



Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi Democratic Engagement Action Plan: Fall 2024

Prepared and written by:

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Most recent revisions: May 27, 2024

I. Executive Summary¹

This action plan was developed by Dr. Sanne Rijkhoff, Associate Professor of Political Science to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2024 Spring semester and leading into Fall 2024, on and around our campus in Corpus Christi, Texas.

The following groups will be leading this work at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

¹ Where necessary, this plan will be revised after NSLVE data from the 2022 elections are made available.

- Undergraduate Students
 - Democracy Fellows (two students per semester, one yet to be hired).
 - Student Organizations: Political Science Club, Student Government Association.
 - First year students in large lecture sections of the required core-curriculum courses in political science.
 - Students enrolled in political science course on campaigns and elections during the Fall 2024 semester.
 - Non-eligible voting students.

- Faculty
 - Leadership is with Dr. Sanne Rijkhoff
 - Strong collaboration is to be expanded with Adrian Rodriguez (Vice President of Student Engagement and Success), Dr. Lisa Perez (Associate Vice President for Student Support and Dean of Students) and Jennifer Baker (Director of Center for Athletic Academic Services).
 - Include faculty from all colleges through activities organized and sponsored by the Center for Faculty Excellence

- University Administration
 - President Dr. Kelly Miller
 - Interim Provost Dr. Ahmed Maudy
 - Vice President of Student Engagement and Success Adrian Rodriguez
 - Dean of Students Dr. Lisa Perez

The purpose of the plan is to list specific tasks and activities designed to maintain 80%+ registration rates and 50%+ voting rates among our students². The success of the plan strongly depends on student fellows (Democracy Fellowship from the Campus Vote Project), service learning in classes (particularly POLS 3312 Campaigns and Elections), and volunteering. The most recent incoming cohorts lacks motivation to do any of this, and thus will be the main target group.

TAMU-CC is subject to Texas SB17 of 2023 which prohibits public university and colleges from having diversity, equity and inclusion offices and any units that perform DEI functions, with carve-outs only for registered student groups, data collection, academic instruction and research, guest speakers and student recruitment. Senate Bill 17, which went into effect January 1, 2024, also bans the higher education institutions from considering race, sex, color, or ethnicity in hiring. Efforts to increase civic engagement among underrepresented groups will be made by focusing on intercollegiate athletics and specific majors (including computer and information sciences, mathematics and statistics, and engineering and engineering technologies).

² We acknowledge that a small percentage (estimated 5%) of our students is not eligible to vote in the USA.

II. Leadership

Dr. Sanne Rijkhoff Associate Professor of Political Science will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. Support comes from coalition members and special attention will be given to expand the coalition:

Current coalition:

- Islanders Vote program (created by Dr. Sanne Rijkhoff, to be further developed)
- Democracy Fellow (undergraduate student – Alexia Martinez)
- Democracy Fellow (undergraduate student - to be hired)
- Political Science Club (student organization, Dr. Rijkhoff, <https://tamucc.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/psc>)
- Alpha Delta Eta, chapter at TAMU-CC of Pi Sigma Alpha, national political science honor society (Dr. Rijkhoff)
- Braver Angels at TAMU-CC Fellowship. This group focuses on ongoing effort to increase civil discourse. (Fall 2024 student fellows are: Lillian Crane and Ashley Wingate coordinated by Dr. Rijkhoff)
- Political Science program (with various professors encouraging their students in the core curriculum to be involved).
- Student Government Association at TAMU-CC (<https://tamucc.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/student-government-association/>)
- Dr. Lisa Perez, Associate Vice President for Student Support and Dean of Students (<https://www.tamucc.edu/seas/staff.php>)
- President Dr. Kelly Miller (only in signature)

Future partners:

- Tex Rising at TAMU-CC (student organization, Dr. Schuchs-Carr, <https://tamucc.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/txrising>). We only collaborate with them during voter registration as they cannot guarantee to remain non-partisan after the registration deadline.
- League of Women Voters of Corpus Christi (<https://lwv-cctx.clubexpress.com/>)
- Nueces County Clerk Kara Sands and the Elections Department (<https://www.nuecesco.com/county-services/county-clerk/elections-department>, main line elections (361) 888-0385; Diana Munguia elections manager (361) 888-0385)
- Joe Miller from the Office of Research Engagement (ORE), formerly the Office of Community Outreach (<https://www.tamucc.edu/research/research-engagement/ore/index.php>)
- Adrian Rodriguez, Vice President of Student Engagement and Success, and Jennifer Baker, Director of Center for Athletic Academic Services (<https://goislanders.com/>)
- The College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- STEM fields at TAMU-CC: College of Engineering and Computer Science and the College of Science.
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This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, Representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise, Trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy, Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus into our work.

Our group plans to meet Weekly (this is only with Democracy Fellows) at Bay Hall 345 (Office of Dr. Rijkhoff) Tuesdays at 3pm. We plan on having scheduled events (see the timeline in the Strategy section).

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- Campus Vote Project
- Ask Every Student
- Civic Nation
- Every Vote Counts
- Fair Elections Center
- Institute for Democracy and Higher Education
- League of Women Voters of Texas
- Move Texas
- Vote Riders

Succession is a concern. Dr. Sanne Rijkhoff is the main faculty on campus working on this which is taxing on her other work and health. More faculty need to be recruited to make this sustainable. First collaboration has started with the Dean of Students and the Center for Faculty Excellence. Pathways towards establishing a formal university committee on which faculty serve are explored.

During 2023, no students applied to be a Democracy Fellow. This meant that Dr. Rijkhoff had less support. For the Spring 2024 semester two fellows were hired and active and one is returning as fellow in the Fall 2024 semester. Several students already expressed interest for the position.

New members will be recruited through the first-year large lecture sessions of the courses in the core curriculum. All political science classes include required civic engagement activities as part of the course. Further recruitment efforts will be made in the on-campus dorms and housing. Campus wide announcements, flyers, posters, and social media will be used for outreach.

III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. Prior to 2020, our university mission statement included references to civic learning or global citizenship. Since then, the mission statement and vision no longer include that. The vision: *To be nationally recognized for student success, academic achievement, research, creative activity, innovation, and service excellence*, and mission: *Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is a premier institution of higher education, dedicated to providing an unparalleled commitment to student success, developing professionals and engaged leaders, closing achievement gaps as a Hispanic and Minority Serving Institution, and providing intellectual capital through research, creative activity, and innovation for South Texas, the Gulf of Mexico, and beyond*. Through the focus on service excellence and engaged leadership, we will appeal to the vision and mission of the university with our non-partisan civic engagement activities. This includes a focus on non-citizens and other non-eligible to vote groups as well.

There are currently no institutional efforts to bring civic engagement into campus culture, however, throughout 2022, upper administration has been enthusiastic, supportive, and open to collaboration. The President signed the higher education president's commitment to full student voter participation agreement and submitted a renewed commitment to ALL IN which indicates that she is open to have a conversation about this. Moreover, the Dean of Students organizes a monthly gathering called "First Amendment Friday" where freedom of speech and civil discourse are discussed with interested students. Although this activity is not very popular, we are committed to increase the impact of this program through collaboration. Due to turnover in administrative positions such as the provost office and Dean offices, we will encourage all new and interim leaders to sign a pledge as well.

On campus, we have seen:

- Voter education resources.
- Political clubs or student organizations.
- Campus leaders promoting voting.
- On campus polling place.
- Voter registration tables.
- Protests / rallies / walkouts / encampments.
- Signage promoting Election Day.
- Institution specific promotion material: pens, stickers, maps of campus including the location of the polling station.
- Integration of TurboVote with the online portal for student organizations.

On campus, we have experienced:

- Voting in student body elections (turnout is below 10%).
- Political speakers.
- Walks / rides to polls.
- The start of the Islanders Vote campaign to create a campus culture.

- Registering to vote.
- Classroom announcements.
- Deliberative dialogues.
- Organized civil discourse discussions.

The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased. There is no collective effort or incentive for faculty to include anything related to elections and non-partisan civic engagement efforts. The Islanders Vote program has received grant funding to increase engagement and participation and plans include outreach to faculty (see AES Implementation Grant proposal and acceptance). Closer collaboration with the committee for expressive activity (<https://www.tamucc.edu/governance/committees-councils/university-committees/expressive-activity-committee.php>) is also anticipated.

IV. Landscape

Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi is a public 4-year R2 research university, and a federal designated Hispanic Serving Institution. The enrollment at TAMU-CC in Fall 2023 is 10,855³ with 47.9% Hispanic students. In the fall 2023 semester 2,431 freshmen enrolled which is the fourth year of consecutive increase of enrollment. Among all freshmen, about half (1,094) are first generation students, and more than half (1,309) of are Hispanic and 758 of new freshmen are first generation Hispanic students (31%).

Unfortunately, we cannot include current figures as NSLVE data for 2022 is not yet provided to anyone. In 2016, 2018, and 2020 our student voter registration rates were 76.6%, 80.9%, and 83.8% and we aim to increase this rate. Voting rates in 2016, 2018, and 2020 were 38.1%, 37.8%, and 56.7%, and TAMU-CC earned the Bronze Seas of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. We aim to increase turnout for the 2024 elections.

TAMU-CC is subject to Texas SB17 of 2023 which prohibits public university and colleges from having diversity, equity and inclusion offices and any units that perform DEI functions, with carve-outs only for registered student groups, data collection, academic instruction and research, guest speakers and student recruitment. Senate Bill 17, which went into effect January 1, 2024, also bans the higher education institutions from considering race, sex, color, or ethnicity in hiring. Therefore, we focus our efforts to increase civic engagement among on intercollegiate athletics and specific majors. Majors and programs with a voter turnout below 50% in 2020 are: computer and information sciences, mathematics and statistics, and engineering and engineering technologies).

With the funding from Ask Every Student for the 2022 midterm elections, we registered 225 new student voters, held conversations with over 400 students about civic engagement and elections, held three evening events with over 75 attendees, and provided much needed signage on campus during early voting and election day. For 2024, we aim to impact all incoming freshmen students (around 2,500) at the very least. Furthermore, by including faculty training, we aim to impact majors with low registration and turnout rates.

The Office of the Dean of Students is already part of our coalition, and we aim to strengthen this partnership. The office provides online information on expressive activity <https://www.tamucc.edu/dean-of-students/expressive-activities.php>, and expressive activity on campus is restricted only by reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions (<https://www.tamucc.edu/governance/rules-procedures/assets/08.99.99.c1-expressive-activity-on-campus.pdf>).

The core curriculum at TAMU-CC includes two required political science courses for all students of all majors and programs. The two courses are U.S. Government and Politics, and State and

³ Based on numbers from Fall 2023 in reports publicly available on the university website https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/tamucc.pir/viz/Enrollment_15690131724490/DEFINITIONS

Local Government. Related to these courses are the four University Core Curriculum Program outcomes: critical thinking skills, communication skills, personal responsibility, and social responsibility. These courses aim for students to meet these outcomes: by having the students engage in critical thinking activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior; by having students engage in written, verbal, or visual activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior; by having students engage in course related activities that connect personal responsibility and political ideology to encourage ethical decision making; and by having students engage in course related activities that connect social responsibility to civil rights, civil liberties, and to voting and voting behavior

Faculty in the Political Science program are solely responsible for these courses. Currently there are six professors in the program each of whom are teaching large lecture sections with class sizes over 200 students each semester, including summer sessions. In most of these sections, students are required to attend and participate in multiple application activities in which they engage with the course topics and materials. They then write a short self-reflection for each activity.

The Political Science Club, the Democracy Fellows, the Civil Discourse Fellows, and other student groups (e.g., Islander Feminists, Islanders for Social Justice, TexRising at TAMU-CC, and the College Republicans) all focus on civic engagement. Not all are strictly non-partisan. Groups coordinated and advised by Dr. Rijkhoff (the Political Science Club, Democracy Fellows, and Civil Discourse Fellows) are all strictly dedicated to non-partisan efforts.

V. Goals

The long-term vision the team hopes to achieve for the institution is the establishment of an integrated and specified office for civic engagement with paid staff.

The short-term vision the team hopes to achieve for the institution is to maintain $\geq 80\%$ registration rates among students for the general election, and $\geq 50\%$ student voter turnout in the general election.

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration:

- The most recent NSLVE report (2020) and we will integrate the new data from 2022 which is not yet available.
- The mission statement of TAMU-CC.
- The focus on expressive activities from the Office of the Dean of Students.
- Anecdotal evidence from students' experiences.
- Feedback from administrators and faculty.
- Outcomes from the 2022 midterm elections and funded initiatives.

Based on NSLVE information from 2016, 2018, and 2020 our student voter registration rates were 76.6%, 80.9%, and 83.8% and we aim to increase this rate. Voting rates in 2016, 2018, and 2020 were 38.1%, 37.8%, and 56.7%, and TAMU-CC earned the Bronze Seal of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. We aim to increase turnout for the 2024 elections. Furthermore, the NSLVE data shows that various fields fall behind in student voter rates including computer and informational sciences, engineering and engineering technologies, mathematics and statistics, health professions, physical sciences, and biological and biomedical sciences.

With the funding from Ask Every Student for the 2022 midterm elections, we registered 225 new student voters, held conversations with over 400 students about civic engagement and elections, held three evening events with over 75 attendees, and provided much needed signage on campus during early voting and election day. For 2024, we aim to impact all incoming freshmen students (around 2,500) at the very least. Furthermore, by including faculty training, we aim to impact majors with low registration and turnout rates.

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan do not mention civic learning and democratic engagement. However, service excellence and engaged leadership are mentioned. The President of the University has also renewed her signature with ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
- We do not have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus. There is no office for civic engagement. These

tasks mainly fall on professors of political science, and with Dr. Rijkhoff who is working towards expanding the campus coalition of students, faculty, staff, and administration.

- We do not have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students. However, political science professors invite Volunteer Deputy Registrars to aid students in core-curriculum courses with voter registration. In January 2024, various courses reported to have registered approximately 60 new voters as result of these efforts.
- We do not have official ways in which we communicate voting information to our students but again, individual efforts are made by professors and students (among which prominently the Democracy Fellows) to increase awareness. We do this through course information, posters, flyers, social media, and collaboration with the Office of Marketing and Communication.
- The voter engagement work on our campus is very siloed within one office or program, namely political science. While faculty are excited and enthusiastic about our activities, many feel burdened by additional service requests from the university. In addition, many students, including the Student Government Association, have indicated that civic engagement is important to them, but they are reluctant to act. TAMU-CC lacks a strong student community which is an obstacle for collective action. This requires a more individualized or one-by-one approach which is costly in terms of time.
- We do not have sustainable or consistent funding. Fortunately, for the Fall 2024 presidential elections, Dr. Rijkhoff secured funding from various non-partisan organizations such as Ask Every Student. The budget for the upcoming semester is \$6,500. With this funding we can provide small incentives for faculty and students to attend information sessions and become active as well.
- While voter engagement seemed to be very politicized during the 2020 presidential elections, there are signs that the work of Islanders Vote coordinated by Dr. Rijkhoff has increased trust and confidence among university administration. We are hopeful that this results in decreased administrative reluctance to engage for the 2024 presidential elections.
- Finally, despite providing funded fellowships to students, we have trouble engaging student leaders for the leadership of our initiative. We plan to have a robust social media campaign advertising the leadership/ fellowship opportunities at the start of the Fall 2024 semester.

We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- We do not have a working relationship with our local election office. During the 2022 elections, the county clerk visited our campus once to train new volunteer deputy registrars. We hope to do this again to establish a long-lasting working relationship.
- We do not have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement. Apart from voter registration collaborations with the League of Women Voters in Corpus Christi, and TexRising at TAMU-CC, the campus community is rather out of touch with the community partners in the city and county.

- Finally, our state laws make it challenging to support student voter registration efforts. While voters can fill out a form online, it is still necessary to print the form, sign it, and mail it to the clerk's office. The process is confusing for students and especially in the large lecture sessions of the required core curriculum political science courses, coordinated efforts are included by faculty to help register or re-register students.

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus including:
 - The political science faculty.
 - Supportive administration such as the Dean of Students and the President
 - Intercollegiate Athletics has shown interest for collaboration in the past.
 - Student organizations.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students such as digital and paper messages, the I-Engage online student organization platform, and tabling efforts throughout the semester.
- We use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus. Among these are:
 - Information on TV screens in the campus student union, reminders for voter registration on I-Engage (the portal for all student organization activities), the Islanders Vote program, and the Democracy Fellows.
 - Furthermore, we aim to include information for students and faculty through Open Educational Resources and Canvas Courses. (The University switched from Blackboard to Canvas on May 15, 2024).
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan: as publicly funded institution, it cannot be emphasized enough that our efforts are strictly non-partisan.

Our institution needs to invest in signage available to the campus community to to best mobilize voters for the next election. This includes opportunities for voter registration and directional signage to the on-campus polling place.

By integrating the action plan, we take big steps towards solving immediate issues student voters face. We aim to again increase voter turnout for all majors and programs and have a turnout of $\geq 50\%$ for all majors and programs. In 2020, English and History showed the highest student voter turnout rates with 70%. Majors and programs that still show student turnout rates below 50% are Computer and Information Sciences (42%), Mathematics and Statistics (46%), Engineering and Engineering Technologies (49%), and Parks, Recreating Leisure, and Fitness Studies (49%). In addition, our Health Professions is at a 54% student voter turnout. The Nursing program at TAMU-CC is highly established and successful.

Being selected for the program is a major achievement as the program had 94% to 100% graduation rates, 75% to 86% pass rates for the Board of Certification of their students and 92% to 100% job placement rates in the previous years (2019 – 2022).⁴

Collaboration with the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is therefore important for our efforts as well.

With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Maintain 80%+ registration rates among students for the primaries and the general election.
2. Maintain 50%+ student voter turnout in the general election.
3. Have Election Day (for primaries and the general election) on the university calendar.

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

1. Form a University Committee dedicated to civic engagement with faculty serving for 2 (or more) years representing each college.
2. Incorporate voter registration and education in first year housing programs (on campus dorms) to communicate a campus culture of civic engagement.
3. Form an office of civic engagement with a full-time employee who can oversee on campus efforts.

These goals are in line with our strategies and tactics as elaborated in the next section.

⁴ <https://www.tamucc.edu/nursing-and-health-sciences/health-sciences/naacsl-accreditation.php>

VI. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we are already doing in the short term (within the next year):

- Holding registration drives.
- Holding vote drives.
- Tabling in the high foot traffic areas on campus.
- Placing signs on campus that point in the direction of the polling place on campus.
- Classroom presentations particularly in core-curriculum required classes with >200 students enrolled.
- Promoting voter registration and voting through the office of marketing and communication.
- Hanging posters, posts on social media, messages on the announcement screens across campus.
- Organizing watch parties for (among other things): political debates, State of the Union, Election Day.
- Created an Elections 101 document (due for update) and provide that through Canvas.
- Being part of a community of practice for civic engagement at HSIs.
- Organizing campuswide civil discussions twice per semester in collaboration with Braver Angels, ACTA, and Bridge USA.

These are tactics that we plan to do in the short term:

- Placing deadlines and important dates on the campus calendar.
- Organizing workshops to become Volunteer Deputy Registrars.
- Organizing workshops to answer how civic engagement relates to all majors and programs, specifically those in STEM including the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, and the College of Science.
- Holding town hall meetings about elections in other countries / or about the value of democracy - to include students who are not eligible to vote (international students).
- Work with the student newspaper.
- Work with the Office of Marketing and Communications.
- Provide students reminders about registering and voting through the student organization system (I-Engage).
- Work with local election office.

These are tactics that we hope to do in the short term:

- Direct communication from administration to students.
- Inviting local candidates for a debate or panel discussion.
- Collaborate with student athletes to get the word out (perhaps have the athletes take a pledge).

- Collaborate with the Center for Faculty Excellence to teach faculty how to encourage civic engagement.
- Have campus mascot walk around campus encouraging our efforts.
- Work with residential life to incorporate voter engagement in move in or residence meetings.

These are tactics that we are already doing for the long term (beyond the next year):

- Remaining current activities.
- Developing the Islanders Vote program for Civic Opportunities and Voter Engagement.
- Focus on including STEM by collaborating with the Colleges and student organizations.

These are tactics that we want to do in the long term:

- Create a voter guide.
- Work with the Campus Election Engagement Project Incorporate voter registration with student government activities.
- Apply to become a Voter Friendly Campus.
- Acquire funding for efforts and activities.

These are tactics that we hope to do in the long term:

- Establish a campus culture focused on non-partisan civic engagement.
- Establish an active student group or organization dedicated to non-partisan civic engagement.
- Have a steady recruitment of student Democracy Fellows.
- Establish community connections.
- Establish an institution of civic engagement with paid staff.

TIMELINE

Monday	August 19	Start date for faculty
Monday	August 26	Classes begin & start Islanders Vote media campaign
Tuesday	September 3	Class Announcements, Drs. Huerta and Kearns (360 enrolled)
Wednesday	September 4	Class Announcements, Drs. Shay, Dillard, and Rijkhoff (540 enrolled)
Thursday	September 12	Faculty Registration Workshop with Center for Faculty Excellence Additional class announcements throughout September and October
Monday	September 16	Presidential Debate Watch Party
Tuesday	September 17	National Voter Registration Day & Islanders Vote tabling event
Wednesday	September 25	Vice-Presidential Debate Watch Party & Islanders Vote information
Tuesday	October 1	Presidential Debate Watch Party
Monday	October 7	Last Day to Register to Vote & Islanders Vote tabling event
Wednesday	October 9	Presidential Debate Watch Party & Islanders vote information
Thursday	October 17	Faculty Voting Workshop with Center for Faculty Excellence
Monday	October 21	First Day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance & Signage
Tuesday	October 22	Islanders Vote tabling event
Thursday	October 24	Islanders Vote: Early Voting Day 1 (variety of activities)
Friday	October 25	Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail (Received, not Postmarked)

Tuesday	October 29	Islanders Vote tabling event
Wednesday	October 31	Islanders Vote: Early Voting Day 2 (variety of activities, Halloween)
Friday	November 1	Last Day of Early Voting by Personal Appearance
Tuesday	November 5	Election Day & Islanders Vote tabling event
Thursday	November 14	Islanders Vote: Results discussion & debrief with faculty
Tuesday	November 19	Islanders Vote team debrief
Sunday	December 1	Budget end date
Wednesday	December 4	Last day of classes
Sunday	December 15	Report due to Ask Every Student

In the long-term, we aim to establish a campus committed to educating for civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation. Our vision includes the following characteristics, institutions, and culture:

- We have a campus institution with one full time staffer. This could be established in the current Office of Belonging or could be housed in the Office of Research Engagement (previously the Office of Community Engagement), or could be a new program in the Office of the Vice President of Student Engagement and Success.
- A university committee focused on civic engagement and civil discourse is established. Faculty representatives of each College will be multi-year members of the committee. Other members include representatives of the Office of the Dean of Students and the Student Government Association.
- A strong coalition exists on campus including students, student organizations, faculty, staff, and administrators. In addition, the coalition includes, various student organizations, and major programs such as the Islander Athletics and the Office of Veteran Affairs.
- All Deans, the Provost, and the President commit to goals related to being a voter friendly campus.
- The University provides some funding for civic engagement efforts enabling at least two events for 75 to 100 students per academic semester. This funding will be in addition to current existing funding for student organization events.
- Awards for civic engagement for individual students, student groups, and faculty will be part of the annual Student Engagement and Success Leadership and Service Awards.

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 83.8%. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased. The 2022 NSVLE report has not yet been released but the 2020 report is a better comparison as it is the previous presidential election cycle and not the midterm cycles of 2018 and 2022.

	2016	2018	2020	2016-2020 Change (p.p.)
Total Student Enrollment	13,054	12,742	10,296	↓ -2,758
(Age under 18/Unknown)	-	-	-	-
(IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens)	508	386	268	↓ -240
(FERPA records blocked)	43	27	18	↓ -25
(Non-Degree Seeking Students)	790	569	154	↓ -636
Total eligible voters	11,712	11,760	9,856	↓ -1,855
Number of students who registered	8,972	9,512	8,264	↓ -708
Number of students who voted	4,463	4,442	5,590	↑ 1,127
Registration Rate %	77	81	84	↑ 7
Voting Rate of Registered Students %	50	47	68	↑ 18
Voting Rate %	38	38	57	↑ 19

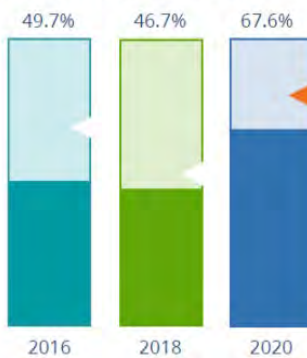
In 2020, our voting rate was 56.7% and our voting rate among registered students was 67.6%. During this year, our voting rate was lower than the national average. The figures below come from the institutional specific NSVLE report on the 2020 presidential elections.

Our institution does not provide detailed demographic information to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement and thus we are unable to report on registration and turnout rates distributed per race or ethnicity and sex / gender.

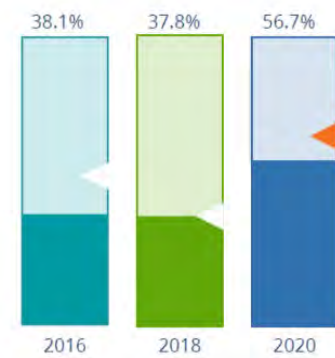
REGISTRATION RATE



VOTING RATE OF REGISTERED STUDENTS



VOTING RATE



As voting is habitual, it is interesting to look at various age groups. The report shows that older students are more likely to vote than younger students. However, in 2020 it was the first time that all age groups increased voter turnout and exceeded 50%. More specifically, age groups 18-21 increase with +21 points, group 22-24 with +18 points, and age group 25-29 with +17 points.

More encouraging information is provided by voter turnout per field of study as all showed an increased in turnout. The smallest increases of +8 points are in fields with already highly established student voter turnout namely Social Sciences, Public Administration and Social Services Professions, and Philosophy and Religious Studies. The largest increase in turnout with up to +25 percent points are in English (+25 points), Parks, Recreating Leisure, and Fitness Studies (+24 points), Business, Management, and Marketing (+22 points), and Biomedical Sciences (+21 points). Few programs did not exceed the 50% student voter turnout such as Computer and Information Sciences (42%), Mathematics and Statistics (46%), Engineering and Engineering Technologies (49%), and Parks, Recreating Leisure, and Fitness Studies (49%).

The total enrollment in these disciplines in 2020 was 1,502 which is approximately 15% of the student population in 2020.

The data indicates that while there were increases for each age group and each major or program in 2020 compared to 2016, impactful increases can still be made for student voter registration and turnout on the TAMU-CC campus in general, and in STEM fields specifically. Our goals and scheduled activities include a focus on these fields by targeting not only students, but also faculty.

VIII. Reporting

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is edited, reviewed, and completed by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition (among which):
 - Political Science Program (kevin.kearns@tamucc.edu)
 - Department of Social Sciences (wendi.pollock@tamucc.edu)
 - Center for Faculty Excellence (<https://www.tamucc.edu/faculty/center-for-faculty-excellence/index.php>)
 - Islanders Athletics (<https://goislanders.com/>)

 - Democracy Fellows and Campus Vote Project (amartinez381@islander.tamucc.edu)
 - Student Government Association (<https://tamucc.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/student-government-association> / sga.president@tamucc.edu)
 - University Council of Student Organizations (ucso@tamucc.edu)

- Email to campus administration (among which):
 - Dean of the College of Liberal Arts (maricela.alexander@tamucc.edu)
 - Office of Student Engagement and Success (seas@tamucc.edu)
 - Office of the Dean of Students (deanofstudents@tamucc.edu)
 - Office of Research Engagement (joseph.miller@tamucc.edu)
 - Office of the Provost (academicaffairs@tamucc.edu)

- Email to the President Dr. Kelly Miller (kelly.miller@tamucc.edu)

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Include it on I-Engage, the online portal for student organizations at TAMU-CC.
- Release in a public statement through the Office of Marketing and Communications.
- Post on TAMU-CC website where permitted to make it publicly available.
- Create the Islanders Vote platform within the University Website.
- Share it with the Nueces County Clerk office and elections department (<https://www.nuecesco.com/county-services/county-clerk/elections-department>)

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Submitting it to All IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect.
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts.

IX. Evaluation

Prior to assessing our efforts, we plan to have our action plan evaluated by ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. The student Democracy Fellows share their experiences and thoughts with other Fellows of the Campus Vote Project.

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Tracing additional student voter registration numbers including new voters and changes in address.
 - When Volunteer Deputy Registrars aid students in class, we count the submitted forms.
 - In addition, we ask students to sign a pledge to vote at registration, tabling, events, and activities. A pledge is not the same as actual turnout numbers, but it indicates a willingness to be involved. We count the made pledges.
- Tracing attendance for workshops, events, and other activities.
 - Registration / attendance sheets will be available for all activities. As a check, we ask faculty who include any opportunity for students to engage (with or without extra credit incentives) in civic learning to provide us their numbers.
 - Any activity funded by the University Council of Student Organizations requires attendance sheets as well.
- Tracing the number of new Volunteer Deputy Registrars among students.
 - Particularly when we can organize a training on campus in collaboration with the County Clerk Kara Sands.
- Tracing student voter registration and turnout reported in the NSLVE documentation.

We plan to have this as continuous effort but assess this at least once per semester. Prior to the fall 2024 voter registration deadline, we aim to estimate registration rates among students so that we can conclude the impact of our efforts throughout the first weeks of the semester leading up to the November general elections.

In addition to a focus on number, we evaluated our success by analyzing narratives and reflections of our students and faculty:

- As part of the Political Science classes in the core-curriculum (POLS 2305 and 2306) students write a short reflection on their own civic engagement and responsibility. We will discuss outcomes with other involved political science faculty (five professors).
- Students enrolled in POLS 3312 a course on campaigns and elections that includes 30% service learning, will function as case studies on the impact and outcomes of increased civic engagement. The final report from students includes self-reflections and are due after the November general election.
- Short evaluation forms will be handed out to faculty after they attended the information sessions. This is specifically important for our faculty in Nursing, Engineering, and Sciences.

Official assessment and feedback:

- Since it is a requirement from *Ask Every Student* for the grant application acceptance.
 - This formal report will include tracing numbers and where applicable, comparisons with previous reports and numbers.
 - The report is due to AES after the November general election.
- Dr. Rijkhoff discusses progress on the action plan with the Campus Vote Project, but also with the community of practice of ALL IN at an HSI since she is a member of that community.
 - This may also function as seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team.
 - Dr. Rijkhoff also discusses all these efforts in her annual faculty activity report with the Chair of the Department of Social Sciences.

Potential outside impact measures and what is already being measured:

- It is currently unknown if TAMU-CC is active with or collaborates with the Carnegie Foundation Classifications for Community Engagement. Conversations with Director Joe Miller will make that clear. Furthermore, contact will be made with Carnegie (carnegieelectives@acenet.edu).
- The President of the University already signed the Higher Education President's Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. We will encourage other high-level administration such as the Provost, Deans, and other relevant offices to sign such a pledge as well.
- TAMU-CC should maintain its' current two funded fellowships with the Capus Vote Project.

Resources necessary to advance civic engagement and reach long-term goals for TAMU-CC are:

- Continued student enthusiasm.
- Continued participation from faculty.
- Continued support from university administration.
- Continued support from Campus Vote Program with funding for Democracy Fellowships.
- Continued collaboration with ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the ALL IN Community of Practice for Hispanic Serving Institutions.
- Opportunities for funding.
- Delegation of major tasks among students and multiple faculty.
- Recognition for faculty and students focusing on civic education and learning, and making efforts to increase civic, non-partisan engagement and commitment.