



Center for Civic Engagement
at Rose State College



Democratic Engagement Campus Action Plan 2024
ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
Prepared by Dr. Emily Stacey
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Executive Summary

Established in 1970, Rose State College (RSC) is a public institution of higher education, fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. RSC serves students with over 60 in-person and online degree/certificate plans—offering the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Associate in Applied Science, and specialized certificates. Although physically located in eastern Oklahoma County, RSC has a widespread impact across the metropolitan Oklahoma City area and the state of Oklahoma, with 70 percent of its students coming from outside of the College’s Technical Service District. RSC prides itself as a community educational and cultural asset while remaining focused on its students. The College’s Mission is “As a public and open admission institution that grants associate degrees, Rose State College provides higher education programs and services intended to foster lifelong learning for a diverse population.”

Rose State College is uniquely positioned in Midwest City, Oklahoma roughly 5 miles away from Tinker Air Force Base, one of the most critical military installations in the United States. As such, the College has a diverse matriculating population that includes active and veteran members of the Armed Forces, and their families.

The establishment of a Center for Civic Engagement promotes the College’s vision, and mission statements, as well as its core values. The possibilities of such a center impact student success and retention, serves the broader community in which Rose State is positioned, and demonstrates a commitment to the tolerance and development of diverse perspectives on issues of importance to our students, faculty and staff, and our community. The Rose State College Center for Civic Engagement has generated considerable momentum and collaboration across our

campus and with our broader community and fosters greater collaboration across the campus and with our community in achieving the College's goals.

Through the efforts of Rose State Political Science, Student Engagement/Affairs, and the Center for Civic Engagement, the College intends on continuously educating and empowering the campus and wider Oklahoma City community through accessible and comprehensive democratic engagement events, activities, and programming to enhance civic literacy, voter education and awareness, and to foster an environment of both learning and participation. The aforementioned groups will host voter registration drives in conjunction with our external partner, the Civic Learning Coalition (CLC); host a debate on a policy issue of importance that voters will make a choice on in November; a variety of democratically-focused events for Constitution Week; and a colloquium, all with the intent to educate the students, the campus community, and broader community about the election and using their voice in a democracy.

The College's action plan, authored by Dr. Emily Stacey, will define the initiatives that will be the focal point of the 2024-2025 academic year with the goal of facilitating voter and civic education and empowering students and citizens to use their voice through the electoral process. The College will continuously engage the community with civic and democratic education through a variety of programming. Political efficacy and democratic results occur when students (citizens) understand democracy and the value of voting and other forms of democratic participation, which is something we strive to teach to every student at Rose State College.

Leadership

The Leadership Team will be the team that is responsible for coordinating and implementing the College's mission and value statements of encouraging lifelong learning and fostering lasting connections within the immediate community as well as statewide. The Team is a cross-campus coalition of engaged administrators and faculty who are already encouraging active student participation in campus activities as well as civic and democratic engagement.

The leadership team responsible for the development and implementation of this plan are:

- Dr. Emily Stacey, Program Coordinator and Professor of Political Science;
- James Davenport, Associate Dean of Social Sciences Division, Director, Civic Engagement Center at Rose State College;
- Dr. Kirby Atkinson Harzman, Associate Vice President of Student Life/Affairs;

- Dr. Aaron Bachhofer, Program Coordinator and Professor of History;
- Paige Stramski, Director of Student Engagement;
- Dr. Joe Campbell, Professor of Political Science;
- Mary Vick, Professor of History;
- James Johnson, Professor of Criminal Justice.

This coalition is well-connected across campus, both with students and executives, ensuring the reach and support of the democratic engagement plan is widespread. The coalition consists of faculty, executive team members, administrators, as well as external non-partisan partners, Unify America, and the Oklahoma Civic Learning Coalition, and their Executive Director, Andy Moore. The CLC will work with CCE and Rose State College to coordinate and host voter registration drives throughout the academic year starting in August 2024. Dr. Atkinson Harzman and Ms. Stramski are coordinators of the President's Leadership Class as well as Student Senate, and have access to student leaders on campus whose input on this plan will be sought out as well as future campus action plans.

The Rose State Political Science Department actively coordinates and hosts a multitude of events that encourage civic and political participation for the students, campus, and wider community. Each academic year the Political Science Department Program Chair, Dr. Stacey, coordinates and hosts a panel in the Great Debate Series on a topic of importance (the most recent have focused on Partisanship and Ideology in 2024 Elections; Recession Politics; The Israel/Gaza Conflict); this Fall's will focus on increasing the minimum wage in the State of Oklahoma (an issue that voters will decide in November). In cooperation with the Student Affairs and Student Engagement Offices, Drs. Stacey and Atkinson Harzman, along with Ms. Stramski host an annual Advocacy Day, which brings together nonprofit and advocacy groups, legislators, journalists, and other stakeholders to campus to educate students as to how to use their voices in a democracy. Constitution Week Extravaganza has become a cornerstone of Rose State College Political Science; instead of Constitution Day, we celebrate for a full week with a variety of activities, including Constitution Jeopardy!, guest speakers, including Jack Rakove, and Race To The Constitution, a scavenger hunt at the Oklahoma State Capitol. The campus community works incredibly well together to coordinate and host rich and engaging events for our students that foster civic education and understanding, and a likelihood to participate in the future. Dr. Stacey provides a campus-wide Voting Module via Canvas, the College's learning management system, that enables any professor across campus to download to their courses and offer students the basic (just the facts) information regarding voter registration, important deadlines, where to find ballots, and more.

The Team will work on a weekly basis with student leaders and faculty across campus to implement and successfully carry out ALL IN's campus strategies. This Team will be critical to keeping our student leaders involved and engaged in assisting faculty in implementing strategies but also to encourage the participation of other students across campus. Student buy-in is important to us at Rose State College.

Dr. Stacey and James Davenport will act as co-leads as well as a student co-advisor with Dr. Atkinson Harzman and Ms. Stramski. In the event that Dr. Stacey or Associate Dean Davenport are no longer willing or able to serve in the leadership capacity, the Team then led by Dr. Harzman would select new faculty and engagement center leaders. Our external partner is the Oklahoma Civic Learning Coalition, an organization that is dedicated to building coalitions and connections and establishing civic education reform to create better public policy for all.

The strength of the RSC/CCE Campus Action Plan is found in the network and connections of the members of the Team who will be responsible for implementation. Each member has been chosen because of their expertise, connections, and ability to foster mobilization among the student and campus community. Through our Team, we have experts in political science, advocacy, student engagement, history, research, methodology, event planning, and more. It is our hope that in our inaugural year that we are able to build more external partnerships to support and advance our mission for increased democratic engagement.

Commitment

The Rose State College and Center for Civic Engagement Campus Action Plan is a constantly evolving and improving document because of the College's commitment to empowering students of the College as well as all Oklahoma citizens to use their democratic voice. The plan focuses on facilitating engagement and increasing education among the traditionally marginalized population of the youth in the American electoral process. The electorate is being overtaken by the millennial and younger generations, it behooves younger citizens to become politically and civically engaged sooner rather than later in their existence.

The overall vision of Rose State College in "Supporting, serving and advancing the common good – sustaining and advancing a tradition of excellence." Rose State College is committed to serving the community through educating critical thinking, democratic citizens, and goes above and beyond to offer extracurriculars that

engage the campus community in democratic and civic education. Specifically, the Political Science department through Program Coordinator, Dr. Emily Stacey, coordinates and hosts a variety of events including the Great Debate Panel Series, which brings experts, scholars, and politicians to campus to discuss pressing sociopolitical issues; the Liberal Arts and Sciences Colloquia is coordinated via Dr. Stacey and colleagues in an interdisciplinary manner - each semester participating LAS faculty hone in on an issue or concept to discuss from our varying fields of expertise, recent colloquia include, Racial and Ethnic Representation in Pop Culture; On Disgust; and the War on Terror: 20 Years Later; and the LAS Book Club that is co-coordinated by Dr. Stacey has an underlying focus on civic engagement, the text explored Spring 2024 was “How Democracies Die” by Levitsky and Ziblatt, which led to Dr. Levitsky speaking to Dr. Stacey on the podcast she co-hosts with James Davenport, Not My Generation. In coordination with Student Life and Engagement, the Rose State College Advocacy Day is an annual workshop for students on how to engage themselves in their democracy at all levels. The day brings advocacy and nonprofit groups, legislators, and other stakeholders to campus to speak to and engage the student community in better understanding their voice and how to use it to create change. We will host our fourth annual in Spring 2025, it has become a cornerstone of Rose State College student programming, and one that is quite popular amongst the students.

Values:

- Learning: The College is a learner-centered institution that regards students as partners in the learning process and supports them in meeting their educational goals; Priorities: Continually revise and evaluate campus offerings to support community and workforce needs.
- Excellence: The College establishes high standards designed to promote and sustain learning in an innovative environment, thereby honoring the trust of its internal and external stakeholders; Priorities: Promote faculty, staff, and student excellence and achievement through increased and consistent campus-wide and community marketing efforts.
- Integrity: The College maintains fair, honest, accurate, and consistent policies and procedures to assure credibility and accountability;
- Service: **The College builds lasting relationships with the communities it serves – recognizing the unique opportunity it has to positively impact the lives of both students and the greater citizenry**; Priorities: Expand mentorship, service-learning, and volunteer opportunities to benefit students and community partners; Contribute to lifelong learning in the community by increasing the number of faculty- and staff-led events available to the community.

- **Diversity: Acknowledging the value of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, the College is a place of diversity, civility, and collegiality, and celebrates the benefits of mutual learning and growth from all;**
Priorities: Continue to identify and implement effective forms of recruitment, outreach, and support for all potential and current students, including those from historically marginalized populations.

Campus-wide learning outcomes concerning civic engagement and education are reflected in newly adopted College Core Competencies. Below are two primary outcomes that Rose State College expects all students (regardless of major) to meet upon graduation:

- Engage in collaborative learning inside or outside a classroom (Engagement)
- Interpret cultural variations within and between communities (Awareness)

Further, the establishment of a Center for Civic Engagement directly aligns with one of the goals of the Rose State College strategic plan – improving student retention and success. Rose State students will have opportunities centered on civic engagement activities and in areas of public policy. In addition, the knowledge and expertise of Rose State faculty and students will be highlighted in such an effort. By focusing on civic engagement and public policy, the Rose State Center for Civic Engagement also promotes the achievement of another of the College’s goals – improving the quality and diversity of our programs and personnel.

Co-Curriculum

The Team is composed of members from the Center for Civic Engagement (Davenport and Stacey) as well as a majority of facilitators from Rose State College who are directly involved in civic/democratic education and/or student engagement and affairs. Student involvement will also be critical to the campus action plan implemented at Rose State College, as we act through our student leaders as much as possible. All students are welcome to join and participate in volunteering opportunities that will be open with each activity or event that is hosted on campus.

Landscape

Oklahoma has a rich history of populism and progressivism interwoven into its founding documents and its people. While currently, the state is one of the most red in the country, with all statewide and federal offices being held by Republicans as well as the party leading in voter registration with 51.7 percent of Oklahoma voters being registered Republicans, in contrast, just 28.4 percent of voters were registered

Democrats as of January 15, 2024 (the day the State Election Board releases annual registration numbers). While there are hubs of more liberal politics in the Tulsa and Norman areas due to the universities housed there, the remainder of Oklahoma trends conservative, which does not necessarily translate our students' politics into real world policy.

Oklahoma was among the first states in the nation to adopt absentee balloting for convenience purposes, and it has been a critical tool for democracy in the state. But much like national politics, there has been talk about limits and/or restrictions on mail-in balloting in Oklahoma as well as other forms of voting (the state preemptively outlawed rank choice voting in the 2024 legislative session that recently ended). Thus educating citizens, particularly, the youth on how to vote and why has become more crucial than ever in Oklahoma.

The student population at Rose State is incredibly diverse because it is a commuter college that serves many of the rural counties of eastern Oklahoma, as well as being placed just miles away from Tinker Air Force Base, which makes the matriculation of active and veteran military members and their families an important demographic for the College. Rose State also serves a large concurrent population, or high school students from across the state who are also taking college courses. We are able to impact democracy greatly in this capacity as via state law a person who is 17 but will turn 18 before the most recent election is eligible to register to vote; this has been a population that we have been targeting specifically for increasing registration.

Barriers to Success

While programs such as ALL IN and the Campus Vote Project's Voter Friendly Campus and colleges such as Rose State work to eliminate barriers to democratic education and civic engagement, there will always be obstacles that will impact a citizen's ability (and willingness) to participate, namely vote. Rose State is predominantly a commuter college, although there is campus housing, a vast majority of our student population lives across the metro area, making getting back home on Election Day difficult or impossible for some. Students may not be aware of registration deadlines in the State of Oklahoma, and that same-day registration is not offered. Further, Oklahoma offers straight party voting, which can make voting easier for some, but many will come vote without knowing who they are voting for and why.

Resources

The College draws support from a wide variety of community partners, the state legislature, students, staff, faculty, administrators, community stakeholders, and the wider Midwest City community. The Center for Civic Engagement has recently achieved 501(c)3 status and is able to fundraise, but has a minimal amount of funds to commit to any project at present. The Political Science fund as well as funds expended by Student Affairs/Engagement have been utilized to host events such as Advocacy Day.

Goals

The long-term goal for Rose State College Action Plan is to ensure a majority of students are obtaining the resources and education that they need to vote, and those that are eligible can get registered on campus and vote on Election Day understanding their role within democratic politics. One critical mission of both Rose State College and the Political Science Department is to graduate democratically-engaged citizens that possess the knowledge and skills to participate in solving the country's shared problems via consensus, as the founding fathers intended. Rose State students should graduate feeling empowered and knowledgeable of the world around them, ready to participate in their representative democracy.

Our short-term goals include:

- Establish a communications plan for Rose State Marketing to post on social media platforms regarding voter registration drives, and other civic engagement events;
- Establish a consistent voter registration drive calendar for 2024-25 which include participating in national days of action like National Voter Registration Day;
- Host well-attended panel discussions with legislators, experts, stakeholders, etc.;
- Host a Sample Ballot Party; showing students a sample ballot to alleviate any anxiety about 'voting wrong';
- Educate the campus community about how to research candidates and issues in a reliable manner (media literacy);
- Join the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement in order to assess Rose State's progress in accomplishing increased voter engagement goals.

Long-term goals include:

- Establish a voter education workshop series to familiarize voters with ballots, etc.;
- Continue to hold a Partisanship and Ideology panel in election years to educate the students on varying political parties and ideological issues;
- Implement a voter registration process with Admissions;
- Continue hosting Advocacy Day to introduce and encourage students to engage in other forms of direct democracy beyond voting;
- College closed on Election Day to allow everyone to vote;
- Continue to identify partner organizations and potential funders to assist in engagement activities.

National Study of Learning Voting and Engagement (NSLVE)

The Team, with Dr. Stacey leading the effort, is applying to participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement in order to start the process of gathering, reporting, and assessing data with an eye towards improving our campus and community-wide democratic and civic engagement strategies.

Strategy

The Rose State College and Center for Civic Engagement strategies are focused on the overall goals of increasing voter education, voter registration, and voter turnout among students (and wider campus) of the College. The activities planned are predominantly in-person, but debates, discussions, and panels are recorded and posted to the College's website for posterity. Events for 2024-25 include:

- Voter Registration tabling throughout the academic year in the Student Union as well as Social Sciences Division buildings;
- Activities and communiques on National Voter Registration Day, Vote Early Day, Constitution Week, and all other POLS-organized civic engagement events;
- Hosting debate watch parties;
- Panel discussions on Raising the Minimum Wage (Fall 2024);
- Creating Oklahoma Voter Portal QR codes to make registering to vote seamless for campus;
- Create campus-wide Voter Registration/Education Module for Canvas;
- Constitution Week Speaker Jack Rakove speaking about importance of democracy and participation;
- Race to the Constitution scavenger hunt to encourage democratic participation and show accessibility of state legislature/government;
- Promote the Civic Holidays throughout the year to students and campus community;

Timeline for 2024-2025 Academic Year (August 2024-May 2025)

- Voter registration tables at Raider Days (First days of classes, August 2024);
- National Voter Registration Day Event (September 17);
- Vote Early Day Event (October 29);
- Constitution Week Events (September 17-24);
- Voter Registration Tabling in Student Union; Campus Housing; Social Sciences;
- Team Meetings with student leaders on Campus Action Plan (weekly);
- Hosting Debate Watch Parties (with Bingo)!;
- Debate Panel on Minimum Wage;
- Rose State College Third Annual Advocacy Day (Spring 2025).

The events and activities detailed are intended to increase voter registration and turnout as well as civic education and engagement.

Reporting

The plan will be communicated collegewide to students, faculty, staff, and administrators via email, social media, campus alerts on Canvas, and flyers around campus. The plan will be shared with stakeholders such as the Board of Regents, internal and external partners as well as other interested parties.

Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation of the RSC/CCE voter engagement programming and communications is critical to successfully accomplishing the goals laid out previously. The Team wants to ensure that the strategies implemented are fostering democratic participation through civic learning. The Team would like evidence that Rose State students are registering to vote, actively participating in the electoral process, thus graduating as informed, empowered, and engaged democratic citizens.

For the current academic year, the Team in conjunction with Rose State College administrators will conduct electronic evaluations and surveys to assess the inaugural strategies. The aggregated responses will be shared in a report with internal and external stakeholders, including the student body in order to continuously make progress in accomplishing civic engagement goals and fostering increased voter registration and participation on campus and throughout the state.