

SMCC 2024 ALL IN ACTION PLAN

Last updated: November 8th, 2024

Executive Summary

This Action Plan communicates Southern Maine Community College's strategies for increasing registration rates and voter turnout among our entire student population (online, South Portland campus, and Midcoast campus in Brunswick, ME). This action plan outlines current strategies that have been implemented by Maine Students Vote and Student Life, as well as new strategies and methods to be implemented over the next two years by the SMCC Nonpartisan Campus Voting Coalition. This plan will be reviewed and adapted in the Spring of 2026.

This action plan is a living document that will continue to grow and adapt based on the needs of our students and institution. These strategies will be continually assessed, improved upon, and implemented by the Coalition each election cycle. This plan will cement SMCC's commitment to civic learning, election engagement, and youth participation in local government, as is our duty as a local non-profit education institution developing the future of Maine's workforce.

This plan was written by Campus Voting Coalition Leader and Assistant Director of Student Life Tori Penney, who has overseen voter engagement at SMCC for 3 years. Penney is the Advisor to the Student Senate, main contact for ALL-IN and Maine Students Vote, and works closely with SMCC's diversity initiatives, including the Diversity and Equity Governance Committee, who is responsible for evaluating and implementing diversity initiatives at the college, and is Chair of the Diversity Programming Committee, which is responsible for developing and hosting co-curricular diversity and equity programming on our campuses.

Leadership

The SMCC Nonpartisan Campus Voting Coalition is a new addition to SMCC in the summer of 2024. Previously, all planning and actions were overseen by Assistant Director of Student Life Tori Penney, Student Senate Faculty Advisor and Professor of Political Science Herb Adams, and Allyson Gardner, Director of Maine Students Vote. To increase our success, sustainability, and institutionalization of civic and democratic engagement on campus, as well as to include a wider variety of perspectives and experience, Student Life is recruiting campus and community members to develop the Coalition.

The Coalition Leader, and person responsible for facilitating this work, is Assistant Director of Student Life Tori Penney. This work will be funded and overseen by the Student Life Department. A recruitment email will be sent to the entire SMCC community, and any interested parties can meet. The group will meet biweekly on Zoom to create the most equitable and accessible option for members. Current members are listed below.

The members of this team are prominent and returning members to the SMCC community, so we do not expect much turnover. From year to year and as vacancies arise, we will actively recruit replacements via advertisements and community messaging. For a number of our these members their responsibility to

this coalition's work is written within their position descriptions. In the event that the Coalition Leader leaves or must step away from their work, the Executive Team Representative, who is also their supervisor, will be responsible for taking over responsibilities, delegating tasks, and training their replacement.

SMCC Nonpartisan Campus Voting Coalition

Coalition Chair: Tori Penney, Assistant Director of Student Life, Coalition Leader
Responsible for overseeing and facilitating the Coalitions work, documenting meeting minutes and actions, and assisting in navigating College policies and practices.

Senate Chair: Payson AVery, Vice President of the Student Senate. Payson will be compensated via work study funds.

Executive Team Representative: Associate Dean of Students, Douglas Stoves.
Responsible for communicating work and needs between upper Administration and the Coalition. Will advocate for the Coalitions during strategic planning meetings.

Residence Life Representative:: Vacant, Director of Residence Life
Responsible for advocating for the needs of residential students, and for implementing the coalitions work within

Maine Students Vote Representative:: Allyson Gardner, Director of Maine Students Vote
Responsible for Maine Students Vote and the League of Women Voters

Social Science Representative: Herb Adams, Student Senate Faculty Advisor, Political Science Instructor

Midcoast Staff Representative: Vicki Rose Porter
Responsible for advocating for the needs of Midcoast students, and for communicating initiatives and needs between Midcoast staff/faculty and the Coalition.

Faculty Senate Representative: Julie Mueller, Professor of Social Science, Advisor to Political Science Club
Responsible for communicating initiatives and needs between SMCC Faculty Senate and the Coalition.

Student Senate Representative: Katelyn McKay, Student Senate Representative and Diversity Programming Committee Member. Katelyn will be compensated via work study funds.

Advising and Orientation Chair: Stacey Kardash

Maine Students Vote Fellow, Raelyn Knowles. The Maine Students Vote Fellow is a student at SMCC, and they will be compensated via a stipend from Maine Students Vote.

Midcoast Maine Students Vote Fellow, V. Granholm. The Maine Students Vote Fellow is a student at SMCC, and they will be compensated via a stipend from Maine Students Vote.

Midcoast Student Representative, *Vacant*

Student Representative(s), Vienna Vongsay

Commitment

SMCC is committed to promoting civic learning and engagement by offering every student the opportunity to register, vote, and participate in civic advocacy. As a publicly funded institution with great responsibilities to our community, it is not only a federal requirement of our work, but also a passion of ours to develop civically involved students. SMCC is devoted to keeping with its mission, vision, and values. This action plan will enhance SMCC's mission by ensuring students have the ability to lead, inspire, and succeed through civic engagement. This action plan will achieve SMCC's vision by acknowledging that the students come first, and therefore should be given every opportunity to be civically prepared for their post-college careers. This action plan will promote SMCC's core values by giving students the opportunity to engage in their community, building integrity within the student body, allowing students to become leaders within the student body and greater community, and to ultimately find success in their civic participation. We are a part of the Maine Community College System, and other colleges within our system are also dedicated to this work, and work closely with Maine Students Vote. We intend to further streamline our communication between our colleges and to streamline our system-wide practices.

Our senior leadership team is dedicated to this work. We recently appointed a new President, Dr. Kristen Miller, who has encouraged our Student Life team to develop this work further, and has signed the ALL IN Presidents' Commitment. Our Dean of Students has supported us these last few years in joining ALL IN, Ask Every Student, Campus Takeover, Students Learn Students Vote, and we look forward to being a part of When We All Vote in the future. Our Associate Dean will be actively involved in our Coalition and will represent and advocate for the Coalition among the leadership team.

We intend to further communicate this commitment via our work, via the assembly of our Coalition, and via public statements made to our community regarding voting. We will work in the future to share this pledge on our public web presence to make this known to our larger community.

While we know there is a strong care for civic engagement and learning within our Political Science Department and our Student Senate, we are at this time unaware of the work and care given to this cause within other departments. It will be a responsibility of the Coalition to investigate this further.

Landscape

This information is reported as of Fall 2020 and will be updated with each subsequent NSLVE report.

The following statistics can be found on our public website, smccme.edu.

Total Enrollment: 6,007

- 38% full time, 62% part time
- 57% female, 43% male

Student to Faculty Ratio: 20:1

Enrolled in Training Workshops and Seminars: 1,012

Last Updated 11/8/2024

Investigating our current efforts outside of Student Life, as well as further examining and assessing our landscape, will be a responsibility of our Coalition. We will investigate what work and dedication exists among our faculty, staff, departments, student groups, local election officials, community partners, and within our curriculum. We will do this by meeting with departments, speaking at Faculty Senate and Governance Committee meetings, by digging into our college's data with our Institutional Data team. We will utilize the Ask Every Student First Step Form and the resources listed in the Strengthening American Democracy guide to assist. Once we have completed this assessment, we will develop specific learning outcomes for our work.

Our current awareness of work regarding civic engagement and learning is work being done by the Student Life Department, which oversees student leadership education and opportunities, student government, student organizations, and co-curricular programming. Historically, we have offered a number of engagement opportunities for students, but they were not developed with the care to ensure that they were as effective as possible. Events and opportunities previously hosted include:

- Constitution Day Trivia
- Shuttles to the Polls
- Sharing of on campus student data with local election officials to assist with Voter Registration
- Attending the Maine Students Vote Youth Summit

Internal barriers that currently prevent us from being more successful with our civic engagement and education programs include the following:

- Lack of staff to create and host these events. We currently only have one full time staff member within Student Life, the Assistant Director of Student Life, who must manage this work among their other responsibilities.
- Our Student Life Department is two years old, so we are still figuring things out as we go.
- Overseeing two campuses with different staffing has proven a challenge. We hope to establish better communication by having members of the Midcoast campus as chairs on our Coalition board.
- Being a community college, we experience student turnover a lot more than a four year institution. It is hard to train and prepare students to do this work during the 2-3 years they are here, especially considering succession work.
- Our students have a lot going on. Many are nontraditional students that have responsibilities outside of their academics. Getting them actively involved in planning these events and attending them has proven difficult. We have a lot more success among our residential population.

external barriers.

- We have students who attend SMCC from across the state and New England, and many who are from across the country or from other countries. Maine consistently ranks as one of the top three most rural states in the US. Just over a third of students are full time, and while the college offers on campus housing, the majority of students are commuters. Getting information to students regarding their specific polling location can be difficult.
- A challenge with largely commuter colleges is engaging students in events and activities. This requires tailoring events to meet the needs and desires of the student body, which may be difficult to see results for.
- Many of our students come from low income backgrounds, which means that sufficient transportation and various other resources may be lacking. A way to combat this is by creating a bus to the polls event on election day, but this is not helpful for students who have polling locations outside of our area. Therefore, we will focus a significant amount of our time on educating students about absentee ballots.
- Maine has an extremely vibrant voting culture and is generally very involved in its politics. In South Portland and Portland alone, there are 15 voting locations, all within fairly equidistant locations of each other. The challenge is, again, with getting apathetic and transportation lacking persons to the polls. This is another reason why bus to the polls and absentee voting are great ways to get around this issue.

Maine is very involved in political culture and has a long history of civic engagement and expanding rights. In this respect, SMCC, along with any other school in Maine, is perfectly primed to take on voting action. Maine has an unabashed record of voter turnout and SMCC, a school located in the most populated area of Maine, is a fantastic place to present voters with all the knowledge they need to know for election day.

Main Goals

Our Coalition has only been working for a semester, so many of our goals are yet to be determined. However, our Student Life team has a number of established goals they will recommend to be continued. Our main goals are listed below, and in our timeline of events below.

1. Recruit and develop our SMCC Nonpartisan Campus Voting Coalition, with our first meeting happening prior to July 1, 2024. Tori Penney will be responsible for this tasks. – *Completed*
2. We recently enrolled in NSLVE, but have heard that there may be some FERPA concerns that have held us back. We will determine if this is the truth and try to find a solution so that we can benefit from this data. With NSLVE we will be able to centralize our efforts in specific areas where civic engagement is below average. – *Completed, we have heard that any concerns have been cleared.*
3. Join and participate in the ALL IN Community College of Practice group. We recently attended our first meeting and look forward to learning from other Community Colleges. – *Completed, we have attended multiple meetings this semester.*
4. For the November 2024 Election, we are hoping to achieve a 65% voter turnout. To achieve this goal, it is crucial to work with the school's administration to implement civic education as a core component of our Student Success course, which all students are required to complete in order to graduate. By implementing civic education as a core part of the curriculum, it will better equip students with the knowledge necessary to engage in the election process, as well as inform them

on why diversity, equality, and fairness in the electoral process is important. We would like to see this implemented by the 2026 midterm elections. – *This project has not been started yet, and we hope to have this prepared for the Fall 2025 semester.*

5. Participate in civic holidays as outlined by the Ask Every Student organization, including Voter Registration Day and Early Voting Day. There will be efforts to implement debate watch parties and work with staff and faculty to ensure that all students are being reached out to in a sufficient manner. Maine Students Vote, having been a key part of promoting campus engagement, also plans to facilitate more annual Student Voting Summits, which should be advertised and advocated for heavily, when occurring. – *Completed, we have hosted an event or engagement opportunity for all civic holidays this semester! Specific goals and action items for each holiday can be seen in our timeline below.*
6. Recruit two Maine Students Vote Fellows, one on our South Portland campus and another to serve our Midcoast campus in Brunswick. Initial advertisements and invitations to apply went out recently. *Completed!*
 - a. *We onboarded a South Portland and a Midcoast Fellow this semester.*
7. Be granted the \$5,000 Ask Every Student Grant to pay our fellows. Our Coalition will work in conjunction with our partner, Maine Students Vote, on the application and reports. MSV will take the lead on this task.
 - a. *Completed.*

Strategy

Maine Students Vote and SMCC applied for a \$5,000 grant through Ask Every Student and were lucky to achieve it. We will utilize this grant funding to pay our student Fellows and help cover costs for their professional development and programming.

Many of our strategies are still to be determined by the Coalition. Unfortunately, we were not able to start our Coalition until the academic year had already started, which prevented us from planning and preparing as we had originally wished for. Most of our Coalition meetings were spent planning for the next upcoming Election Holiday, so our strategies are not much more defined as they were at our last submission in May. However, we still completed a lot of work, as can be seen in the Action sections of our Goals & Action timeline below.

A core structuring of our strategy and timeline consists of celebrating civic holidays as outlined by the Ask Every Student (AES) organization. Key holidays that we strive to celebrate are National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day.

SMCC works with Maine based non-profits such as Maine Students Vote and the League of Women Voters of Maine to access resources and leverage capacity in order to reach the most students possible.

The Coalition will continue to develop a timeline that will guide us in our work. The development of the timeline started in preparation for our application for the Ask Every Student grant, and has been further built upon by our Coalition to share our goals and document our work.

Goals & Action Timeline

Month	Goals & Actions
<p>June 2024</p>	<p>Goal(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment, selection, and training of fellows - <i>Did not achieve until later in the semester</i> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No action was taken during this month. We were encouraged by the Administration to wait until the new Associate Dean started (Late July/Early September). We had no fellow applications.
<p>July 2024</p>	<p>Goal(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brainstorm, plan, and finalize dates for fall election engagements – <i>Did not Achieve in 2024. Because we started so late, we only planned for the next upcoming item.</i> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No action was taken during this month. We were encouraged by the Administration to wait until the new Associate Dean started (Late July/Early September).
<p>August 2024</p>	<p>Goal(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Table at Welcome Week & New Student Orientation, first meeting with Faculty Champions – <i>Did not Achieve in 2024</i> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 8-5-24 Creation of Coalition - Chair of the Coalition send an email to all proposed members of the coalition, inviting them to join. ● 8/23/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Outside of the Campus Center, sharing voter education info ● 8/27/24 Maine Students Vote tabled at our Campus Block Party BBQ, registering voters and sharing information about the Fellowship Opportunity ● 8/87/24 Maine Students Vote tabled at our Midcoast Campus Block Party BBQ, registering voters and sharing information about the Fellowship Opportunity
<p>September 2024</p>	<p>Goal(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day events – <i>Achieved</i> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9/4/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Outside of the Campus Center* ● 9/4/24 First Coalition Meeting - Notes for all meetings can be found here.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9/10/24 - Presidential Debate Watch Party - We hosted a Presidential Debate Watch Party on the South Portland campus in our Student Center, serving snacks and drinks. ● 9/11/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Outside of the Campus Center* ● 9/17/24 Pizza to the Polls and Constitutional Conversations - National Voter Registration Day & Constitution Day Event. We had two tables in the campus center stationed next to each other. Table 1 served Pizza and was staffed by a Maine Students Vote Representative. Table 1 focused on getting students to register to vote and answers questions regarding this. Table 2 had members from the City Clerk's office, as well as representatives from the Coalition dressed as Founding Fathers and handed out pocket constitutions. A copy of the constitution and the Bill of Rights were hung in the Campus Center. ● 9/17/24 Midcoast Register to Vote & Constitutional Conversations. A Representative from the Coalition tabled in the Learning Commons and answered questions about voting & assisted with registrations. ● 9/17/24 NVRD & Constitution Day Social Media Post - Student Life posted photos of our National Voter Registration Day & Constitution Day Event. We reached 150 people. ● 9/18/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Outside of the Campus Center* ● 9/18/24 Coalition Meeting - Notes for all meetings can be found here. ● 9/24/24 SMCC Alum/LWV Tabled Inside of the Campus Center** ● 9/24/24 SMCC Student Senate Hosts David Costello, Candidate for US Senate - The Student Senate, with assistance from Coalition members, hosted a local US Senate Candidate for a Q&A event. ● 9/25/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Outside of the Campus Center*
<p>October 2024</p>	<p>Goal(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10/7-11/24 - Voter Education Week - Beach Bonfire (voter registration & education with food, games, & fun), tabling in front of Oceanview Dining Hall daily – <i>Partially Achieved in 2024. We did not have this event, but we hosted alternative events.</i> Activities to provide information on candidates, referendums, etc.. Voter Education Week should be celebrated on a minimum of three days of that week. ● Get Out the Vote activities & encourage early voting – <i>Achieved</i> ● 10/29/24 - Promotion of Vote Early Day, including voter registration tables/call to action, education and resources with information to request an absentee ballot and locations to vote early for students in the greater Portland area, as well as resources for students outside of this area to find their early voting location. – <i>Achieved</i> <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10/1/24 SMCC Alum/LWV Tabled Inside of the Campus Center** ● 10/2/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Inside of the Campus Center*

- 10/2/24 **Coalition Meeting** - Notes for all meetings can be found [here](#).
- **NVEW Social Media Post** -SMCC Student Life posted on Facebook about National Voter Education Week, sharing resources and encouraging people to register to vote. It reached 466 people.
- 10/7-10/11/24 [NVEW Slides](#) - Educational Presentations were created with information about what will be on the ballot, registration, ranked choice voting, and absentee ballots. We also provided QR codes to resources. This was put on the main screen in our Campus Center Lounge on our South Portland campus. They were also posted in the Learning Commons and Orion Residence Hall on the Midcoast Campus.
- 10/8/24 SMCC Alum/LWV Tabled Inside of the Campus Center**
- 10/9/24 **National Voter Education Week Tea Party** - We had two tables in the campus center stationed next to each other. Table 1 was staffed by a Maine Students Vote Representative and focused on getting students to register to vote and answered questions. Table 2 had representatives from the Coalition dressed as Founding Fathers who served a “tea party” with tea, hot cocoa, muffins, and cookies to pull students in!
- 10/10/24 [Residential Letters](#) - Student Life sent letters to all residential students that included a letter from our President and a copy of our 2024 Voter Guide with info about registration, ballot initiatives, and absentee voting. It included QR codes to resources.
- 10/11/24 [SMCC Voter Guide](#) - Student Life sent out a Voter Guide to all students via email with info about registration, ballot initiatives, and absentee voting. It included hyperlinks to resources.
- 10/12/24 - **Maine Youth Voting Summit** - Student Life sponsored the travel of 4 students and a staff member to attend the Maine Youth Voting Summit.
- 10/15/24 SMCC Alum/LWV Tabled Inside of the Campus Center**
- 10/15/24 **SMCC Student Senate Hosts Ron Russell**, Candidate for Maine House - The Student Senate, with assistance from Coalition members, hosted a local Maine House Candidate for a Q&A event.
- 10/16/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Inside of the Campus Center*
- 10/22/24 SMCC Alum/LWV Tabled Inside of the Campus Center**
- 10/23/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Inside of the Campus Center*
- 10/28-10/31/24 - [Vote Early Slides](#) - Educational Presentations were created with information about voting early, including city hall hours, and put on the main screen in our Campus Center Lounge on our South Portland campus. They were also posted in the Learning Commons and Orion Residence Hall on the Midcoast Campus.
- 10/29/24 SMCC Alum/LWV Tabled Inside of the Campus Center**
- 10/29/24 **Vote Early Day Social Media Stories** - Student Life posted a story on both platforms about absentee voting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10/29/24 Vote Early Day Posters - Posters supplied by Vote Early Day were put up around the South Portland Campus. ● 10/29/24 Vote Early Day Social Media Post - We posted on instagram a photo of two of our student leaders encouraging folks to vote early! ● 10/30/24 Maine Students Vote Tabled Inside of the Campus Center* ● 10/30/24 Coalition Meeting - Notes for all meetings can be found here.
<p>November 2024</p>	<p>Goal(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get Out the Vote activities & encourage early voting – <i>Achieved</i> ● 11/5/24 Election Day - SMCC Bus to the Polls! – <i>Not Achieved</i> ● 11/13/24 Coalition Meeting - Post Election Reflection and Recap Notes for all meetings can be found here. Schedule spring meetings. <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 11/4/24 Donut Forget to Vote! Event - Our Maine Students Vote Representative answered questions about registering at the polls and regarding ballot initiatives, while serving donut holes! ● 11/5/24 Election Day Transportation - Unfortunately, Transportation vehicles were not available to transport students to the polls. Luckily, the polls are within walking distance of our campus. We received reports from poll workers that a great number of our students showed! ● 11/5/24 Election Day Email - an email was sent out to all students and all employees, focusing on information about registering at the polls, finding your polling place, and tips and tricks to prepare for casting your ballot. ● 11/5/24 Election Day Cancellations – Many club meetings and the Student Senate meeting were canceled so members could vote ● 11/5/24 Election Day Social Media Stories - Student Life posted a story encouraging folks to see the voter guide we sent them earlier that morning. ● 11/5/24 - Election Watch Parties - We hosted Watch Parties the night of the Election in our three residence halls, two were open to the public for viewing. We served snacks & drinks. 27 Students attended at South Portland, 14 at Midcoast.
<p>December 2024</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>January 2025</p>	<p>Goals(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resume Coalition meetings near end of January
<p>February 2025</p>	<p>Goals(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Propose Civic Engagement Module for First Year Seminar Courses <p>Action(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be determined by the Coalition at a future date

March 2025	Goals(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalize Action Plan for AY 25 Action(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be determined by the Coalition at a future date
April 2025	Goals(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Propose Action Plan for AY 25 to Student Senate and Administration Approval Action(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To be determined by the Coalition at a future date
May, June, July 2025	Break

*Maine Students Vote Tabling is staffed by student fellows who are supported and supervised by Maine Students Votes and SMCC. At their tables they share voter education info and register voters.

**Leave of Women Voters had an SMCC alumni volunteer who tabled in the Campus Center and shared LWV resources with students, answering questions about registration, ballot measures, and more.

Reporting & Evaluation

This plan is a living document and will be evaluated and altered as necessary by SMCC Nonpartisan Campus Voting Coalition. The Coalition Leader will request the most current NSLVE report from the President’s office if the report has not already been made publicly available. When the action plan has been prepared for the upcoming election cycle, the Coalition will submit the action plan to the Student Senate and College administration for feedback and approval. When the plan has been finalized then it will be released to the public via the student portal. The Coalition may omit any data and information deemed sensitive or unnecessary.

The action plan should detail where resources should be allocated for underperforming demographics in the student body, and detail how and why these resources should be allocated.

To receive public feedback, students will be able to make their comments and concerns heard in the same manner that they are able to do so to the Student Senate.