



# Emporia State University Democratic Engagement Action Plan: 2022-23

*This plan was created using the Votes & Ballots Action Planning Form. We highly recommend editing and expanding upon this draft before submitting for review.*

*Throughout this document, we mention the Strengthening American Democracy Guide as a resource for your review. We encourage you to turn to that resource for guidance and support as you complete your action plan!*

## I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Rob Catlett, Roe R. Cross Distinguished Professor to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Emporia State University. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-23, on and around our campus in Emporia, Kansas.

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

- Undergraduate Students
- Faculty

The mission of our initiative is:

- The CLDE mission is to improve lives individually and collectively through civic engagement.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the Strengthening American Democracy Guide and review the Guiding Questions to ensure your Executive Summary includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## II. Leadership

Rob Catlett - Roe R. Cross Distinguished Professor will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

- Bekah Selby (Econ prof), Associated Student Government (ASG) team, League of Women Voters, Loud Light (Kansas), Lyon County Election Office
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- Each of these individuals/entities/organizations adds a important elements to our efforts. Kansas recently passed legislation that prohibits others from submitting voter registration forms and ballots for a voter. It really helps to have our County election officials working with us to ensure no one is in legal peril.

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

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

Our group plans to meet annually (getting this grou at August - We all meet at the Annual Block Party which is outdoors and we combine it with training and voter registration to ensure everyone is trained and supported.

In the event that our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. The succession plan is currently active to ensure Bekah Selby is prepared with increasing responsibilities.

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- American Democracy Project
- ALL-IN
- League of Women Voters

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Leadership Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.



### III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. As stated in our mission statement, THE MISSION OF EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY Preparing students for lifelong learning, rewarding careers, and adaptive leadership. THE VISION STATEMENT OF EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY Changing lives for the common good. THE CORE VALUES OF EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY AF The university has four core values: excellence, respect, responsibility, and service. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. They state, "The Adaptive Leadership element at its core is about civic engagement."

We also have had a senior leader commit to civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
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- Voter registration tables
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On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Walks / rides to polls
- Town halls
- Registering to vote
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We can point to the above institutional commitments to support our work.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Commitment Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2020-2021 Academic Year when our total student enrollment was 5828.

### Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
54.58%	45.42%	57.34%	42.66%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
91.00%	9.00%	8.00%	62.80%	38.20%

### Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
32.69%	67.31%		

### Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+
38.57%	17.18%	14.50%	15.51%	7.82%	4.48%

### Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races

1.63%	0.38%	3.28%	9.39%	0.60%	68.41%	3.79%
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**How can you improve this section?** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Landscape Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## V. Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration.

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

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- We don't have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
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- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding.
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We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

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- Our state laws make it challenging to support student voter registration efforts.
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With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
- We have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
- We use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- The voter engagement work on our campus is distributed throughout many offices and areas of expertise.
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- 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.
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With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Between January 19, 2022, the first day of the spring semester, and October 11, 2022, the last day to register to vote in Kansas, have every eligible student receive voter registration details.
2. By October 11, 2022, Increase the voter registration rate of students in recreation, the one area less than 50 percent, (and maintain all academic majors (and undecided) to levels over 50 percent voter registration.
3. By October 11, 2022, have our new president commit to a 100% voter registration rate. (The announcement of a search committee occurred January 19, 2022.)

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

1. Have an on-campus polling place by November 5, 2024.
2. Increase voting rates for the so-called midterm elections compared with our 2018 rates as reported in our NSLVE report.
3. Once again, have the highest voting rate of any college or university in Kansas in our 2024 NSLVE report. In 2020, we were one-half of one percentage point lower than the highest after years of having the highest.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Goals Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.



## VI. 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):

- Midterm elections have been challenging for us, so we are trying to increase interest by raising awareness of positive accomplishments (e.g., press releases, discussions, and major addresses).

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

- Once again, we plan to on specific groups with relative low percentages as illuminated by the NSLVE report by encouraging students to visit with other students.

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

- We hope the legal challenges to the law that went into effect July 1, 2021 allow us to return to voter registration with our partners. Since then, the League of Women Voters and Loud Light, who are significant partners with us have halted all voter registration drives.
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- From the Lawrence Times January 7, 2022, it should be obvious this is serious:
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- "Election laws passed last year by the Republican-led Legislature, including one that threatens felony prosecution for any activities that could be mistaken as the work of an election official, received heavy criticism. Lawsuits ensued, setting the stage for when legislators return to Topeka on Monday (January 11, 2022) for the new session to tackle voter registration issues, voter roll maintenance and securing elections."

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

- We maintain our relationships with our partners even if we cannot engage in voter registration drives.

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

- If no changes to the Kansas law with felony prosecution result, our registration activities will have to be only with the Lyon County Election Official present.

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

- We hope to return to the robust voter registration drives that have been so successful in the past.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Strategy Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

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

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2014 through 2020. In 2014 through 2020 our registration rate was 87.4%. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2014 through 2020, our voting rate was 70.5% and our voting rate among registered students was 80.7%. During this year, our voting rate was higher than the national average. In our NSLVE report, we had racial data for the following groups:

- Asian
- American Indian / Alaska Native
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

For the racial groups that have recent voter turnout data, we saw the following groups increase in voter turnout compared to four years ago.

- Asian
- American Indian / Alaska Native
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

Our campus also has access to our NSLVE data for 2012 through 2020. In 2012, 2014, 2016, & 2018 (in respective order) our registration rate was 77.7%, 69.1%, 77.9%, & 79.9%, our voting rate was 46.4%, 26.0%, 52.8%, & 49.1% and our voting rate among registered students was 59.7%, 37.6%, 67.8%, & 61.4%.

English Language and Literature had the largest percentage point increase (39 percentage points) followed by psychology (30 percentage points) and business (29 percentage points). Part of the increase in business was attributable to relatively low percentage of business students in 2016 when they had only a 32 percent rate.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your NSLVE section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## VIII. 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 coalition
- Email to campus administration
- Email to the President
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We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

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- Release in a public statement
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We will collect feedback on this plan by:

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- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts
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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
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***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Reporting & Evaluation Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.