



Texas Lutheran University 2024-2028 Action Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas Lutheran University (TLU) was originally founded in Brenham, Texas in 1891, and later moved to Seguin in 1912. Today, TLU is a private, four-year institution that offers liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies with 27 majors, 37 minors, and 64 specializations. The university has over 1,400 students, with more than half being first-generation students and one-third being student-athletes. TLU was designated as a Voter-Friendly Campus.

The John and Sandra Moline Center for Servant Leadership (CSL) at TLU is under the Service Learning and Career Development Department. It provides centralized leadership for civic engagement, emphasizing quality over quantity and partnering with community organizations and students as co-educators. The CSL is composed of student coordinators who serve as liaisons to various community organizations and facilitate regular service opportunities for TLU students.

The CSL works closely with three local nonpartisan organizations, Community Forum, MOVE Texas, and Campus Vote Project to support TLU's current Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement work. CSL's student coordinators partner with these non-partisan organizations to create programming for TLU and the Seguin community, with a focus on voter engagement and empowerment.

The Texas Lutheran University action plan was developed by a team of experts and stakeholders who were carefully selected based on their expertise and experience in addressing issues related to the university's operations and objectives. It was developed by a committee of faculty, staff, and students who are committed to promoting civic engagement and social responsibility within the university and its surrounding communities.

The purpose of the plan is to encourage and facilitate active participation in community service, volunteer work, and political engagement among students, faculty, and staff members. This is to ensure that the university and its members are actively contributing to the betterment of society. The purpose of the plan is to identify and address the key challenges and opportunities facing the students when it comes to voter rights, voter education that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The plan will be implemented across the campus and in the surrounding communities where the university has a presence. This includes partnerships with local organizations, events, and programs that promote civic engagement and social responsibility.

The primary goal of the civic engagement plan is to provide a nonpartisan platform for students, faculty, and staff members to engage in meaningful community service and volunteer work. This is to ensure that everyone is working towards a common goal of improving society, regardless of their political views or affiliations.

The intended duration of the plan is five years, with regular reviews and updates to ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to changing circumstances and priorities. The plan will be



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evaluated using a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators, with progress reports and updates provided to all stakeholders on a regular basis.

The plan will be implemented through a collaborative and consultative process, involving all stakeholders in the university community. This will include regular meetings and consultations with faculty, staff, students, and external partners to oversee specific aspects of the plan's implementation. The plan will also be supported by a range of resources and initiatives, including professional development programs, funding opportunities, and communication and outreach activities.

Civic engagement will be implemented through various initiatives, such as service-learning courses, community service projects, and political engagement events. Additionally, the university will provide resources and support for students, faculty, and staff members who are interested in getting involved in community service and volunteer work.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership

The leadership team that is responsible for drafting this action has a goal of building partners to increase civic learning and engagement on and off campus. Our team is made up of members who reflect the diversity of our campus and stakeholders, which is essential for maintaining continuity and achieving our goal of robust voter engagement. The leadership team members are committed to building a strong partnership network that supports civic learning and engagement. Their focus is to promote civic education both on and off campus to increase voter engagement and participation, work to ensure that all stakeholders, including students, faculty, and community members, are involved in the process.

The Service Learning & Career Development /Civic Engagement Committee boasts a diverse range of staff, faculty members and student leaders from various academic departments. Additionally, one faculty member served on the team to support the report drafting process. Below is the list of roles who make up the leadership team striving to maintain continuity in their efforts to promote civic learning and engagement, even as leadership roles may shift over time.

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Makeup of the TLU Coalition Group

Staff Members

- Associate Vice President of Student Affairs
 - Vice President of Student Affairs
 - Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)
 - Director of Campus Activities & Student Engagement
 - Vice President for Admissions, Marketing, & Communications
 - Representative of TLU Athletics
-

Academics

- Assistant Professor, Communication, Cultures, English & World Languages
 - Associate Professor, Communication, Cultures, English & World Languages, and the Director of the Center for Mexican American Studies
 - Assistant Professor, Communication, Cultures, English & World Languages, former Civic
 - Engagement Faculty Fellow, and Interim African American Studies Director
 - Professor, Political Science, Sociology & Geography, and the International Studies Program Director
 - Director of Library
-

Student Members

- Student and Democracy Fellow
 - Student, President, MOVE Texas Student Organization
 - Student and Student Government Senator
 - Student and Vice President of Student Government Association
-

Community Members

- Community Forum
- Mobilize. Organize. Vote. Empower (MOVE) Texas
- Campus Vote Project



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Center for Servant Leadership (CSL) & Civic Engagement Student Coordinator

The Center for Servant Leadership is the primary working group for this action plan. It is a unit within the Student Affairs Division. CSL Director, a position within the Student Affairs Division, will have primary oversight of voter engagement on campus. The CSL has a Student Democracy Fellow and Civic Engagement Student Coordinator position that will be responsible for organizing voter registration drives, coordinating with local election boards, and educating students on the importance of voting. In addition to the Student Democracy Fellow and Civic Engagement Student Coordinator positions, the CSL will also work with various student organizations to promote voter engagement on campus.

Under the leadership of the Director, the department works to provide students with opportunities to apply their academic knowledge and skills to real-world settings through service-learning projects. The Jon & Sandra Moline Center for Servant Leadership, overseen by the Director, is a hub for civic engagement activities on campus, including community service projects, leadership development programs, and social justice initiatives. The Student Democracy Fellow and Student Coordinators, who report to the Director, are an integral part of the department's operations

Student Democracy Fellow receive a stipend each semester from the Campus Votes Project. Whereas the Student Coordinators are compensated with hourly pay and other incentives to support the delivery of high-quality programming and services to students. The Service Learning & Career Development Department is committed to fostering a culture of service and leadership on campus, and to preparing students to become responsible and engaged citizens in their communities and beyond.

Coalition Group

Voter engagement on campus is an important goal for any educational institution. To achieve this, a working group has been established with the following constituents:

- Service Learning & Career Development/Civic Engagement Committee
- Jon & Sandra Moline Center for Servant Leadership
- MOVE Texas
- TLU MOVE Texas Student Organization

These groups are composed of internal and external stakeholders, including a diverse range of voices from faculty, staff, students, and community partners.

The Civic Engagement, Service Learning & Career Development Committee aspires to meet monthly. The committee is focused on educating and empowering students to become active citizens who are engaged in the democratic process.. The committee lends their knowledge and expertise that support events and activities that encourage students to become informed about the



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issues and candidates. The committee’s goal is to create a culture of civic engagement on campus that extends beyond the election cycle.

The Center for Servant Leadership (CSL) within the Service Learning & Career Development Department is focused on mobilizing the campus community to act on issues that matter. The coalition provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to get involved in service projects and community engagement activities. By working together, they aim to create positive change in the local community and beyond.

MOVE (Mobilize, Organize, Vote, Empower) Texas is grassroots, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization building power in underrepresented youth communities through civic education, leadership development, and issue advocacy. The organization believes that together we are transforming democracy in Texas and beyond. TLU has a very vibrant MOVE Texas Student Organization. The club meets monthly and works closely with the Student Democracy Fellow and CSL Student Civic Engagement Coordinator.

According to Chart 1, TLU working groups with diverse stakeholders that concentrate on voter engagement, education, empowerment, and action result in overlapping relationships essential for a more knowledgeable and engaged campus community. Their efforts are critical in ensuring that young people are active participants in the democratic process and are able to make their voices heard. Furthermore, the coalition plans to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Report to identify specific areas that require attention and improvement.

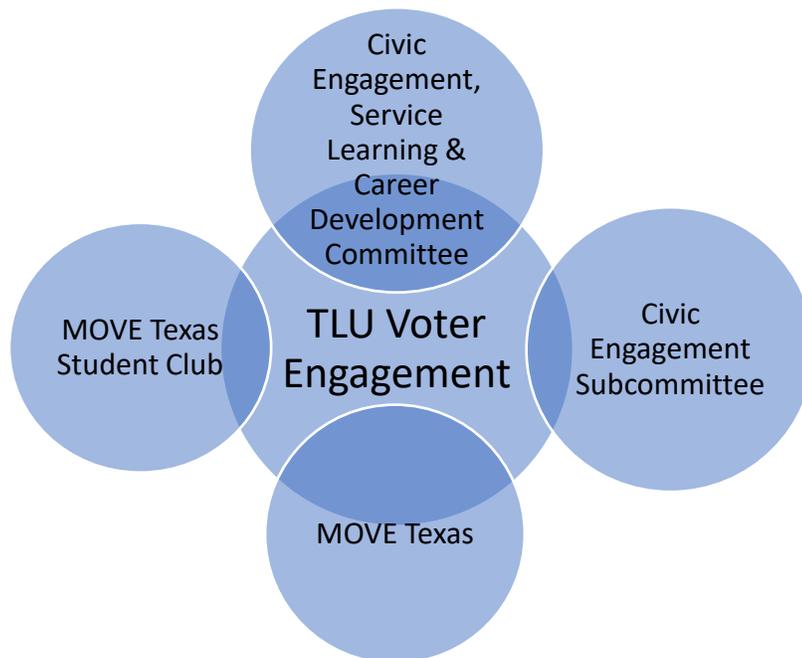


Chart 1. Coalition Group



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Academics

To build on existing knowledge and expertise, an academic department will seek out and analyze data on civic engagement on the campus. This data will provide valuable insights into what has worked well in the past and what can be improved upon in the future. Engagement with the Center for Servant Leadership will also involve interacting with faculty through campus committees and events. These efforts aim to clarify how the course numbers and enrollment figures for civic engagement were calculated.

Senior Leadership

Service Learning & Career Development/Civic Engagement Committee is a vital committee that plays an integral role in promoting voter engagement through diverse partnerships on campus. As a working group, it comprises senior administrators, faculty, staff, and students who are committed to ensuring that the campus community is actively engaged in the democratic process.

To achieve this goal, the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion serves as the senior administrator of the committee. The Vice President's role is to oversee the committee's activities, provide guidance, and ensure that the committee is aligned with the university's mission and values, and reflective of its mission for voter engagement. Through their advisory role, they provide insights and recommendations to the committee, which are crucial in guiding the committee's activities and initiatives.

The committee is committed to achieving its goals by adopting a participatory approach that monitors the entire campus community, including students, staff, and faculty. They aim to create a culture of civic responsibility and engagement that is reflective of the diverse perspectives and experiences on campus.

To ensure effectiveness, the civic engagement student leader will offer reports on voter registration drives, educational resources, and partnerships with community organizations to promote voter engagement. The committee hopes to increase voter turnout and democratic participation among students and beyond by closely monitoring the efforts of student leaders and other stakeholders.

COMMITMENT

Texas Lutheran University's commitment to improving democratic engagement is not just a statement, but a part of their core values and beliefs. The university has taken several actions to ensure that their commitment is communicated widely, both externally and internally.

Here are some ways in which Texas Lutheran University has integrated their commitment to democratic engagement into their culture:



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- Mission statement: The university's mission statement clearly reflects their commitment to democratic engagement. It states that the university is dedicated to producing graduates who are "informed and active citizens in a global and diverse society."
- Learning outcomes: The university has incorporated democratic engagement into their learning outcomes. They aim to develop students who can "engage in civil discourse and democratic decision-making" and who are "prepared to be leaders in a diverse and changing world."
- Curriculum: Texas Lutheran University has made it a point to include courses that focus on democratic engagement in their curriculum. While American government, political science, and public policy are certainly important courses, there are many other areas of study that also contribute to civic engagement and understanding of government and society. Here are some additional courses:
 - History courses that focus on political movements or the development of democratic systems
 - Sociology courses that explore topics like race, class, and inequality in relation to government and public policy
 - Environmental studies courses that examine the intersection of politics and the environment, such as environmental policy or environmental justice
 - Economics courses that delve into public finance, taxation, or international trade agreements
 - Anthropology courses that investigate political systems in different cultures or the role of culture in shaping politics
- By expanding beyond political science courses, students can gain a more well-rounded understanding of civic engagement and the ways in which government and society intersect. Additionally, many majors and programs across disciplines incorporate civic engagement as a core component so students can engage with these topics. Co-curriculum: The university has also integrated democratic engagement into their co-curricular activities. They offer opportunities for students to participate in - volunteer for political campaigns and attend events that promote civic engagement.

TLU is committed to promoting civic engagement and awareness among its student body through a variety of initiatives. In addition to publishing a monthly newsletter, the university also plans to organize campus-wide activities that focus on nonpartisan Civic Engagement Holidays. These special days include National Voter Registration, National Voter Education Week, Voter Early Day, and Election Hero Day, which aim to raise awareness and encourage action about civic democracy.

Voter registration is a critical aspect of TLU's voter engagement plan, and the university employs a variety of methods to make it accessible to all students. Faculty members are encouraged to allow access to their classrooms for presentations, while first-year students enrolled in FREX receive a new lesson on voter registration by the course Peer Mentor. Additionally, the university offers in-person voter registration to all classes at TLU, and tabling events are hosted bi-weekly before every registration deadline.



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Voter education is another critical component of TLU's voter engagement plan. During Voter Education Week, TLU will celebrate voter education topics, such as Voter Registration, Voter Education, and Early Voting. The CSL Director will email faculty, staff, and students regularly with links to nonpartisan websites where they can access information.

The university plans to continue to expand its voter education initiatives and amplify existing resources that are available locally, statewide, and nationally to work smartly rather than creating all resources in-house. The TLU Democracy Fellows received training to remain nonpartisan in their conversations with students and to keep that nonpartisan identity in mind when planning programs with the CSL and/or Voter Coalition.

LANDSCAPE

Demographic Overview of TLU's Enrollment Data for Fall 2023

Enrollment Statistics:

Total Enrollment: 1,350
Undergraduate Students: 1,283
Graduate Students: 67
Full-time Students: 1,252
Part-time Students: 98
In-state Students: 1,308
Out-of-state Students: 42
International Students: 5
On-campus Students: 601
Commuter Students: 749

Gender Demographics:

Male Students: 613
Female Students: 737

Age Demographics:

Students Under 18: 10
Students Aged 18-22: 980
Students Aged 23-29: 250
Students Aged 30-39: 65
Students Aged 40 or Over: 45

Analyzing Demographic Groups to Enhance Civic Engagement Efforts at TLU

To boost civic learning and democratic engagement, it's essential to consider demographic groups with lower rates of engagement. Total enrollment at TLU is 1,350 students with over half being first-generation students. Of the gender and age demographics, 45% are males. Given the



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current data of TLU first-generation and male students it's crucial that data is collected to ensure they receive proper civic education and support in registering as voters to create a more inclusive and informed community. The year 2020 brought about major changes which included the opening of two instructional sites and the enrollment of graduate students. Our demographic landscape is also undergoing a shift, moving away from the traditional residential liberal arts college model in ways that were only previously speculated.

GOALS

Strengths

Inclusiveness and collaboration are two essential elements that TLU embraces to create positive and welcoming civic engagement environment. Here are some ways these strengths foster inclusiveness and collaboration:

- Encourage open communication with student, faculty and staff: Promote open and honest communication between partisan members and encourage them to share their thoughts and ideas freely. This creates an environment where everyone feels heard and valued.
- Celebrate diversity: Celebrate the unique strengths and perspectives that all students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders bring to the table. TLU embraces diversity and creates an inclusive culture that values and respects different backgrounds, experiences, and ideas.
- Foster teamwork: Encourage teamwork and collaboration among internal and external campus stakeholders.
- Promote partnership: Continue our partnership with the Guadalupe County Election office to increase access and visibility in the TLU community and Seguin/Guadalupe county residents
- Lead by example: TLU is strong in modeling inclusive and collaborative behaviors to set the tone for a nonpartisan civic engagement culture. This is achieved by listening to needs of stakeholders on voter engagement, showing empathy, and being transparent in decision-making processes.

TLU's strength of promoting inclusiveness and collaboration, builds a stronger, more cohesive approach to tackle challenges and achieve success with civic engagement.

Challenges

TLU faces several challenges when it comes to promoting civic engagement both on campus and in the community. To effectively promote civic engagement, TLU needs to address the following challenges:

- Lack of awareness: Many students and community members may not be aware of the opportunities available for civic engagement. TLU needs to improve its communication channels and increase outreach efforts to spread the word about events, programs, and initiatives related to civic engagement.



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- Limited resources: TLU may not have enough resources to fund large-scale civic engagement projects or events. The university needs to explore alternative funding sources and partnerships with local organizations to maximize the impact of its efforts.
- Resistance to change: Some members of the TLU community may be resistant to change and may not see the value in promoting civic engagement. TLU needs to address this resistance by highlighting the benefits of civic engagement and its importance in creating positive change.
- Limited participation: Despite efforts to promote civic engagement, participation may still be limited. TLU needs to identify the reasons behind the low participation rates and address them accordingly. This may involve adjusting the timing or format of events, providing incentives for participation, or addressing any barriers that may be preventing people from getting involved.

Opportunities

To overcome these challenges, TLU can take advantage of the following opportunities:

Develop a comprehensive communication strategy: TLU will develop a communication strategy that reaches students and community members through multiple channels, including a closer relationship with the TLU Marketing & Communication team, social media, email, and campus events. The strategy should also include messaging that emphasizes the importance of civic engagement and the impact it can have on the community.

Build partnerships with local organizations: By partnering with local organizations such as League of Women Voters and Move TX, TLU can leverage their resources and expertise to fund and promote civic engagement projects. This can also help TLU reach a wider audience and build stronger connections with the community.

Provide training and education: TLU Center for Servant Leadership can provide training and education to students and community members on the importance of civic engagement and how to get involved. This can include workshops, seminars, and other educational events that teach people about the issues facing their community and how they can make a difference.

Offer incentives for participation: TLU can offer incentives for participation in civic engagement events and programs, such as community service hours, recognition awards, or other forms of recognition. These incentives can help motivate people to get involved and stay engaged over time.

Due to a series of personnel and structural shifts, there hasn't been much data available to assess over the past two years. These changes have undoubtedly influenced an analysis of the recent past and how it can shape future decision-making. However, our focus will be on the next several years and collecting enough information to meet our objectives.



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Long-Term Goals:

- In partnership with the campus committee, the Service learning and Career Development office will assess civic engagement on campus, involving faculty and students by 2028.
- By 2028 compare the civic engagement initiatives taken by TLU with other peer institutions to gain a better understanding of where TLU stands in this regard to other small colleges and universities within the I-35 corridor.
- TLU's president will continue to have signed agreements to further enhance civic learning and democratic engagement by 2028.
- Increase by 10 percent male students of color voting at the same rates as other students by 2028.

Short-Term Goals:

- By 2024 electoral politics course will develop a proposal for conducting a study on student engagement on campus and opportunities to improve it.
- By 2024 conduct the evaluation of the Ask Every Student First Step Form to best understand and predict campus context of civic engagement.
- By 2025, survey campus to analyze the NSLVE data to assess registration and voting rates on campus for civic learning and engagement.
- The integration of civic learning and engagement into co-curricular programs and department syllabi will be complete and kept in the campus central syllabi file system by 2026.
- TLU aims to continue its partnership with Guadalupe County Elections office as a polling site by 2026.

STRATEGY

Promoting civic engagement is critical for TLU to build stronger connections with the community and create positive change. By addressing the challenges and taking proactive steps to promote civic engagement, TLU can help students and community members develop the skills and knowledge they need to become active and engaged citizens. Here are some strategies for nonpartisan voter education and engagement:

- *Voter Engagement Drives:* Texas Lutheran University will host 2024 Civic Holidays to support voter education, early voting, voter registration and election hero activities to help students, faculty, staff, and community members register to vote. These drives are nonpartisan and provide information on the voting process, deadlines, and requirements.
- *Student Organizations:* Several student organizations at Texas Lutheran University, such as the MOVE Texas Club and provide opportunities for nonpartisan voter education and engagement. These organizations could host events such as candidate forums, weekly voter education and registration tabling in various locations on campus, and educational seminars on the electoral process.



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- *Faculty and Staff Involvement:* Texas Lutheran University encourages faculty and staff to engage in nonpartisan voter education and engagement efforts. Faculty members can integrate discussions on the electoral process into their courses, while staff members can participate in voter registration drives and other events on campus.
- *Community Outreach:* Texas Lutheran University is committed to engaging with the local community to promote nonpartisan voter education and engagement. The university partners with community organizations to host events such as candidate forums, educational seminars, voter registration drives, and continue to serve as voting poll site.
- *Communication Strategy:* To reach the maximum number of students, we will be using #TLUVotes monthly Newsletter. The newsletter will provide information on various aspects such as candidate forums, upcoming elections, results and recaps from previous elections, and reminders. Apart from the campus website, we will also share the newsletter with MOVE Texas and the Guadalupe County Elections Office to ensure wider coverage.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of Campus Climate

To ensure our initiatives are effective, we will evaluate the current climate on campus regarding civic learning and engagement. The evaluation results will be shared with key stakeholders including the TLU President, Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, and President's Cabinet, Guadalupe County Election Office, Campus Votes Project, ALL In Campus Democracy Challenge, MOVE Texas and MOVE Texas Student Organization. By addressing the challenges and tailoring our plans to short and long-term goals, we will develop a comprehensive strategy.

To increase awareness, we will leverage multiple platforms to disseminate the data collected from the NSLVE, Ask Student Survey, and campus electoral course proposal. This includes email and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. We will also display a graphic on the Bulldog TV system to reach a wider audience on campus.

Our goal is to continue improving civic learning and engagement at TLU and ensure that all students have the necessary resources and support to exercise their rights as citizens. Through collaborative efforts and data-driven strategies, we aspire to make a significant positive impact on our campus and beyond.



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REPORTING

Measuring Plan Effectiveness: The Importance of Tracking and Documenting Metrics

When gauging the effectiveness of a plan, monitoring and documenting various metrics is essential. Below are some metrics to consider:

- Participation rates of students in initiatives and activities
- Number of registered voters in the community, especially among male students and student athletes
- Evaluation of short-term and long-term goals to determine progress and success

By consistently tracking and documenting these metrics, the action plan can be adjusted as needed, in a timely manner, to ensure continued success.