

Civic Engagement Action Plan 2022-2023

Fort Lewis College Civic Engagement Collaborative

Executive Summary

Our mission: The Fort Lewis College Civic Engagement Collaborative is a group of students, faculty, staff, and community members dedicated to civic engagement and civil dialogue. We are here to help FLC students and community members stay informed and take action on the issues they care about. Whether that means voting, awareness raising, contacting elected officials, or other forms of advocacy, FLC Engage is here to help so that students feel that they are prepared, informed, and effectively engaged.

Guiding principles:

- **Engaged:** We want to help empower all FLC community members to be agents of change for the issues they care about.
- **Non-partisan:** We do not take sides in partisan battles or advocate for specific political parties or candidates.
- **Inclusive:** We invite all community members regardless of identity, creed, or ideology to respectfully participate in engaging their political world.
- **Principled:** We stand up for democratic practices and voting rights for all citizens in our diverse communities.

Goals:

Short-term (Fall 2022):

- **65% turnout and 85% registration in the November 2022 general elections**, which translates to maintaining and slightly improving the 2020 presidential election numbers (64.4% voting rate, 84% registration rate) during this midterm election. Our 2020 numbers were a big improvement, up from 34.2% turnout and 72.4% registration in the 2018 midterm elections and 53.6% turnout and 79.4% registration in the 2016 elections. We hope to consolidate and build upon these gains, and we will measure our progress towards / away from this goal by comparing data from the [National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement \(NSLVE\)](#) on FLC registration and turnout from previous elections to our 2022 rates.
- **Provide resources** for students, staff, and faculty to engage their communities in ways that are most exciting, meaningful, and impactful to them.
- Make progress in **closing engagement opportunity gaps** across demographic groups (e.g. youngest students, students of color, students from lower socioeconomic statuses) and academic departments (e.g. low-turnout majors) based upon NSLVE data from 2016-2020.

Long-term:

- Encourage **engaged citizenship** as an integral part of the **Skyhawk identity**.
- **Create culture of excitement around civic engagement** at FLC and in the community.
- **Institutionalize** civic engagement in both curricular and co-curricular activities (e.g. annual events/campaigns, outreach in FLC100 (the first year launch class), Canvas module for instructors).

Leadership:

Involved:

- Paul DeBell, Associate Professor of Political Science | FLC Engage Coordinator and Political Science Club Faculty Advisor
- Carter Rogers, President, Associated Students of Fort Lewis College
- Raina Schmidt, Vice President, Associated Students of Fort Lewis College
- Ruth Alminas, Associate Professor of Political Science | ASFLC Faculty Advisor
- Brittany Bitsilly, President, FLC Political Science Club | ASFLC Senator
- Briana McDaniel, Vice President, FLC Political Science Club
- Matthew Schaeffer, Secretary, FLC Political Science Club | FLC Engagement Specialist | ASFLC Justice
- Jose Rentira, Treasurer, FLC Political Science Club
- Dominick Damper, FLC Engagement Specialist
- Nicolette Manning, Co-curricular and Leaderships Programming Coordinator
- Laurie Meininger, President, League of Women Voters of La Plata County
- Director of the Student Involvement Center (job search currently open)
- Student Engagement Specialists Dominick Damper and Matthew Schaeffer

Involvement wish list:

- President Tom Stritikus
- Provost Cheryl Nixon
- All Deans and VPs
- New director of Student Involvement Center
- New VP of DEI and Indigenous Affairs
- Affinity Centers (Black Student Resource Center, Centro de Muchos Colores, Native American Center, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center)

Our group plans to meet Mondays 5-6pm in Noble 276.

We are also partnering with the following organizations and individuals to support our efforts on campus:

- New Era Colorado
- League of Women Voters of La Plata County
- La Plata County Clerk Tiffany Lee
- Students Learn Student Vote Coalition
- All-in Campus Democracy Challenge and Colorado Voting Challenge
- Ask Every Student

Commitment:

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. One such value states: “Community Engagement: Honor our historic commitment to Native American and Alaska Native education and work towards reconciling our complicated past; Connect faculty, staff, and student expertise to a range of community priorities and interests; Build programs that respond to and serve regional and global needs; Collaborate across settings to support economic and workforce development; Learn from and engage in our diverse natural and cultural environments”

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

On campus, we've seen:

- The development and dissemination of voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- On campus polling place
- Voter registration tables
- Protests / rallies / walkouts
- Signage promoting Election Day

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Deliberative dialogues in the form of the Community by Conversation series and other FLC Engagement forums.

The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased.

Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2021 when our total student enrollment was 3443.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
97.00%	3.00%	14.00%	86.00%

In-State	Out-of-State	On-Campus Residents
45.00%	55.00%	42.00%

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
46.00%	54.00%	Unknown	Unknown

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
	42.00%	2.00%	13.00%	0.00%	43.00%	10.00%

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

- Ask Every Student First Step Form
- National Survey of Student Engagement

They help to inform our institution's civic learning and democratic engagement efforts by scaffolding engagement designs and providing data to set goals and track progress.

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):

- Provide an **FLC Engage Canvas module** with key registration and voting information for all students, including engagement assignment/discussion templates for instructors to tailor to their own disciplines.
- Reach out to faculty with opportunities for **classroom visits** to talk all things voting and help students register, partnering with New Era Colorado (Aly Belknam, New Era CO Senior Organizing Manager: alainna@neweracolorado.org, Gracia Seeley, Western Slope Organizer graciaseeley@neweracolorado.org)
- Collaborate with the League of Women Voters of La Plata County in introductory political science classrooms to produce **student voter education videos** on Colorado's many ballot initiatives, and share these resources during a public event, on social media, on our website, and on YouTube.
- Promote **Civic Holidays** on campus with resources from Civic Holidays partners.
- Execute a Political Analysis Lab **Study of FLC Student Engagement** in conjunction with ASLFC student services student needs survey.

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

- Include opportunities to register in **orientation** materials and events, and provide office hours during orientation and the first week of class for voter services and to meet with FLC Engage students.
- Develop robust **resources** for civic engagement and civic learning as well as a **calendar of events** on our website, www.flcengage.org.
- Develop a team that can use our new email address (engage@fortlewis.edu) and regular office hours / tabling to answer any student registration, voting, and engagement questions.
- Hold expanded **in-person programming** for civic holidays, engagement events, etc. in addition to online outreach to create a more concrete sense of excitement and celebration around engagement and voting.
- **Building a faculty engagement champion program** by which faculty are incentivized and empowered to integrate civic engagement into their classrooms. See [Guide to building a faculty champion program](#) and [template](#) by Ask Every Student

Co-Curricular engagement event timeline:

1. **Faculty retreat:** Introduce Canvas FLC Engage module with resources and lesson plans to try and reach every student.
2. **New Student Orientation:**
 - a. Orientation Handbook greeting from FLC Engage with info on our website and how to contact us
 - b. Engagement and voting tabling/"office hours" at student union during lunch/dinner rushes during orientation and welcome week.

3. **Constitution Day, Saturday, September 17.** Campuswide communication on Indigenous women in the justice system and their experiences interpreting and applying the constitution, coordinated by Visiting Assistant Professor Becca Robinson.
4. **National voter registration day, September 20.** Campuswide social and email communications with registration and voting info
5. **La Plata County Candidate Forum** (Commissioner, Treasurer races) September 28 5-7pm on Zoom.
6. **National Voter Education Week,** October 3-7: Social media campaign via FLC official channels
7. **Ballots mailed in La Plata county,** October 17 (see [CO 2022 elections calendar](#))
8. **Attorney General Philip Weiser visit on public service,** October 17, 4pm Noble 130
9. **Ballot initiative event** with analysis by FLC students co-hosted w/ LWV 10/25, Noble 130
 - a. Students in Paul DeBell's Introduction to Political Science course (PS101 – 2 sections) will present short (3-5 minute), carefully-researched, nonpartisan videos for each issue on the ballot.
 - b. Michele Malach's Media Literacy class will consult on video presentation (First Year Lens section w/ PS 101)
 - c. La Plata County League of Women Voters volunteers will work with student groups on conducting and presenting nonpartisan ballot research.
 - d. Event successful with 60+ students in attendance and no leftover pizza!
10. **Vote Early Day, Friday 10/28:** Social media communication
11. **Run-up to elections:** New Era CO partners phone banking to encourage student turnout
12. **Election Hero Day, Monday 11/7 and Election Day, Tues. Tuesday 11/8** Social media outreach with information, tabling at student union reminding students of voter services center on campus
13. **Ray Boucher keynote talk on civic purpose 11/8,** 1pm Student Union Ballroom
14. **Community by Conversation Event / Student Senate Open House on Student Concerns 11/15 (tentatively) with support from PS304 Political Psychology Event**
15. **Panel on ICWA case in front of the Supreme Court in mid/late Nov?**

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

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 84%. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased. In 2020, our voting rate was 64.4% and our voting rate among registered students was 76.7%. While this is a great improvement over previous years, our voting rate was still lower than the national average.

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

Reporting and 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

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

- Post on the FLC Engage website

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Sending an election survey to students (PAL study)
- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts

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