



Campus Engagement Plan | Rocky Mountain College

Forward Montana Foundation | Montana Campus Compact | SLSV Coalition

Context

This is the Campus Engagement Plan for Rocky Mountain College, located at 1511 Poly Dr., Billings, MT, 59102. This plan will be reviewed by key stakeholders, including Associated Students of Rocky Mountain College (ASRMC), interested campus clubs and organizations, faculty, staff, and administrators. This plan, once approved, will be Rocky Mountain College's official campus engagement plan and will be adhered to when all local, statewide, and federal elections take place in order to increase representation of student voices in government and to foster lifelong habits of civic engagement among students.

From 2014 to 2018, youth voter turnout in Montana increased from 8% to 11%. During the midterms, young people in Montana turned out with the highest rates in the nation. As we learned in 2018, young people have the skills to cast their ballot and make their voice heard and campuses can help foster this engagement by providing simple and accessible voter registration opportunities, and access to educational materials. When campuses participate in fostering a culture of civic engagement, we can build power among young Montanans to increase participation and accountability across every election.

When civic engagement is institutionalized -- from our colleges to our places of work -- young people create lifelong habits of civic engagement and involvement in our democracy. With the help of administrators, faculty, community organizations, and students at Rocky Mountain College, we will create a culture of year-round civic engagement on our campus building a more representative democracy in which the voices of our students are valued at every level of government.

Purpose

As a result of this action plan, students at Rocky Mountain College will have access to the resources needed to register to vote, make informed decisions based on non-partisan information, complete their respective ballots, and have the skills to encourage a healthy environment of civic engagement not only with their fellow students on campus, but *all throughout their communities*.

Goals

1. Each student at Rocky Mountain College will have *accessible, open access* to ample voter registration opportunities and *multiple opportunities and ways* to cast their ballots during all elections. This will be achieved by:
 - a. Expanding voter registration into all previously implemented programs such as orientation, the Bair Family Student Center, and residence life.
 - b. Online outreach to all students through social media and campus-wide communications.
 - c. Voter registration drives held by Forward Montana Foundation staff and associated trained volunteers.
2. Providing a *healthy, open, and welcoming environment* for students to discuss and learn about civic engagement and the issues that surround them. This will be achieved by:
 - a. Hosting at least two civic engagement events per academic year (one per semester). These can be; guest speakers, panels, fairs, volunteerism activities, or anything encouraging civically-minded discussion and thoughts.
 - i. In addition, these activities should be inclusive to all students, and engage every demographic on campus. One way to encourage this inclusivity is to *intentionally and enthusiastically* include student leaders/voices from different backgrounds to plan and participate in these events.
 - b. As in official school policy, an anti-harassment policy will protect students from retaliation or harassment, based on **ALL** of the following; *race, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or disability*.
 - i. This, along with reinforcement of this policy, allows Rocky Mountain College to promote a *healthy* civic engagement environment for all students, which is vital to every other aspect of this Campus Engagement Plan.

Methods

Voter Registration:

Forward Montana Foundation (FMF), and volunteers associated with the partnership between FMF and Rocky Mountain College will be granted access to a complete, updated list of professors' contact information in order to reach out for non-partisan voter registration presentations.

FMF and volunteers associated with FMF shall have access to all relevant college-sponsored events and programs, for the purposes of non-partisan voter registration, education, Census work (where applicable), and voter engagement and turnout. The relevant events vary campus to campus, and can be determined between the FMF organizer, the Campus Engagement advisors, and the primary Campus contact.

Student and staff partners will be responsible for holding a *minimum* of five voter registration drives each semester.

One of these drives will be on National Voter Registration Day, which takes place every September. When the campus takes part in this they should sign up to be a partner at www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org

Voter registration drives should include; volunteers trained on the best practices of voter registration, a dedicated volunteer attentive at the table at all times, and voter registration should always remain accessible, nonpartisan, unbiased and inclusive.

Voter registration will be incorporated into the orientation process. A voter registration form will be provided to every freshman by including it in the standard orientation paperwork used. FMF and volunteers associated with FMF will also be allowed to table at appropriate welcoming events in order to provide ample access and opportunity to forms.

Communications:

Those responsible for the Campus Engagement Plan will hold one presentation, upon request, every year to inform and update faculty, staff, and interested students on the importance of this Campus Engagement Plan and the broader goal of student civic engagement, participation, and education.

There will be information available on bathroom bulletins and the student newsletter reminding students to register to vote and provide important related information (election deadlines, mail-in ballot reminders, election dates, community candidate forums, polling location information, voter registration drive information/dates)

Shayla Brown will work with FMF and associated volunteers to create and approve at least one email a year to professors; including this plan, general statistics for voter engagement and turnout on the campus, contact information for key leaders in the plan, and offer in-class presentations on voter registration and civic engagement every semester.

Professors will also be invited to the yearly presentation listed earlier, to receive more information and provide feedback.

Campus Cooperation:

FMF shall have access to tabling areas on Campus. This is as long as there are no prior paid bookings, and since the organization has encouraged civic engagement and has a student-forward mission - all fees will be waived. This will allow students optimal chances to register to vote, receive educational materials, and experience voter engagement; which has all been proven to lead to higher turnout capacity among student voters.

*Tabling areas defined: This coalition will be granted access to high-traffic areas at Rocky Mountain College, with the expectation that organizers will not interfere with students' access to vital college services.

In order to further institutionalize voter registration on campus, each campus will provide voter registration forms and a secure dropbox in at least one, but ideally several centralized, secure, and accessible locations on campus - possible locations include in an administration office, at check-in desks in the dorms, and in the Library. FMF and volunteers associated with the partnership between

FMF and Rocky Mountain College will provide a short training for all staff working near the secure drop boxes concerning voter registration and the established collection locations. FMF and volunteers associated with the partnership between FMF and Rocky Mountain College will be responsible for turning in the voter registration forms from the box every week.

Faculty, Administration and Community Partners

Each campus will discuss the proposal to join NSLVE, or the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement through Tufts University, if not involved already.

Rocky Mountain College will sign up for the ALL IN Democracy Challenge which is a national, nonpartisan initiative that supports and recognizes colleges and universities working to improve civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation rates.

The responsibilities and procedures above will be reviewed and updated as needed every year by key stakeholders.

Placing important election dates on the academic and events calendar allows campuses to reinforce the importance of elections as a norm, not an elective.

Finally, each campus should push to make every Election Day a campus-wide holiday. This is shown to increase voter turnout by removing school-related scheduling conflicts and giving ample time for students and staff to make it to the polls.

Additional Campus Responsibilities (Key Stakeholders at Each Campus Choose Three):

1. Host two additional voter registration events on campus per semester.
2. Host an unbiased candidate forum where all candidates on the ballot are invited.
3. Decrease the burden of traveling to the polls on election day by, providing a shuttle system from campus to the polls on election day, or making a satellite polling location available on campus.
4. Host a voting party (example: rock 2 vote, party to the polls, party to the mailbox, absentee fill-out party, etc.)
5. Providing a space on the school website that holds resources for civic engagement (links to MT My Voter Page, MT SOS website, local election offices).

Timeline

Date	Purpose and Activities
Freshman and New Student Orientation	Voter registration forms will be included in every orientation packet.
Week before classes begin	All hosts of the registration dropboxes will be trained on best practices of voter registration. Dropboxes will be fully stocked. All staff and faculty will receive an email including this document, information on the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, voter registration information, and in-class presentation information.
First week of classes	Forward Montana Foundation will table at appropriate welcoming events.
Throughout the semester	Hold civic engagement events, and voter registration events. Maintain supplies at the voter registration boxes, process and turn in any forms weekly. Students will be encouraged to attend an unbiased candidate forum. Guidance on preparing for an election including important dates will be available on the bathroom bulletin and the student newsletter.
One week before each election deemed	Election day information and resources will be sent out via email to all students, faculty, and staff. Other means of promotion will be used as appropriate.
On each Election Day	An election day email reminder will be sent to students/faculty/and staff and a shuttle to the polls or satellite polling location.
Last week of classes	Remind students to update voter registration status if moving off campus, especially if classes end before the June elections.