

Civic Engagement Action Plan

Census and Voter Registration

Summary

South Central College's (SCC) Student Senators (North Mankato and Faribault) developed this Civic Engagement Action plan on April 23, 2022 at the Spring 2022 Student Voter Summit.

Members Present:

Taylor Benton, NM Student Senate President *Vicky Coronado, FB Student Senate President*
Elita Olson, NM Vice President *Faith Jameson, FB Senator*
Jess Dewar, NM Senator
Nate Good, NM Senator

This primary goal of this plan is to increase civic engagement on SCC's campuses. During the 2022 calendar year, civic engagement among college students will be vitally important to the sustainability of the state government, and local elections will impact students' daily lives. This plan will overview how various departments at SCC can engage with and support this critical work. The main objective is to ensure all students are registered to vote in the 2022 election. Student leaders will implement this plan and require support from SCC constituents. Most initiatives will take place between September 2022—November 2022 in an effort to increase voter turnout and engagement.

Leadership

South Central College will work with the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, Greater Mankato Growth, and the Faribault Chamber of Commerce to host candidate meet & greets for students and the communities the College serves. In addition, SCC Student Life will ensure frequent communication about civic engagement opportunities to all SCC students.

South Central College will coordinate with Academic Affairs to post MNVotes.org information on each course homepage. Academic Affairs and faculty are encouraged to invite Student Life and Student Senators into their classrooms to discuss voting access and the importance of civic engagement.

These efforts will be led by SCC Student Life through continued collaboration with LeadMN and by supporting the Student Senates in Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts.

Commitment

South Central College has dedicated resources for a student worker on each campus who will work up to 20 hours per week focusing their time on the efforts described above. These positions were created with the intent of keeping voter registration and civic engagement at the forefront for all students. The encouragement of civic engagement and voter registration aligns with the College's institutional core competency of Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility. Students are encouraged to exercise the responsibility expected of a community member.

Landscape

During the 2020 Election, SCC saw an 8.6% increase in voting and registration yield rates (*2021 Institute for Democracy & Higher Education*). However, SCC voter turnout was lower than the national average for higher education institutions. In general, the campus climate reflects interest and engagement beyond presidential election years is low. This has informed SCC's Student Senate's response to

encouraging people to learn about the differences between national and local engagement. By utilizing local examples of civic community impact, students should develop a stronger connection to local and state-wide engagement.

Important Landscape statistics:

- The average age of SCC’s student body is 28.4 years old;
- 21.7% of SCC students are students of color; and
- 46.7% of SCC students qualify as underrepresented (defined as Students of Color, Pell eligible, or First Generation - MN).

Voter engagement among SCC’s oldest population of students continues to grow. In addition, there was also a significant increase in voter turnout towards the 18–29 age group during the 2018 election year. While the turnout for this age group significantly increased in 2018, it was still 20% lower than students aged 50+. As voting becomes more accessible, SCC must focus efforts on early registration and use the Secretary of State’s online platform to reach the 18–29 year old population.

Goals

1. Short-Term: Develop a collaborative, institution-wide plan to provide consistent programmatic efforts around annual voting opportunities.
2. Short-Term: Encourage student involvement in community civic engagement opportunities.
3. Long-term: Continue to grow involvement and engagement amongst young people in the SCC community.

Outcomes

1. As a result of completing the civic engagement initiatives, SCC will increase the college student voting rate for 2022, as reported in the NSLVE report.

Action Steps/Strategy

Below is a rough outline of the planned initiatives for the 2022-23 academic year.

Action Step	Responsible Area	√
Host a student takeover of social media with non-partisan voting resources. Create shareable content that encourages students to get out and vote.	Marketing	
Speak with administration and an election clerk to explore an early vote location or polling place on each campus.	Student Senate	
Provide syllabus statements to faculty for their fall 2022 syllabi.	CTLE	
Post key voting dates at all campus activities to remind students/create excitement. Hype key milestones, like early voting, absentee ballot deadline, etc.	Student Life	
Hang key voting dates in every classroom.	Student Life	
Host a Vote-By-Mail party, complete with stamps and envelopes for ballots. Include a campus official who can serve as a witness if necessary.	Student Senate	
Provide faculty with information about when, where, and how to vote.	Student Life	

Participate in Vote Early Day. Most voters can cast their ballot prior to Election Day. Vote Early Day makes that process easier by helping all eligible voters understand their voting options while celebrating the act of voting early.	Student Senate	
Work with the Student App to publish information about getting out the vote	Student Life	
Partner with local election clerks to recruit students to serve as poll workers on election day. This can engage young students who may not be eligible to vote yet.	Student Senate	
Host Lunch & Learns sessions about legislative issues affecting SCC students.	Student Senate	
Organize a walk/ride to the polls on election day.	Student Life	
Work with commuter students/distance learners on how to identify their polling place.	Student Life	
Apply to be a voter-friendly campus and submit an action plan to the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge.	Student Senate	
Provide voter registration forms in different languages.	Student Affairs	
Include voter registration information at all significant campus events.	Student Life	
Send out regular campus-wide communication with important voting information.	Student Life	
Decorate the NM Café to increase voting visibility.	Senate	

NSLVE 2020 Report

- SCC saw an increase of 13% in student early voter turnout.
- SCC saw a 13% increase in voter turnout for students ages 18–21. There was a 10% increase for students ages 22–24.
- SCC had a significant increase in voter turnout from BIPOC students. Percentages varied based on identify groups, but ranged between -2% to 28%.
- While SCC increased in almost every measure, the College’s current voter turnout percentages are 0.3% lower than the all-institution average.

NSLVE 2022 Report

- SCC saw a 19% increase in voting from 2014–2018 (non-presidential election years). This increase was seen across demographics, including white and BIPOC students.
- Between 2014–2018, the College saw an increase in external voting measures; i.e., fewer students voted in-person.

Reporting

1. 100% of faculty will include voter registration information on their D2L course page. (*CTLE*)
2. South Central College will provide voter registration information to the entire student body twice per election period. (*Student Senates*)
3. Student Life will include civic engagement strategies and results in the 2022–23 Student Affairs Co-curricular assessment report. (*Director of Student Success*)
4. Civic Engagement results will be shared to the College’s all-employee newsletter, “Connections,” to highlight important progress. (*Director of Student Success*)

Evaluation

1. South Central College will continue participating in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE).
 - a. The NSLVE will provide information on voter registration and turnout.
 - b. SCC will analyze data to measure civic engagement by students from previously less advocated demographics. If an engagement gap is identified, the plan will be adjusted to target specific, demographic-related opportunities with the goal of closing the engagement gap.
2. South Central College will receive the ALL IN Campus Challenge recognition seal.