

## Northern Arizona University 2022-2023 Action Plan

### Executive Summary

The NAU Votes! Coalition has drafted the following Action Plan for the 2022-2023 academic year to guide our efforts to increase voter registration, participation, and education across Northern Arizona University. This action plan was created and will be implemented in collaboration with NAU Votes! Coalition partners, listed below, including the Associated Students of Northern Arizona University, key faculty members, community partners such as the Arizona Students Association, and staff from the Office of the Dean of Students. The plan will primarily be implemented at the Flagstaff campus of NAU, though we hope to build communication with other campuses and help to encourage voter engagement efforts there as well. Key goals for this midterm election year include:

- Increase total voter turnout rate from 33.6% to 48%
- Increase voter registration rate from 73.3% to 78%
- Increase the voting rate of registered students from 45.9% to 60%
- Work with faculty implementing the new General Studies curriculum to incorporate voter registration and civic education into classes fulfilling the American Institutions requirement
- Increase dedicated staff/faculty/student worker time to voter registration and engagement efforts

With the strong support of NAU President Jose Luis Cruz River, who has recently signed the All In Presidential Commitment, and by broadening participation in the NAU Votes! Coalition to include a more diverse range of student voices and campus organizations, we believe that we can be successful in achieving these goals.

### Background

Northern Arizona University is a public university with a student population of about 28,000 at its main campus in Flagstaff and at 26 sites across the state and online. Popular majors include nursing, psychology, biomedical science, criminology and criminal justice, and education, and the school is known for its programs in forestry, environmental studies, hotel and restaurant management. NAU is a Hispanic Serving Institution and includes commitment to Native Americans as one of its key strategic goals. Other objectives of NAU's strategic plan, relevant to our Civic Action Plan, are to integrate community engagement into academic curriculum and university policies and practices.

### Coalition

During the 2019-20 academic year, NAU joined the All-In Democracy Challenge. In anticipation of the 2020 elections, the NAU Votes! Coalition was formed in June 2020 to create a unified, campus-wide civic engagement effort. Our primary goal is to increase voter registration and participation and to integrate civic engagement into aspects of the university. The effort was spearheaded by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, with leadership from the Civic

Engagement Minor in the Sustainable Communities Program. In June 2020, this truly became a campus-wide effort. This action plan was created and will be implemented in collaboration with NAU Votes Coalition partners:

- All Voting is Local
- Arizona Students' Association
- Associated Students of Northern Arizona University (ASNAU)
- Black Student Union
- Campus Ministry Connection
- Center for Ecosystem Science and Society (ECOSS)
- Civic Engagement Club
- Civic Influencers
- Community Engagement Minor
- Cline Library
- Departments of Anthropology, Astronomy and Planetary Science, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Communication, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Politics and International Affairs, Psychological Sciences, Social Work, and Sociology
- Episcopal Canterbury Fellowship
- Leadership, Engagement, Activities and Peer Mentoring Office (LEAP)
- NAU Young Democrats
- Student PIRGs New Voters Project
- Office of the Dean of Students

Thus far, the Coalition's efforts have focused on the Flagstaff campus of NAU. In 2022, we plan to begin making connections with extended campuses to support efforts to increase voter registration and participation beyond the Flagstaff campus.

### 2020-2022 Efforts

In the fall of 2020, the NAU Votes! Coalition increased its efforts to register and educate voters and encourage voter participation. The efforts utilized included emails to professors, classroom visits, voter registration phone and text banks, integration of voter registration links into University websites, voter registration announcements, all-campus emails from the president's office, push notifications on the NAU GO app, and voter education events.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Coalition was able to secure the support of the new NAU President, Jose Luis Cruz Rivera, who signed on to the Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation and gave his full support to the Coalition's efforts. Largely as a result of the work of the Coalition, NAU's voter engagement efforts have begun to receive campus-wide recognition. We hope to build on these efforts and work with the NAU administration to integrate civic engagement across the curriculum and co-curriculum.

### **Leadership**

The NAU Votes! Coalition has been led since 2020 by Dr. Leah Mundell, a faculty member in Anthropology and Coordinator of the Community Engagement Minor. Key participants are listed below and include faculty, staff, students, and community members. The Coalition has also

partnered with the Coconino County Recorder's Office, though a representative of the office has not participated regularly in Coalition meetings. Expanding and diversifying the Coalition (in terms of political leaning, race, ethnicity, and field of study) and identifying new leadership for the coming years will be a key goal for 2022-2023.

#### Faculty/Staff Leadership

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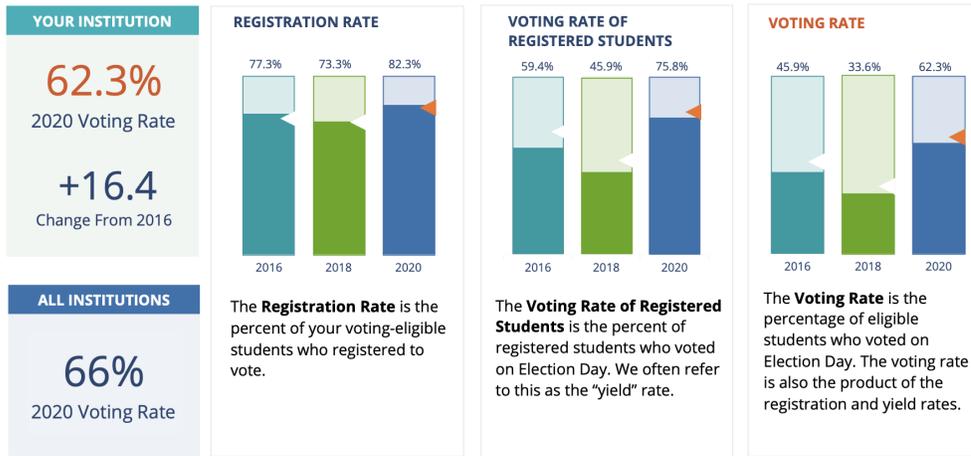
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## **Landscape**

The NAU Votes! Coalition demonstrates the breadth of NAU partners dedicated to enhancing civic engagement on campus. Beyond the coalition, civic engagement is fostered through programs such as the Community Engagement Minor. In this program, students acquire a broad education in democracy, power, and the skills that bring about change to enhance the commonwealth from the local level, to national and transnational scales through a series of intentional and sequenced learning experiences. At NAU, the general education program, formerly known as Liberal Studies, is currently being revamped with new requirements and with a new title of General studies. One of the new distribution blocks will be American Institutions, which will include a heavy emphasis on civic education. We hope to build on this new focus by encouraging all American Institutions courses to include a voter registration and education component.

The 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Campus Report shows a 16.4 point increase in NAU's voting rate, jumping from 45.9% in 2016 to 62.3% in 2020. Moreover, 82.3% of voter-eligible NAU students registered to vote in 2020 compared to 77.3% in 2016 and above the national average for comparable student voters. The voting rate for registered students was 75.8%, up from 59.4% in 2016.

## Voting, Registration and Yield Rates



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We realize that it will be difficult to maintain these gains in the midterm elections in 2022. Voter turnout was significantly lower in 2018 than in 2016, with 33.6% of all students and 45.9% of registered students voting in the midterm elections. Nonetheless, there will be at least one ballot initiative attracting significant attention: SCR 1044, which would permit students who have attended and graduate from Arizona high schools to pay in-state tuition at public colleges and universities, regardless of their immigration status.

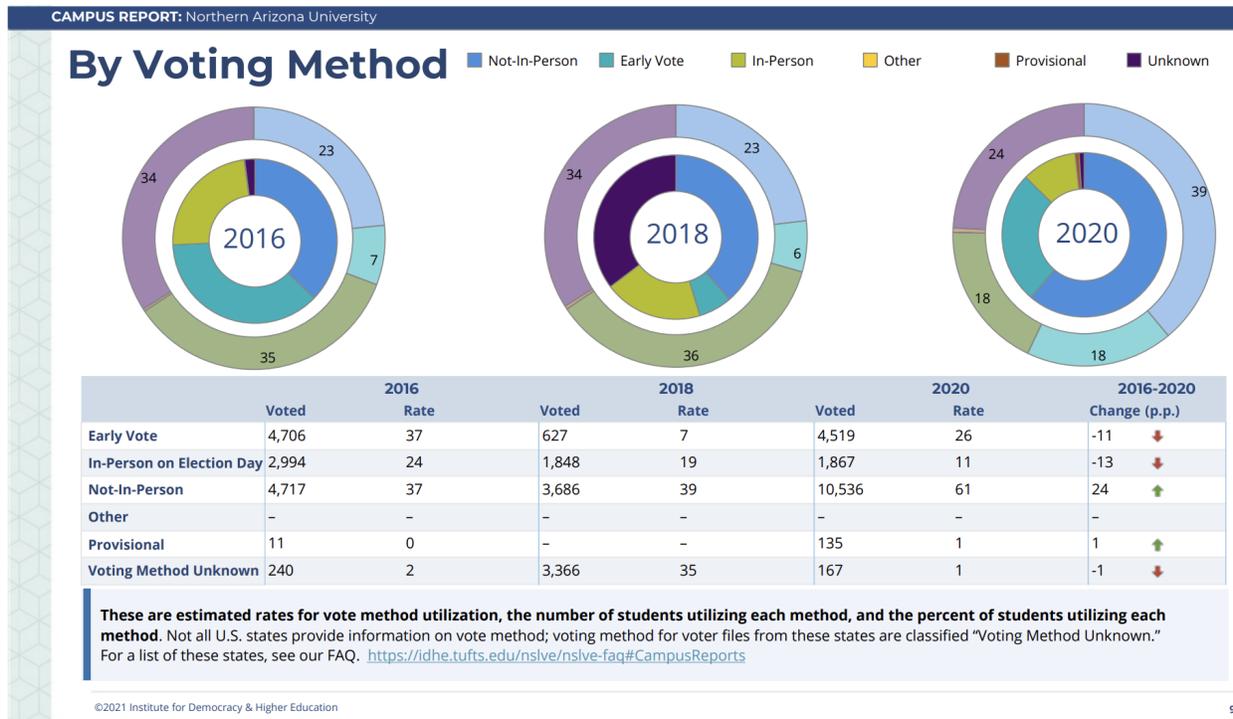
Unfortunately, we do not have data from NSLVE disaggregated by race, ethnicity, or gender for 2016, 2018, or 2020. We will be exploring the possibility of reporting these data for 2022 so that we can better understand issues of equity in our voter registration and participation rates. Northern Arizona University has newly achieved the status of a Hispanic Serving Institution, with 25% of our population identifying as Hispanic/Latinx. We also have a strong institutional commitment to serving Native American students, with 5% of our student population identifying as Indigenous. In addition, 6% of students identify as Asian and 6% as African-American.<sup>1</sup> It will be critical for us to ensure that our voter registration and participation gains are reflected across these diverse populations.

In considering how we can expand our efforts beyond the Flagstaff campus, the largest population to include will be our Online/Personalized learning community, which comprises 5,627 students. These students will be difficult to reach, but we will explore the best methods for digital communication across the different departments in which students are enrolled.

It will also be important for us to take into consideration our NSLVE data on the voting methods utilized by students to vote in the 2020 election. We saw a 24% increase in students voting not

<sup>1</sup> <https://in.nau.edu/institutional-research/quick-facts/> All figures are from duplicated values with one or more value per student.

in person from 2016 to 2020, which likely describes students who voted by mail. There have been some changes to Arizona law since 2020 that will affect students' ability to vote by mail. SB 1485 allows voters to be removed from the Active Early Voter List if they do not not "cast their mail ballot in at least one election over the course of two consecutive election cycles and fails to respond to an official notice from the county recorder or elections office."<sup>2</sup> Also, in July of 2021, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Arizona's 2016 law prohibiting turning in mail-in ballots for anyone other than a family member, so campus GOTV efforts cannot include collecting students' ballots and turning them in to the registrar's office.



## Goals

### Voter Registration and Turnout Goals

For the 2022 midterm elections, we utilized data from the 2018 midterm election as the baseline for setting our goals. The goals are:

- Increase total voter turnout rate from 33.6% to 48%
- Increase voter registration rate from 73.3% to 78%
- Increase the voting rate of registered students from 45.9% to 60%

### Civic Engagement Goals

- Increase participation in the NAU Votes! Coalition, especially among organizations and clubs representing BIPOC students and diverse political opinions, faculty from across a wider range of academic fields, and community partners including the Coconino County Recorder's Office. Specifically, add at least two representatives of minority-focused clubs

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.azcleelections.gov/how-to-vote/early-voting/vote-by-mail>

or organizations, two faculty members from outside Social and Behavioral Sciences, and a representative from the Recorder's Office.

- Secure a commitment from NAU President Jose Luis Cruz Rivera to make his commitment to the Challenge public and to incorporate voter registration and GOTV information into his fall 2022 all-campus messages.
- Continue to engage faculty in incorporating both voter registration information and civic engagement into their curriculum and class activities.
- Work with faculty implementing the new General Studies curriculum to incorporate voter registration and civic education into classes fulfilling the American Institutions requirement.
- Increase dedicated staff/faculty/student worker time to voter registration and engagement efforts. Secure new leadership for the NAU Votes! Coalition for the 2023-24 academic year.

### **Strategy and Tactics**

Northern Arizona University, and the NAU Votes! Coalition, will continue to improve voter access and provide information to students about elections. Three key areas of focus are:

1. Voter Registration: Voter registration information will be focused on communicating state-specific information such as Arizona's vote by mail Permanent Early Voter List (PEVL) system. The Coalition also aims to communicate to out-of-state students that they have the opportunity to vote in Flagstaff, while they are living in Flagstaff and attending NAU. Members of the Coalition are trained to answer questions about acceptable addresses and forms of ID. In order to register voters and increase registration rates on campus, we will implement the following:
  - a. Work with Arizona Students Association and AZPIRG Campus Action to provide easy online voter registration to students. Ensure that voter registration links continue to be integrated onto the NAU Go App, Cline Library Website, and LOUIE (class registration and student accounts).
  - b. Work with faculty to integrate registration into their courses by
    - i. Including voter registration on syllabi and course pages
    - ii. Allowing NAU Votes! Coalition members to make non partisan in-class announcements
    - iii. Emailing students on and around key dates in the election cycle
    - iv. Putting a voter tool link in their email bios
  - c. Make non-partisan registration announcements at club meetings and outreach to RSO leadership to email members
  - d. Utilize push notifications on the NAU Go App and implement a permanent widget with voter registration links and information on the app
  - e. Email the entire student body through ASNAU and the President's Office to encourage students to register to vote.

- f. Work with ASNAU to sponsor a voter registration challenge among the academic colleges, with prizes and recognition for the college with the highest percentage of registered voters.
  - g. Hold In-person registration events during key moments of the term, including but not exclusive to Welcome Week events, National Voter Registration Day and other related civic holidays, and the week leading up to the voter registration deadline.
  - h. Coordinate w/ Residence Hall Association to include voter registration in their Fall 2022 Housing Move-in.
  - i. Ensure that extended campus and especially online faculty and students are included in all-campus communications and other digital voter registration efforts.
2. Election Information
- a. In fall 2022, conduct a faculty survey to gather further insight on best practices and implementation strategies.
  - b. Integrate election information into Freshman and Transfer Student Orientation and Resident Assistant (RA) training.
  - c. Maintain the NAU Votes website with voter information for students. The website includes FAQs, student voter ballot information, and instructions to vote.
  - d. NAU Votes! Coalition and Civic Engagement Club will continue to sponsor 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.
  - e. Create social media posts to be shared by coalition members and student groups with information on when, where, and how to vote.
  - f. Host nonpartisan candidate events for NAU students in the Fall 2022 semester.
3. Voter Participation
- a. Have a vote center at the NAU Skydome to make voting in person easy for students.
  - b. Work with Coconino County Recorder to maintain a ballot drop box on campus.
  - c. Publicize NAU Votes Coalition website with comprehensive voting information for NAU students.
  - d. Work with clubs and outside organizations to visit classrooms and clubs to promote student voting.
  - e. Use data collected from [www.arizonastudentvote.org](http://www.arizonastudentvote.org) to encourage students to vote on campus. ASA and AZPIRG Campus Action will coordinate GOTV efforts with student leadership.
  - f. Create a voter pledge competition among athletic teams, fraternities/sororities, and other clubs and organizations.

We will also discuss with the NAU administration ways to post our NSLVE data to the All In Challenge and NAU Votes websites while addressing concerns about on-campus political

campaigning. We plan to share this Action Plan with the NAU Vice President of Student Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Community Relations, and the Office of the President, and (with their permission) post this plan on the All In Challenge and NAU Votes websites.

## Evaluation

### 2020 Evaluation

Two student members of the NAU Votes Coalition, Madeline Snyder and Jaela Pipkins, conducted an evaluation of our 2020 voter engagement strategy, helping to guide our 2022 action plan and to provide a model for future evaluation efforts. In particular, they were able to track the specific success of our digital voter registration strategies:

1. NAU students use LOUIE to enroll in classes and as their one-stop student center. In Fall 2020, the NAU Votes! Coalition advocated for the addition of a "register to vote" push in students' "To Do List," which directed students to [arizonastudentvote.org](http://arizonastudentvote.org). Since this was a unique link, we were able to track that at least 100 registrations originated from the LOUIE link.
2. During the Fall 2020 semester the NAU Votes! Coalition website<sup>3</sup> was launched. The NAU Votes! Coalition website is under the NAU Division of Student Affairs (found under the "Resources" tab, listed as "NAU Votes! and voting resources"). The site contains information about how to register to vote, how to vote in person or by mail, important dates, and voter education events/information. There were 771 new users on the NAU Votes! website. New users accounted for 30% out of 2,538 total sessions. The NAU Votes! website in Fall 2020 contained important information regarding voting information and deadlines. Returning users accounted for 1,767 sessions, according to Michelle Gardner<sup>4</sup>.
3. According to the ASA data on the [azstudents.org](http://azstudents.org) website, there were 450 registered voters from the TurboVote data and embedded voter registration link. Combined with online efforts and paper registration forms, the Arizona Students Association registered 4,088 new voters. This link was provided in class RAPs, in text messages to eligible voters, and posted on social media.
4. The [arizonastudentvote.org](http://arizonastudentvote.org) link<sup>5</sup> (PIRG), reached 926 NAU students. Of the 926 students, 347 registrations came from class RAPs, 171 from Listservs, 155 from Campus Email, 148 from Other, 136 from Orientations, 100 from NAU LOUIE, 37 from Associated Students of Northern Arizona University (ASNAU), 37 from NAUgo, 10 from Social media, 5 Phone banks/texts, 2 from Professors, 1 from True Blue Connects, 0 from Cline Library and NAU Votes!.

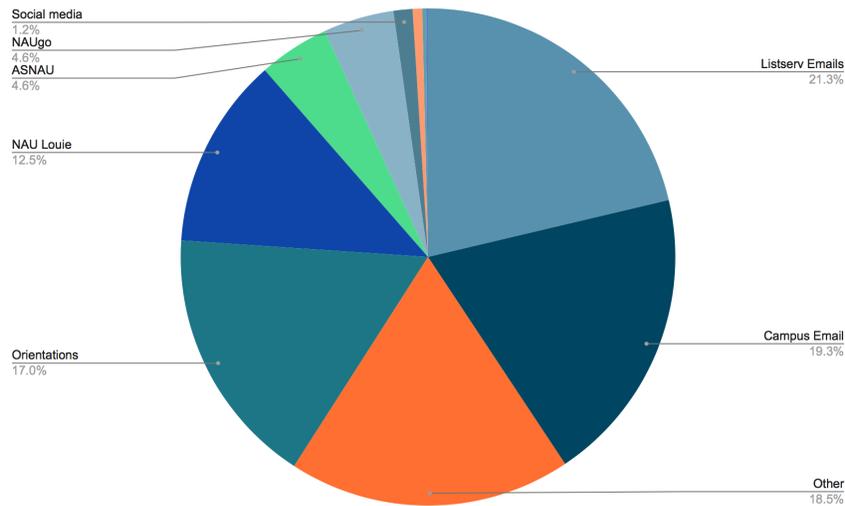
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<sup>3</sup> [NAU Votes! Coalition website](#)

<sup>4</sup> Michelle Gardner, Assistant Director for Student Life Experience, Leadership, Engagement, Activities, and Peer Mentoring (LEAP)

<sup>5</sup> [Arizona Complete VR Data \(Fall 2020\).xlsx](#)

### Voter Registration Referrals



- The NAU Votes! Coalition also worked with ITS to add a voter registration link on the NAU Go app. A link to [arizonastudentvote.org](http://arizonastudentvote.org) went live on the NAU Go app in July 2020 and generated 42 new registrations.

### 2022-2023 Evaluation Strategies

In the Fall 2022 semester, we will implement a campus-wide faculty survey asking them what methods of student engagement they found most effective for their classes in the 2020 election and asking for their participation in 2022 class presentations, posts to Blackboard Learn, and other class strategies for voter engagement. This survey will help shape our faculty-focused efforts for 2022.

An evaluation team from the NAU Votes Coalition, composed of students, faculty, and community representatives, will collect data (number and affiliations of participants) from our events, campus competitions, class presentations, and other efforts. This team will also gather data on our digital strategies similar to that collected for our 2020 evaluation to see where we are reaching the highest number of students. This process of evaluation will be ongoing, throughout the 2022-2023 academic year and after we have received our 2022 NSLVE data.

### **Tentative 2022 Calendar**

February 14	AZ Statehood Day Town Hall with Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs
July 5	Registration deadline for primary elections
August 2	Primary elections
Sep/Oct	Big Sky conference athletics voter registration challenge NAU College Voter Registration Challenge
September 17	Constitution Day
September 20	National Voter Registration Day

October 3-7	National Voter Education Week: election debate
Oct/Nov (TBA)	Early voting events
Late October	Know Your Ballot event
November 8	General elections