

NAU Votes Coalition
2020 Voter Registration and Education Action Plan
All-In Democracy Challenge

Executive Summary:

During the 2019-20 academic year, NAU joined the All-In Democracy Challenge, a national, nonpartisan campaign that works to support campuses in increasing voter participation. The effort was spearheaded by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, with leadership from the Civic Engagement Minor in the Sustainable Communities Program. With the formation of the NAU Votes Coalition in June 2020, this truly became a campus-wide effort, including student affairs staff overseeing NAU clubs and organizations, representatives from the Associated Students of NAU, campus partners Arizona Students Association and Arizona PIRG, faculty from across the university, and students with a range of connections to academic departments, athletic teams, and Greek organizations.

In the last presidential election, only 66% of NAU students were registered to vote. We aim to increase NAU's voter registration rate not just to the national university average of 75% but all the way to 80%. We aim to increase our voting rate for all students to 52% this year, up 10% from the last election. And while our voting rate for registered students was close to the national university average last election, at 64%, we aim to reach 72% this year. NAU is in a competitive legislative district, both at the state and federal level, where we are acutely aware of the power of student voters. Two years ago, one of our state representatives introduced a bill that would have prevented students from voting where they go to college. That bill did not pass, but the direct threat of voter suppression energized our campus and helped students see just how powerful public officials thought they could be.

We have developed a range of strategies to meet these goals:

- Making hundreds of class presentations - mostly virtual - to help students figure out how to register and vote.
- Adding a prominent link on the NAU app to arizonastudentvote.org.
- Adding "register to vote" as an item in students' NAU account to-do list. Those students are directed to the arizonastudentvote.org website,
- An engaging video for faculty to show in their classes.
- Creation of the [NAU Votes](http://NAUVotes) website as a hub for voting information
- Lobbying Coconino County to add a ballot drop box in the center of campus
- Holding student-focused events - a discussion of voter suppression with a political scientist and student and community activists, a campus debate among

the candidates for state House and Senate, a Know Your Vote night giving students information about the propositions and offices on their ballot.

- Enlisting the NAU president, Rita Cheng, to send out an all-campus message emphasizing the importance of voter registration.
- Creating voting competitions among the NAU athletics teams and other clubs, to build momentum up to election day

Leadership

Faculty/Staff Leadership

Dr. Leah Mundell

Institution: Northern Arizona University

City/State: Flagstaff, AZ

Office: Civic Engagement Minor Coordinator, lecturer in Anthropology

Email: leah.mundell@nau.edu

Dr. Lori Poloni-Staudinger

Institution: Northern Arizona University

City/State: Flagstaff, AZ

Office: Associate Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Email: Lori.Poloni-Staudinger@nau.edu

Michelle Gardner

Institution: Northern Arizona University

City/State: Flagstaff, AZ

Office: Assistant Director, Leadership, Engagement, Activities and Peer Mentoring

Email: michelle.gardner@nau.edu

Elizabeth Bonomo

Institution: Northern Arizona University

City/State: Flagstaff, AZ

Office: Lecturer, Criminology and Criminal Justice

Email: Elizabeth.Bonomo@nau.edu

Amy Hughes

Institution: Northern Arizona University

City/State: Flagstaff, AZ

Office: Cline Librarian

Email: Amy.Hughes@nau.edu

Karen Haubensak
Institution: Northern Arizona University
City/State: Flagstaff, AZ
Office: Center for Ecosystem Science and Society
Email: karen.haubensak@nau.edu

Student Leadership

Kai Simson, ASNAU Vice President of Government Affairs
Email: ASNAU_VPSA@nau.edu

Calli Jones, NAU Young Democrats President
Email: ccj65@nau.edu

Alexa Hart, Black Student Union President
Email: akh322@nau.edu

Madison Kier, Arizona Students Association
Email: mdk252@nau.edu

Melissa Berry, Civic Engagement Club
Email: msb396@nau.edu

Nyelah Mitchell, Civic Engagement Club
Email: ntm65@nau.edu

Jaela Pipkins, Civic Engagement Club
Email: jmp759@nau.edu

Community Organizations Leadership

Kyle Nitschke
Institution: Arizona Students Association
City/State: Flagstaff, AZ
Office: Organizing Director
Email: kyle@azstudents.org

Aidan Browne
Institution: Arizona PIRG, New Voters Project

City/State: Flagstaff, AZ
Office: Arizona PIRG Students Campus Organizer
Email: abrowne@arizonapirgstudents.org

Kathleen Day
Institution: United Christian Ministry
City/State: Flagstaff, AZ
Office: Campus Ministrator
Email: ucm.blue@gmail.com

Coalition Meetings

The NAU Votes Coalition had our first meeting in April and then met biweekly starting in June. We will continue to meet virtually on a biweekly basis through the election and regularly for the remainder of the academic year.

Commitment

Northern Arizona University, and the NAU Votes Coalition have already taken several steps to improve voter access and provide information to students about elections. Three key areas of focus are: voter registration, election information, and resources to encourage voter participation.

Voter Registration

- Working w/ Arizona Students Association and AZ PIRG to provide easy online voter registration to students. www.arizonastudentvote.org is being integrated onto the NAU Go App, Cline Library Website, and LOUIE (class registration and student accounts).
- Creating an NAU-specific voter registration video for faculty to share with their classes and to post to the NAU Votes website
- Encouraging voter registration through Class Raps; working with Student Clubs, ASNAU, and ASA to present to classrooms and clubs about registering to vote.
- Will use push notifications on the NAU Go App, and email the entire student body through ASNAU to encourage students to register to vote.
- Have a vote center at the NAU Skydome to make voting in person easy for students.

Election Information

- NAU Votes Coalition is creating a website with voter information for students. The website includes FAQs, student voter ballot information, and instructions to vote.
- NAU Votes Coalition and Civic Engagement Club will put on election information events at NAU, including a discussion of voter suppression, a campus debate among state legislative candidates, and a Know Your Vote night to explain propositions and offices on the ballot.
- In Spring of 2020, local candidates, as well as the candidate for Senate, Mark Kelly, were hosted by the NAU Young Dems and NAU Young Republicans. We are expecting several candidates to hold events geared towards NAU students in the Fall 2020 semester.

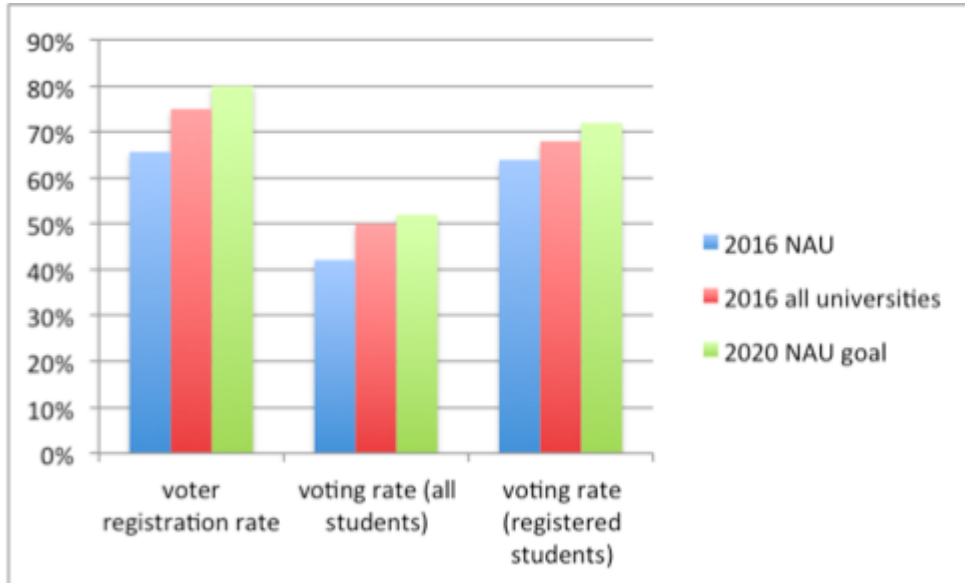
Resources to Encourage Voter Participation

- NAU Votes Coalition website will provide information for NAU students who need to vote in one place to make voting easier.
- Working with clubs and outside organizations to visit classrooms and clubs (virtually) to promote student voting.
- Will use data collected from www.arizonastudentvote.org to encourage students to vote on campus. ASA and AZ PIRG will coordinate GOTV efforts with student leadership.
- Create a voter pledge competition among athletic teams, fraternities/sororities, and other clubs and organizations.
- Encourage Coconino County to add a ballot drop box on campus.

Landscape:

In 2016, Northern Arizona University enrolled 29,669 students. Of these, 27,838 students were eligible to vote but only 18,295 students registered to vote and only 11,705 students actually voted during the 2016 election. In 2018, there were 30,520 students enrolled with 28,724 students eligible to vote; 17,745 registered to vote but only 9,380 students voted. For the 2018 midterm cycle, NAU's voter registration rate was 61.8% while in the 2016 presidential cycle the registration rate was 65.7%, below the national average among universities of 75%. NAU's voting rate in the 2016 presidential election was only 42%, below the 50% national average. Our voting rate for registered students was fairly close to the national average at 64%.

Goals



Voter Registration Engagement Goals

Our goal is to increase voter registration and voting rates at Northern Arizona University. We intend to increase the registration rate to 80%, the voting rate of registered students to 72% and the voting rate of all students to 52%. In order to do this, we propose to:

Institutionalize Voting on Campus

Instead of relying on voter registration drives to register students to vote, NAU Votes Coalition will institutionalize voting on NAU's campus. A couple projects proposed to help accomplish this are:

- integrate an online voter registration system into Louie, BBLearn, and the NAU Go App
- Create an NAU Votes website to provide all the election information students need directly to them
- Find a way to help students vote at the polls, who don't have up to date AZ driver's licenses or State Identification. (P.O. Box #'s on student ID's *or* convince NAU to send student's 0\$ utility bills to use for voter identification at the polls)
- Integrate voter registration into on-boarding events

Voter Education

In the months leading up to elections, we propose non-partisan voter education events such as:

- Ballot proposition education events
- Debates between candidates and/or campus organizations
- Class presentations (either provided for faculty to present or presented by club members)

- Constitution Day events - tabling, classroom presentations
- National Voter Education Week

Strategy

Integrate an online voter registration system into Louie, BBLearn, and the NAU Go App.

- Kai and Leah will head up conversations w/ ITS.

Attend virtual classes, club meetings, and events to encourage online voter registration.

- ASA, Young Dems, Civic Engagement, and other student clubs will use a master list to stay organized. They will email every professor and club president at NAU.
- ASA is paying 10 students to do this work part time throughout the semester.

Establish a system to send paper voter registration forms to students.

- Work w/ PIRG and Rock the Vote to mail paper voter registration forms to students.
- Lit drop program w/ voting information (ASA). Hit students apartment complexes.
- Work w/ RA's to get paper forms to all freshmen living in dorms.

Create an NAU Votes website to provide all the election information students need directly to them

- Leah Mundell is working w/ ITS and NAU Marketing to create an NAU Votes website.
- Basing our design on <https://bruinsvote.ucla.edu/>

Find a way to help students vote at the polls, who do not have up to date AZ driver's licenses or State Identification. (P.O. Box #'s on student ID's *or* convince NAU to send student's 0\$ utility bills to use for voter identification at the polls)

- Long term goal, still determining a strong action plan.
- Potential contacts. Coconino County Recorder. NAU Postmaster. Joseph Harting

Integrate voter registration into on-boarding events

- Missing out on a lot of regular events this year due to COVID-19.
- Will have voter registration integrated into the NAU Club Fair in August using virtual club booths.

Voter Education

- Will use national and local resources, while working with students clubs to create a multitude of voter education events throughout the semester.
- Will work with local and community groups to gather ballot information.

- Will organize debates and forums w/ student groups and community organizations

Barriers/Challenges

COVID 19

The global pandemic is the biggest challenge and barrier to voting. Challenges arising from COVID 19 include but are not limited to:

- Increased difficulty in doing in-person voter registration.
- Fewer students on campus.
- Possible decrease in students living in Arizona, leading to many not registering to vote in Arizona.
- Voters are less willing to vote at the polls on election day.
- Politicization of the pandemic
- Misinformation about mail-in voting coming from President Trump

Arizona's Dual-Registration Track Voter Registration System

Arizona residents who do not have an AZ Driver's License, AZ Driver's Permit, or AZ State ID can not register to vote online. The paper registration forms will also only register voters for the federal election. If we want students to be registered to vote in State and Local elections they must provide additional identification (birth certificate or passport) to the county recorder.

Calendar of Events

[NAU Votes Coalition Calendar](#)

Reporting

In early September, the coalition sent out a press release to local media describing our voter registration and engagement work. We received front-page coverage in the [Arizona Daily Sun](#), as well as coverage in the [NAU Lumberjack](#). After the election, we will prepare a full report of the work of the NAU Votes Coalition, which we will distribute to local media as well as the NAU president and provost, faculty senate, Associated Students of NAU and the Arizona Board of Regents.

Evaluation

In October, the NAU Votes Coalition was approved for a \$1,000 gift from Students Learn Students Vote to fund a graduate student researcher to evaluate the coalition's voter registration and engagement efforts during summer and fall 2020. Project funding is for approximately 60 hours at \$16/hour, to be completed by the end of December

2020. The primary output will be a report to be presented to the NAU Votes Coalition in January 2021. The researcher may also use data collected during the research for a thesis project or academic publication. Research may include:

- Analyzing website activity data to evaluate the effectiveness of voter engagement strategies such as app nudges, emails, online events, and classroom presentations
- Analyzing data from "voter pledge" submissions to evaluate their effectiveness in encouraging students to vote
- If possible, designing a post-election data collection strategy (e.g., survey, interviews, focus groups) to evaluate student perception of these voter engagement strategies