



**Center for  
Civic Engagement**

**Lone Star College – Montgomery  
Center for Civic Engagement**

# **Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan**

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[Lonestar.edu/MontgomeryCivicEngagement](https://lonestar.edu/MontgomeryCivicEngagement)

## Executive Summary

This action plan has been developed by the Lone Star College-Montgomery Center for Civic Engagement Campus Coordinator, Michele Richey. This plan was developed as a part of the application process to be designated a Voter Friendly Campus, a program facilitated by the Campus Vote Project and will be used to clarify the mission of the LSC-M CCE regarding voter registration/education/motivation. It will be used as a set of goals for the 2022-2023 Academic Year as well as a guiding document for future goal setting to be done for each academic year.

Lone Star College is a community college system in south-eastern Texas. It is made up of 8 colleges, 8 workforce centers of excellence, 5 centers, 2 university centers, 10 additional centers, and 15 ISD partners. In the Fall 2021 semester, the system facilitated the education of close to 80,000 students through virtual, hybrid, and in-person classes and programs.

Lone Star College-Montgomery is one of those campuses and is where this plan will be put into action. It is the second largest college in the system, and in the Spring 2022 semester accounted for around 19% of the system's students, or close to 15,000. It is in Conroe Texas and the surrounding political environment and state and local politics falls mainly within Republican/Conservative ideology. As a result, programming on behalf of the LSC-M CCE is often scrutinized very closely by community members concerned about "liberal bias."

This plan was developed with equity and inclusion of our diverse student population in mind. This was done by ensuring programming is non-partisan yet focused on providing accurate, research backed information. In addition, programming was designed to ensure access to our students with disabilities and/or English as a second language. Finally, in response to active voter disenfranchisement legislation enacted by the state of Texas, our action plan tries to address these barriers to voting through our information campaigns and programming.

Despite this scrutiny, LSC and specifically LSC-M have been very supportive of civic engagement efforts for many years now. The LSC-M CCE has been provided with a healthy budget that includes a stipend for the faculty member serving as the Campus Coordinator. The program falls within the Academic Excellence (ACE) Division, which also includes the Library, Student Tutoring and Research Center, and the Faculty Resource Center. The LSC-M CCE has 1 faculty campus coordinator and the ability to hire work-study student workers. Most programming is facilitated by the Campus Coordinator with the support of committees and the ACE Division staff and it is the Campus Coordinator who will be in charge if implementing and assessing this plan, under the guide of the ACE Division Dean.

This plan not only reflects the culture of the LSC-M CCE, but also that of the Lone Star College System. One of the LSC Core Values is Community, of which civic engagement is included in the description. Additionally, LSC has a list of Core Objectives for its academic endeavors and this list includes critical thinking, social responsibility, and personal responsibility, all of which are

furthered by the LSC-M CCE and its voter registration/education/motivation efforts.

## Leadership

The LSC-M Center for Civic Engagement falls within the Academic Excellence (ACE) Division, which also includes the Library, Student Tutoring and Research Center, and the Faculty Resource Center. The LSC-M CCE has 1 faculty campus coordinator who is paid a stipend for this secondary assignment, and the ability to hire work-study student workers. Most programming is facilitated by the Campus Coordinator with the support of committees and the ACE Division staff and it is the Campus Coordinator who will be in charge of implementing and assessing this plan, under the guide of the ACE Division Dean. Efforts by the LSC-M Center for Civic Engagement are strongly supported by the upper administration on the LSC-M campus.

While the work of the LSC-M CCE is organized mostly by the Campus Coordinator, there are many other groups and individuals, both on campus and within the community that are often engaged in helping to organize and facilitate programming efforts. Faculty are often tapped to serve on committees for specific programs to help develop the programs and participate in the programs based on their subject content expertise. Staff are engaged in programming and educational efforts as well and the LSC-M CCE co-sponsors programs regularly with different student organizations. Students are compensated for their efforts through being paid (work study students), having their involvement count towards their service requirements (for example Honors College students who are required to complete service hours), college credit (for students in a civic engagement related learning community and or with civic engagement related assignments), and/or programming funds (for registered student organizations). Faculty and staff are compensated through involvement counting towards their required institutional service.

Each summer, the Campus Coordinator plans out the programming calendar and reaches out to faculty and staff to recruit working group members. These groups are event based, allowing for specific campus and community stakeholders being involved based on the goals of the program. Each fall, students are recruited through either work study, advertisement of service opportunities, or civic engagement focused learning communities. Since these processes are just beginning for the 2022-2023 AY, the specific strengths and responsibilities of working group members is still unknown as are systems of communications, meeting schedules, and accountability measures; however, ensuring that each working group is diverse as well as specifically targeting faculty, staff, and students from groups identified by the 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report as being underrepresented within our campus voting population.

The main on-campus groups that have worked on LSC-M CCE projects/events are the ACE Division Staff, our campus Librarians, New Student Orientation, Student Life, the Diversity Action Council, the Campus Diversity Manager, faculty from our speech, government, and

history departments, and the Theatre Department. The mail student organizations partnered with have been identity-based groups, such as the LGBT student organization (Continuum) and the students of color student organization (Mavericks in Color). Finally, none of the programs would be successful without the help from the Marketing and Communications Department, the Facilities Department, the Special Events Department, and the Office of Technology.

There are several groups the LSC-M CCE works closely with from the community. The Montgomery County Volunteer Deputy Registrars are frequently on campus to help register students to vote and provide information and demonstrations about voting. The Montgomery County League of Women Voters has also been a key stakeholder in our voter registration/education/motivation efforts as has the Voter Awareness Council. Finally, we have also developed relationships with the Montgomery County NAACP and the different county chapters of political organizations and have invited them to participate in our programs as well as helped to facilitate their programs on our campus.

## **Commitment & Landscape**

Lone Star College is a community college system in south-eastern Texas. It is made up of 8 colleges, 8 workforce centers of excellence, 5 centers, 2 university centers, 10 additional centers, and 15 ISD partners. In the Fall 2021 semester, the system facilitated the education of close to 80,000 students through virtual, hybrid, and in-person classes and programs.

Lone Star College-Montgomery is one of those campuses and is where this plan will be put into action. It is the second largest college in the system, and in the Spring 2022 semester accounted for around 19% of the system's students, or close to 15,000. It is in Conroe Texas and the surrounding political environment and state and local politics falls mainly within Republican/Conservative ideology. As a result, programming on behalf of the LSC-M CCE is often scrutinized very closely by community members concerned about "liberal bias."

The campus and system leadership are very committed to civic engagement and their support of the LSC-M CCE programming has been key to the success of programming efforts. The establishment of a Campus Coordinator for Civic Engagement for each campus was a system wide initiative, pointing to a commitment from senior leadership. Our campus leadership has put their money where their mouth is by including a stipend and a healthy programming budget; however civic engagement efforts have remained mostly co-curricular. There have been learning communities and a service-learning course for credit, but these have focused on social problems and food insecurity not voter engagement.

Overall, civic learning and democratic engagement is not a campus wide focus in that there is no requirement to include these pieces in all courses and programming. One of the LSC Core

Values is Community, of which civic engagement is included in the description. Additionally, LSC has a list of Core Objectives for its academic endeavors and this list includes critical thinking, social responsibility, and personal responsibility, all of which are furthered by the LSC-M CCE and its voter registration/education/motivation efforts.

The LSC-M CCE has submitted one prior action plan; it was submitted in May of 2020. The only assessment data for our campus in regard to political climate and democratic engagement is our participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Our 2020 NSLVE data provides an overview of the voting habits of our students. LSC's overall voting rate in 2020 was 52.1%. This is an increase of 13.1% from 2016 but is still lower than the rate of all institutions, which is 66%. Our registration rates have increased as well. In 2020 72% of our students were registered to vote compared to 68.2% in 2018. Those students registered also were more likely to vote, with our voting rate of registered students going from 54.1% in 2018 to 72.4% in 2020. Though we are still lower than the average voting rate of 66% for all institutions, our efforts have helped increase our voter engagement from 2018.

When you examine these rates by race/ethnicity, an increase is seen for each group, demonstrating that our efforts are reaching students of all racial/ethnic backgrounds, with the biggest increase within our Black and White student populations, followed by our Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander student population. When you examine these rates by age group, an increase was seen in all age groups, with 30-39-year-old students having the biggest increase, followed closely by 22-24-year-old students and 40-49-year-old students. Finally, both male and female students increased voting rates equally, with an increase of 15% for each group. When students voted also changed between the two surveys. Most voted in-person on election day in 2018 (39%) whereas most voted early in 2020 (81%).

While this data is promising, there is still a lot to be done in terms of integrating civic learning and democratic engagement throughout all curricular and co-curricular activities. One of the biggest internal barriers is lack of staffing. Having only one Campus Coordinator to cover all that is included in civic engagement means prioritizing specific aspects of civic engagement over others. In terms of external barriers, being in a very conservative county in a very conservative state has provided many obstacles to democratic engagement. Since voter access has become a partisan issue, any voter motivation efforts are often seen as a partisan campaign and is examined closely by the campus and larger community. What has helped in this situation is having the full support of campus leadership.

## Goals, Strategy, & Assessment/Evaluation

### Short-Term Goals | 2022-2023 Academic Year

1. **Education & Motivation:** Reach at least 10% of our student population (~1,500) through trackable passive and active programs.

#### ***a. Passive Programming:***

- i. Hire 1 or 2 work-study students to help with social media programming
- ii. Update the LSC-M CCE website to be more easily navigated and include a hub for information on voting and voter engagement efforts.
- iii. Work with Marketing and Communication to add a website counter to the LSC-M CCE website to track visits.
- iv. Work with Marketing and Communication to add a form to the LSC-M CCE website for students to sign-up for e-mails/updates on programming/voter information emails.
- v. Weekly social media ads/posts pushing VOTE 411 website during early voting leading up to each election.
- vi. Use all on-campus advertising opportunities to advertise voting w/ a QR code to Vote411 website. This includes:
  1. Digital posters & TV/DMS screens
  2. Paper flyers & posters
  3. Monthly campus programming e-mail

#### ***b. Active Programming:***

- i. Becoming a Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrars Info Session Fall & Spring (Details TBD)
- ii. Becoming an Election Worker Info Session Fall & Spring (Details TBD)
- iii. Collaborate with government/political science/EDUC 100 faculty on providing potential class presentations on Vote411 website.
- iv. Constitution Day 2022 Programming (Details TBD)
- v. Free Speech Week 2022 Programming (Details TBD)
- vi. Texas Tribune Festival 2022 Participation (Details TBD)
- vii. Fall 2022 Election Ballot Information Education Program (Details TBD)
- viii. September Latinx Heritage Month 2022 Programming (Details TBD)
- ix. October LGBTQIA+ History Month 2022 Programming (Details TBD)
- x. November Native American/Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month 2022 Programming (Details TBD)
- xi. Spring 2023 Election Ballot Information Education Program (Details TBD)
- xii. Spring Campus Compact 2023 Conference Participation (Details TBD)
- xiii. February Black History Month 2023 Programming (Details TBD)
- xiv. March Women's Heritage Month 2023 Programming (Details TBD)
- xv. May Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month 2023 Programming (Details TBD)

TBD)

2. **Registration:** Increase the percentage of registered students from 72% (2020) to 75% in 2022.

- a. ***Passive Programming (to be done each semester):***

- i. Provide up-to-date information on registration at the top of the website from the beginning of the semester to the registration cut-off dates for the next election.
    - ii. Bi-weekly social media ads up until 2 weeks before registration deadline on registration information.
    - iii. Weekly social media ads 2 weeks before up to registration deadline on registration information.
    - iv. Integrate registration information with LSC-M website banners
    - v. Use all on-campus advertising opportunities to advertise voter registration information w/ a QR code to the LSC-M CCE website.  
This includes:
      1. Digital posters & TV/DMS screens
      2. Paper flyers & posters
      3. Monthly campus programming e-mail
    - vi. When faculty return for each semester, provide them with a flyer/handout with all registration information for them to share with students

- b. ***Active Programming:***

- i. Integrate voter registration information into student orientation.
    - ii. Invite Montgomery County Volunteer Deputy Registrars to participate in all physical new student orientation events.
    - iii. Invite Montgomery County Volunteer Deputy Registrars to participate in all physical events being held on campus.
    - iv. Invite Montgomery County Volunteer Deputy Registrars to table on their own on campus 2 times each week between the beginning of each semester and the registration cut-off dates for the next election.
    - v. Invite Montgomery County Volunteer Deputy Registrars to table on their own at the Conroe Center (satellite campus of LSC-M) 1 time each week between the beginning of each semester and the registration cut-off dates for the next election.
    - vi. Collaborate with government/political science/EDUC 100 faculty on providing potential class presentations on voter registration.

3. **Voter Turnout:** Increase the percentage of registered students who vote from 52.1% (2020) to 60% in 2022.

- a. ***Passive Programming***

- i. Provide up-to-date information on voting at the top of the website

- during early voting leading up to each election.
- ii. Weekly social media ads/posts pushing website to find polling locations during early voting leading up to each election.
- iii. Integrate voting information with LSC-M website banners
- iv. Use all on-campus advertising opportunities to advertise voting w/ a QR code to the LSC-M CCE website. This includes:
  - 1. Digital posters & TV/DMS screens
  - 2. Paper flyers & posters
  - 3. Monthly campus programming e-mail
- v. When faculty return for each semester, provide them with a flyer/handout with all voting information for them to share with students

**b. Active Programming**

- i. Collaborate with student clubs/organizations to provide transportation to early voting locations each day of early voting.
- ii. Collaborate with government/political science/EDUC 100 faculty on providing potential class field trips to early voting locations.
- iii. Social media “I voted” contest w/ prizes during early voting/election day
- iv. Sample ballot printing program (Details TBD)

**Long-Term Goals | 2-year Plan**

1. **Education & Motivation:** Expand faculty/class collaboration to 5 other disciplines besides government/political science/EDUC 100.
2. **Education & Motivation:** Establish a student organization on campus for students interested in promoting civic engagement through voting.
3. **Education & Motivation:** Create a committee to begin work on the 2025 application for Carnegie Community Engagement Classification
4. **Voter Turnout:** Get LSC-M Campus designated as an early voting location.
5. **Other:** Increase Campus Coordinator Positions
6. **Other:** Have LSC-M CCE physical space included in plans for Student Center 1<sup>st</sup> floor renovation
7. **Other:** Utilize the National Inventory for Institutional Community Engagement (NIIICE) to map infrastructure of campus and community engagement.
8. **Other:** Utilize the Ask Every Student Toolkit



## Evaluation

Over the next year, a focus will be placed on creating evaluation processes for the work the LSC-M CCE is doing. We want to know who is attended our programs or accessing our information, what they think of the programs/resources, and what programs/resources would they like. The purpose of this will be to help advocate for more resources as well as shape the development of our 5-year plan and future programming/resources. A specific plan or tools have not been created yet and will be created by committee in the Fall 2022 semester with utilization beginning in the Spring 2023 semester. In addition, we plan to continue to participate in the NSLVE, begin to use the Ask Every Student framework, and the NIIICE.

## Reporting

This plan, regardless of acceptance into Voter Friendly Campus, will be shared with the following people/groups. Their feedback will be solicited, and the plan updated with their feedback. Additionally, at the end of the 2022-2023 AY, an assessment report will be provided to them as well, with feedback being used to develop 2023-2024 AY goals. Finally, this plan and any related reports will be posted on the LSC-M CCE website.

1. Academic Excellence Division Dean – Sarah Palacios-Wilhelm
2. President, LSC-M – Rebecca Riley
3. Vice President, Instruction – De’Reese Reid-Hart
4. Vice President, Student Success – Cami Keitel
5. Student Government Association
6. Diversity Action Council
7. Campus Diversity Manager – Yolanda Lopez