in turnout in 2020 and 4% lower than average in 2022.

Looking at our students, voting rates are highest among our white students (77% in 2020 and 44% in 2022), followed by our American Indian/Alaskan Native (73% in 2020 and 40% in 2022) then Black (67% in 2020, 20% in 2022), Hispanic (63% in 2020, 22% in 2022) and finally Asian students (51% in 2020, 19% in 2022).

California State University, Fresno authorized participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) in 2014 and is authorized through 2033.

California State University, Fresno participated in National Voter Registration Day: 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, 2024 and will continue this practice.

Goals:

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

Informational Goals:

- Add voter registration to new and transfer student orientation for Fall 2026.
- Add voter registration dates to Canvas calendars for 2026 primary and general elections.
- Increase information on where to vote in-person or where to drop off a ballot on campus websites.
- Provide information on how to get transportation to polls if needed.
- Send out weekly reminder about election dates and locations during the three weeks leading up to Election Day and a reminder the day before Election Day.

Registration and Turnout Goals:

- Increase student voter registration rate to 85% in 2024 and 80% in 2026.
- Increase student voter turnout rate to 70% in 2024 and 30% in 2026.
- Increase participation amount Black, Hispanic and Asian student to bring up to parity with white and American Indian/Alaskan Native rates of registration and turnout.

ALL-IN Campus Goals:

- Move from Bronze campus to Silver Campus for 2026.
- Get Athletic Coaches to sign All-In Pledge (and maintain President's commitment)

California Ballot Bowl Goals:

- Place as one of the top 10 CSUs in terms of voter reg and turnout.

Strategy:

California State University, Fresno will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

Campus Calendars and Communications: For all elections, including the 2024 election, Fresno State will place key election-related dates, such as voter registration deadlines, vote-by-mail deadlines, National Voter Registration Day, Election Day, etc. on the printed student calendar. We will send a campuswide email to all students reminding them when voting has started and reminding them of those deadlines. We participated and will continue to participate in National Voter Registration Day (NVRD).

National Voter Registration Day: This year we participated NVRD by hosting a registration event in the President's Booth in the Free Speech Area of campus where we had students register and handed out stickers and pens. This effort was led by the Student League of Women Voters and the College of Social Sciences. The President joined and posted on his social media. We will host a similar event in 2026.

Various Registration Events: Various student groups (ASI, Student League of Women Voters, NAACP, Fraternities and Sororities, and various academic departments will host a series of registration events on campus prior to each election. The Department of Social Work is one of the campus leaders in this area. Social Work students learn how to register voters and do so

multiple times each year. They register both students and members of the greater Fresno community in the weeks leading up to an election. These efforts are an ongoing part of our plan.

Associated Students Inc - Social Media Outreach: For both the primary and general elections, ASI created a series of informational videos explaining what a yes or no vote on each of the statewide ballot propositions meant. These videos are shared through ASI Instagram and TikTok outlets in the weeks leading up to an election.

Campus Public Educational Talks and Events - Each election there are a series of non-partisan, educational talks and events about the election that are open to the public. The College of Social Sciences hosts a teach-in each election about what is on the ballot and invites students to bring their ballots to get answers to questions. For the primary election, the Student League of Women Voters hosted a student panel addressing why students and this model will be replicated for future elections. ASI had a forum on what all of the ballot measures and ballot propositions meant and how they might impact the Fresno State community. The Center for Media Information and Trust hosted a talk on Election Misinformation and How to Verify Information. The Fresno County Clerk came to campus to explain how elections are run. These types of educational talks will be an ongoing part of our plan.

Ensure Access to Voting Location on Campus: The university will provide students with information about where to vote on campus, as well as provide contact information for the vote center supervisor should any issues occur. We will also identify and publish who to contact on campus if an issue occurs at the polling location and the supervisor cannot help the student. Should a student need a letter from the university to verify they are a current student to update their voter registration, we will provide that information. We will educate students about their voting rights, including the right to vote free from intimidation or coercion.

Campus Watch Parties: Reserve spaces for campus gatherings for watching the election related programming. We would prefer to have one large viewing space for watching election debates or returns, such as the student union; however, we will consider various campus constituent and *be that multiple spaces may be needed. We will encourage students to attend by offering free, healthy food. We will have selected faculty/staff at program(s) to aid students with processing of information and/or election results. We will invite various student organizations to be present and have handouts and educational materials to educate attendees, if applicable.*

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

After the election, will comprise a list of activities that took place across campus, including those that took place in-person, through social media, and through student and partner organizations in the community to identify where gaps in coverage and outreach occurred so that we can improve in the next election cycle. Dr. Bryant will take the lead on these assessments. The report will be shared with the Dean of Students (Dean Stevenson), ASI, the President's Office, the Chancellor's Office (if requested), and any other organization that requests a copy. We will also report the activities to Chris Fiorentino in the Richter Center for Community Engagement for reporting with our Carnegie Community Engaged Campus report.

California State University, Fresno Our institution has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and we will use our campus voting data to help with the evaluation of our action plan and nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts. We will use our 2020, 2022, and 2024 NSLVE voting data to compare our registration and turnout numbers between the cycles to see if there was improvement (comparing presidential to presidential and midterm to presidential).

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/california-state-university-fresno/>.

The campus action plan will be shared with the following: the CSU Chancellor's Office, the California Secretary of State, ALL IN, and any other entities that are interested.

The NSLVE reports will be shared with following: the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Fresno State President's Office and any other entities that request it.

The Fresno State Civic Engagement Action Plan and NSLVE reports will be available for public viewing on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness website and can be obtained by emailing Dr. Lisa Bryant at lbryant (at) csufresno (dot) edu.