



## SUNY Old Westbury 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

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### Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by SUNY Old Westbury in New York for the 2024 election. This action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goals for SUNY Old Westbury for the 2024 election are to:

- Expand on the existing activities and information led by the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities
- Through our Community Action, Leadership and Learning (CALL) program create a changemaker fellow position
- Build relationships with stakeholders on and off campus
- Incorporate nonpartisan voter registration into current programs, classes, and processes

### Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following, campus groups, and organizations:  
Assistant Provost for Student Success, Community Action, Leadership and Learning (CALL) Program, First Year Experience, Residence Life, Office of Student Affairs and Center for Student Leadership & Involvement.

SLSV  
ALL IN  
APII  
VOTO Latino  
Ask Every Student  
And still working on more!

### Commitment:

The State University of New York at Old Westbury is a dynamic and diverse public liberal arts university that fosters academic excellence through close interaction among students, faculty, and staff. Old Westbury weaves the values of integrity, community engagement, and global

citizenship into the fabric of its academic programs and campus life. In an environment that cultivates critical thinking, empathy, creativity, and intercultural understanding, we endeavor to stimulate a passion for learning and a commitment to building a more just and sustainable world. As SUNY's most diverse campus, we embrace the role as regional academic leader that fosters personal growth and prepares students to embrace the social and environmental responsibilities of our 21st century global community. SUNY Old Westbury's commitment to the Community Action, Leadership and Learning (CALL) Program since 2007, as over 10,000 OW students engaged with community partners that address the myriad needs of underserved communities and families across Long Island, the New York Region, nationally, internationally, and virtually. Representing more than 750,000 hours (about 85 and a half years) of community engagement and action over the Program's history, this equates to an economic impact of approximately \$12 million of in-kind engagement. For nine consecutive years, the engagements of the CALL cohort, faculty, and staff a place on the U.S. President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

SUNY Old Westbury's commitment to nonpartisan democratic engagement has and will continue to be communicated to the campus community in myriad forms (virtual, hybrid, and in-person) as we attempt to increase access and meet students where they are at (which is often in digital spaces) and encompass both curricular and co-curricular programs for our short term goals of increasing voter registration and education and our long-term goals of deeper integration into the curriculum and campus culture.

To provide the entire University community with accessible and understandable information about registration, voting, elections, deadlines, and FAQ we will promote online voter education through a dedicated site.

Campus wide emails providing timely election information and campus initiatives.

Creating pledge cards in many languages and disseminating these at campus-wide events, voter reregistration/CALL informational tables and in Community Learning classes via Old Westbury's Fellowship Voter Ambassadors. These Fellows will be trained to be peer educators and representatives of the CALL voter initiative through Ask Every Student Grant/Old Westbury's Changemaker Fellowships.

Utilizing campus events and presentations focused on voter registration and civic action, and additional organic opportunities such as tabling and engaging the campus community at orientation, club events, etc.

An active and robust social media campaign providing updating information regarding civic holidays on platforms meeting the students where they are which can improve and increase visibility and engagement with all students.

Informational tabling with flyers, brochures, voting definitions etc. located in high traffic areas on campus. Supplies for students to create their own posters "I vote Because.."

Additionally, a commitment to integrating voter registration and civic action into established Community Learning courses. Scheduled for Summer 2024 in our community learning courses with EOP students' civic engagement lessons, voter registration presentations and opportunities which will continue in our Fall semester.

SUNY Old Westbury does not have a current signatory to ALL IN's Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

This is the first action plan that our institution has developed for ALL IN.

## Landscape:

SUNY Old Westbury is a public university located in suburban Long Island and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2024. SUNY Old Westbury has 4,270 (3,907 undergraduate) with a 16 to 1 student to faculty ratio.

Our institution is extremely diverse: 12% of students identify as Asian, 31% Hispanic/Latino, 26% White, 25% Black or African American, and 3% two or more races, 1% unknown and 1% non-U.S. resident. Approximately 600 students live on campus, and undergraduate student age falls at 79 % 24 and under and 21% 25 and older.

NYS college students can register to vote at either their parents/pre-college address or where they attend college but cannot be registered in both locations. The New York Election Law defines "residence" as "that place where a person maintains a fixed, permanent and principal home and to which he, wherever temporarily located, always intends to return." N.Y. Election Law §§ 5-102 and 1-104(22). The word "permanent" requires only physical presence and an intention to remain for the time at least. See *Palla v. Suffolk County Board of Elections*, 31 N.Y.2d 36, 37 (N.Y. 1972). Students can establish residency in New York if they have a present intention to remain at their New York school address for the time being, and they intend to make it their principal home. Students must plan to return after temporary absences, like summer break, but do not have to plan to reside at that address permanently. See *Williams v. Salerno*, 792 F.2d 323, 327 (2d Cir. 1986).

SUNY Old Westbury participates in the following initiatives to support the development and implementation of our nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts on campus: The Office of Services for Disabilities serves as a national registration agency. The office's website includes links to: NYS voter registration information, online registration (pdf) in English and Spanish, NYS ballot application in both English and Spanish and NYS Board of Elections Homepage. In addition, there are active links to Nassau County Board of Elections. National Voter Registration Day and Voter Education week will be recognized on campus.

## Goals:

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are to have a comprehensive, organized, and actionable steps to encourage and enhance maximum voter registration and turnout for the 2024 elections and continue cultivating a culture of civic engagement more broadly. This will be emphasized through voter registration, voter education and civic empowerment. These efforts work towards our long-term goal of sustained engagement, participation, and the institutionalization of civic engagement through voting. The plan ties in directly to SUNY Old Westbury's stated goals to educate students to be engaged citizens, and is reflected in its Mission and Vision statements, its programming priorities, and in administrative, faculty, staff, and student culture. Additionally, we will continue to find areas for

growth and future collaboration across various campus stakeholders on campus creating a sustainable voting coalition, and in the wider community creating a culture of open dialogue. Long range we hope through Student Government, Call Community Changemaker Fellows, First Year Experience or Residence Life, to secure students to consistently engage and collaborate on campus continuing civic engagements and education.

Train fellows to be voter ambassadors for First Year Experience Classes.

Teach a 2 credit Fall class in Civic Engagement including elections, voting, barrier discussions speakers and a demonstration of voting in real time.

### Strategy:

SUNY Old Westbury will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

We commit to various strategies involving diverse groups, organizations, and individuals on campus to fully involve the entire student body in our democratic engagement efforts. The strategies will be spearheaded by Cris Notaro, Assistant Provost for Student Success, Bonnie Eannone, First Year Class Dean, Sam Kloeckener, Associate Dean of Students Enrichment and Junior Class Dean, Paul Ferrante, Center for Student Leadership and Involvement, Joshua Phillips, Senior Class Dean and Director of Office Residence Life, Elizabeth Dysart, Director of CALL, Stacey DeFelice, Director, Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

Community Changemaker Fellowships: The crux of our strategy plan will center on implementing a peer-to-peer program that invites eligible students to complete an application to be part of OW voting plan and pledge. The fellows will participate in training prior to soliciting their peers, in over 30 Community Learning classes, and prepared to disseminate and collect Pledge to Vote cards. They will help with other voter registration recruitment and education efforts, which will include voter registration tabling events throughout the fall, including staffing at Orientation, Club Bash, and Homecoming.

Social media CALL staff and fellows will be responsible for developing a social media strategy and engagement plan for the CALL Instagram account. This will include leveraging social media campaigns from our many partners (ALL IN, SLSV, Ask Every Student, Civic Holidays, etc.) as well as devising more local content regarding deadlines and candidate information. Additionally, we will share all events, updates, and information through SUNY Old Westbury radio station, Newspaper, and campus newsletter.

Post-Election and 2025 Engagement Strategies These strategies deal with Election Day 2024, but we know that democratic engagement needs to happen all year round. In the post-election phase and through the remainder of calendar year we hope to commit to the following: ● Create a sustainable voting coalition. ● Continued dialogue with, support, and collaboration of the various nonpartisan programs and activities of the Student Government Association and other nonpartisan student orgs. ● At least one educational event each year (guest speakers, panel discussions) ● Encouraging more active advocacy and observation of civic processes such as local government meetings and recognizing civic holidays.

We will share our plan with key stakeholders in the following ways: ● In an email asking faculty in August to pledge to election engagement activities. ● An update from the campus radio, newspaper, and newsletter. ● Shared content on the CALL webpage and Instagram page.

## Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

The effectiveness of our plan will be evaluated through follow-up surveys, pledge cards, and observations. Metrics will include the number of cards distributed and collected; surveys sent to see what students found valuable during tabling and events, and numbers reflected in voter registration and or voting. As we move forward and establish a collation of staff, professors, administrators, and students we will collectively and effectively determine whether the approaches made have resulted in the desired impact across campus. The evaluation effort will be led by Elizabeth Dysart and fellows.

SUNY Old Westbury institution still needs to authorize the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to receive campus voting data to help evaluate our action plan and nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts.

## Reporting:

We hope to post excerpts from the action plan on our campus page with approval from SUNY Old Westbury Leadership team.

Create a campus email blast of achievements and report to OW school newsletter and newspaper including the work students, staff, and faculty have accomplished.