



## Scripps College 2024 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

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### Executive Summary

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Scripps College in Claremont, California for the 2024 national election. The purposes of the action plan are to increase civic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout. Our goals for the 2024 general election are to increase our registration and voting rates, employ a variety of methods to engage students, and disseminate voter education resources.

### Leadership

Our leadership team includes:

Gretchen Maldonado - Director, Laspa Center for Leadership

Stephanie Johnson – Assistant Director, Laspa Center for Leadership

Amy Marcus Newhall - President

Sha Bradley - Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Kelly Hogencamp – Registrar

Jamila Zuwayed, Assistant Dean and Director of Case Management

Nick Daily, DEI Consultant and Acting SCORE Liaison

Becky Kyles, International Student Advisor

Patricia Eskenazi '26 Leadership Intern

Blake Weld '26 - Leadership Intern

Saenger Breen '26 - Leadership Intern

Riya Hariharan '25 - Leadership Intern

Simran Sethi '26 – Vice President of Student Activities, Scripps Associated Students

The leadership team will be renewed at the beginning of each school year, prior to the fall semester. The participation of professional staff and faculty will be confirmed and, if necessary, new members will be recruited from the same functional area(s) on campus. Student participation will include the Laspa Center interns and at least one member of the student

government. Future years will include an open call to students of all class years to achieve diverse representation, create more opportunities for student engagement, and ensure that younger students can learn from more seasoned students on the team.

Our campus works with the following community partners: Civic Nation, Democracy Works, NAACP, League of Women Voters, California Secretary of State, VoteForward, Every Vote Counts-Claremont, Claremont Initiative for Voter Engagement Strategies

### **Commitment**

Civic engagement is central to life at Scripps College both culturally and academically. Our mission states that students will *“develop their intellects and talents through active participation in a community of scholars, so that as graduates they may contribute to society through public and private lives of leadership, service, integrity, and creativity.”* This illustrates our commitment as an institution to prepare our students for engaged lives after graduation. The Laspa Center for Leadership is one of several campus centers actively preparing students in this way

At the heart of our academic curriculum is our Core program. Unique to Scripps College, Core is a signature, three-semester, interdisciplinary program that every student participates in. The first semester of Core is unified by a single syllabus and set of readings, divided into discussion sections of about 18 students. In the first semester, students tackle issues central to democratic engagement, including political and cultural studies, as well as race and gender studies. We believe these interdisciplinary subjects to be the fundamental building blocks of a comprehensive education, and this foundation is essential preparation for democratic engagement. Politics is one of our most popular programs and its major and minor programs include a broad range of subjects including United States politics, public policy, political theory, and political economy. One of the learning outcomes of the Politics program is for students to participate in civic engagement activities. Scripps does not only encourage a strong academic and theoretical foundation for Politics students, but our programs also encourage engaging with the community and applying what they are learning in the classroom.

Additionally, the College continuously develops opportunities for co-curricular engagement, including our Interdisciplinary Humanities Institute. This program features a community engagement arm for students to apply what they learn in the classroom to the

community, thereby becoming more informed advocates and, ultimately, informed voters. The Humanities Institute is currently running a program entitled “Can We Escape the Echo Chamber?” This program features a series of lectures, discussions, and workshops throughout the fall semester intended to tackle difficult questions about how to meaningfully politically engage in an era of polarization. An upcoming community event features a guest lecture from David Romano, the Chair of Middle Eastern Politics at Missouri State University. This event will educate our student body on global issues and culture, further engaging our community in the world around us.

Scripps College’s faculty members maintain a broad focus on community engagement that enhances our demographic outreach. The College offers an array of classes that present opportunities for engagement with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. For example, several professors invite elder co-learners in the community to audit classes through the local Napier Initiative. Faculty also maintain a relationship with the Pilgrim Place Senior Community in Claremont, which hosts seniors with long careers related to social justice and political advocacy. By connecting students with these community members, Scripps forges mutual growth and learning. Students can share campus resources and perspectives regarding democratic engagement with older community members, who in turn offer their own knowledge and experience to inspire student political action. Professors also offer opportunities to work with children from marginalized communities, incarcerated individuals, and other community members engaged in activist work. By engaging with the broader community beyond Scripps, students can internalize the importance of their vote and learn from diverse communities, while the College can share our resources to spaces beyond campus.

The Laspa Center for Leadership at Scripps College has primary responsibility for programming around democratic engagement and does that through its Civic Engagement Initiative. The Civic Engagement Initiative is a nonpartisan program that educates our student body about voter rights and electoral processes, empowers students to be civically engaged, and equips students to become leaders in public policy. The action plan described here represents its current goals and strategies.

In addition to the Laspa Center, the College hosts a number of resource centers for students that encourage democratic engagement in diverse ways. The Scripps Communities of Resources and Empowerment organization (“SCORE”) collaborates with diverse affinity groups

on campus, including ethnic, international, disability, queer, and religious clubs and organizations, to create an inclusive space for all students and offer a physical environment for students of marginalized identities to gather in mutual support. Additionally, the Claremont EmPOWER Center works to prevent violence by offering education outreach initiatives and counseling for survivors of sexual and relationship abuse on campus. These are just two examples of college-run organizations on campus that foster democratic engagement by ensuring that all students can thrive and make use of the college's resources.

## **Landscape**

Scripps College is a private liberal arts institution, founded in 1926 as a women's college. Scripps joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2022. We have 1,082 full-time undergraduate students and 21 post-baccalaureate students; 99% of students live on campus. Students of color comprise 47% of the student body and 4% are international students. Our voter age range is 18-22. Forty-three percent (43%) of our students are from California and vote in-state.

As reflected in our NSLVE reports, Scripps College is in the fortunate position that a large majority of our students arrive on campus having already registered to vote. Given the politically active and small nature of our community, we seldom encounter unregistered students. We have therefore found that our energy surrounding civic engagement is better applied in other ways. For example, given that more than half of our students come from out of state and at least 32% of them do not vote in person, the Laspa Center works to disseminate information surrounding the absentee voting process and answer state-specific questions about voting processes. Our institution also encourages students to check their registration status using our TurboVote resource to avoid unwanted surprises on Election Day. By adapting our strategy to a high base level of registered voters, we can meaningfully engage with students in other areas to increase our overall level of participation and democratic commitment.

Founded as a women's college, a commitment to gender-inclusivity is central to Scripps's mission. Our institution seeks to uplift marginalized gender identities through programming and curricula, which shines through in our student body. Scripps College students are an exceptionally politically active group that engages in issues affecting democracy far beyond election cycles. Students have consistently engaged in activism and demonstrations for a variety of local to global current events. For example, within the past year, students have

organized walkouts and demonstrations in support of divestment from corporations viewed as complicit in the war in Gaza. Activist and journalistic organizations on campus seek to keep Scripps College students informed on current issues in social justice and ensure meaningful protest and activism. Our institution strives to encourage such student activism continuously and specifically channel it into highly involved participation in the upcoming general election this fall.

## **Goals**

### Short Term

1. Increase registration rate from 91.9% in 2020, to 95% in the 2024 national election, as measured by the NSLVE.
2. Increase voting rate of 86.5% in 2020, to 90% in the 2024 national election, as measured by the NSLVE.
3. Create opportunities for non-voters to engage by writing and mailing 300 letters to voters in districts with historically low voter turn-out by participating in "VoteForward" campaigns across Texas, Florida, Arizona, and Georgia.
4. Increase involvement and awareness among international students by offering educational programs and encouraging volunteer activities such as canvassing, phone-banking, and translating/interpreting.

### Long Term

1. Increase registration rate from 89.9% in 2022, to 95% in the 2026 midterm elections, as measured by the NSLVE.
2. Increase voting rate of 51.8% in 2022, to 70% in the 2026 midterm elections, as measured by the NSLVE.
3. Engage faculty participation on the leadership team with the addition of at least two faculty members by the time of the 2026 midterm elections.
4. Establish the Laspa Center as the central resource for civic engagement activity on campus, so that students know precisely where to go with questions or plans for civic engagement.
5. Facilitate more diverse representation and create more opportunities for student engagement through an open call to the student body to join the leadership team.

## **NSLVE**

Scripps College participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). In 2018, our institution had a voting rate of 65.8% and a registration rate of 91.8%. Scripps had a 2020 campus voting rate of 86.6%, and a 2020 registration rate of 92%. In 2022, our voting rate was 51.8%, and registration rate was 89.8%.

The voting rates of our non-White students, while consistently above the national average, is still less than the voting rates of our White students. The voting rate of White students in 2020 was 89% and in 2022 it was 59%. For Asian students the voting rate was 66% in 2020 and 34% in 2022. For Black students the voting rate was 77% in 2020 and 33% in 2022. Students who identify with two or more races had a voting rate of 87% in 2020 and 55% in 2022. (The NSLVE reports did not include information about students who identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.)

Our institution was recognized by ALL IN with Platinum Seals in 2020 and 2022.

## **Strategy**

Scripps College will implement the following strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

1. Host weekly pop-up tables where we register students to vote via the dedicated TurboVote platform, request absentee ballots using Vote.org, and track ballots with Ballot Trax.
2. Partner with Every Vote Counts, a club open to students from all five Claremont Colleges, and the Claremont Initiative for Voter Engagement Strategies at Claremont McKenna College to fund and support a “Voter Registration Carnival” where students can check in with questions about voting and partake in civic engagement-themed games, other recreational activities, and food-truck dessert.
3. Engage students at the weekly pop-up tables with games related to civic education, including California representative identification and voter registration trivia.
4. Partner with VoteForward in a letter-writing campaign for registered voters in US regions with historically low voter turn-out.
5. In preparation of early voting starting October 8 in California, students prepared an informational video on the Official Voter Information Guide.

6. Partner with the local League of Women Voters to create a virtual Q&A with the community.
7. Disseminate voter information, resources and reminders via social media and internal campus platforms. Resources include but are not limited to Vote.org, TurboVote, BallotTrax, Ballotpedia.
8. Partner with the campus communications team for enhanced outreach to a broader audience.

## **Reporting**

Our campus action plan and a summary report will be posted on our website. Our campus action plan will also be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/scripps-college/>.

## **Evaluation**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

1. Track registration and voting behavior via the NSLVE report
2. Monitor usage of TurboVote for evidence of engagement
3. Compare student attendance rates at 2024 programming and where possible, collect demographic student data to gauge the effectiveness of outreach efforts to nonvoting and international students as well as non-White students
4. Track how many letters our students write for Vote Forward using our dashboard on their website and the campaign tracking software they provide