

Strengthening American Democracy
ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
Action Plan
Saint Francis University (PA)
May 31, 2024

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Saint Francis University (SFU) has a longstanding tradition of encouraging students to participate in the electoral processes. The SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law (CSG&L), with the assistance of the Department of History and Political Science, the Pre-Law Club, and the History Club, conducts campus-wide voter registration drives two times per year, one prior to the November general elections and one prior to the spring primaries. SFU attempts to help young voters get started and to encourage them to form habits of active and informed citizenship that will carry over into the future.

SFU submitted its authorization form and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge on July 14, 2017. The President and Provost of the University both supported our participation in the program. Since then, we have continued to conduct fall and spring voter registration drives. The fall voter registration drives begin during Constitution Days in September. We formally launch our fall campus-wide voter registration drives on National Voter Registration Day in September. A Steering Committee assists with the planning and implementation of related programming. Dr. Joseph Melusky, Professor of Political Science and Director of the SFU CSG&L coordinates registration drives and recruits various faculty, staff, and student stakeholders to serve on the Steering Committee.

Dr. Melusky also prepares the first draft of our action plans.

II. LEADERSHIP:

Dr. Melusky will continue to coordinate voter registration and related activities. He serves as chairperson of the Steering Committee and will seek members' advice regarding future planning and effective student outreach. He will also seek the committee's help in executing resulting plans.

Membership:

In 2024 members of the Steering Committee included the following:

- Dr. Melusky (Professor of Political Science, Director of the SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law (CSG&L), member of the Blair County Democratic Committee, and Judge of Elections for Blair Township, District 1);
- Dr. Denise Damico (Chairperson, Department of History and Political Science and member of Loretto, PA Borough Council);
- Dr. Art Remillard (Interim Dean of the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics -- STEAM);
- Robert J. Young (Associate Vice President for Advancement and Government Relations, former District Director for U.S. Rep. E.G. "Bud" Shuster (R, PA-9th);
- Lisa Swope, J.D. (Senior Associate Athletic Director for Administration, Senior Woman Administrator)
- Lianna Weir (Administrative Assistant and Events Coordinator, Shields School of Business, and member of the Cambria County Democratic Committee)
- Student officers of the Pre-Law Club and the History Club -- President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer – serve on the Steering Committee as well. Officers are elected to one-year terms so their membership on the Steering Committee varies accordingly.

- When College Democrats and College Republicans have active campus chapters, their presidents are invited to join the Steering Committee. We do not, however, always have active chapters of these organizations.

Succession Plan:

Since our last Action Plan was submitted, several committee members left SFU or have assumed different positions. When such personnel changes occur, Steering Committee invitations are extended to people who fill resulting vacancies. Student membership changes occur when students elect new officers for the Pre-Law Club and the History Club. When College Democrat and/or College Republican chapters are active, leaders of these organizations are invited to join the Steering Committee.

Community Outreach:

Directors of Cambria County and Blair County Voter Registration Offices will be invited to campus to talk with students about voter registration rules and procedures. Video tutorials explaining voting equipment in area counties will be utilized. Students have served as interns with area county party committees and have volunteered to assist local election offices on Election Days. While such area officials are not members of the Steering Committee, their assistance is appreciated.

III. COMMITMENT:

Very Reverend Malachi Van Tassell T.O.R., Ph.D., SFU President, and then-Provost Dr. Wayne Powel, both supported the decision to join the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in July of 2017. Fr. Malachi has signed ALL IN’s Higher Education President’s Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. Former Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the School of STEAM, Dr. Peter Skoner, and current Interim Dean of the School of STEAM, Dr. Art Remillard, also support SFU’s participation in the ALL IN program and have served as members of our Steering Committee. Additional commitment is reflected by SFU’s revised General Education/Core Curriculum Program’s explicit dedication to promoting “Citizenship and Civic Education.” The revised Core Curriculum is described elsewhere in this document.

IV. LANDSCAPE:

SFU: Founded on Catholic Franciscan Values:

In an age of complexity, the simplicity of the message of St. Francis of Assisi has more appeal than ever before: Virtue. Truth. Compassion. These guiding principles of the Franciscans are the values we embrace at Saint Francis University.

SFU Vision Statement:

Saint Francis University is a Catholic and Franciscan university that provides high quality education and innovative learning experiences so students *become that someone* that God calls them to be.

SFU Mission Statement:

As the oldest Franciscan institution of higher learning in the United States, Saint Francis University draws inspiration from our Catholic tradition and expresses the lived example of Saint Francis of Assisi in the modern world. Saint Francis University promotes an inclusive learning community and a lifelong path to virtue, truth, and compassion. Within a culture that seeks understanding through innovation and collaboration, we champion both the inherent dignity of the individual person and the common good.

SFU Goals of Franciscan Higher Education:

- Franciscan Character
- Humble and Generous Attitude Towards Learning
- Community of Faith and Prayer
- Respect for the Uniqueness of Individual Persons
- Service to the Poor and Needy
- Solidarity and Reconciliation
- Reverence for All Life and Care of Creation
- Spirit of Simplicity and Joy

- **Franciscan Character**

Valuing the University's Franciscan heritage and joining the mission of the Franciscans of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis of Penance, the University strives to communicate the ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi in the modern day through its mission of education. Saint Francis called all people to a life of metanoia - a life of constant transformation of mind and heart in the Lord. The University Community joins in pursuing the life of grace as we journey together to our eternal home. Realizing the presence of God in every student, the faculty and staff strive to demonstrate through word and work the love of God as they facilitate the spiritual and intellectual formation of our student body.

- **A Humble and Generous Attitude Towards Learning**

Living with an awareness that God, the source of all good, gifts us with talents of mind and heart, we as members of the Saint Francis University Community, receive and share these gifts humbly. We recognize that the gift of learning calls us not to self-advancement but to a generous gift of self for the benefit of others. We strive for excellence without arrogance and generosity in sharing our intellectual gifts, rejecting the power and prestige of knowledge as we seek to serve our brothers and sisters. As a community of learners, we encourage a free and open exchange of ideas as we seek truth together. We wish to follow the encouragement of Saint Francis that in the exercise of learning we should never extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion which such learning should foster.

- **A Community of Faith and Prayer**

Seeking God, the fulfillment of all desire, the Saint Francis University Community most fully expresses its identity as a Catholic and Franciscan University when it follows the Lord Jesus Christ and lives out this relationship as a Community of Faith and Prayer. Following Saint Francis, who did what God had given him to do, the University invites all of its members to spiritual growth, regardless of their background. As a community of learners, we particularly seek to foster the spirit of prayer and devotion through our studies. At its heart, the University holds the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacramental life of the Church as the animating principle of all it does.

- **Respect for the Uniqueness of Individual Persons**

Imitating Francis of Assisi, we recognize that the image and likeness of God dwells in every human person and is expressed in a particular way through their unique giftedness. Inspired by Saint Francis, for whom even lepers became a source of consolation and joy, the University affirms the goodness of all human life. While no one is free of the reality of sin and suffering, the University's members learn to receive and practice mercy through one another. Therefore, the University commits itself to fostering the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical health of the entire University Community.

- **Service to the Poor and Needy**

Seeing Saint Francis, who loved the poor, crucified Christ and served him in his members, we strive to love Christ who is particularly present in the least of our brothers and sisters, especially the poor and the disenfranchised. Refusing to see people as objects to be used and controlled, the University Community exercises its many gifts and talents in serving the poor and needy both at home and abroad. It is by doing so that the University realizes the joy of fulfilling its opportunity and obligation to relieve the suffering of Jesus, present in our brothers and sisters.

- **Solidarity and Reconciliation**

Living as brothers and sisters to one another and all creation, we form, by God’s design, a Community that transcends particular nations and cultures. In the many communities across the world in which they will serve, the University forms its students to take up the ministry of reconciling the world to God both through their professional work and the example of their lives.

- **Reverence for All Life and Care for Creation**

Flowing from the abundant Goodness of God and our identity as sons and daughters of God, we live as brother and sister to one another and all creation. This shared life leads us to reverence for all human life, to treat all persons in accord with their inherent dignity, to work together for the common good, and to care for our common home. In imitation of Francis, humble imitator of Christ the Servant, our faith moves us to action, helping to bind the wounds of those who suffer and bearing one another’s burdens.

- **Spirit of Simplicity and Joy**

Recognizing that Jesus, the Son of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped at but, instead, emptied himself and was born in the likeness of people, Saint Francis considered nothing and no one beneath him as he sought to live in solidarity with his Savior. Saint Francis celebrated the love of God present to him at all times and in all situations. Joyfully imitating him, we affirm that God draws close to us in whatever state and circumstances we have been given. In gratitude, we affirm that all that we have is a gift, and seek to conform our lives to that of our Creator.

- Visit <https://www.francis.edu/mission-and-character> to read the full Saint Francis University mission and goals.

SFU Enrollment Data (2023-2024)

	UNDG	GRAD	TOTAL
Full-time	1408	231	1639
Part-time	1612	447	2059

Residents and Commuter:

	UNDG	GRAD	TOTAL
Residents	1047	35	1082
Commuters	565	412	977
Total	1612	447	2059

In-state/Out-of-state:

	UNDG	GRAD	TOTAL
PA Residents	1241	366	1607
Out-of-state	352	81	433
Out-of-country	19	0	19

Total	1612	447	2059
-------	------	-----	------

Age Cohorts (as reported to IPEDS)

	UNDG	GRAD	TOTAL
under 18	20	0	20
18-24	1409	238	1647
25-39	115	133	248
40 and above	68	76	144
Total	1612	447	2059

Gender

	UNDG	GRAD	TOTAL
Male	618	125	743
Female	991	320	1311
Unknown	3	2	5
Total	1612	447	2059

Ethnicity (as reported to IPEDS)

	UNDG	GRAD	TOTAL
American Indian/Alaskan	8	1	9
Asian	34	10	44
Black/African American	109	9	118
Hawaiian/Pacific Island	4	2	6
Hispanic (of any race)	17	2	19
Two or more races	53	4	57
Unknown	90	38	128
White	1297	381	1678
Totals	1612	447	2059

Summary Profile of “Typical” SFU Student: Full-time, Resident, PA Resident, 18-24, Female, White

Revisions to the General Education/Core Curriculum Program:

Changes at the university level in 2018-2020 set the stage for core curriculum re-envisioning at Saint Francis University. A significant restructuring of academic departments and schools occurred in 2018, with the number of schools decreasing from four to three through consolidation of natural sciences and humanities and shifting of social sciences. Academic program reviews were implemented university-wide, resulting in many departments taking action to refresh and strengthen their programs. In 2021, the Goals of Franciscan Higher Education and the university mission statement were updated. As part of the restructuring and renewal at the university level, the existing General Education curriculum was tweaked with the understanding that a full-scale revision would take place in the near future.

In Fall 2020, the administrative decision was made to proceed with a full General Education revision, and in December 2020 a task force was formed with the goal of re-envisioning the program. The charge for the revision came from Father Malachi van Tassell, University President, and Dr. Karan Powell, then-Vice President for Academic Affairs. A number of reasons for a full-scale revision were identified by Fr. Malachi, including relevance of the program for the needs of a modern learner, concerns about a large number of credits in the program, and need for competitiveness in the marketplace. Fr. Malachi recognized that today’s student must be prepared for a workplace of the future that is ever changing, requiring flexibility and innovation. Finally, the need for the core to highlight

civil discourse and understanding of the uniqueness and value of every individual as evidenced by national and global issues was acknowledged.

Father Malachi asked the task force to design a “relevant, timely, and meaningful liberal arts core curriculum,” one that inspires students and their parents to choose Saint Francis University. The task force was encouraged not to feel confined by current course offerings, faculty, or structures. Rather, they were charged to think boldly and differently. Father Malachi provided the following points for consideration during the re-envisioning:

- Families are choosing Saint Francis because of common values and morals. The core curriculum should reflect our Franciscan and Catholic values.
- The core curriculum should contribute to personal formation of the student, including growth in virtue and building of personal character.
- Students should engage the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- Students should engage the Franciscan intellectual tradition.
- The core should include some courses / tracks common to all students.
- *Students should enter society as informed good citizens.*

The last of these, preparing students to enter society as informed good citizens, is most directly relevant to our ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge efforts.

The classes chosen for the core curriculum were divided into three main categories to help clarify their purpose and progression: foundations, connections, and integrations. This model was found in several variations when examining the programs of peer institutions and was a good fit for the clear message to be conveyed.

Foundations: Foundations courses are the nucleus of the core curriculum. They help students to develop the skills that will be threaded throughout the curriculum, preparing them with the basic elements needed for success in college courses and beyond. Foundational courses include transferrable skills such as written and oral communication, information literacy, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking. They also include an introduction to Franciscan values and service to others, helping students to build a foundation and preparing them to make a difference in their careers, communities, and the world.

Connections: Connections courses allow students to build on their knowledge and skills, strengthening the foundation while building the next educational level through exploration of different disciplines. They encourage a breadth of knowledge while further developing habits of mind, methods of inquiry, and ways of understanding through different frames of reference and traditions of each discipline. Each course in the connections category has been carefully selected to help achieve the objectives behind the core curricular goals. Courses in this category provide students with an opportunity to apply their skills, knowledge, and diverse ways of thinking to problems and issues challenging us today and in the future.

Integrations: Integrations courses encourage application of the knowledge and skills gained throughout the core curriculum to one’s future career and life. They help to contextualize all that has been learned in the college curriculum. They encourage students to consider diversity and social justice, democracy, global awareness, and civic engagement. Students may engage in opportunities to develop stewardship, leadership, or advocacy while guided by Franciscan values and the problem-solving skills they have learned. Integrations courses include research, community engagement, experiential learning, internships, and problem-based learning.

To fulfill “Connections” requirements, students are required to select courses from the following

list:

HISTORY (3 credits) from courses including HIST 103 The U.S. to 1877; HIST 101 Europe and the World (1500-1815); HIST 102 Europe and the World Since 1815; HIST 210 African American History; HIST 225 Women in European History; HIST 245 History of Medicine; HIST 259 U.S. Environmental History

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND CITIZENSHIP (3 credits) from courses including PLSC 102 American National Government; PLSC 103 World Politics; PLSC 203 U.S. Environmental Policy; PLSC 204 U.S. Government, Business, and Politics; PLSC 220 Homeland Security; PLSC 221 War and Peace: International relations in the Modern World; PLSC 223 U.S. Foreign Policy; PLSC 301 Constitutional Law; PLSC 305 Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; and additional courses from other disciplines

SOCIAL SCIENCE (3 credits) from courses including PLSC 112 The Road to the White House; PLSC 303 The American Presidency; PLSC 313 Ethics and Public Policy; PLSC 314 Public Administration; and additional courses from other disciplines.

Course from my home department, the Department of History and Political Science, are featured prominently in the revised core curriculum, ensuring that students will be exposed to instruction and topics directly related to voting, voter participation, and registration. The revised SFU General Education/Core Curriculum program includes courses that specifically and explicitly address topics involving the theoretical and philosophical foundations of the American political system, foundational documents (e.g., The Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the *Federalist Papers*, landmark Supreme Court decisions, etc.), separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, campaigns and elections, voting and voters, voter suppression, literacy tests, citizenship tests, turnout and information levels, the Electoral College, apportionment and districting, and much additional relevant information. See, for example, American National Government and U.S. History, to cite just a few directly relevant courses. Instructors in *all* “Connections” courses (History, Civic Responsibility and Citizenship, and Social Science) will be asked to share voter registration information with their students. In addition, panel presentations and plenary sessions are offered frequently on topics related to political campaigns.

The revised SFU General Education/Core Curriculum will be sent as a separate document.

SFU is known for its sponsorship of Mock National Conventions. Students originated the idea of staging a Mock National Convention in 1960. The event has become a campus and community tradition, as conventions have been held every four years, making this our 17th. Conventions are held for the party not holding the Office of the President. With Democrat Joe Biden currently serving as president, SFU staged a Republican Convention on Saturday, April 20, 2024. The Convention was sponsored by the History and Political Science Department, the SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law, and the Pre-Law and History Clubs. Approximately 200 people participated, including SFU students, alumni, faculty, administrators, and staff. Students visiting from area colleges also took part. High school students from the SFU Upward Bound program also participated and played prominent roles, including students from Blacklick Valley, Cambria Heights, Central Cambria, Conemaugh Valley, Ferndale Area, Forest Hills, Glendale, Greater Johnstown, Northern Cambria, Penn Cambria, Portage Area, and Richland. Guest speakers included PA State Representative (R-79th) Lou Schmitt, former PA State Senator John Eichelberger, Cambria County Commissioner Scotte Hunt, and former Huntingdon County Commissioner Bill Hoover. The keynote address was delivered by Robert A. “Rob” Gleason, Jr., former Chairman of the Republican Party of Pennsylvania. The delegates approved reports from the Credentials Committee, the Rules Committee, and the Platform Committee. According to the adopted rules, the Convention was conducted as a contested one. Republican candidates who were still in the race on Super Tuesday (March

5, 2024), Nikki Haley and Donald Trump, were eligible for the nomination on the first ballot. To secure the nomination, a candidate had to receive at least 1,215 votes. Following balloting by a roll call of states, Donald Trump narrowly defeated Nikki Haley for the nomination by a vote of 1,237 to 1,192 votes. This was one of our most closely contested closest mock convention ever. The delegates went on to select J.D. Vance as Trump's running mate.

To cite an additional example of relevant programming, every September SFU offers "Constitution Day(s)" programs. Constitution Days were celebrated at SFU from September 18 – 22, 2023. Programs and activities were sponsored by the SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law, the Department of History and Political Science, and the Pre-Law and History Clubs. Constitution Day commemorates the conclusion of the constitutional convention in 1787, the signing of the proposed Constitution by thirty-nine of the delegates in attendance, and the sending of the document to the states for debate and ratification. We distributed 323 pocket copies of the U.S. Constitution on campus and in the surrounding area. Constitutions were distributed to SFU students, high-school students, and junior-high students. Members of the SFU community were invited to participate in a variety of activities. On Monday, September 18, Students staffed tables in the Scotus/Padua Lobby offering "on-the-go" activities for those who were passing by. Participants were invited to take a brief quiz consisting of questions drawn from the test that is administered to prospective American citizens, to complete a survey to determine which founding father they would have voted for, and were provided with voter-registration information. On Tuesday, September 19, National Voter Registration Day, we kicked off our 2023 Voter Registration Drive. Information about registration procedures, deadlines, absentee ballot requests, and more were distributed via campus-wide email. Registration links and QR codes were made widely available, enabling prospective voters to register and request ballots in Pennsylvania and in other states as well. Hard copies of voter registration forms and wallet-sized voter information cards were placed in high-traffic areas and remained available in the SFU Center for the Study of Government & Law (Scotus 316). Also on Tuesday, September 19, U.S. Magistrate Judge Keith Pesto visited and presented remarks on the topic, "Original Intent v. the Constitution as a Living Document." Should courts rely on the original intent of the framers of the Constitution? Should courts interpret constitutional provisions in light of changing times and contemporary needs? Judge Pesto discussed these timely issues in view of recent Supreme Court decisions in cases involving abortion, firearms regulations, and more. On Wednesday, September 20, links to Center for Civics Education Podcasts, iCivics the Constitution Explained video series, and C-SPAN's Constitution Day and Constitutional Foundations programming were made available. On Thursday, September 21, Joseph Melusky moderated a roundtable discussion, "To Run a Constitution 2023: Interns' Stories from the Field." Tyler Beckwith (intern for National Park Service at Gettysburg National Military Park), Isaac Johnsen (intern for Befesa Zinc U.S. Inc., Moon Township, PA), Reace Myers (Eppard Scholar and intern for U.S. Rep. John Joyce, R-PA, 13th), and Emily Bucher and Makenna Murphy (SFU representatives, Women and Politics New Leadership PA summer program, Chatham University) discussed their experiences and told their stories. Rob Young, Associate Vice President for Advancement also participated. He discussed some of his own experiences working as a legislative assistant and district director for former U.S. Rep. Bud Shuster and he described the new Bud Shuster Memorial Scholarship and Government Internship Program and the Ann Eppard Memorial Scholarship for Women in Leadership Program. On Friday, September 22, a recorded presentation from the University of Colorado Law School, "2023 United States Supreme Court Review," was made available. A distinguished panel of former U.S. Supreme Court clerks and legal scholars discussed some notable cases that the Supreme Court decided during the 2022-2023 term. Students and other members of the University community participated in a few surveys. The following results are of interest: "Which Founding Father Would You Vote For?" Respondents completed surveys to determine which Founding Father they would support in an election. Results showed that Thomas Jefferson of Virginia came in first, followed by James Madison. John Adams and Alexander Hamilton tied for third. George Washington and Ben Franklin rounded out the field. "Are You Smart Enough to Be an American Citizen?" Two hundred twelve respondents answered ten questions that were randomly drawn from a list of questions that people

seeking American citizenship must answer to pass the government's naturalization test. A "passing" score is 60% (six out of 10). The mean score for SFU respondents was 6.5, down from last year's mean score of 7.53. "Are you smart enough to be an American citizen?" The answer from the SFU community was "Yes," but the passing score was a little too close for comfort!

As noted, we sponsor campus voter registration drives, one in the fall and one in the spring semester. We begin with a campus-wide e-mail announcement to all students, faculty, and staff. The announcement includes links with information about dates, deadlines, addresses and more. Links for those who want to register to vote (locally, elsewhere in Pennsylvania, or back home in another state) or to request absentee and mail-in ballots are provided. We also provide links with information about casting a more informed vote (how to match your issue positions with those of candidates, how to fact-check claims made by candidates, etc.). Follow-up e-mail messages are sent to faculty asking them to encourage students to read the original message and to register to vote. Hard copies of registration materials are also made available to interested parties. Information is also disseminated through campus new letters, announcements, electronic messaging platforms, and flyers. QR codes are also distributed and displayed for those who find them more convenient than links. Our fall voter registration drive "launches" during Constitution Day(s) on National Voter Registration Day in September. When chapters of College Democrats and College Republicans are active, we host live "Voter Registration Fairs" with College Democrats and College Republicans working side-by-side at tables in high-traffic areas to assist students with registering to vote, requesting absentee ballots, and related matters. Samples of some relevant links are as follows:

- In Pennsylvania, you can register to vote online, in person, or by mail using the VotePA website: [DOS Voting & Election Information \(pa.gov\)](#). This Pennsylvania Department of State web site contains information about voting systems in every Pennsylvania county. It includes information about voter registration procedures, absentee ballots, acceptable forms of voter ID, finding polling places, and checking on the status of voter registration. If you have questions, this is the site for you!
- To register to vote online, go to [Voter Registration Homepage](#).
- If you need an absentee ballot or a mail-in ballot, go to: [Mail-in and Absentee Ballot \(pa.gov\)](#)..
- If you are not from Pennsylvania but you want to register to vote back home, here are three websites that can help you to register and find information for your home state: Rock the Vote [Rock the Vote - Register to Vote, Find Election Info, and More!](#), TurboVote [TurboVote](#), and All In to Vote [ALL IN To Vote](#).
- [Home | League of Women Voters \(lwv.org\)](#) (League of Women Voters' national Web site offers voter-related information for all states.)
- [America's most popular voting guide for elections, political issues, candidates, and poll data \(isidewith.com\)](#) Take the survey and match your issue positions with those of the parties and candidates.)
- [PolitiFact](#) (Site devoted to fact-checking assertions from candidates, their staffs, their TV ads, and YouTube videos. The site is run by Bill Adair, Washington bureau chief for the St. Petersburg Times.)
- [FactCheck.org - A Project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center](#) (Site attempts to hold politicians accountable with Annenberg fact checks.)

We also distribute wallet-sized cards containing links to voter-registration information at Summer Orientation and Academic Registration (SOAR) sessions for incoming students. Approximately 450 wallet cards are being distributed from June 6 through July 12, 2024.

V. GOALS:

- Increase student registration rates by 5% from 2012 to 2024 (as measured by NSLVE report).
- Increase student voting rates by 5% from 2012 to 2024 (as measured by NSLVE report).
- By September of 2024, get a commitment from the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science and the Associate Dean of STEAM to support our continued use of institutional web sites to distribute voter registration information and materials.
- By September of 2024, get a commitment from the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science and the Interim Dean of STEAM to support our continued use of institutional social media to distribute voter registration information and materials.
- By September of 2024, get a commitment from the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science to support our continued use of hallway television monitors near the CSG&L to display live news coverage and commentary regarding important political developments (e.g., presidential inaugural address, Supreme Court confirmation hearings, impeachment hearings, etc.).
- Conduct fall voter registration drive. (Completion date: 30 days prior to November General Election Day)
- Conduct spring voter registration drive. (Completion date: 30 days prior to Primary Election Day)
- Print 1,000 additional "How to Register to Vote" wallet cards. Add QR code. (Order completion date: September 2024)
- Distribute wallet cards to incoming students at SOAR orientation programs. (Completion Date: July 12, 2024)
- Continue to administer questions drawn from the National Citizenship Exam to students in introductory classes every semester and continue to administer these surveys at other relevant campus events like Constitution Days. (Completion date: September 2024; also administer survey in selected classes during the spring 2025 semester)

VI. ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT (NSLVE):

- Pennsylvania currently permits residents to register to vote online, by mail, or in person. As of September of 2019, Pennsylvania residents can also request absentee ballots online. In 2020, PA introduced mail-in voting with no excuse required. Mail-in ballots can also be requested online. Nearly 18 times as many Pennsylvanians requested mail-in ballots as in 2016. Almost two million PA voters requested mail-in ballots for the June 2 primary! Such procedures make it easier for people to register to vote. One small administrative downside is that online registration and ballot requests make it somewhat difficult for us to measure how successful our voter registration efforts are. We can no longer count the number of registration forms that we distributed and use this number as an estimate of how many students registered to vote. Many, probably most, now register to vote online. Nevertheless, we will continue to remind students, faculty, and staff about registration procedures and deadlines and we will continue to make relevant materials available to them.
- **NSLVE Data:** The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report from Tufts University ("Student Voting Rates for Saint Francis University 2020 NSLVE Campus Report") was released in October 2021. The 2020 Report allowed for participation comparisons between the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. The Report included the following highlights:
 - The SFU "Voting Rate" (percentage of eligible SFU students who voted on Election Day) increased from 51.6% in 2016 to 65.9% in 2020 (+14.3%).
 - The SFU "Registration Rate" (percent of our voting-eligible students who registered to vote) increased from 75.3% in 2016 to 82.1% in 2020 (+6.8%).
 - The "Voting Rate of Registered Students" (percent of our registered students who voted on Election Day) increased from 68.5% in 2016 to 80.3% in 2020 (+11.8%).
 - Voting rates for SFU Asian (+25%), Black (+9%), and White (+14%) students increased from 2016 to 2020.

--Voting rates for SFU students by age group increased for all age groups (18-21 increased from 47% in 2016 to 64% in 2020 = +17%; 22-24 increased from 55% in 2016 to 68% in 2020 = +13%; 25-29 increased from 53% in 2016 to 64% in 2020 = +11%; 30-39 increased from 60% in 2016 to 68% in 2020 = +8%; 40-49 increased from 69% in 2016 to 78% in 2020 = +9%; 50 and above increased from 72% in 2016 to 74% in 2020 = +2%).

--Voting rates for female SFU students increased from 53% in 2016 to 75% in 2020 (+22%).

--Voting rates for male SFU students increased from 49% in 2016 to 70% in 2020 (+21%).

--Voting rates for undergraduates increased from 48% in 2016 to 65% in 2020 (+16%).

--Voting rates for graduate students increased from 58% in 2016 to 70% in 2020 (+12%).

--Voting rates for full-time students increased from 47% in 2016 to 65% in 2020 (+18%).

--Voting rates for part-time students increased from 67% in 2016 to 70% in 2020 (+3%).

NSLVE Campus Reports also reveal that turnout rates are higher among graduate students than among undergraduates. This finding is consistent with data indicating that turnout rates are higher for older individuals than for younger ones. While we will continue to target our traditional undergraduate students, we will not take our graduate students for granted. To that end, we will share electronically our “register and vote” materials with graduate students as well as undergraduates.

At the 2021 ALL IN Challenge Awards Ceremony held to recognize colleges and universities committed to increasing college student voting rates, Saint Francis University was awarded a “Silver Seal” for achieving a student rate between 60 and 69%. As noted above, SFU’s student voting rate increased from 51.6% in 2016 to 65.9% in 2020 (+14.3%).

SFU was included in *Washington Monthly*’s “2021 Best Colleges for Student Voting Honor Role” <https://washingtonmonthly.com/magazine/september-october-2021/americas-best-colleges-for-student-voting-3/>.

As of this writing, the 2022 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report from Tufts University is not yet available. When the 2022 NSLVE Report is released, it will allow for participation comparisons between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections. When the 2022 NSLVE Report becomes available, an addendum to this Action Plan will be prepared and will be submitted separately.

VII. STRATEGY

- During the fall and spring voter registration drives, continue to incorporate TurboVote, Rock the Vote, and ALL IN-supplied QR codes into voter- registration materials. Students who are not from Pennsylvania can use sites like these to obtain information about registering to vote in other states. That is, we will serve non-Pennsylvania residents as well as Pennsylvanians.
- Print 1,000 additional “How to Register to Vote” wallet cards for distribution to incoming students at first-year SOAR orientation programs. Add QR code to the wallet cards. That is, we will serve incoming SFU students as well as current students.
- In 2022, posters describing voting by mail in Pennsylvania were obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State. These posters were displayed prominently around campus. We will continue to obtain and display such materials, as available, in the future.
- Build on the success of our previous Voter Registration Fairs. Continue to sponsor a Voter Registration Fair on National Voter Registration Day if active College Democrat and College Republican chapters are present on campus.
- Dr. Melusky will publicize voter registration information through customary channels (e-mail, electronic messaging platforms, campus new outlets, flyers, class announcements, etc.) In

addition, the message will be extended by asking instructors in all core curriculum History, Civic Responsibility and Citizenship, and Social Science classes to encourage students to register to vote and to vote. In addition to providing students with voter registration information, instructors will ask students in their classes to share this information with at least one of their peers.

- Dr. Melusky will work with Steering-Committee member Lisa Swope, Senior Associate Director for Administration, and with coaches, including Doug Hoover (men's and women's Track and Field and Cross-Country coach), Rob Krimmel (men's basketball coach), and others to encourage athletes to register to vote and to vote.
- Dr. Melusky will reach out to the SFU Upward Bound Program and will provide students with voting and voter-registration information and encouragement. Doing so will extend our reach to traditionally underserved populations. Upward Bound is designed to help students prepare for and pursue a college degree following high school graduation. A federal TRIO Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Upward Bound has prepared over 2,500 qualifying students for the challenges of college. Continuously funded since 1966, Saint Francis' Upward Bound Program is one of the oldest Upward Bounds in the U.S. Provided at no cost to participants, the program offers a wide variety of academic, career, cultural, and social development activities. From September through May students participate in Saturday follow-ups held on Saint Francis' campus and tutorials held after school in their communities. Additional academic year activities include college visits, SAT cram sessions, FAFSA completion nights, and college fairs. In addition to SAT and college application fee waivers, the staff provides students with assistance completing their college and scholarship applications. Each summer participants live on the Saint Francis University campus for six weeks, attending academic classes in math, lab sciences, literature, foreign languages, and social sciences. The program also sponsors tutorials, a work-study component, volunteer opportunities, and cultural activities for students. To qualify for the program, students must either come from a family with a modest income or from a family in which neither parent has a bachelor's degree. Ninety-three percent of program graduates enroll in college on average with 76% of alumni earning a college degree within six years of their high school graduation. Among the program's alumni are physicians, engineers, educators, nurses, lawyers, business people, and physical therapists; they are employed by such companies as Alcoa, Chase Manhattan Bank, General Electric, Hewlett-Packard, and State Farm.
- As noted, we will continue to administer questions drawn from the National Citizenship Exam to students in introductory classes every semester and continue to administer these surveys at other relevant campus events like Constitution Days. We pose the question, "Are you smart enough to be an American citizen?" So far, the answer has been "yes" on a consistent basis. We want to help make sure it stays that way.

VIII. REPORTING

The Action Plan will be shared with the President, the Interim Dean of STEAM (School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), the chairperson of the Department of History and Political Science, and members of the Steering Committee. Additional dissemination of the Action Plan will be at the discretion of the President.

IX. EVALUATION

- NSLVE Reports are used to compare participation rates in presidential election years to presidential election years (e.g., 2020 to 2016).
- NSLVE Reports are used to compare participation rates in midterm election years to midterm election years (e.g., 2022 to 2018).
- Submission of Action Plans (2016 – Yes; 2018 – Yes; 2020 – Yes; 2022 – Yes; 2024 – in progress)

- Campus has a current signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation (Yes)
- Submission of NSLVE Report (awaiting receipt of 2022 NSLVE Report)
- NSLVE Authorized (Yes – SFU authorized NSLVE through 2033)
- Permission for ALL IN to publish SFU's NSLVE report on our ALL IN campus webpage (Yes)
- Seals of Recognition received (2016 – Bronze; 2018 – Silver; 2020 – Silver)
- Engagement Opportunities: Coaches Voter (Coaches signed in 2020)
- Evaluation of completed goals (see above list of goals – complete or incomplete)

X. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Our **vision** is to develop and support student leaders who have a strong commitment to democracy. We seek to provide a sound conceptual foundation that they will be able to build upon as citizens. They will continue to engage in the civic life of their communities through collaborative and creative approaches to problem solving.

For quite some time, voter registration drives have been a part of our identity, a part of what we do at SFU. We do a lot. We were gratified to receive “Silver Seal” recognition for our efforts. We plan to do more and we intend to do it as effectively as possible. We regard this Action Plan as a work in progress. We expect it will evolve as we move forward.

**ADDENDUM –
ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND
ENGAGEMENT (NSLVE):**

When the May 31, 2024 SFU Action Plan was prepared, the 2022 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report from Tufts University was not yet available. It was noted that when the 2022 NSLVE Report was released, permitting comparisons between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections, an addendum to the Action Plan would be prepared and would be submitted separately. This is the promised addendum.

NSLVE Data: The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report from Tufts University (“Student Voting Rates for Saint Francis University NSLVE Campus Report”) was released in June 2024 and was received on June 17, 2024. The June 2024 Report included data for participation in the 2022 midterm elections. As such, the June 2024 NSLVE Report allowed for participation comparisons between the 2018 and 2022 midterm elections. The Report included the following highlights:

--The SFU "Voting Rate" (percentage of eligible SFU students who voted on Election Day) increased from 27.2% in 2018 to 35.1% in 2022 (+7.93%).

--The SFU “Voting Rate” in 2022 (35.1%) was 4.5% higher than the corresponding “Voting Rate” for “All Institutions” in 2022 (30.6%).

--The SFU "Registration Rate" (percent of our voting-eligible students who registered to vote) increased from 71.1% in 2018 to 74.9% in 2022 (+3.8%).

--The "Voting Rate of Registered Students" (percent of our registered students who voted on Election Day) increased from 38.3% in 2018 to 46.9% in 2022 (+8.6%).

--Voting rates for SFU White (+9%) students increased from 2018 to 2022. Voting rates for SFU Race-Unknown students decreased by 4%. Voting rates for Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, Hispanic, Native/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were not available for 2022. Voting Rate for SFU 2-or-More-Races students was 23% in 2022. A corresponding figure for 2018 was not available.

--Voting rates for SFU students by age group increased for the following age groups (18-21 increased from 19% in 2018 to 31% in 2022 = +12%; 22-24 increased from 29% in 2018 to 34% in 2022 = +5%; 30-39 increased from 46% in 2018 to 47% in 2022 = +1%; 40-49 increased from 50% in 2018 to 56% in 2022 = +6%; 50 and above increased from 62% in 2018 to 65% in 2022 = +3%). Those in the age cohort 25-29 remained steady at 32% in 2018 and 32% in 2022.

--Voting rates for female SFU students was 27% in 2018. NSLVE did not report a corresponding figure for 2022.

--Voting rates for male SFU students was 26% in 2018. NSLVE did not report a corresponding figure for 2022.

--Voting rates for undergraduates increased from 23% in 2018 to 32% in 2022 (+9%).

--Voting rates for graduate students increased from 40% in 2018 to 43% in 2022 (+3%).

--Voting rates for full-time students increased from 22% in 2018 to 32% in 2022 (+10%).

--Voting rates for part-time students increased from 47% in 2018 to 48% in 2022 (+1%).

The NSLVE Report includes voting rate percentages by field of study. The highest 2022 voting rate percentage was recorded by students in the Social Sciences (68%), followed by History (42%) and Education (41%).

NSLVE Campus Reports reveal that turnout rates are higher among graduate students than among undergraduates. This finding is consistent with data indicating that turnout rates generally are higher for older individuals than for younger ones. While we will continue to target our traditional undergraduate students, we will not take our graduate students for granted. To that end, we will share electronically our “register and vote” materials with graduate students as well as undergraduates.

