

Florida Atlantic University

Civic Action Plan

2024-2025



**FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY**

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**Weppner Center for LEAD  
and Service-Learning  
Division of Student Affairs**

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## Executive Summary

Florida Atlantic University is committed to being a force for positive change by engaging in civic learning and democratic engagement in its various communities. We look to achieve this by leveraging the knowledge and expertise of our faculty, staff, and students, along with the resources of the community partners in authentic engagement for mutual benefit.

As Florida Atlantic University strives to maintain the prestigious Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, the ultimate goal of this civic engagement plan is to create civically minded and socially responsible students and alumni by bringing together curricular and co-curricular programs and experiences. The Roadmap to Civic Engagement for Florida Atlantic University incorporates elements of curricular and co-curricular service-learning and civic engagement, as well as resources directed specifically to continuing to build a culture of voter engagement at Florida Atlantic.

This plan incorporates the definition of civic engagement from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) as defined by Ehrlich (2000):

“Civic engagement is working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. In addition, civic engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.”

To accomplish this, the Civic Action Plan centers around four themes:

- Community Partnerships
- Voter Engagement and Literacy
- Experiential Programs
- Faculty and Staff Engagement

Florida Atlantic is an institution with a footprint that spans over 100 miles of coastline in southeast Florida, across a 4-county service area with students attending campuses in Dania Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Davie, Jupiter, and Fort Pierce, and the main campus in Boca Raton. Re-envisioning democratic engagement for the 21st century involves utilizing various platforms including online, in-person, and hybrid approaches.

Additionally, this plan serves to support the Pillars and Platforms of the university’s Strategic Plan which strives to “create knowledge that benefits society”. This plan was assembled in alignment with Florida Atlantic’s A Strategic Plan for the Race to Excellence 2015-2025 and lives out the mission of the institution, which states:

“Florida Atlantic University is a multi-campus public research university that pursues excellence in its missions of research, scholarship, creative activity, teaching, and active engagement with its communities.”

This action plan addresses short and long-term goals. Florida Atlantic strives to have year-round non-partisan civic engagement in election years and non-election years. Goals are set and benchmarked utilizing data from the NSLVE report which comes out every 2 years, corresponding with the election cycle.

Our short-term goals include building more relationships with various populations of students. This includes aiming to work with student organizations across the five councils of student organizations

including academic, multicultural/spiritual, fraternity & sorority, sports, and special interests. Intentional partnerships with various offices have also been planned with various offices to further provide civic engagement resources to multiple different student populations. One of the goals of the Campus Vote Project Democracy fellows and the Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning is to provide new and engaging opportunities to get students involved in voter education and civic engagement.

Florida Atlantic has worked to strengthen the partnership between the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to further develop a holistic approach of civic engagement that brings social issues from outside the classroom into inside of the classroom. Connections have been made with faculty teaching courses designated as academic service-learning. The Academic Service-Learning Program incorporates direct, hands-on engagement in the local community that brings students together with local community partners to address a specific social issue. At Florida Atlantic, we currently have over 200 courses being deemed as Academic Service Learning. Each course spreads across all our academic colleges that combine real-world experience, academic instruction, and a desire to make our community a better place. Each of these courses must meet the minimum university requirements including, but not limited to, “Purposeful Civic Engagement” which means that the projects students get involved in should be designed to have them practice the learning strategies and/or class content that meets course learning objectives. Examples of these courses include Social Welfare History and Policy (SOW 6235), Capstone Communication, and Civic Life (SPC4271) where students engage in semester-long civic engagement projects.

Collaborations between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs create events that allow students to gain insights into different points of view and engage with interactive speakers during Constitution Week. During this week students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to attend a keynote presented by Monica Crowley, Ph.D., titled “The U.S. Constitution and the Spirit of America.” Also, multiple members of the faculty and greater community participated in a luncheon to further discuss and expand on topics impacting our society. Constitution Day of Service took place on September 20th, and students wrote letters through, and an organization called Vote Forward encouraging other voters on the importance of voting and advocating the importance of having your vote count.

The Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning (Lead and Serve) hosts two different annual conferences titled iLead Student Leadership Conference and WeLead: Community Engagement Conference. These two conferences offer students the chance to engage in interactive breakout sessions where they discuss a variety of concepts to fine tune their leadership skills and learn to become a more civically engaged student. At the iLead conference, a staff member from Lead and Serve presented with the Fall 2023 Campus Vote Fellow on a session titled “The True Definition of Service”. During this session, students learned more about service and how it looks different for every student. The previous WeLead conference was focused on the intersections of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and leadership and service-learning. Given the political direction taken in the state of Florida, Lead and Serve took the opportunity to shift the conference’s mission to address the needs of catering to our communities. In iteration of this new conference, attendees can become changemakers by encouraging collaborative leadership strategies within the Greater FAU community. The attendees participate in a community service project, impactful leadership development sessions, and close with a community partners engagement lunch. An example of one of the sessions was a panel with local city politicians discussing ways attendees can assist in making an impact in their community.

Additionally, National Voter Registration Day falls during Hispanic/Latina/o/x Heritage Month. Our event includes posters and tabling materials featuring Spanish and other languages to be informative towards the different populations we serve at Florida Atlantic.

## **Leadership**

FAU has a working group consisting of diverse stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, and spanning across the division of academic affairs and student affairs to provide a multitude of points of view as we aim to reach a wide range of individuals and intersecting identities.

- Marlynn Lopez, Director, Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning
- Bailey Carmack, Coordinator, Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning
- Christopher Thomas, Coordinator, Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning
- Dr. Larry Faerman, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Donald Van Pelt Jr., Assistant Vice President Student Engagement
- Danielle McCalla, Director of Student Activities and Involvement
- Dax Boatwright, Assistant Director, Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution, Dean of Students
- Dr. Kevin Wagner- Professor and Associate Dean (Constitution Day Planning Committee)
- Camila Mychalczuk, Director of State Relations, Office of the President Government Relations (Liaison to Academic Service-Learning Professors)
- Bethany Alex, Director of Local Relations, Office of the President Government Relations (Liaison to Academic Service-Learning Professors)
- Academic Service-Learning Professors
- Dr. Katie Burke, Assistant Vice President, Alumni and Community Engagement
- Dr. Rebecca Goldstein, Director of Assessment

The Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning (Lead and Serve) is the primary university hub for civic learning and democratic responsibility. From the Division of Student Affairs, we host multiple standing meetings in which discuss our programmatic efforts. For example, the division has the Major Events and Engagement Team that meets weekly to discuss university-wide events that impact many areas within the institution. This meeting consists of 30+ campus partners coming together to improve the ways in which we offer and deliver programming to the student body. We also plan our signature events (leadership conferences, constitution week, homecoming, new student events, etc.) in community by creating committees to assist in the planning and incorporation of varying stakeholders into the curriculum of the events so that what we are offering aligns with the mission and strategic plan of the university.

Outside of the meetings we have within the Division of Student Affairs, the above leadership comes together to discuss community and civic engagement initiatives routinely. Florida Atlantic is also collecting data to submit for the Carnegie Re-Classification for Community Engagement. To this end, Government Relations hosts and will continue to host semesterly meetings to stay abreast on the work done across the university and how we can better support one another by strengthening our partnerships. Lastly, separate meetings are held to dedicate specialized efforts towards the Academic Service-Learning initiatives by gathering Government Relations, Academic Affairs, Assessment, Office of Information Technology, and the Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning to enhance its processes and further expand its offerings in all disciplines.

As a designee of the university president, Dr. Larry Faerman, Vice President of Student Affairs, serves as an advocate for civic engagement and shares efforts of voter registration and pledges to vote throughout the university. With his support we have strengthened the partnership between the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to further develop a holistic approach of civic engagement. FAU plans to continue to feature voter engagement and pledge information on various platforms, to draw student attention. Therefore, our commitment is to submit a Civic Action Plan each cycle.

## Commitment

Community and civic engagement is woven into the Florida Atlantic culture. This current strategic plan was built with substantial input from faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Our former president John Kelly and Provost Perry met individually with all 63 academic departments, 17 support units, 12 student organizations, and numerous community leaders and organizations to inform the development of the 2015-2025 strategic plan. This input was crucial to bringing community engagement to the forefront of the university's day-to-day tasks and in finding the most appropriate ways to operationalize it. The involvement of the community, faculty, staff, students, and the university leadership, in defining and strategizing community engagement at Florida Atlantic, has produced a significant increase in engaging activities as collaborative partnerships have been made a priority across the institution.

In an age when nearly everything feels politically charged and polarized, it is essential that we come together to dissolve us vs. them construct and reaffirm our shared humanity through the fundamentals of civil discourse. An ongoing series called the Breezeway Dialogues was established in the Summer of 2021 with this exact goal in mind: to provide Florida Atlantic students the opportunity to discuss relevant and controversial topics while learning civil discourse best practices. To ensure all dialogues remain relevant and meaningful, student voices must be the guiding force behind this series. The first step to identify the controversial topics Florida Atlantic students most want to discuss. More than 400 students completed a university-wide survey to identify the most pressing topics and determine the right time and frequency to hold these important discussions. Each dialogue features a moderator and multiple panelists who present opposing sides of a selected topic. Following the panelist presentations, discussion is opened to the audience members, who may pose questions for the panelists, offer additional commentary to either viewpoint or share an additional position on the topic.

Florida Atlantic continues to promote opportunities for the entire campus community (students, faculty, and staff) to participate in the primary and general elections and emphasize voting early at either our on campus voting site or local polling site. This will be promoted through email campaigns, newsletters, and tabling targeting the entire university community.

The commitment of the students and staff members involved in civic programming is showcased through their creative practices approaches to providing voter education. An example of this can be seen through the gamification of teaching concepts relating to voting such as spinning a wheel to answer trivia questions or having fun tabling themes as staff interact with students on the Breezeway. The Government Relations area also has expanded to include a new Office of Public Policy and Events; and provides more opportunities for community engagement for everyone in the university.

Student Government has extended its contract with the rideshare organizations Lyft and Brightline. The \$30,000 Lyft and Brightline partnership helps address the students' barrier of transportation to access their polling location.

On the Florida Atlantic Community Engagement classification application, there is a question on the application that specifically asks: "Does the institution encourage and measure student voter registration and voting"? There is also a sub-question that asks, "Describe the methods for encouraging and measuring student voter registration and voting". Florida Atlantic does encourage and measure student voter registration and voting, through the Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning, with the official measurement tool being the nationally recognized NSLVE report. In terms of promotion, this takes the form of encouragement of students to vote by staff; however, there is also an opportunity for faculty to continue promoting in their classes, as evidenced by the disciplines that have increased rates of student voter registration and turnout.

The Division of Research, the Division of Academic Affairs through the Office of Community Engagement, and the Division of Student Affairs support staff, faculty, and students involved in engaged research by providing individual and group advising opportunities, grant writing workshops, editing services and internal grant money to get the projects started. Examples of these projects include collaborative work with the Palm Beach County, Broward County, and St. Lucie County Public School Boards, the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office, the City of Dania Beach among many others.

Additionally, this plan serves to support the Pillars and Platforms of the university's Strategic Plan which strives to "create knowledge that benefits society". This plan was assembled in alignment with Florida Atlantic's A Strategic Plan for the Race to Excellence 2015-2025 and live out the Mission of the institution, which states:

**Mission:**

"Florida Atlantic University is a multi-campus public research university that pursues excellence in its missions of research, scholarship, creative activity, teaching, and active engagement with its communities."

**Vision:**

"Florida Atlantic University aspires to be recognized as a university known for excellent and accessible undergraduate and graduate education, distinguished for the quality of its programs across multiple campuses and classified as a very high research institution that is internationally acclaimed for its contributions to creativity and research as well as its collaborations with regional partners."

In 2016, FAU gained the designation as a "Voter-Friendly Campus" and has maintained an action plan yearly. The Voter Friendly Campus designation program was started through a partnership between Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA LEAD Initiative. The goal of the Voter Friendly Campus program is to help institutions develop democratic engagement action plans that coordinate administrators, faculty, and student organizations in civic and electoral engagement.

Academic Service-Learning (ASL) Assessment: this mechanism focuses on the effects of student engagement with our community on their academic success through their participation in an ASL course. Since Fall 2014, the survey has been administered every semester. It was designed to assess the impact of ASL practices on student attitudes toward community involvement and the development of practical skills.

Collaborations between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs create signature events that allow students to share different points of view and perspectives on current/trending topics. Examples of some of these programs include keynotes and panels for Constitution Week featuring expert faculty, staff, local government officials and national correspondents. Events have been planned on multiple campuses for National Voter Registration Day.

At the departmental level, community input varies by college. Examples are:

The Department of Civil, Environmental & Geomatics Engineering has a Departmental Advisory Board that is comprised of members of industry, regulatory agencies, and public entities. The Board represents over 20 different organizations that advise and assist the faculty with the continuous improvement process, among other functions. The Board's mandate to advise and assist in curriculum development and improvement is clearly stated in the first two objectives of its bylaws:

1. To advise the Department of the professional requirements of private enterprise and government and the implications of those requirements upon the curriculum; and
2. To provide a forum in which teaching, research, professional development, and academic excellence can discuss the needs of the profession and related industries.

The Board is an active constituency involved in nearly all aspects of the Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering program – from teaching to mentoring, and as such, directly affect and are affected by all four Program Educational Objectives. The Board meets at least twice a year, usually at the end of Fall and Spring semesters. The meeting incorporates final design presentations given by students in the CGN 4804C CEGE Design 2 course (an ASL course).

Through 2022-2024 efforts have been made to expand outreach to community partners utilizing the platform Noblehour. Florida Atlantic utilizes Noblehour as a one-stop shop to find volunteer opportunities and log their service hours. By expanding our database of community partners, further outreach can be done to invite them to come to campus to participate in events such as the volunteer fair. Through this event, community partners can showcase their missions and promote upcoming and ongoing volunteer opportunities and ways students can get involved with their cause.

In addition to ongoing days of service, Florida Atlantic has an alternative break program known as Owl Breaks. The Owl Breaks program is an immersive experience that takes place during university breaks and offers students the chance to “dive deeper” into a social issue around the state of Florida, and regionally. Past social issues that Owl Break trips centered around included: disaster relief, children’s disability awareness, resource insecurity, and much more. To increase the number of students who can participate in Owl Breaks, the format has been adapted to allow a series of single day and weekend experiences. By getting more students involved in service relating to their passion areas they will be able to build upon their interest to take civic action.

In the 2020 Election, Florida Atlantic was among one of the top ten universities on the Conference USA leaderboard for the All-In Pledge to Vote Challenge. Florida Atlantic plans to continue its partnership with All In Democracy Challenge and promote the campaign to get students, faculty and staff to pledge to vote. As such, we plan to strengthen our partnership with various non-partisan organizations and utilize more of their resources. Some of these resources include this Action Plan submission, resource engagement for students, and new partnerships to provide students with as much information as possible about voter education and civic engagement.

### **Landscape**

To facilitate institutional growth in the areas of democratic and civic engagement, the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education at Tufts University in Boston, MA facilitates the National Study of Learning and Voter Engagement (NSLVE) report that is offered to institutions to get a closer look at their student voting habits. From the 2020 election cycle, as evidenced in our NSLVE report, Florida Atlantic reported a 71.1% voting rate (which reflects an increase of 11.1% from the 2016 election cycle). This is also 5.1 percentage points higher than all institutions' national average for 2020. FAU increased the voting rate across all race/ethnicity demographics and was awarded the All in Democracy Challenge Gold Seal. According to the NSLVE report, an area where Florida Atlantic had a decrease by 5% was early voter turnout. While early voter turnout decreased by 5 percentage points, not-in-person voting, or

absentee voting increased by 22 percentage-points according to the NSLVE data. Florida Atlantic plans to emphasize efforts to increase early voter turnout.

Academic Service-Learning is more than a volunteer activity; it integrates community service with instruction and reflection. It is designed to enrich the learning experience through hands-on activity and to teach civic responsibility. Academic Service-Learning requires students to apply what they learn in the classroom and to reflect on their experiences by thinking, discussing, and writing about them. It teaches students how to apply academic knowledge to real-life civic issues, promotes teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, develops life skills, and makes learning more personally meaningful. Courses with civic engagement components span across the College of Arts and Letters, College of Business, College of Education, College of Engineering and Computer Science, Honors College, College of Nursing, College of Medicine, College of Science, and the College of Social Work and Criminal Justice.

The Student Activities and Involvement department houses the Council of Student Organizations (COSO). COSO is the body that oversees and assists registered student organizations on each campus by providing services, equipment, funding, and showcase opportunities. Florida Atlantic has over 400 student organizations across 5 councils of student organizations including academic, multicultural/spiritual, fraternity & sorority, sports, and special interest. Some student organizations that emphasize civic learning and democratic engagement include, but are not limited to, Student Government, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, College Republicans and more.

Owl Central Catalog of Student Organizations:

<https://FloridaAtlantic.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations>

Having an accessible voting site at Florida Atlantic has been a resource contributing to civic engagement success. Having a voting site on campus removes barriers to voting for students whose busy class, work schedules, and other life responsibilities often make it difficult to vote on Election Day. Florida is also a vote-by-mail state, and we promote deadlines and details relating to voting by mail to allow students this option. This is especially helpful for students from partner campuses where there is no voting site on campus. Voting habits start early and making early voting accessible to them as they are starting out as new voters and community members is an important part of our civic education goals.

Florida Atlantic has been named a member of the Age-Friendly University (AFU) Global Network. The AFU network consists of institutions of higher education around the globe that have endorsed the AFU principles and committed themselves to become more age-friendly in its programs and policies. Members of the network have a shared challenge to promote an all-encompassing approach to healthy and active aging through research, enhanced learning opportunities for people across generations, and innovations that address issues affecting older adults. Florida Atlantic has established Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes (OLLI) at its Boca Raton, Jupiter, and Fort Lauderdale campuses dedicated to offering intellectually enriching educational experiences. The centers offer non-credit courses and programs, along with concerts and entertainment. The courses are taught by Florida Atlantic professors and distinguished guest lecturers.

### **Goals**

The Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning (Lead and Serve)'s mission is to empower students' pursuit of their own developmental growth by cultivating lifelong leadership skills and engaging in experiential service learning to become more effective citizens in their community. As the university's main champion for civic engagement via student affairs, Lead and Serve and other departments accomplish this mission by developing short term goals related to community engagement, service-learning, and civic responsibility.



## Short Term Goals

From the community engagement lens, Lead and Serve hosts days of service throughout the year centered on local challenges. The academic year begins with Red and Blue Day of Service (formerly Weeks of Welcome) followed by Constitution Day of service and Homecoming Day of Service. Other involvement includes working with many non-profit organizations to best provide students with different community service opportunities that will best fit their interests. During the Fall of 2023 Florida Atlantic welcomed 25+ organizations to its Volunteer Fair. This fair was designed to help provide students with opportunities to directly engage with non-profit partners on campus. Our goal for this year is to expand the fair to include politicians and governmental organizations to show the intersections of volunteerism and civic engagement.

Students also participate in the Owl Breaks service-learning trips, including a new Fall experience at Camp Boggy Creek and the two Spring experiences with Habitat for Humanity Punta Gorda and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. By constantly changing the trip locations, partnering organizations, and the issues being addressed, Lead and Serve caters to students' varying interests and expands its service area. In relation to this program, our goal is hosting pre-trip meetings with local experts to discuss ways to assist with the issues facing the communities being served in future trips.

Owl Breaks is facilitated by student leaders known as Site Leaders. In conjunction with the Elite Owl Ambassadors program through Lead and Serve, an emphasis will be placed on providing in-service training to the student leaders about commitment, common purpose, and citizenship.

The newest and largest initiative led by the Lead and Serve department is the Fill the Burrow Donation Drive. This multi-stakeholder collaboration takes place at the end of each semester in order to provide Florida Atlantic and local high school students in need with donated clothes, food, toiletries, and other household items they need to be feel comfortable in school. Not only does this initiative work with other entities of the University, but with community partners such as Lake Worth High School, Goodwill, and Palm Beach County Food Bank. During both semesters, students donated thousands of pounds of clothing items and over 1,000 non-perishable food items. Our goal for the new year is to expand the program to include more student organizations and other areas of the university into the washing, sorting, and delivery of the items. Coupled with this goal is the desire to increase the number of donated items to these local entities.

Another goal of the Lead and Serve department is to continue the partnership with the Campus Vote Project as to employ a Democracy Fellow for our institution that will assist in spreading awareness on the importance of voting in all elections. This will include promoting summer primary registration deadlines, planning events for Early Voting days and Election Day, and all other pertinent information needed for the general election in the Fall. Continuing the work of the previous fellows, the Lead and Serve department will encourage the new fellow to move forward with sending letters to the Supervisor of Elections office to express their support and advocate to keep an early voting site at the FAU Boca Raton Campus.

Lead and Serve also supervises the Student Government program Students Advocating Volunteer Involvement (SAVI). SAVI provides community service and leadership opportunities to all interested students by promoting a positive environment of volunteerism and community engagement. SAVI also assists clubs and other student organizations in their community service efforts. SAVI is based on the Boca Raton, Broward, and Jupiter campuses. SAVI's goal across all three campuses is to provide more events for students to be involved in and to do joint programming to maximize their impact instead of functioning independently.

Through intentional programming and strategic planning, Lead and Serve and SAVI plan to create more partnerships with registered student organizations. This can be done by working with the Council of Student Organizations to expand outreach and resources relating to participating in service and community engagement. To achieve this, a goal is to host monthly meetings for student organizations to pitch their community engagement projects in front of students, faculty and staff to receive funding and assist with implementation. Thus, the initiative would allow us to encourage more student involvement in service-learning and those find ways to build connections among the organizations so that efforts are coordinated, and the impact is greater. The Council of Student Organizations is also comprised of five councils of student organizations including academic, multicultural/spiritual, fraternity & sorority, sports, and special interest. We plan to partner with student organizations within these subsets to bring about new ways to engage in civic responsibilities that align with the passions of their group.

New connections are being explored to plan days of service and civic engagement resources with our ever increasing First-Year students at Florida Atlantic. Since a third of the students are coming from out of state, many of these students may be registered to vote in other states and counties. By providing students resources about reregistration and Absentee Ballots in a centralized location online, Florida Atlantic can provide even more students with the ability to vote.

We also work with the Upward Bound program designed to help high school students academically talented and from traditionally underserved backgrounds. Many students do not know they can pre-register to vote at age 16. Our goal is to share this information with this population during this summer's community service project so that they can pre-registered to vote, be prepared to vote during future elections, and be more informed about the democratic process to address the community's needs.

In 2020, an estimated 38 million people with disabilities were eligible to vote for 8 votes. Florida Atlantic works with students with all types of disabilities, and it is important that they know their rights such as that all voting sites are required to be ADA compliant. For all events, we will continue to provide accessible options and include an accessibility statement and provide contact information for students to be able to request accommodation if needed to participate. We also plan to contact Student Accessibility Services to raise awareness about accessibility and how all students can be of service during this year's Disability Voting Rights Week on September 9-13, 2024.

### **Long-Term Goals**

A long-term goal for Florida Atlantic University is to maintain the prestigious Carnegie Foundation Classification. Florida Atlantic was named one of 119 U.S. colleges and universities to receive the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification for 2020. This classification is awarded every five years following a process of self-study by each institution, which is then assessed by a national review committee led by the Swearer Center for Public Engagement at Brown University, the administrative and research home for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

A long-term vision over the next 10 years for Florida Atlantic to increase from being a Gold Seal institution (currently in the 70%-80% student voter participation range) to becoming a Platinum Seal institution (80%-90% student voter participation range).

To achieve this, we plan to expand our outreach to more populations at Florida Atlantic. In the past, we have provided civic engagement resources to be included in move-in bags for our residential students, but we plan to increase our efforts in targeting multiple student populations by collaborating with them on even more civic engagement opportunities. We will be notified of our Carnegie Community Engagement Classification next year.

### **Strategy**

Our collective strategy for Florida Atlantic's Civic Action Plan is to work smarter, not harder across all the areas impacting civic learning and democratic engagement. The strategy continues to uphold the multiple leadership meetings held throughout the academic year that keeps us all informed and engrained in each other's initiatives. With the strength of the Division of Student Affairs, Government Relations, and Alumni and Community Engagement, these three partners will ensure the commitment of university to develop a socially responsible Florida Atlantic network comes to fruition. Given that this year is a presidential election year, a heavy lift of these strategies will be accomplished by the national election day towards the end of the fall semester. In the spring semester, the strategy is to transition to local and state civic engagement plans.

Below are some of the events as part of our strategy to celebrate civic holidays and promote the democratic process:

- Primary Election Registration Deadline- July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Owls Vote- August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Absentee Ballot Tabling- August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Disability Voting Rights Week- September 9-13<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Presidential Debate Watch Party- Tuesday September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Constitution Week
  - Constitution Day of Service- Monday September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024
  - National Voter Registration Day Tabling event - Tuesday September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024
  - Constitution Day Speaker
  - Hot Topics Debates (featuring our Registered Student Organizations)
- ILead Student Leadership Conference- October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- General Election Registration Deadline- October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- National Voter Education Week
  - Civic Engagement Fair- October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Donut Forget to Vote- October 29<sup>th</sup> 10-12<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Outcome Watch Party- November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- WeLead: Community Engagement Conference- January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- Owl Breaks- Spring Break and Summer Break 2025
- Additional events hosting legislative individuals

Below are new initiatives to be implemented in the next academic year:

- Develop a separate resource webpage for civic engagement and voter information
- Collaborate with Government Relations to engage more politicians into our programming
- Embed more citizenship topics into the Lead and Serve ambassadors program
- Increase staff within the Lead and Serve department and initiatives at the partner campuses

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

The data shared by the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) is crucial in informing our practices for civic learning and democratic engagement related to the diverse identities of our student body. According to the 2020 NSLVE Report, Florida Atlantic increased voting across all demographic groups.

Florida Atlantic is a Hispanic Serving Institution, according to the 2020 NSLVE report 8,281 students who identify as Hispanic/Latina/o/x were enrolled at FAU and 67% of them voted in the 2020 Election.

Similarly, according to the 2020 NSLVE report 5,856 students who identify as Black were enrolled at Florida Atlantic and 70% of them voted in the 2020 Election.

Another demographic is age group. According to the 2020 NSLVE data the majority age group was 18-21 years olds to 14,013 students enrolled and 68% of them voted. While this is the majority demographic, there were also increases in voter turnout across the 22-24, 25-29, 30-39, 40-49 and the 50+ age groups.

In terms of our graduate students' engagement in civics, the NSLVE Report stated there were 4,737 graduate students enrolled at Florida Atlantic University for the 2020 election and 71% of them voted. We will be able to reach more of our graduate student population by working with the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) and any other organization that has a high population of graduate student members. GPSA represents Florida Atlantic's graduate and professional student population. GPSA advocates for the unique voices/needs of graduate-professional students through a unified and representative body with programs such as travel grants, research grants, workshops, social events, networking opportunities, as well as representation on university committees.

We also contacted Student Accessibility Services to work on planning ways to participate in Disability Voting Rights Week. This year, Disability Voting Rights Week is September 9-13, 2024. In 2020, an estimated 38 million people with disabilities were eligible to vote. Florida Atlantic works with students with all types of disabilities and they must know their rights such as that all voting sites are required to be ADA compliant. For all events, we will continue to provide accessible options, include an accessibility statement, and provide contact information for students to request accommodation if needed to participate.

The year is a primary and general election year. Maintaining a campus culture of prioritized civic engagement means continuing efforts to register students to vote and make pledges to vote even during times when there is not an election. To stay on track to meet our long-term goal we need to continue year-round non-partisan civic engagement by hosting civic engagement programs at least once a month. This also includes maintaining voter education and engagement across in-person, virtual and hybrid platforms.

### **Evaluation**

The goal of the following evaluation efforts is to assess our practices and improve our work so that we are impacting the most students and developing a civically engaged study body. Florida Atlantic's NSLVE Report is public through the All in Campus Democracy Challenge Website. A goal for the upcoming year is to share at the aforementioned meetings (Leadership Section) the outcome of the data collection and evaluate how our efforts have impacted the numbers. Civic engagement efforts and vital information will be shared via the Lead and Serve social media page which can be re-shared by various departments and student organizations within the university.

Through end of the year reporting, goal evaluations, and the Carnegie Re-classification process, the university and specially Lead and Serve are and will be taking a very close look into the programs, services, and initiatives centered in civic learning and democratic engagement. Lead and Serve routinely meets with the Assessment department to ensure surveys are created to measure the impact of its department and to find ways to validate the importance of the work. In addition, the plan will be shared with Student Government and the Campus Vote Project Democracy fellows so that students are aware of resources and data and have an active role in implementing strategies to create a university-wide culture of prioritized civic engagement to make a difference on campus and in the community.

### **Reporting**

The sharing of this plan is imperative for the overall success of Florida Atlantic's student body's participation for the upcoming elections and civic engagement events. This plan will be shared internally with the Weppner Center for LEAD and Service-Learning staff, the Division of Student Affairs, and with other areas from the institution. The incoming Campus Vote Fellow will have access to the report as well as act as a guide to creating events for the upcoming semester. Departmental meetings as well as specialty meetings with stakeholders will act as the space in which the plan is shared so all can further engage with providing students with the opportunity to engage in civic engagement information. The action plan will be highlighted through digestible posts on LEAD and Serves social media. The NSLVE data will act as a guide in planning any future collaboration and event planning. By using the NSLVE data to drive events, the department, the Division of Student Affairs, and all areas committed to this work can tailor events and information to students who may not have been given the opportunity to engage in civic learning and democratic participation.