

Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plan

Campus Name: Santa Rosa Junior College

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Leadership:

Our college has put together a workgroup of 45 students, staff members, faculty members, and administrators to work on our college's voter engagement and election readiness plan. The Voter Engagement Workgroup is holding regular meetings from September through Election Day (and beyond) to ensure that we are providing our college community with the resources, support, and information they need to prepare for, participate in, and process the upcoming election. This includes opportunities to learn about the election process and what's on the ballot, and also includes support for student's self-care. We have utilized this workgroup to build a short-term plan of events and activities for the upcoming election, and this work will serve as a model for future Civic and Voter Empowerment Action plans in future academic years.

Introduction:

At Santa Rosa Junior College, we recognize the importance of fostering a culture of civic responsibility and democratic participation – as is reflected by our [Mission, Vision, and Values](#). While it was not always formally coordinated prior to AB 963, our college has consistently taken steps to engage our student body in the electoral process, through efforts including voter registration drives, educational events, and collaborations with student & local organizations. Historically, our college has worked to ensure that students have access to the most important information regarding elections, but recent elections have changed the way our college thinks about supporting our community in election years. Not only is there a lot of stress, confusion, and anxiety leading up to the election, those feelings stick with the community following the conclusion of the election as well. Now in 2024, we have taken those lessons to heart and have been working on a plan to ensure our students are supported before, during, and after the election, in ways that are reproduceable in the future. Unfortunately, we did not complete our enrollment in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) in time to include that data in our report, but we look forward to reflecting on that data in our next report.

Civic Engagement Plan Goals and Action Steps:

Santa Rosa Junior College's plan focuses on four key areas: Outreach, Education, Engagement, and Support. While much of our plan relies on the students and employees of our college, our community partnerships with organizations are also key to this plan's success.

Outreach:

Our outreach begins in the lead-up to the primaries and continues through Election Day in November, and consists of a district-wide effort to ensure that students are receiving election information in every form possible. Important election dates (Election day, voter registration deadlines, etc) are published in our Academic Calendar year-round and on our college's smartphone app calendar, and also highlighted in a

weekly email newsletter that is sent to all registered students. Voter and registration information has also been published to the Student Portal and to Canva –two of the most frequently visited pages on our college’s website. As we approach specific important dates, we plan to increase the outreach with the following strategies:

- Send weekly push notifications to enrolled students via our college’s smartphone app, reminding students to register to vote and to vote in the election.
- Utilize graphics developed by partner organizations, statewide organizations, and our college to make weekly posts to college sponsored social media pages, the news feed of our college’s smartphone app, our weekly student newsletter, bulletin boards across campus, and our network of digital displays dispersed across our five campuses. We especially plan to use QR codes in our media to ensure a quick navigation from our outreach materials to important election information.
- Send election-specific emails to all students throughout the month of October and early November, including the information highlighted in the [California Student Vote Project Toolkit](#), and additional information about college-sponsored, student lead, and community organized activities related to the upcoming election.
- Send election-specific text messages to all students before the deadlines to register to vote and to cast their ballots.

Education & Engagement:

In addition to outreach, we have many activities planned to ensure our students have opportunities to learn about elections, voting, and the importance of civic engagement. These activities include student-lead events, lecture series, and staff-lead trainings, such as:

- “Deep Democracy Initiative” – an event, hosted in partnership with Political Science Club, MEChA, and a local non-profit, to highlight local ballot measures and register students to vote
- “Fake News and the Impact of Algorithms in Your News Feed” and “Misinformation: Exploring Media Bias” – multiple seminars hosted by our college librarians
- “Generative AI and the Election” – a group discussion lead by our Student Health Service’s Student PEERs program
- “Dismantling False Narratives” – a 5-part lecture series coordinated by our Intercultural Center, which focuses on topics including partisan political culture, common myths associated with political topics and voting, the effect of politics on education, and the effectiveness of voting.

For the second year in a row, we are partnering with the League of Women Voters to train student leaders as Election Ambassadors; providing students non-partisan tools, resources, and strategies to get their fellow students to vote. We have hosted informational session with our Student Government and Inter-Club Council, and the students who have received training will be visiting classrooms and tabling on campus to register students to vote. Part of this training is introducing students to the California University and College Ballot Bowl Competition, and as of October 1st, SRJC has already registered the 16th most students to vote in the California Community College system.

To support access to this information, we have created a one-stop election hub on our college website that includes a list of upcoming election-related activities, important dates, and links to important election information. We will be distributing that website to our college community (and in all of the outreach listed above) starting on Friday, October 4. Our plan is for this website to be a permanent place for this kind of

information for future elections, to increase the visibility of what specific college programs are doing to support elections and to highlight all the ways that students can access opportunities to learn more about civic engagement.

Support:

Starting the week of October 21st, we will be providing support services to our students that focus on their health and wellness. This will include opening a “cozy” center in partnership with Student Health Services to create a space for students to relax, inviting emotional support animals from a local non-profit for students to spend time with on campus, and organizing an Election Discussion Drop-in Center for students to come together and discuss their election experiences and feelings. We will also be working with Student Psychological Services to ensure there is adequate support for students in these spaces, including access to our bilingual therapists.

Evaluation and Reporting:

Moving forward, we plan to use the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement data to assess the effectiveness of our approach and to set future long-term goals, in consultation with our college’s Office of Institutional Research. We will also be documenting our progress in the California University and College Ballot Bowl Competition year-over-year, to assess the effectiveness of our voter registration efforts. Lastly, we will consult with student organizations and continue to meet with our college’s Voter Engagement Workgroup to gather feedback and suggestions for our future Civic and Voter Empowerment Action Plans.

Once the 2024 election has concluded, our Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator will report back to the Secretary of State with an analysis of this plan and the lessons we have learned.