

Truckee Meadows Community College 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Becca Franssen, Coordinator for Student Engagement & Leadership

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Truckee Meadows Community College in Reno, Nevada for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goals for Truckee Meadows Community College for the 2024 election are to:

- Increase student voter turnout to 50% in 2024 and 55% in 2026.
- Coordinate events and marketing to support our goal of increasing student voter turnout.
- Develop digital wellness toolkits for faculty and staff to utilize when students express fatigue or challenges to their wellbeing while participating in the election.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following, campus groups, and organizations:

Araceli Salazar | Associate, Student Activities & Leadership
Barrie Fenton | Social Media and Events Program Coordinator
Becca Franssen | Coordinator for Student Engagement & Leadership
Bradley Summerhill | English Professor
Erin Frock | Lead Counselor
Jarret Orcutt | Coordinator, Educational Partnership Programs
Katie Paul | Coordinator, Counseling Center
Lisha Allison | President, Student Government Association
Taylor Easley | Student Administrative Assistant

We are also expecting to finalize membership from the Political Science Department, Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability Office, Faculty of Color Coalition, and the Diversity Committee.

Commitment:

This is the first action plan that our institution has developed for ALL IN. We look forward to discovering ways to bolster engagement at Truckee Meadows Community College through our collective efforts.

The mission of Truckee Meadows Community College is: “Create a future you love with accessible, innovative, education opportunities at TMCC. Together we can make it happen.”

It is the collaborative culture at TMCC that allows us to foster a commitment to democratic engagement efforts during the 2024 election cycle. Furthermore, TMCC is dedicated to “fostering attitudes that exemplify responsible participating in a democratic society.” Democratic engagement is woven into the institutional values, and is deeply valued by leadership at TMCC.

Traditionally, we provide nonpartisan messaging to our campus community around voting, free speech, and voter registration. As an institution, we prioritize nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts by historically providing voter registration in the Student Government Association and Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability offices. This reduces the amount of partisan voter registration groups on our campus.

Additionally, we host various state officers on our campus to encourage our community to engage in our democracy. For example, in September 2023, we hosted Nevada’s Secretary of State, Cisco Aguilar, to highlight the importance of democratic engagement regardless of party. We take pride in hosting guests who share strong, nonpartisan messaging.

Truckee Meadows Community College does not have a current signatory to ALL IN’s Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. However, we are engaging in efforts to obtain that signature. TMCC’s President, Dr. Karin Hilgersom, supports nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts.

Landscape:

Nevada is famously a Battle Ground State, with narrow margins determining many of the state’s election outcomes. In recent years, Nevada has undergone changes to voting processes, enacting mail-in ballots for all active, registered voters. Additionally, the Washoe County’s Registrar of Voters has experienced high turnover in their leadership positions due to the tumultuous nature of politics in the state. It is because of the unique landscape of Northern Nevada, and Truckee Meadows Community College, that we are excited to find innovative ways to increase student voter turnout.

The Landscape of Voting in Nevada:

Mail-In Ballot Voting:

All active, registered voters in the state of Nevada automatically receive a mail-in ballot for each election. Mail-in ballots have typically been distributed 3 weeks before Election Day. Mail-in ballots can be mailed in or dropped off at designated locations. Nevada also offers a ballot tracking system where voters can check the status of their ballot.

Northern Nevadans are facing unease heading into the 2024 election due to the Reno mail-processing operations moving to Sacramento, CA. Many elected officials from the state of Nevada have stated their opposition to this move, which would lead to slower

mail service for Northern Nevada residents. While it is unclear if this change will impact the delivery of mail-in ballots, this is a change that has led many Nevadans to forgo mailing in their ballots and dropping them off instead.

Voter Registration:

Same-day registration is available to any Nevadan with a Nevada driver's license or ID card. Additionally, any Nevada resident who is convicted of a felony is immediately given their right to register to vote and cast their vote once they have been released from prison. Lastly, Nevada offers pre-registration for 17-year-olds, automatically registering them to vote once they turn 18.

2024 Election Dates:

- **May 25, 2024 – June 7, 2024:** Early Voting for the Primary Election
- **Tuesday, June 11:** 2024 Primary Election
- **October 19, 2024 – November 1, 2024:** Early Voting for the General Election
- **Tuesday, November 5, 2024:** General Election

The Landscape of Truckee Meadows Community College:

“Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) is a comprehensive community college located in Reno, Nevada, and is part of the Nevada System of Higher Education. The College serves nearly 13,000 students each year in credit and non-credit programs at five educational sites and more than 20 community locations.”

TMCC joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2024. Our institution is designated as a Minority-Serving Institution and a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Truckee Meadows Community College has 10,249 students.

In the Spring 2024 semester, Caucasian students made up 48.74% of TMCC's total headcount. Additionally, Hispanic students made up 33.36% of the total headcount, which is a 10% increase from the previous year. TMCC has seen an overall increase in student enrollment, with specific increases to: American Indian (47% increase), Asian (4% increase), Black (9%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (55% increase), and multiracial (22% increase) students.

Additionally, the age ranges of TMCC students are characteristic of a community college landscape. Students of the 18-24 age group made up 50.88% of the student body in the Spring 2023 semester. Over 32% of TMCC students are ages 25 and up. 16.8% of TMCC's students are under 18 due to TMCC's robust High School Program, making this demographic hard to integrate into voter registration efforts.

Lastly, 38% of TMCC students engage in distance education, meaning they seldom visit any of TMCC's campuses.

Overall, TMCC has a diverse student body of nontraditional students with competing responsibilities from providing child care to working full time as a way to afford their tuition and fees. This landscape, while not unusual for a community college, poses unique challenges to implementing voter registration and engagement efforts.

Truckee Meadows Community College has not yet authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). However, we are engaged in conversations to join NSLVE.

TMCC has participated in the following initiatives to support the development and implementation of our nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts on campus. With the turnover of staff previously engaged in voter engagement efforts, we have experienced gaps in our participation in various initiatives.

- **Ask Every Student Initiative and National Voter Registration Day:** 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021.
- **Voter Friendly Campus:** 2020-2021, 2023-2024

Goals:

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

Goal 1: Have the TMCC President sign the ALL IN Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Goal 2: Develop a strong marketing campaign to be utilized during the Primary and General Election.

Goal 3: Increase student voter turnout to 50% in 2024 and 55% in 2026.

Goal 4: Integrate voter registration into at least two campus-wide events in Fall 2024.

Goal 5: Develop digital wellness toolkits for faculty and staff to utilize when students express fatigue or challenges to their wellbeing.

Strategy:

Truckee Meadows Community College will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

Student Life Integration:

The [Student Life department](#) at Truckee Meadows Community College hosts many of TMCC's most valuable student resources from counseling to educational partnership programs.

To begin our outreach efforts, we will provide information and resources to the departments in Student Life.

- During the Fall semester Student Life meeting, we will provide a presentation on voter engagement and voter resources
- Marketing materials will be provided for each staff member in Student Life so they can have those resources posted in their offices
- Following the election cycle, we will ask for feedback regarding how this information showed up in the work staff members and make adjustments accordingly

Additionally, the Counseling Center, a department in Student Life, will provide drop-in counseling sessions during the week of the General Election. We will also work with the Counseling to facilitate conversations around participating in the election.

Student Government Association Partnership:

The Student Government Association (SGA) will play a vital role in the implementation of voter engagement efforts at Truckee Meadows Community College. A few strategies we will use to engage with the SGA include:

- Provide a workshop during their August training regarding voter engagement, resources, election dates
- Approach the SGA and ask for their collaboration to co-host an event or initiative to bolster student electoral engagement
- Provide training to any SGA officers or Student Activities & Leadership student workers so they can register students to vote during event
- Work with the social media lead for the SGA to post voting resources and information during the General Election

Events:

- Host a voter registration table at TMCC's inaugural Spirit Day on September 17th in observance of National Voter Registration Day
- Identify major campus events in the 2024-25 Academic Year that we can provide voter registration, engagement, and resources
 - *Potential events include:*
 - SGA Welcome Week events (week of August 26th)
 - TMCC Spirit Day (September 17th)
 - TMCC Tailgate (September 21st)
 - SGA Welcome Week events (week of January 27th)
 - Unity Graduation (week of April 28th)

Marketing & Outreach:

We will follow the proposed timeline to share marketing materials to increase students' awareness of the upcoming elections, voter information, and resources:

- **May 25th:** Announcement that early voting has started, provide links in bio to polling locations
- **June 3rd:** Share with students how to make a plan to vote
- **June 10th:** Reminder of the Primary Election on June 11th
- **June 11th:** Primary Election, encourage students to cast their votes (provide links in bio to polling locations)
- **September 17th:** National Voter Registration Day, include information on how to register to vote
- **October 19th:** Announcement that early voting has started, provide links in bio to polling locations
- **October 28th:** Share with students how to make a plan to vote
- **November 4th:** Reminder of General Election on November 5th
- **November 5th:** General Election, encourage students to cast their votes (provide links in bio to polling locations)

We will also work closely with TMCC's Marketing and Communications Office to add important voting reminders to the monthly student newsletter that is sent at the beginning of each month.

Additionally, we will utilize the TMCC All-Events Listserv to send out mass messaging to faculty and staff so they are equipped with knowledge to not only cast their own votes, but to support their students in voting (or registering to vote).

Wellness Toolkits

Recognizing the impact of election rhetoric on student well-being, we find it of the utmost importance to provide faculty and staff with a digital “Wellness Toolkit” that they can utilize. In instances where students are showing election fatigue, burnout, or challenges to their mental health (because of their democratic engagement), faculty and staff can employ the toolkit.

The toolkit would consist of:

- Campus resources
- Grounding techniques
- Facilitation guides
- And additional resources as determined by the Counseling Center

Citizen’s Campaign

Truckee Meadows Community College is excited to begin a new partnership with the Citizen’s Campaign. Through this partnership, we will provide a “Leadership & No-Blame Problem Solving” Certificate to the Student Government Association and selected student leaders in Fall 2024.

The goal of this certification is for students to not only participate in government, but also identify roles they can take in their communities to offer solutions and leadership. This partnership will ideally bolster civic engagement at TMCC.

Additionally, we plan to offer this certification to certain TMCC Committees including the Men of Color Mentorship Program, the Democratic Engagement Coalition, and the Diversity Committee. If our efforts are successful, we plan to provide this certificate to all faculty, staff, and students.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

- We will track:
 - Students who register to vote at various events
 - Students, faculty, and staff who gain their “Leadership & No-Blame Problem Solving” Certificate
 - Students who participate in programming
- We will review the success of our social media outreach efforts by reviewing analytics on Instagram and Facebook.
- We will facilitate end-of-semester debriefs during the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semester to gauge our effectiveness and set new goals.

Looking Forward:

Truckee Meadows Community College Our institution needs to authorize the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) in order to receive campus voting data to help with the evaluation of our action plan and nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts.

The coalition formed amongst faculty, staff, and students will be entrusted to develop a sound and consistent way to assess our efforts throughout the years. NSLVE data will be a strong addition to our efforts; however, we will need to determine a way to determine if our messaging is fostering a sense of democratic engagement at TMCC.

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/truckee-meadows-community-college/>.

The efforts of the Democratic Engagement Coalition will be posted on the Student Activities & Leadership Office's webpage. We currently have a "[TMCC Votes](#)" page that will be updated in by June 2024.

Our campus action plan and the results of our work will be shared across three different governing bodies at Truckee Meadows Community College. We plan to present our goals and strategies to each group at the beginning of Fall 2024. In the Spring semester, once receiving our NSLVE data, we will return to each group to summarize our progress. The following groups we report to will be:

- [Planning Council](#)
- [Faculty Senate](#)
- [Student Government Association](#)