



ASI Civic Engagement Action Plan 2018

I. Executive Summary

Associated Students, Incorporated (ASI) is an auxiliary non-profit organization at Cal State LA. We are charged with providing student representation, avenues for student voice, and believe that an effective student government is the first step towards, and first experience with, civic engagement. We encourage students to vote in campus elections, voice their opinions on university committees, find solutions to pressing student issues, advocate on behalf of all Cal State LA students, participate in activism, ensure the availability of service-learning opportunities, and promote a welcoming and inclusive campus environment.

Our ASI Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Committee (LAAC) took initiative and decided to create this ASI Civic Engagement Action Plan. The LAAC is comprised of student representatives that are elected and appointed to advocate on behalf of students, research and analyze higher education policy, and promote civic learning and democratic engagement at Cal State LA. We work tirelessly to promote the education of students for engaged citizenship through democratic participation in their communities, respect and appreciation of diversity, applied learning and social responsibility. Our civic engagement focus supports discourse, educational programming, advocacy, and professional development to help students gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to make a difference in their communities.

One of four strategic priority areas in the Cal State LA Strategic Plan is “Engagement, Service, and the Public Good.” One measure of success for this strategic priority is to graduate civic-minded students equipped for and committed to engagement, service, and the public good. We stand in solidarity with the University and look forward to helping accomplish that goal.

This action plan will be active from January 1, 2018 and will end on December 31, 2018.

*Approved by the ASI Board of Directors on November 30, 2017

II. Civic Engagement Leadership

Internal: ASI Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Committee and Lobby Corps

- Marcos Montes, ASI VP for External Affairs and Advancement, will Chair the LAAC.
- Yessenia Villacorta, ASI Civic Engagement Officer
- Joshua Salazar, ASI Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- Marcus Rodriguez, ASI Director of Government Affairs and Leadership Programs (staff)

External: Campus Consultants and Collaborators

- Dr. Michael Willard, Director of Service Learning
- Luz Borjon, Director of Civic Engagement and Internships

The campus is moving to create a Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Steering Committee. We hope this committee, once constituted, can play a major role to



coordinate campus wide efforts for voting, elections, and public policy regarding student issues.

Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Steering Committee

Student committee members are either elected by the Cal State LA student body, appointed by the ASI LAAC, or invited by ASI VP for External Affairs and Advancement.

Inclusivity: The committee will seek to recruit members who are underrepresented in the political realm to amplify their voices. Civic engagement is about more than just voter registration. There are many avenues to foster greater student engagement in political affairs and involvement in their communities.

Stakeholders (members from the following offices will comprise the committee):

- VP for Student Life or designee
- Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs (PBI)
- Vice Provost of Diversity and Engaged Learning
- Center for Engagement, Service and the Public Good
- Associated Students, Incorporated
- Center for Student Involvement
- Faculty Representatives
- LA County Registrar's Office

The committee shall meet on a designated day and time, to be established by the membership, once every month.

III. Commitment

Cal State LA's commitment is reflected in its vision statement (University Strategic Plan):

We are dedicated to delivering cutting-edge academic programs that prepare students to be innovative leaders in both their professional and civic lives and to serving the public good through initiatives that engage local, regional, and global communities in mutually beneficial partnerships.

Additionally, one of Cal State LA's strategic priority areas, 'Engagement, Service, and the Public Good' currently aims to connect the educational environment to civic engagement and service learning. The overall goal is to "Graduate civic-minded students equipped for and committed to engagement, service, and the public good." This same philosophy is also in the university's values.¹

Cal State LA currently demonstrates its commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement through its General Education, "Civic Learning" requirement, and its collaborations with PBI. ASI demonstrates its commitment through its various efforts to help students engage civically, such as National Voter Registration Day programming, California Higher Education Student Summit attendance, hosting

¹http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Cal%20State%20LA%27s%20Strategic%20Plan/homepage/calstatla-strategic-plan_11x17.pdf



governmental officer and candidate events and debates, and participating in the All-In-Challenge.

Cal State LA has also taken steps to incorporate civic learning and democratic engagement into the academic curriculum by requiring each student to take two General Education civic learning course. Most recently, efforts have increased to make these courses more easily available for transfer students. Because of these increased and sustained efforts, this method seems consistent, sustainable, and systematic.

- Upper Division, GE, civic learning outcomes specify that upon completion of the course students will be able to: Demonstrate understanding of the connection between academic learning/ disciplinary knowledge and civic participation; demonstrate understanding of their impact on their respective physical, social and cultural environments and how such environments impact them; demonstrate knowledge of ways to make change in local and global communities; and demonstrate the ability to collaborate in order to develop and implement an approach to a civic issue.²
- First time freshmen are required to complete a total of two courses certified as Civic Learning/Community Engagement. Students will complete 3 units of (cl) in their IHE course. The other 3 units of (cl) must be completed by choosing a course in the Upper Division GE Requirements that contains the Civic Learning/Community Engagement (cl) component. All Cal State LA students must complete a total of nine units from the Upper Division GE Requirements. At least one of those courses (3 units) must contain a Civic Learning/Community Engagement (cl) component.³

While these courses serve both 4 year students and transfer students, there is still room to grow beyond this foundation based in courses in the classroom to support civic engagement efforts. Service learning opportunities are offered throughout campus (through the Division of Student Life, and through ASI student government) to compliment the civic learning courses that often require students to work in collaboration with community organizations. Beyond service learning, ASI's LAAC and Lobby Corps trains and prepares students for the opportunity to advocate on the behalf of Cal State LA students. Further collaboration with the California State Student Association (CSSA) allows for advocacy for the entire California State University System.

ASI's commitment is demonstrated through its continued offering of civic engagement events and opportunities for students. The value of student involvement is also demonstrated through the ASI Vision Statement: "Ignite potential and empower student voices." Further responsibilities are articulated in the ASI Mission Statement: "Associated Students, Incorporated promotes the establishment of, and provides the means for, effective avenues of student input into the governance of the campus; provides an official voice through which student opinion could be expressed; provides an opportunity where students can gain experience and training in responsible political

²http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Center%20for%20Engagement%2C%20Service%2C%20and%20the%20Public%20Good/Mind_Matters/submitting_a_course_proposal_for_upper_division_ge_civic_learning_pdf.pdf

³<http://www.calstatela.edu/academicadvisement/general-education-and-university-requirements>



participation and civic leadership; assists in the protection of the rights and interests of individual students; and stimulates the educational, social, physical and cultural well-being of the university community.”

Currently, major events, initiatives, and involvement opportunities are communicated via campus wide emails. All ASI-specific events are promoted through the ASI website, app, and social media. When programs are communicated outside the institution, it is done through social media or third-party stakeholders otherwise involved in the event (such as program partners, sponsors, and political campaign teams).

Campus efforts could be further improved with University collaboration and the promotion of these events, including the public endorsement by the University President. With better coordination between all civic engagement stakeholders on campus, our commitment can become more visible.

IV. Institutional Landscape of Civic and Community Engagement

Intended Outcomes: Democratic Participation

- Increase in voter registration among 18-21-year-olds
- Increase in women voter registration and voting

Political climate and democratic engagement on campus in comparison to that of peer institutions

- The Cal State LA 2016 voting rate is 56.4% compared to the 2016 voting rate average for all institutions at 50.4%.
- Awarded the Bronze Seal from ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for having a student voting rate between 50% and 59%.

Civic Learning Present in the Curriculum.

- Mandatory lower and upper division general education courses in the Civic Learning/Community Engagement
- Courses are listed under the following:
 - Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning
 - Arts and Humanities
 - Social Science

Internal Barriers Preventing Institutional Success

- Commuter campus: voter resources might not be readily available and cohesive, campus-wide commitment to voter registration and voting may not a priority for all members of the campus community.
- Full-time student democratic participation: part-time student voting data had a 10.7% increase from 2012 to 2016 as opposed to full-time student increase of 7.6%.
- Maintaining voter registration and voting numbers growth
- Lack of institutionalized democratic participation efforts

External Barriers Preventing Institutional Success

- Lack of proximity to polling location: in-person voting numbers decreased by 7%
- Inability to accommodate different means of early voting without holding voter data
- Increased enrollment from 19,000 students in 2014 to 28,000 students in 2017 for a commuter campus necessitates greater accommodations for mail-in ballot voters



Gains and Achievements

- The mandatory upper division courses in Civic Learning
- The ability to register to vote while applying for Financial Aid
- The ability to register to vote through the Cal State LA website portals (MyCSULA portal and ASI web page)

Urgent Needs and Future Considerations

- Creating a sense of community among students in Colleges and majors within the University
- Raising awareness about how to vote by mail, since there was a 28.6% increase from 2012 to 2016.
- Taking advantage of higher enrollment, emphasize the importance of voting through campus programming and open forums targeting first-year students.

V. Goals

Purpose: To increase civic learning and democratic engagement at Cal State LA, by focusing on registering, educating and mobilizing students to vote.

Long-Term Goals

- For presidential elections current Cal State LA student voting rate is 56.4%; it has risen by 10% from 2012. We aspire to increase it to 75% by 2020.
- Midterm elections are often overlooked, we want to push for more consistency in this area and increase the student voting rate to 25% in the 2018 Midterm elections.
- Create a Voter Education and Mobilization Center on campus by 2022.
- Create a funding model to sponsor independent service projects designed by Cal State LA students.

Short-Term Goals

- Host consistent town halls/forums, at least one per semester (Spring 2018 and Fall 2018), to inform the Cal State LA community about relevant issues affecting higher education.
- Outreach to campus academic departments/ and other units areas to include more representatives from different divisions within the University to create a more diverse civic engagement movement.
- Send campus-wide emails and hold events that will inform students about upcoming elections and issues of interest.
- Use the ASI Lobby Corps, the student advocate arm of ASI, to be ambassadors of civic engagement across campus. Responsibilities will include developing grassroots strategies to promote civic engagement and political participation.
- Advocate to strengthen and support the component of Civic Learning in the General Education Curriculum.

VI. Strategies

Students are asking the campus to create a Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Steering Committee. The Purpose of committee will be to:



- Unify all relevant campus stakeholders that are interested in increasing voter participation and civic engagement.
- Adhere to recommendations inserted in the Voter Registration & Engagement MOU signed by the California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, CSU Chancellor White, and CSSA President Lopez to increase voter participation at CSU campuses, including:
 - implementing a comprehensive civic engagement plan;
 - creating opportunities to register students to vote during resident move-in days, new student and transfer orientations, welcome week, and in high-traffic areas;
 - identifying and implementing policy changes to promote voter engagement; and
 - promoting voter registration through students' registration portals and campus wide emails.
- Create a multi-year Civic Engagement Plan that leads to the 2018 mid-term elections and the 2020 General Election and creates a culture of engagement and political participation.
- Identify opportunities for the University to improve our efforts through external partnerships and identify special designations or recognitions for our civic engagement efforts: e.g., LA County Registrar, CalPIRG, etc.
- Develop a campus model for dissemination that allows for other CSUs to adopt and adapt our efforts and to promote best practices to other colleges and universities.

To complement the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Steering Committee efforts, ASI will also commit to a set of sustainable initiatives including, but not limited to:

- Creating an annual communication plan that determines how many campus-wide emails will be sent throughout the year, the frequency of these, and on what key dates they will be scheduled.
 - Campus-wide emails will be used to remind students about deadlines to register to vote, upcoming elections, and events.
 - In addition to emails, press releases, op-eds, and other forms of communication will be used.
- Hosting a National Voter Registration Day annual event with support programming.
- Planning an Open Deliberation event for students to promote dialogue and community engagement.
- Hosting political debates (local & state) such as the Assembly District 51 Special Election Debate.
 - Possible US Senate Debate partnership with PBI
 - Possible Gubernatorial Debate partnership with PBI
- Increasing the visibility of Mind Matters town halls, requiring the ASI Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Committee to participate.
- Producing a large-scale event during the spring semester to promote engagement and reduce political apathy.
- Promoting post-graduation public service opportunities such as the California Capitol Fellows Program.
- Supporting faculty initiatives to promote civic entrepreneurship.
- Nurturing partnerships with CALPIRG, Campus Vote Project, and YVote.
- Creating and distributing pledge cards to collect information from students.
 - Identifying issues most important to students and what is more likely to get them to the polls.



- Students would be asked to indicate what time of the day they would vote, where they would vote, and who they would go to vote with.
- Supporting an expansion of the ASI Alternative Break Program.
- Developing Voter Registration and Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaigns (e.g. tabling events, classroom presentations).
- Joining efforts with student clubs and organizations to foster civic engagement among students.
 - Creating a special designation for student organizations that are civically engaged and promoting voting and election involvement opportunities to their membership and the student body.
- Supporting student activism via an official resolutions and joint-efforts (e.g. campaign to fight against tuition increases).
- Hosting more forums and town halls in concert with the Democracy In Action series.
- Inviting elected officials onto campus to engage with students about pressing issues.
- Inviting more participants to the California Higher Education Student Summit where students travel to the State Capitol to participate in a higher education policy conference followed by meetings with elected officials about higher education funding and important issues affecting students.
- Finding professional development opportunities for students like the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting organized by AASCU and NASPA.

Activity Planning and Implementation Responsibilities

- ASI Civic Engagement Officer
- Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Committee
- Other stakeholders on campus that are involved:
 - Center for Engagement, Service and the Public Good
 - Educational Participation in the Communities (EPIC)
 - Faculty

Target Audience and Stakeholders

- Our work is for all Cal State LA students and the surrounding community.
- The audience is the University (students, faculty, staff, and administrators) and the Greater Los Angeles community.

Development Areas and Program Locations

- Work will happen in the ASI office and other respective offices involved with the event.
- Locations will vary, but include the Student Union Plaza and Theatre, Main Campus Walkway, and the Luckman Fine Arts Complex.

Programming and Initiative Timelines

- Work will happen during ASI member service and/or specific duty hours in conjunction with varying offices on campus that are involved with the program.
- Fall Semester - National Voter Registration Day, Year-Round - service and service-learning projects; candidate debates and elected official events on-campus.

Programming Purpose and Goals

- Foster a community of civically engaged students.



- Promote activism and political knowledge amongst students (e.g. hosting candidate debates and elected official events).
- Create a community that helps one another and gives back (service and service-learning projects).

VII. Reporting

Sharing and Communicating the Civic Engagement Action Plan - The plan will be shared both internally and externally.

- Internally, the plan will be distributed to all ASI members. A presentation will be made to the ASI Board of Directors, ASI Shared Governance Council, and ASI Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Committee.
- Externally, we should share the plan at the Academic Senate, email the document to all faculty members, and ASI College Representatives should share it with their Deans so that colleges and faculty can urge students to seek opportunities created by the Civic Engagement Action Plan.

Publishing the Civic Engagement Action Plan - The Plan will be shared with students via the ASI website (standing page) and by using our social media outlets. ASI will also host a forum in the Spring Semester to inform students about the plan and to discuss the Civic Engagement Action Plan and efforts being made at Cal State LA.

Collecting Information - As we focus on transparency, collected data, along with the plan, will be available to the public. This invites the campus community to assess progress demonstrate results. Additionally, plan and associated program assessments will be presented once there is a quantifiable data available relating to student civic engagement at Cal State LA. Results would be presented at the ASI Board of Directors, the Shared Governance Committee, Academic Senate, and for all interested stakeholders.

VIII. Learning Outcomes

By participating in civic learning and democratic engagement programs and curricula, students will be able to:

- access humanitarian values (e.g. use social justice rhetoric, understand personal and social responsibility, and serve as positive social change agents);
- explore the dimensions of difference in communities;
- engage with the local community in appreciation of civic duty; and intentionally gain knowledge about new cultures and the natural world.

By participating directly or indirectly with the Civic Engagement Action Plan, students will help build a campus culture that fosters: civic ethos, civic literacy and skill building, civic inquiry, civic action, and civic agency.

As part of our educational assessment we will be documenting and using empirical data on the knowledge, skill, attitudes, and beliefs to refine programs and improve student learning. Results will be shared via an annual ASI Civic Engagement Action Report and published on the ASI media platforms at the conclusion of the Spring Semester.



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS, INC.
California State University, Los Angeles

Assessment Methods

- Direct Assessment: Student presentations and self-reflection essays (e.g. in-class, Academic Senate, campus-wide committees, ASI Board of Directors)
- Indirect Assessment: Student self-report surveys (i.e. ASI Student Leader State of Affairs)
- Formative Assessment: Small Group Analysis and observations using rubrics (e.g. Open Deliberation programs, Mind Matters Town Halls)
- Summative Assessment: Student post-participation experience focus group (e.g. Lobby Corps, Legislative Affairs and Advocacy Committee)
- Value-Added Assessment: Entrance/Exit Interviews (e.g. ASI Student Leader transition conversations)

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