

Executive summary

Dalton State believes in the power of democracy to shape our campus community and prepare our students for active and engaged citizenship. In the spirit of fostering inclusivity, embracing diversity, and upholding democratic values, we proudly present the "ALL In Democracy Campus Action Plan."

Our college is more than just an institution of learning; it is a vibrant community that thrives when all voices are heard, respected, and valued. Recognizing the transformative potential of a democratic culture, we embark on this journey to strengthen our commitment to civic engagement, diversity, and inclusion.

As we stand on the threshold of change, it is crucial to acknowledge the unique role that Dalton State College plays in shaping the minds and perspectives of our students. We understand that an educated and informed citizenry is the bedrock of a thriving democracy. Therefore, we aim to cultivate an environment where every community member feels empowered to contribute to the democratic process, where differences are celebrated, and where dialogue and collaboration foster understanding.

The ALL In Democracy initiative is not just a set of goals and action steps; it reflects our collective commitment to building a campus community that mirrors the principles of democracy we hold dear. It is a call to action, a rallying cry for all members of our community to actively participate in shaping the future of our college.

Leadership

Student Life leads the coalition, which hires at least two student workers to serve as Democratic Engagement Fellows. These Fellows are charged with leading the planning and implementation of Democratic Engagement work. Student Life is committed to enhancing campus life by developing and executing programs and initiatives designed to advance campus and community engagement, provide civic-based learning opportunities, and create opportunities for powerful partnerships that foster positive social change.

Other partners and resources include:

Community Partners

- Whitfield County Board of Elections
- League of Women Voters - Dalton, GA
- Daughters of the American Revolution - Chatsworth / Dalton, GA

Additional Resources

- [All In Campus Democracy Challenge](#)
- [Campus Election Engagement Project \(CEEP\)](#)
- [Voter Friendly Campus Designation Program](#)
- [The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement](#)

Commitment

This action plan will directly support the institution's Strategic Plan. Goal III: Colleges are vital to their communities. Dalton State College will continue to enhance its engagement with its region and beyond by providing leadership, ideas, innovation, and diverse viewpoints to support its service area. This plan is shared publicly on the Dalton State Website.

Note: The current strategic plan is set to expire, and a campus committee will soon be launched to discuss creating a new strategic plan.

3.1 Dalton State College will enhance and coordinate partnerships with the Technical College System of Georgia, K-12 systems, local and state agencies, nonprofits, and businesses, as well as institutions that promote economic development and entrepreneurship.

3.3 Dalton State College will commit to service that has mutual and educational benefits through service learning and volunteerism involving students, faculty, and staff.

3.4 Dalton State College will contribute to the vibrancy of the community by providing a variety of events, programs, and activities while encouraging collaboration and shared resources.

In addition to the Institutional strategic plan, Dalton State exemplifies a commitment to increasing civic learning and democratic engagement through the following ways:

Institutional Commitment:

- Authorization to participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)
- Collaborative initiatives involving faculty & staff across campus.
- Dedicated student life staff member to advise and support student leaders serving on the coalition

Student Commitment:

- Designated Federal Student Worker Positions to lead this work.
- Work supported by the Student Government Association.

Community Partners:

- Various community partners who provide community engagement opportunities to students, faculty, and staff.
- Partnership with local board of elections to provide updated list of candidates and sample ballots prior to each election.
- Partnership with Women's League of Voters to assist with voter registration drives.

Landscape

Student Life continues to create events and programs to encourage students to become civically, politically, and democratically engaged. Examples of these co-curricular opportunities include:

Ongoing voter registration opportunities include:

- Voter Registration Campus Takeover on National Voter Registration Day
- Annual Constitution Day Event(s)
- A “Meet the Candidates” event for local and state elections.
- Community Action Days and Days of Service are held regularly to encourage and promote civic engagement.

The Social Work Department and Faculty are great supporters and aid in the planning and staffing of voter registration drives. The biggest challenges over the past year have been:

- Reduced Student Life Staffing from January 2021-August 2023
- Retention of Democracy Fellows and Student Worker Positions to Lead this work
- Gained buy-in and support in the planning and implementation process across campus beyond the Student Life Team
- Voter Registration events are easy to host and facilitate, we need to help our student be more comfortable hosting voter education and awareness programs

The only data Dalton State is currently utilizing to track and share democratic engagement on campus is gathered through the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). All of our previous NSLVE reports can be accessed here: https://www.daltonstate.edu/campus_life/forms.cms under the heading “Reports”.

Short-Term Goals:

- Promote awareness campaigns to inform students about the importance of voter registration and election participation.
- Organize short workshops or seminars on campus to educate students about the democratic process, government structures, and the significance of civic engagement.
- Invite guest speakers or faculty members to share insights on current political issues.
- Leverage digital platforms, such as social media, to share information about upcoming elections, civic events, and relevant news.
- Utilize civic holidays to celebrate democratic principles and reinforce the importance of civic engagement.

Long-Term Goals:

- Continue and expand voter registration initiatives, aiming to achieve sustained high levels of voter registration and turnout in campus elections and beyond.
- Develop and regularly assess metrics to measure the impact of civic engagement initiatives, including surveys, participation rates, and community impact assessments.
- Cultivate ongoing partnerships with local communities to address shared civic challenges, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration.

- Encourage ongoing and respectful dialogue on complex social and political issues, providing platforms for diverse perspectives to be heard and understood.