

SUU SOUTHERN
UTAH
UNIVERSITY



LEAVITT CENTER
for Politics & Public Service

SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY

Voting Engagement Plan

2022-2023

I. Executive Summary

This action plan was created by the Student Leaders of the Michael O. Leavitt Center for Politics & Public Service to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Southern Utah University. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2023 Academic Year, on and around our campus in Cedar City, Utah.

The mission of our initiative is to strive to provide students with access to civil discourse about various political topics and promote civic engagement through hosting various events that encourage students to get involved with their community. We accomplish this initiative by helping students register to vote, providing a weekly discussion about various political topics, and arranging visits with important Utah political figures. The Michael O. Leavitt Center for Politics & Public Service also strives to help the community by providing public service to various organizations and various community members.

This action plan is to commit our institution to increasing the engagement of our students in a civic matter through supporting organizations on our campus and to forward our goals of helping students achieve academic excellence, social responsibility, experiential learning, community involvement, and personal growth.

II. Leadership

Mary Weaver Bennett, Director, will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. She will be supported in this work by the Leadership Team, which oversees making decisions and leading everyone involved. The Leadership Team is composed of the Business Manager, Internship Coordinator, Student Director, and Director (who is the only professional staff member involved). Of the student leadership positions, the Student Director is in charge of making the final decisions. The person in that position is the voice of the Center and ensures that what is planned gets accomplished.

Mary Weaver Bennett is also supported by the Executive Council of the Leavitt Center who help lead various committees that provide different services that help engage the students such as events, service projects, Pizza & Politics, and more. Each week the Center hosts at least one event. These events have covered topics from majoring in political science to differentiating credible sources from fake news. Service projects are typically monthly and benefit SUU and the community. The bread and butter of the Leavitt Center is Pizza & Politics. These weekly discussions give students a chance to comment on the latest political topics. Conversations cover everything from Vaping to International Affairs.

III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. As stated in our mission statement, The Leavitt Center is a non-partisan, interdisciplinary organization dedicated to preparing students to serve as responsible and educated leaders in a democratic society.

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Voter registration tables
- Protests / rallies / walkouts
- Signage promoting Election Day

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Town halls
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)

Despite these things, the emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased.

IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2020 when our total student enrollment was 12,582.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
90.00%	10.00%	64.00%	36.00%

* Part Time and Full Time data are the combination of undergraduate and graduate students and represents the entire student body.

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
74.00%	26.00%	4.00%		

* This data is only representative of undergraduate students.

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
40.00%	60.00%		

* This data is only representative of undergraduate students.

Age:

18-24	25 and Over
77.00%	23.00%

* This data is only representative of undergraduate students.

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
1.00%	1.00%	2.00%	7.00%	1.00%	74.00%	1.00%

* This data is only representative of undergraduate students.

V. Goals

The Leavitt Center on behalf of SUU would like to implement the following long term goals:

1. Increase Voter Turnout
2. Emphasis Democratic Engagement in all Academic Fields
3. Foster and build better relationships with community members and our campus

The Leavitt Center on behalf of SUU would also like to implement the following long term goals:

1. Increase participation of students in Leavitt Center activities
2. Increase the registration and voting activity of students
3. Create a relationship with SUU Athletics

VI. Strategy

The Michael O. Leavitt Center for Politics & Public Service will maintain the strategies we have been using to achieve our goals. These strategies are as listed below, but are not limited to:

1. Pizza and Politics
2. Hosting candidate debates
3. Trips to the Capitol
4. Hosting weekly events
5. Hosting Voting Registration tables

We plan to maintain these various activities so that we can achieve the goals set above and any others we plan on creating. By doing so, we will maintain and grow our relationships with other campus partners and students.

All work completed in the Center is done by students, for students. Though community members are often encouraged to attend events, students are always encouraged to attend as each event covers topics that affect their future.

The majority of events hosted by the Leavitt Center occur within its walls. The Center is located in the Student Center, located in the center of campus. The location of the Leavitt Center is in the heart of the Student Center, allowing students to easily access it and participate in events. Every part of the process takes place in the Leavitt Center. From planning to hosting the event, students are able to have a consistent location for everything put on by the Center.

The purpose of the work done by students in the Leavitt Center is to increase understanding of leadership, service, research, and citizenship. Each activity is implemented to engage an array of students around campus. Ideally everyone would attend every event, but having different topics allows students of all areas to attend events that relate specifically to them. The goal for each activity is to engage students in democratic practices and encourage civic engagement on and off campus.

VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 72.9. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 53.3 and our voting rate among registered students was 73.1. During this year, our voting rate was lower than the national average.

VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

Internally, SUU's Marketing office sends weekly bulletins to inform faculty and staff about campus happenings. The Leavitt Center will work with the Marketing Communication office to send reports out that cover the action planning process.

For students on campus, the Leavitt Center will use their own marketing team and the marketing efforts of the student association. Between social media, digital signage, and paper advertisements, the marketing efforts of both organizations will reach a majority of students. The Leavitt Center also has an option to post online information on the student's online portal, which is a place each student logs into when they need to access classes and other account information.

External reporting will start with local news organizations. In Cedar City, there are two newspapers that locals read. There are also news outlets in neighboring cities and towns that could release the information. From there, marketing efforts would move to state news agencies.

The plan will be made public by posting it on the Leavitt Center's website. The plan will be in PDF format, giving visitors a chance to read what was planned from the beginning. Updates and reports can also be added to the website, allowing visitors to see the progress made.

The NSLVE data will also be made public. In the past, the Leavitt Center has issued a press release with the results. Going forward, the NSLVE data will be made available on the Leavitt Center website.

The purpose of evaluation of the action plan is to ensure that the work of the Leavitt Center is following the guidelines and interacting with as many students as possible. SUU and The Leavitt Center specifically wants to know if students are voting more in elections. Ideally students will vote the same in local and national elections, but it is not anticipated that that will happen. The school wants to see an increase in voter engagement and a chance for students to have their voices heard.

Evaluation of the plan will be carried out by members of the Leavitt Center, including the Director, Mary. The Director will be the constant in the Center, especially since students have a quick turnover rate in higher education. The Director will work with student leadership to evaluate efforts implemented, look at data provided by NSLVE, and how to move forward to continually increase voter engagement.

The evaluation will be completed over the summer of each year. Ideally the plan starts in the fall and ends in the spring, giving Center leadership a chance to work on the plan while

students are off campus. The summer months can be used for planning and adjusting the action plan, while the fall and spring can be used for students to implement events, discussion topics, and more.

The information that must be collected are the voter turnout numbers from NSLVE. These numbers will be the sole indicator if the efforts by the Leavitt Center and campus community have increased voter engagement. Other goals, such as increasing attendance and having more diversity in political discussions, can be measured by numbers obtained by the Leavitt Center. The main numbers that internal and external audiences will want most will come from the NSLVE.

Information will be analyzed by any breakdown given by the NSLVE. It will be important to see how other areas besides the Humanities encourage civic engagement amongst its students. For analyzing goals like having more diversity it will be best to monitor comments and engagement to see if all sides are represented. In other words, if a Pizza & Politics discussion only has conservative comments, the Leavitt Center would need to go out and find those that have different viewpoints to add to the conversation.

Results of the evaluation will be shared through the Leavitt Center internally, on social media, and on the website. These outlets will allow for a majority of people to see the progress made by the Leavitt Center and campus through the action plan.

Contact Us

Director: Mary Weaver Bennett

Leadership Team: Ashley Cannon, Olivia Johnson, Tom Cloward

Email: leavittcenter@suu.edu

Phone: 435-865-8186

Website: suu.edu/leavittcenter

Social Media:

Twitter: [@leavittcenter](https://twitter.com/leavittcenter)

Facebook: facebook.com/leavittcenter

Instagram: [@leavittcenter](https://instagram.com/leavittcenter)

