

## **I. Executive Summary**

This action plan was developed by Shelby Rogers, Associate Director of Experiential Learning, within the Office of Undergraduate Studies, to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Cal State San Marcos. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2024-2025 Academic Year, on and around our campus in San Marcos, California.

The following groups will be leading this work in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Civic Engagement Department (Experiential Learning)
- Undergraduate Students (peer Civic Engagement Ambassadors)
- Faculty
- Associated Students Incorporated Representatives and Staff
- Cal State San Marcos Free Speech and Elections Task Force Members
- Office of Inclusive Excellence Staff
- Department of Government Affairs Staff
- Student Affairs Staff – Identity Centers Staff
- Athletics Department Staff
- Housing and Residential Life Staff

The mission of our initiative is:

- To develop and implement a civic engagement plan that will proactively prepare the CSUSM community for the upcoming election through voter education and voter engagement activities. This will help us nurture a voter engagement and an overall civic engagement culture on campus, with the larger goal of institutionalizing it so that it is an integral part of every Cal State San Marcos student's experience.

Through a variety of in-person, virtual events, social media campaigns, automated text messages, and in-class presentations we plan to increase our voter education and registration efforts substantially. We aim to increase the voter engagement turnout to 80%

## I. Leadership

Shelby Rogers, Associate Director of Experiential Learning will be overseeing the work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

- The CSUSM Task Force on Free Speech and Elections. The Task Force is comprised of 16 campus leaders made up of faculty members, colleagues from Student Affairs, Associated Students, Academic Affairs, and two student leaders. This action plan was developed based on our 2022 NSLV results and experiences during the 2022 election.
  - Jason Schreiber, Dean of Students
  - Elizabeth Matthews, Civic Engagement Faculty Liaison
  - Rachael Dombrowski, Interim Civic Engagement Faculty Liaison
  - Kimber Quinney, Associate Professor of History
  - Char Booth, Associate Dean, University Library
  - Ibrahim Al-Marashi, Associate Professor of History
  - Jesus Flores, Associate Vice President for Campus Safety & Chief of Police, University Police Department (UPD)
  - Lori Brockett, AVP of Alumni Engagement & University Events
  - Alicia Lores, Digital Communications Specialist, University Communications
  - Giselle Luevanos, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing, University Communications
  - Zach Bunshaft, Director of Government Relations, University Advancement
  - Tony Pang, Director of Student Leadership
  - Erica Perez, Director of Strategic Marketing, Student Affairs
  - Shelby Rogers, Associate Director of Experiential Learning
  - Illeana Carmona Chavez, ASI Chair & Chief of Staff, ASI Board of Directors
  - Elaine Pollard, Vice President of Student & University Affairs

\*Additionally, the work will be supported by the following local, off campus partner, who will serve as the non-partisan information expert for on campus events: League of Women Voters – North San Diego County

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus with key contacts and modes of outreach, including student leadership, representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise, trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy, and members of the campus leadership who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus in to our work.

Our group meets 1/month virtually.

We are also partnering with the California Secretary of State's Office on the College Ballot Bowl Competition, and the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- All In Challenge, National Registration Day, Vote Early Day, Ask Every Student

## II. Commitment

Our university's President states that we at CSUSM "strive to be a welcoming community of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends who exemplify the values of inclusive excellence, lifelong learning and community engagement."

The campus's strategic goal, also names the following goals that express a commitment to ensuring our students are civically engaged:

- Prepare our students to be the socially just leaders and change makers of tomorrow.
- Ensure that every student has the opportunity to participate in hands-on, engaged learning and high impact, career-activating practices, including those based in and supportive of the community.
- Collaborate with community partners to innovate and address real-world challenges and create sustainable social change.
- Partner with community to provide relevant and engaged learning, research, service and civic engagement opportunities.

On campus, we've seen:

- Print voter education resources included in new student move in welcome packets
- Political clubs or student organizations engaging in voting outreach
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- On campus polling place
- Voter registration tables
- Signage promoting Election Day
- In class voter education presentations

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Town halls
- In person paper registrations
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Deliberative dialogues

Notably, while we have several partners across campus supporting voting, it is generally limited to an election year so the commitment could be increased to year-round attention on civic engagement and voting. Additionally, we are fortunate to have a President who is in support of civic engagement and continue to brainstorm creative ways to collaborate on campus wide messaging that promotes the idea that civic engagement is for every Cal State San Marcos student, not just students with specific majors or political interests.

### III. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from Fall 2023 when our total student enrollment was 15,431.

**Enrollment Data:**

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
88.5%	11.5%		

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
97.70%	2.30%			

**Gender Demographics:**

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
40.4%	59.3%	0.3%	

**Age:**

17-22	23-25	26-35	36+
50%	17.8%	13.7%	4.8%

**Racial Demographics:**

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black or African American	Latinx	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
15.7%	0.2%	4%	48.3%	0.3%	20.4%	4.4%

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

- National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement

The NSLVE survey is instrumental in helping our institution's ability to create targeted outreach plans and track our trajectory on overall engagement.

## **IV. Goals**

Before setting the civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, the following information was taken into consideration.

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan do not explicitly mention civic learning and democratic participation.
- We don't have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement across our campus, rather we have a coalition of partners who are willing and prepared to disseminate information on civic learning and democratic engagement programming, mainly put on by one Department – Civic Engagement. Because the Civic Engagement Department is minimally staffed, the amount and scope of possible programming is limited.

We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- We continue to be a largely commuter campus, so our main option for hosting events is during the 12-1pm Tuesday/Thursday timeframe when no students have class and are ideally on campus. That creates a lot of competition for events, and fatigue from students who are overwhelmed with info about events.

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- We have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- Civic engagement work is technically named in several job descriptions and areas across campus, so the potential to collaborate is significant.
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We are able to engage student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.
- We have a working relationship with our local election office.
- We have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement.
- We have a vote center on campus and a permanent ballot drop box, thus making voting extremely accessible for students.

With this in mind, we have set the four goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

- Increase the voter engagement turnout to 80%
- Collaborate with Associated Students on voter outreach efforts for explicitly and intentionally.
- Collaborate with CSUSM Athletics on at least one voter outreach event.
- Collaborate with Student Housing on at least one student housing wide messaging attempt.

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

- Increase the President's Office's engagement in voter registration and turn out efforts.
- Increase the co-curricular connections with voter education and engagement efforts through a module in all General Education Learning courses and/or Political Science 100 (American Government) courses. Both of these courses are taken by the vast majority of CSUSM students.
- Increase the voter engagement presence during welcome days and orientation.

## V. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- Co-planning and hosting the National Voter Registration Day event with ASI and Civic Engagement.
- Planning a voter registration event with the Men's Basketball Team.
- Hiring a group of peer voter registration outreach specialists (Civic Engagement Ambassadors aka CEAs) to help increase our overall voter turnout. The CEAs will facilitate educational and tabling events with key groups across campus, including in classroom presentations.
- Submitting voter registration information cards to CSUSM Housing to distribute to all 2000 students moving in.

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- Promoting voter registration and education materials via digital screens, email messages, social media, classroom presentations and flyers across campus.
- Promote civic holidays, host voter education dialogues, promote vote early day signage.
- Host a voter registration tabling pre-event for the All People's Luncheon where the California Secretary of State will be speaking.
- Host at least 1 information session for students in on campus housing.

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **short term**:

- Co-host and plan additional events with ASI and CSUSM Athletics.
- Establish key points of contact and sets of responsibilities for voter outreach during welcome days and orientation.
- Create a marketing and information scheme to come from the President's Office about where to cast your ballot on campus for Vote Early Day.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

- Hosting cross-campus civic engagement opportunities
- Partnering with campus-community to host democratic and civility conversations.
- Maintaining communication with our local elections office to ensure we are able to host a vote center for each election.

These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

- Promote civic engagement activities year-round through Presidential level messaging.
- Connect with key first year course faculty partners to develop modules that can be used for voter education.

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- Institutionalize a campus culture of civic and voter engagement.

## **VI. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)**

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2022. In 2022 our registration rate was 29.6%. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate decreased. Although this is consistent with the national average, we still came in just below the national average for 2022 of a 30.6% voting rate.

In 2020, our voting rate was 73.6% and our voting rate among registered students was 84.6%, higher than the national average. We hope to continue this positive trend for the 2024 election.

Some positive trends to note from 2022 are a 3% increase in students who registered, and an overall increase of 1% registration rate, showing there was a positive impact from the students we hired to do peer to peer voter registration outreach for the first time in 2020. We also saw a 13% increase to not in person voting --- likely due to our student peer outreach about the option to drop off mail in ballots.

## **VII. Reporting & Evaluation**

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus Free Speech and Elections Task Force.
- Email to campus administration.
- Email to the President.

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Post on the campus website.

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Sending a post-election survey to students.
- Sending a post-election survey to faculty.
- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect.

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year.
- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team.
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly.