

Georgia State University

Democratic Engagement Action Plan
Student Civic Engagement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Director of Student Civic Engagement at Georgia State University, it is my pleasure to share with you our 2024-2025 campus action plan for voter engagement. Our plan was developed by a large collaborative team comprised of faculty, staff, and students from all campuses with input from community stakeholders and election officials. The plan is inclusive of all six GSU campuses.

The core mission and goal of our campus action plan is to increase the number of GSU students that vote in presidential, mid-term and local elections. In the short term, Georgia State aims to increase voter turnout from 69.6% (2020 Presidential election) to 73%. (2024 Presidential Election). Our long-term goal is to increase voter turnout to 80% in the 2034 presidential election and 70% in 2032 midterm elections.

To achieve our goals, we plan to build upon the success of previous voter engagement efforts.

These strategies include:

- Continued facilitation of a large, collaborative working team that is committed to engaging students in the democratic process.
- Utilizing one main message to send to students: visit vote.gsu.edu.
- Hosting collaborative in-person and online events with faculty and student groups so we reach a broader audience.
- Enhancing our web resources for students, faculty, and staff.
- Developing clear guidance for external parties wanting to “partner” or come to campus to promote voter engagement.

2024 is already gearing up to be a very heated election season, and our department has begun receiving numerous inquiries from internal and external stakeholders asking how they can participate in our voter engagement efforts. Our campus action plan not only guides our work but has become an important guide in navigating the many questions and concerns of external constituents. While it is updated annually, our campus action plan is a living, working document and we are regularly adding ideas and strategies to reach our goals. It has become a very helpful tool, and we appreciate your support and guidance in this process.

In Service,
Ellin
Ellin McDonough, Director
Student Civic Engagement
Georgia State University

LEADERSHIP

Voter Engagement efforts are coordinated out of Georgia State University's Student Civic Engagement office. Student Civic Engagement facilitates a voter engagement working group of all relevant stakeholders (across 5 categories) that is responsible for the development and implementation of Georgia State's campus action plan. The team includes representatives from academic affairs, student affairs, and students; as well as the local election office. Student Civic Engagement plans and convenes meetings every semester, and monthly during plan implementation times. The group maintains regular contact through a Microsoft Teams channel. Below is a list of members:

GSU Voter Engagement Working Group

Ellin McDonough	*lead	Director, Student Civic Engagement; Atlanta campus
Shanika Harvey	*lead	Coordinator, Student Civic Engagement; Atlanta campus
Ashley Anderson		Student, Democracy Fellow, Panthers Vote Coalition
Leigh Barton		Georgia State Athletics
Boyd Beckwith		Senior Director, Student Center; Atlanta campus
Jeffrey Benson		Associate Director, Student Life and Fraternity and Sorority Life; Atlanta campus
Jez Catambay-Lopez		Associate Director Student Life; Clarkston campus
Kristina Clement		Director of Leadership Development; Atlanta campus
Andrew Cohen		Associate Professor, Philosophy; Atlanta campus
Perry Culverson		Assistant Director, Student Life (Newton); Newton campus
Carolyn Curasi		Associate Professor, College of Business; Atlanta campus
Kristen Delaney		WPN with the Georgia State Foundation; Atlanta campus
Patrick Elliott		lecturer, History and Political Science; Decatur campus
Michael Evans		Senior Lecturer, Political Science; Atlanta campus
Heather Housley		Assistant Vice President for Student Engagement; Atlanta campus
Morris Jones		Assistant Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life; Atlanta campus
Theodora Johnson		Assistant Dean of Students; Dunwoody campus
LaShandra Little		Voter Education and Outreach Manager, Fulton County
Registration & Elections		
Ritu Lohtia		Associate Professor, Marketing, College of Business; Atlanta campus
Nikki Marshall		Administrative Assistant, Human Resources; Atlanta campus
Jennifer McCoy		Professor of Political Science; Atlanta campus
Andy Soe Myint		Student- Clarkston Campus, Social Justice Advocate,
Panthers Vote Coalition		

Crystal Moody campus	Career and Employer Relations Specialist, Athletics; Atlanta
Scott Pieper	Librarian Instructor; Decatur campus
Amanda Puche campus	Director of Development, Andrew Young School; Atlanta
Maddie Riddell	Student, Director of Serve@State
Michael Sanseviro	Vice President of Student Engagement; Atlanta campus
LaTia Sinclair	Associate Director, Multicultural Center; Atlanta campus
Adam Stone Sciences; Alpharetta	Associate Professor, Associate Department Chair for Social
Gail Sutton	Director, Student Life; Atlanta campus
Romina Torres-Aranda	Director, Undergraduate Admissions; Atlanta campus
Rebecca Rakoczy campus	Coordinator of Marketing and Public Relations; Decatur
Barbara Robertson Studies; Newton campus	Lecturer of History, Political Science and African American
John Ross	Elections Chief, Fulton County Registration & Elections
Denise Turner campus	Assistant Professor, History and Political Science; Dunwoody
Aprille Williams	Assistant Director, Student Life; Alpharetta campus

COMMITMENT

Georgia State University is deeply committed to enhancing democratic engagement as a core aspect of its institutional mission and values. Recognizing the vital role that active civic participation plays in fostering informed, responsible citizens, GSU has undertaken a comprehensive approach to instill democratic principles throughout its academic and extracurricular activities.

Integration into Mission and Values:

Georgia State's commitment to democratic engagement is explicitly woven into its mission statement. The university acknowledges the significance of preparing students not only for successful careers but also as active contributors to their communities and society at large. This commitment is further underscored by values such as collaboration, openness, inclusion, and integrity.

Curricular and Co-Curricular Initiatives:

Georgia State actively promotes democratic engagement through both curricular and co-curricular avenues. GSU integrates civic education into its academic programs, fostering an environment where students can explore issues related to democracy, governance, and social responsibility. Beyond the classroom, the university supports

extracurricular activities, clubs, and events that encourage students to actively engage in civic discourse.

While civic learning and democratic engagement is threaded throughout Georgia State's academic programs, the below colleges and programs represent the "drivers" of most of GSU's CLDE initiatives:

Andrew Young School of Policy Studies

We enroll more than 2,100 students each semester in sought-after degree programs in public economics, public management and policy, criminal justice and criminology, social work and urban studies. Our strong coursework provides students with the skills and knowledge needed to address the tough problems facing communities, government and nonprofit agencies.

Political Science Department

To prepare students to be critical thinkers, creative problem solvers and responsible citizens, our programs emphasize both classroom instruction and distinctive opportunities to observe and participate in the political process. The department is home to the Political Survey Research lab, Model Teams, and the Zoukis Research Collaborative.

The Jean Beer Blumenfeld Center for Ethics

To enhance moral reflection, dialogue and constructive action on campus, in greater Atlanta and beyond.

The Georgia State University Center for Human Rights and Democracy

To create a major interdisciplinary, collaborative program focused on the contemporary and comparative study of human rights and democracy.

College of Law

In the heart of downtown Atlanta, law students can walk from the classroom to the courtroom. Faculty, alumni and students dare to ask tough questions and see the law as a mechanism for problem-solving. "We are committed to the pursuit of justice. We provide a world-class education for the courageous, committed and curious." The College of Law is home to the Center for Access to Justice.

Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement: Co-Curricular Opportunities

There are many ways students can become involved in civic learning and democratic engagement outside of class.

Below are the main co-curricular "drivers" of civic learning and democratic engagement:

Leadership Programs

Leadership Programs provide a variety of programs and services to assist students in developing their leadership potential and considering how they can positively influence their individual communities.

Student Civic Engagement

Student Civic Engagement promotes and encourages community service and service-learning opportunities, while enhancing student learning, advancing community development and responding to societal issues and concerns.

Student Organizations

College Republicans

History and Political Science Club

Ignite

Panthers Vote Coalition

Student Government Association

Young Democrats

Young Democratic Socialists of America

Further evidence of Georgia State's commitment to voter education, voter registration and voter engagement is demonstrated by:

- Georgia State provides free space and staffing as an "advance polling pop-up site" for Fulton County Board of Elections
- Inclusion of voter registration and voting deadlines on student's main online portals: Icollege and PAWS;
- Campus broadcast messaging reminders about voting deadlines;
- Hiring of a full-time staff member, whose work is dedicated to voter engagement;
- Purchase and use of Turbovote;
- Participation in NSLVE, and
- Signed President's All IN Challenge commitment

By weaving democratic engagement into the fabric of its mission, values, curriculum, partnerships, and community involvement, GSU demonstrates a robust institutional commitment to preparing students as informed, active, and responsible participants in a democratic society.

LANDSCAPE

The analysis of student data at Georgia State reveals encouraging trends in democratic engagement. Surveys and assessments indicate that a significant portion of the student body demonstrates a keen interest in civic participation and social responsibility. This is evident through increased involvement in campus organizations focused on civic engagement, as well as participation in community service and volunteer activities. Additionally, student-led initiatives, such as voter registration drives and awareness campaigns, showcase a palpable enthusiasm for democratic processes among GSU students.

Georgia State participates in NSLVE and our voter engagement team uses NSLVE data to inform strategies that increase student voter registration and voting. Our NSLVE report can be viewed here:

<https://allinchallenge.org/wp-content/uploads/Georgia-State-University-NSLVE-Report-2020.pdf>

(<https://allinchallenge.org/wp-content/uploads/Georgia-State-University-NSLVE-Report-2020.pdf>) A review of NSLVE findings shows that Georgia State has seen a steady increase in student voting across all races/ethnicities and ages. This is very exciting, and we feel that, by continuing and improving upon our efforts, we can reach our goal of 72% voting in the 2024 election. In 2020, there was a significant increase in early voting, and we will continue to educate students on the opportunity to vote early in elections as a strategy.

Current Institutional Efforts:

Georgia State currently offers a robust, comprehensive plan to increase democratic engagement among its students. By having a large voter engagement working group with wide representation, we are able to review data through multiple lenses as well as target very specific areas. For example, by having administrators on our working group, we are able to get approval to post voter registration and voting deadlines on PAWS, I-College, Turbovote and send out campus wide broadcasts (emails).

Athletics makes a great effort to push vote.gsu.edu at all athletic events, and the campus marketing team provides valuable support in developing vote.gsu.edu websites and marketing “bling” encouraging voting. Our faculty team members create exciting programming about voting, political issues, the constitution, and regularly invite candidates to campus. Our students and student groups post important voter education information on social media and host debates, watch parties and tabling. The Fulton County Board of Elections regularly visits campus and partners with Georgia State to be an advanced polling site.

GOALS

Short-Term Desired Democratic Engagement Results (By Next Election):

Increased Voter Turnout:

In the short term, Georgia State aims to significantly increase voter turnout among its student body. Specifically, our goal is to increase student voter turnout from 69.6% (2020 Presidential election) to 73%. (2024 Presidential Election). The university will implement targeted campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of voting, provide resources for voter registration, and facilitate easy access to polling locations. The goal is to see a measurable uptick in student participation in the next election.

Enhanced Civic Education Programs:

GSU intends to expand and strengthen its civic education programs in the short term. This includes organizing workshops on democratic processes, and offering resources that help students understand local and national issues. By the next election, the institution aims to observe a notable increase in students' understanding of the political landscape and their ability to critically engage with it.

Diverse and Inclusive Dialogue Platforms:

Short-term objectives include fostering a campus environment where diverse perspectives are actively sought and respected. Georgia State will work towards creating platforms for open and inclusive dialogue, ensuring that students from all backgrounds feel comfortable expressing their opinions. This inclusivity is crucial for building a vibrant democratic community on campus.

Community Partnerships for Civic Engagement:

Georgia State seeks to establish or strengthen partnerships with local community organizations and governmental bodies to create opportunities for students to actively participate in civic activities. These partnerships will enable students to connect their academic learning to real-world civic engagement experiences, fostering a sense of responsibility and community involvement.

Long-Term Desired Democratic Engagement Results (In the Next Decade or Two Election Cycles):

Sustained High Voter Turnout:

Over the long term, GSU aims to establish a culture of consistent and high voter turnout among its student population. Our long-term goal is to increase voter turnout to 80% in the 2034 presidential election and 70% in 2032 midterm elections. By cultivating a

sense of civic duty and the habit of active political participation, the university envisions that students will continue to engage in the democratic process throughout their lives.

Institutionalization of Civic Education:

GSU's long-term goal is the full integration of civic education into its institutional framework. This involves not only maintaining strong curricular components but also ensuring that civic education becomes a lasting and inherent aspect of the university experience. This includes ongoing professional development for faculty, updated course offerings, and innovative approaches to teaching civic literacy.

Alumni as Engaged Civic Leaders:

Looking ahead, GSU envisions its graduates actively participating as leaders in civic, political, and community spheres. The long-term goal is to produce alumni who are not only successful in their careers but are also deeply committed to contributing to the betterment of society through informed and active democratic engagement.

By pursuing these short-term and long-term objectives, GSU seeks to establish itself as a model institution for democratic engagement, fostering a community of students and alumni who are actively involved in shaping the future of their communities and society at large.

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

Georgia State participates in NSLVE and our voter engagement team uses NSLVE data to inform strategies that increase student voter registration and voting. Our complete NSLVE report can be viewed here:

<https://allinchallenge.org/wp-content/uploads/Georgia-State-University-NSLVE-Report-2020.pdf>

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CAMPUS REPORT: Georgia State University

Looking Closer

Voting and Registration Rates

	2016	2018	2020	2016-2020 Change (p.p.)
Total Student Enrollment	47,500	49,050	49,273	↑ 1,773
(Age under 18/Unknown)	-	-	-	-
(IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens)	2,721	2,694	2,643	↓ -78
(FERPA records blocked)	37	26	16	↓ -21
(Non-Degree Seeking Students)	-	1,024	-	-
Total eligible voters	44,742	45,304	46,613	↑ 1,870
Number of students who registered	34,406	37,203	40,898	↑ 6,492
Number of students who voted	24,877	24,202	32,425	↑ 7,548
Registration Rate %	77	82	88	↑ 11
Voting Rate of Registered Students %	72	65	79	↑ 7
Voting Rate %	56	53	70	↑ 14

This page provides the numbers we used to calculate your voting, registration, and yield rates. The sub-categories under total student enrollment are the adjustments that we make to account for students who are ineligible to vote due to age or citizenship status. We also exclude, when correctly flagged, students who are not pursuing degrees.

We use IPEDS-derived estimates of NRAs when institutions do not submit non-resident alien status data to NSC, or we cannot verify the accuracy of the reported counts. This estimate is given by "IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens" on this page. If you believe the number of international students reported on this report is incorrect, you can manually adjust your institution's voting rates by using our recalculation tool. <https://td.tufts.edu/nsolve/nsolve-recalculation-tool>.

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The above table showcases an upward trend in registered Georgia State student voters (88%) and voting rates (70%).

In taking a closer look at race/ethnicity NSLVE data, we saw an increase in all groups. White students voted at the highest rate (76%) and Asian students voted at the lowest rate (43%). When looking at age, all age groups showed an increase. Students over 40 years of age voted at a rate of 10% or higher than their younger counterparts. Females voted at a higher rate (68%) than males (62%). Undergraduates and graduate students voted at almost the same rate. Of note, first year students voted at a much lower rate (61%) than upper-level students (71%).

In considering NSLVE data, an opportunity exists to increase our student voter rates by focusing additional outreach on males, and first year students.

REPORTING

Georgia State's Action plan, data, and reports are readily available and shared internally with faculty and staff. The Democratic Engagement Action Plan is posted on the All In website, and NSLVE data is available to the public. Currently, they are not available on the Georgia State website.

EVALUATION

The voter engagement working group reviews and evaluates the Democratic Engagement Action Plan annually, then makes revisions as needed. When reviewing, the following measures are considered:

Google Analytics: Google Analytics are set up to track the number of visitors to our vote.gsu.edu site. With this mechanism, we can see when/if our marketing is driving people to the site, and what type of voter education they are looking for.

Turbovote: Turbovote provides data on student's visit to site and inquiries.

Focus Group: Student focus groups are facilitated annually to better understand the student decision making process when determining whether to register and vote

Event Attendance: To the extent possible, the number of students who attend voter engagement events will be tracked.

NSLVE: Ultimately, NSLVE data is used to track how many students registered and participated in elections and is one of the better tools to measure success. Because the

NSLVE report comes a year AFTER the election has concluded, it will be important to return to this plan and report so connections can be made.

STRATEGY

The below strategies are additional efforts, and have been developed for 2024-2025:

Facilitate Civic Engagement Workshops and Seminars:

Long Term Strategy: Host regular workshops and seminars on campus, covering topics such as voter education, political literacy, and community involvement. These events provide students with practical knowledge and skills necessary for active democratic engagement. The university collaborates with faculty, guest speakers, and community leaders to facilitate these informative sessions.

Short term strategy: Facilitate Constitution Week, Natl Voter Registration Day, Election Watch Parties, Political Coffee Talks.

Increase Student-Led Voter Engagement Initiatives:

Long Term Strategy- Actively support and encourage the formation of student organizations dedicated to civic engagement. These groups organize events, campaigns, and projects that promote awareness, voter registration, and community service. The university provides resources, mentorship, and logistical support to amplify the impact of these initiatives.

Short Term Strategy: Provide support to existing organizations Serve@State and Panthers Vote Coalition, and Student Government. Provide stipends for student clubs and orgs that agree to host a voter engagement event. Recognize voter engagement efforts at Royal Flame Awards

Develop Community Partnerships:

Long Term Strategy: Georgia State collaborates with local community organizations, governmental bodies, and non-profits to create meaningful opportunities for students to engage with civic issues. These partnerships extend beyond traditional classroom settings, providing students with real-world experiences that connect academic learning to practical civic engagement.

Short Term Strategy: Serve as polling site for Fulton County Board of Elections. Host Fulton County Election's "Voter Bus", Create guidance for external partners and political candidates when requesting to engage Georgia State students, Invite non-partisan community partners, who promote voter engagement, to attend the Social Impact Expo.

Deepen Integration of Civic Engagement:

Long Term Strategy: Increase curricular civic engagement opportunities through professional development for faculty, updated course offerings and resources, and innovative approaches to teaching civic literacy.

Short Term Strategy: Propose/Develop voter education module for the GSU 101 course, Develop website for faculty resources, Support faculty/staff attendance to the CLDE national conference.