

# Florida International University



## Civic Action Plan 2024 Voter Friendly Campus

## OVERVIEW

Florida International University (FIU) was founded as Miami's public university in 1965 with a unique mission and a name embodying its call to embrace international perspectives. FIU was born to serve our community and to prepare our students to become leaders, scholars and engaged citizens. The university's vision was cemented on a bronze plaque unveiled on the university's opening day on September 14, 1972.

The plaque, which is still displayed on FIU's first building, Primera Casa, states the university's goals:

1. Education of Students — including to help them “becom[e]... effective members of the society and [to] offer... them an appreciation of their relation to their...environments.”
2. Service to the community — serving in a manner that enhances the metropolitan area's capability to meet the challenges it faces.
3. Greater international understanding — “creating greater mutual understanding among the Americas and throughout the world.”

Today, FIU is proud to be one of the country's leading Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI). FIU is a vital catalyst for community engagement and enrichment in South Florida, having produced more than 325,000 graduates. FIU serves more than 55,000 students. The university is designated as a Carnegie R1 Very High Research Activity institution and has earned Carnegie's elective classification for community engagement. FIU has been recognized in the Top 10 national universities by Degree Choices for return on investment, and Washington Monthly ranked FIU among the top 20 universities in the nation based on its commitment to social mobility, public service, and research.

At FIU, we understand that civic engagement and education are crucial in the lives and development of our students. The university provides a variety of curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings that allow students to explore what it means to be a good citizen and to work for the public good. FIU produces not only brilliant scholars, but civically minded, informed leaders who contribute their talent, knowledge and time to making the world a better place. Our alumni have reached top positions around the country in areas ranging from engineering, the arts and education to foreign affairs, policy development and advocacy.

In recognition of FIU's commitment, the university has received designation as a Voter Friendly Campus three times in the last several years. We know our students are the

future. That is why we continually strive to deepen our civic engagement efforts and why we have made it our goal to earn the Voter Friendly Campus designation once again.

We will focus on the following three goals during the fall semester:

- 1) Providing students with experiences on a civically engaged campus
- 2) Showcasing pathways for students to be involved in civic leadership and democratic engagement
- 3) Establishing campus-wide communication and refreshing the content of the [vote.fiu.edu](http://vote.fiu.edu) webpage.

## **COALITION**

FIU continues to support civic engagement and the Voter Friendly Campus Coalition. This coalition is comprised of campus-wide leaders, administrators, students, and academic units. The committee is led by the Center for Leadership & Service (CLS) and is supported by the Office of Analysis and Information (AIM), both within the Division of Academic & Student Affairs. This collaboration between CLS and AIM was established to ensure that there was seamless integration between tracking campus activities, measuring success, and supporting data collection/analysis. The coalition's goals are to increase voter awareness, registration, and engagement for all students at FIU.

Members of the coalition:

- Patricia Lopez-Guerrero, Director, Center for Leadership and Service
- Hiselgis Perez, Associate Vice President, Analysis and Information Management
- Anthony Teague, Director of Operations and Outreach, Center for Community Impact and Public Purpose
- Anthony Rionda, Associate Vice President for Strategic Communications, Government and External Affairs; Co-Executive Director, Center for Community Impact & Public Purpose
- Bridgette Cram, Vice President, Academic Affairs: Student Success Operations and Integrated Planning; Co-Executive Director, Center for Community Impact & Public Purpose
- Gisela Valencia, Senior Writer, Strategic Communications, Government and External Affairs
- Agatha Caraballo, Director of the Maurice A. Ferre Institute for Civic Leadership
- Pablo Menvielle, Project Coordinator, Analysis and Information Management
- Anthony Dick, Professor, Psychology, College of Arts, Sciences, and Education

- Connie Penczak, Assistant Director, Office of Global Learning Initiatives
- Amanda Knapp, Coordinator, Maurice A. Ferre Institute for Civic Leadership
- Stephen Dominy, Director, Center for Fraternity & Sorority Enrichment
- Sophie Loureiro, Engagement Program Manager, Honors College
- Student Representatives from on campus organizations: Student Government Association, Registered Student Organization Council, Student Programming Council, etc.

The Voter Friendly Campus Coalition is charged with multiple responsibilities: to meet at least once per term, collaborate asynchronously throughout the year in a dedicated Microsoft Teams site, and to track campus-wide civic learning and democratic engagement student activities and involvement. As a group, we've evaluated the NSLVE 2020 report and data on voting engagement to identify recommendations for improvement. The group's analysis of data allows the team to recognize ongoing initiatives, make recommendations, and attempt to quantify the impact of these initiatives on civic engagement.

## **DESCRIPTION OF OUR WORK**

FIU continues to build our capacity to scale our student's civic leadership and social engagement. This fall, our focus is to create experiences for students regarding the four pillars of engagement: Voter Registration, Education, Voter Turnout, and Students as Voter Advocates. We plan to focus on three goals related to voter engagement this year: 1) Provide students with experiences on a civically engaged campus; 2) Showcase pathways for students to be involved in civic leadership & democratic engagement. 3) Establish campus-wide communication and to refresh the content of the [vote.fiu.edu](http://vote.fiu.edu) webpage. Our coalition and campus partners are working to create the following activities and events to prepare students to be election ready.

### **Voter Registration**

- Outreach & Tabling — Collaborate with the Miami-Dade County Elections Office, student organizations, and other non-profit organizations to promote ongoing voter registration.
- Student Organization and Greek Lettered social organizations are planning opportunities to create voter registration awareness.

### **Voter Education**

- Academic Partnerships, Curricular Engagement, Guest Lecturers:
  - Invite community leaders to present and engage the students at events aimed at fostering an active community. The idea is for the guest speakers to

engage the participants on both the personal and community levels. These voter education events are aimed at helping students examine their environment and seeing how and why it takes engagement to make it a better place.

- The Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs is a leader in academic partnerships. The Maurice A. Ferre Institute for Civic Learning was established to be the hub for civic leadership & learning. The institute's goals include an undergraduate/graduate Certificate in Civic Leadership, Micro-credential, Civics Education and Public Service Hub, Research and Policy Analysis, and Public Engagement.
- Launch new [vote.fiu.edu](http://vote.fiu.edu) website to feature previous voter friendly campus designations, share upcoming involvements, and voter deadlines.
- The Office of Global Learning will host two Tuesday Times Roundtables featuring civic learning.

### **Voter Turnout**

- The Center for Leadership & Service Office will co-host events for national voter registration day and support student engagement initiatives. This department will also encourage students to record impacts related to civic learning and democratic engagement on their GivePulse profile.
- Support Student Government *Panthers to the Poll* initiatives.
- As FIU has been designated as a Miami Dade County Early Voting Site, continue to highlight this as an option to encourage voter turnout.

### **Students as Voter Advocates**

- Promote volunteer opportunities as poll workers for the Miami Dade Elections office.
- Support campus-wide “get out the vote” initiatives.
- Identify opportunities to host debates and election watch parties.

### **TIMELINE**

We are in the process of confirming our timeline and program strategy throughout the summer semester for fall event execution. Several methods will be used to follow attendance and track student interest and event attendance. This will aid us as we organize voter engagement programming for the next election cycle. We will begin early communication with students and use data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to measure if our programs help increase or decrease civic involvement among our students. We have already hosted events, such as our Spring Voter

Registration initiative, that took place in March. We will continue to track these events to document impact.

Our hope is that students who demonstrate a passion for civic issues will take on leadership roles within our initiatives. We aim to provide students with a platform and the resources necessary to further engage other students. The goal is ultimately to inspire and empower students to take on the responsibility of passing on the sense of civic duty to their fellow peers. These events will target our undergraduate and graduate students and take place at our Modesto A. Maidique and Biscayne Bay campuses. Some specific examples of these events include:

#### Implementation Timeline:

##### Summer 2024 (complete by August 18, 2024):

- Generate ideas and plan programming;
- Identify partners and confirm campus-wide collaborations;
- Finalize data collection plan;
- Create marketing campaign

##### Fall 2024:

- Event roll out;
- Highlight curricular/co-curricular events and educational programs;
- Voter registration drives;
- Feature civic holidays:
  - National Voter Registration Day, September 17, 2024
  - National Voter Education Week, October 7 – 11, 2024
  - Early Voting
- Highlight FIU's designation as an early voting site.

##### Spring 2025:

- Data Collection and final report

## **SUCCESS**

FIU defines success as a coordinated effort to ensure we are providing students with access to education and opportunities to develop as civic leaders. We view success as our ability to accomplish the following:

- To instill and nourish in our students a sense of civic duty and global citizenship.
- To foster the growth of leaders that are well-prepared in their fields and can utilize their expertise for the public good.
- To positively impact the local and global communities through the university's programs, initiatives, and partnerships, as well as through the leadership of FIU students.

Concretely, success means 1) organizing and hosting meaningful events that inform students about the history and significance of civic duty and 2) reaching students as documented through program/event attendance and/or participation. We measure success based on the quality of the event/educational offering itself as well as audience turnout and impact.

We consider a civic engagement initiative/event successful if the programming adheres to certain criteria such as providing key information about civic duty; showcasing opportunities or internships related to civic engagement; or offering a platform where students can prepare to participate in their civic duties.

We also consider our efforts successful if we reach students (i.e., if students attend the program/event, post about it on social media, tell others about the event, etc.). In general terms, the more students we reach, the more successful we believe our efforts have been. However, we know that different programs may have different impact; but we believe reaching students in myriad ways is key to accomplishing our goal of meeting students where they are. We know that one student leader can make a difference among the entire student body, and if that one student leader becomes passionate about civic duty at our programming, then that is proof of our impact. Therefore, we also measure success by the qualitative feedback we receive from students.

Additionally, we will also utilize NSLVE data to measure if our programs successfully contributed to an increase or decrease in voter turnout among our students. This data will also help us identify opportunities for future programming among academic units.