

University of California, Santa Barbara 2023-2023 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Viviana Marsano and Kaitlin Andrade

Executive Summary:

UC Santa Barbara's nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by the Director of Civic and Community Engagement, Dr. Viviana Marsano, and the Gauchos Vote Coalition. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement, voter registration, and turnout within the UCSB campus community to educate students and to create a larger campus culture of civic engagement. Presently, our established plan has been implemented through the Gauchos Vote Coalition volunteers visiting ninety floor meetings during move-in weekend to register first year students. This Gauchos Vote Coalition move-in campaign encourages students to participate in their first civic engagement act at UCSB. In addition, the coalition actively registers students to vote in Registered Campus Organizations (RCOs) and Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) weekly meetings, classes, and tabling that happens multiple days a week at different campus locations. The goals for UC Santa Barbara for the 2024 election are:

- Partner with UCSB Intercollegiate Athletics Department to register all eligible student athletes and feature prominent student athletes in the GOVT campaigns.
- Expand the Gauchos Vote Coalition, which presently includes members of CALPIRG, the Voter Registration Volunteer Coalition, and Associated Students, to include representatives of several of the 500 RCOs, FSL chapters, and local non-profits who align with our mission and have engaged in the past.
- Increase the number of Get Out Vote programming on campus and in Isla Vista as compared to previous years.
- Based on NSLV data for 2020, increase the number of eligible students registered to vote by 5% and increase the number of students who vote on campus by 5%.

In preparation for 2024, we have already started communicating with the UCSB Intercollegiate Athletics Department to develop a comprehensive plan to engage the most students possible. This includes working with coaches from each team to determine the best time to outreach and engage with the teams during practices, department class and meetings, or tabling in their building. We will work with the Director of this department to identify outstanding athletes that can use their following to increase our campaign outreach.

The Gauchos Vote registration intern is currently developing a strategic plan to increase membership to the Gaucho Vote Coalition. To that end, he is approaching RCO and FSL leaders to invite them to participate in this effort. If agreed, they will identify one person within the

organization to become a member of the coalition with hopes that this will be an established position in their organization for the future.

We are currently partnering with Latinos for Politics to launch more expansive educational components of the Gaucho Vote Coalition. This includes several workshops on voter education, such as registering to vote, election dates, polling locations, and components of a ballot to increase voter participation for populations that have lower voting rates. Another initiative is partnering with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. for a *Ballot Party* where a nonpartisan election expert guides students through each section of the ballot including different official positions and pros and cons of each measure. The day of the election, the Gauchos Vote Coalition will host an election watch party to continue engagement with our partners and community.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following:

- Viviana Marsano - Director of Civic and Community Engagement, marsano-v@ucsb.edu
- Suzanne Perkin, Associate Dean of Student Life, serlinger@ucsb.edu
- Katya Armistead, Assistant Vice-chancellor and Dean of Student Life, katya@ucsb.edu
- Margaret Klawuun, Vice-chancellor of Student Affairs, miles.ashlock@ucsb.edu (chief of staff)
- Renee Bischof, Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters, Clerk-Recorder, Assessor, and Registrar of Voters, County of Santa Barbara, rbischo@countyofsb.org
- Kaitlin Andrade, Coordinator, Civic and Community Engagement, kandrade@ucsb.edu
- Chistian Zuñiga, Fraternity and Sorority Life Coordinator, Student Engagement and Leadership Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated, christianzuniga@ucsb.edu

Student Leadership:

- Melody Torres, Organizing Director, External Vice President State Affairs, Associate Students and Education Coordinator for Latinos for Politics, melondytorres@ucsb.edu
- Jeanne Broome, Intern, Gauchos Vote Coalition, jeannebroome@ucsb.edu
- Byron Chan, Intern, Gauchos Vote Coalition, bryonechan@ucsb.edu

Our campus works with these following nonprofit partners:

- Isla Vista Community Network
- Isla Vista Community Services District
- Isla Vista Recreation and Park District
- St. George Youth Center
- Plant Parenthood of Santa Barbara
- Student PIRGs, among others

Our leadership team is made up of full-time staff that will continue to support this initiative. Dr. Viviana Marsano will continue to direct and implement the nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan with the support of the student interns that hold the positions for

multiple years or are identified through committed Gauchos Vote Coalition volunteers. Currently we have two interns that will serve at least one more year. Civic and Community Engagement also added a new part time staff to support Dr. Marsno and the Gauchos Vote Coalition campaigns. Our non-profit partners help provide volunteers for our campaigns that continue to return every year.

Commitment:

The University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2022. UC Santa Barbara has had a long history of voter registration commitment for over 15 years and received national recognition in the past for the number of students registered to vote. In the early 2000s, this commitment started with the vice-chancellor of Student Affairs, who earmarked funds for an annual voter registration campaign and designated a permanent staff member to lead this initiative every year. This infrastructure was later replicated in all the UCs.

UCSB's mission states, "Our commitment to public service is manifested through the creation and distribution of knowledge that advances the well-being of our state, nation, and world. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration, opportunity, and advantage from the beauty and resources of UC Santa Barbara's extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean." This part of the mission statement represents the campus commitment to the civic engagement of our students beyond our campus.

In addition, you can see the commitment to non-partisan democratic civic engagement through participation and partnerships on campus. The offices of the External Vice President for Statewide Affairs and the External Vice President for Local Affairs in Associated Students collaborate with the Gauchos Vote Coalition (former Voter Registration Volunteer Coalition) in its annual voter registration campaign. Housing, Dining, and Auxiliary Enterprises partners with the Gauchos Vote Coalition during move-in weekend. Housing provides voter registration information during their annual resident assistant staff training. On move-in weekend, the Gauchos Vote Coalition does in-person registration in approximately 90 floor meetings. Between 2,000 and 3,000 first-year and second-year students are registered over this weekend. Other activities include registering students in classes with faculty permission, in fraternity and sorority houses, at Registered Campus Organizations (RCOs) meetings, tabling at several campus locations, and during Week of Welcome events.

Landscape:

UC Santa Barbara is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2018. Our institution is the following: Minority Serving Institution, Hispanic-Serving Institution and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI).

Our campus demographic for 2022-23 (there is no date available for 2023-2024 yet):

UC Santa Barbara has 26,421 students. Of the 26,421 students (both undergraduate and graduate students) that attend UC Santa Barbara, there are 19,019 in-state students: the majority originating from the Southern Counties (9,270) and Northern Counties (7,813), followed by students from the UCSB Service Area (1,936). There are 1,736 out-of-state students and 2,704 international students as well.

While studying at UC Santa Barbara, students indicated that they live in the following areas: most students (15,000) reside in the local community (a significant number live in Isla Vista (11,053)). 10,195 students are staying in UCSB owned facilities, 83 students located elsewhere in the US, and 422 students live internationally.

The data shows an age distribution of students by class level: in representing the undergraduate students, the most that responded are 19-20 years old (43%) followed by 21-22 (30%), 18 & under (22%), 23-24 (4%), 25-29 (2%) and 30-39 (0%). Of the graduate students, the most that responded are 25-29 years old (47%) followed by 30-39 (22%), 23-24 (18%), 21-22 (9%), 40 & over (3%).

The UCSB student population is made up of the following different ethnicities and subgroups. According to the data, undergraduates are 35% White (7,358), followed by 29% Asian/Pacific Islander (6,064), 28% Chicano/Latino (5,733), 4% Black/African American (911), 1% American Indian/Alaskan (166) and 3% Unknown (511). Of the graduate students that responded, 56% are White (1,115), followed by 18% Asian/ Pacific Islander (365), 17% Chicano/ Latino (345), 6% Black/African, 1% American Indian/Alaskan (18), and 2% Unknown (35).

Goals:

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

- 1) Increase student voter turnout rate to 82% in 2024 (from 78.1% in 2020) and to 85% in 2028. Increase student voter registration rate to 92% in 2024 (from 89.9% in 2020) and to 95% in 2028.
- 2) Solidify our collaboration with the UCSB Athletics department in voter registration and GOTV initiatives for the 2024 elections and institutionalize it for future years so that it becomes part of the department's culture. Increase to 75% UCSB student athletes' voter registration and voting rates for the 2024 elections and to 80% in 2028.
- 3) Increase the number of sorority and fraternity chapter meetings visited to register students to vote and to 10% the number of FSL members that volunteer to register students to vote. Have each fraternity and sorority chapter designate a voter registration and GOTV officer by the 2026 midterm elections.

- 4) In keeping with the goal of expanding the Gauchos Vote Coalition in 2024, have 50% of the Registered Campus Organizations (RCOs) designate an officer as a representative to the Gauchos Vote Coalition.
- 5) In the next three years, work closely with the Registrar's Office in the conversion to a new class registration platform that will feature online voter registration more prominently and thus insure higher voter registration rates. It is the Registrar's goal to have this platform running by 2026.

NSLVE

UCSB takes part in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement that compiles voting and registration rates and compares them to other universities and schooling institutions. The data received was informative for the creation of UCSB's Action Plan in plotting out our goals and understanding our effectiveness in registering and getting students out to vote. In 2020, UCSB's NSLVE data shows a campus voting rate of 78.1%, which is a 30.8% increase in the number of students voting from 2018. UCSB also had a voter registration rate of 89.9%, which is a 7.1% increase in the number of students registered to vote from 2018. Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2016 Bronze, 2018 Gold, 2020 Gold

The NSLVE data described above helped us shape our SMART goals for this Action Plan for what percentage of students we plan to register and improve upon the efforts of previous years. One section of the NSLVE breaks down the registration and voting rates of students by field of study. This information is useful in helping us find areas of study where voting rates are low, and we can focus extra efforts on bringing voter education and registration opportunities to those students. Gauchos Vote often does class visits to register students, so this data can help target the major group with low registration and voting rates.

Strategy:

UC Santa Barbara will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

Goal #1 above:

- a) Increase messaging on voter registration, the importance for new students to register locally, and the value of having their voices heard where they will live for the next 4 years, as well as GOTV through the UCSB Parents Facebook page, GOLD (class registration platform), Canvas (course platform), and Shoreline (platform for RCOs with several thousand members) for the 2024 election. Institutionalize these venues of information dissemination in future years until it becomes part of the institutional culture.

- b) Continue working with Housing, Dining, and Auxiliary Enterprises for move-in voter registration. This is our largest voter registration drive. It is efficient (we register 2,100 - 2,800 students in two evenings.) But there is room for improvement: 1) resident assistants occasionally change the venue or time of the meeting at the last minute without informing the Gauchos Vote Coalition; 2) communicate to the new residents in advance the necessary information for a successful voter registration to bring to the meeting (i.e, home address vs. mailing address). Since we meet these students basically a few hours after moving in, many of them don't have the correct information, which leads to invalid voter registration cards.
- c) The Gauchos Vote Coalition registers a fairly large number of students in-person during class presentations. Although they have support from several professors, the numbers of classes visited could be significantly increased if this venue for voter registration became more institutionalized with the commitment of department chairs, who could then request their faculty to facilitate voter registration class visits. This strategy was tested in 2019 with a good response from the chairs. But progress stalled during the pandemic, and it will take a couple of years to rebuild that collaboration.

Goal #2 above:

- a) Collaboration with the Athletics department started last fall quarter, when the Gauchos Vote Coalition tabled in their lobby, an area with considerable traffic. The number of students reached and registered was lower than projected. We are brainstorming with leadership now to increase our outreach efforts by 1) working individually with each coach to visit their practices and register their teams; 2) coordinating voter registration drives at highly attended sports events; 3) featuring well-known student athletes in voter registration and GOTV social media campaigns.

Goal #3 above:

- a) Working with Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) for voter registration is particularly challenging due to their schedule. The start of the academic year at UCSB is either the end of September or the first week of October, allowing barely 3 weeks to register students to vote before the established deadline. FSL recruitment occurs exactly during this time, which makes chapter visits challenging. We just hired two new FLS coordinators on our team and are starting to strategize to identify times during recruitment where we can dedicate 15 minutes to voter registration of current and prospective members.
- b) Will closely work with presidents of the Collegiate Panhellenic Council, the Inter Fraternity Council, the United Sorority and Fraternity Council, and chapter presidents to permanently incorporate voter registration and GOVT activities in their processes and create a voter registration/civic engagement position in each chapter.

Goal #4 above:

- a) Our voter registration/GOTV intern is taking a class in the Civic Engagement Scholars program and has chosen to expand and institutionalize the Gauchos Vote Coalition as his two-quarter project. To that end, he will work with the offices of the Associated Students External Vice President of Local Affairs, the External Vice President of Statewide Affairs, and many Registered Campus Organizations to expand the coalition by requesting each organization to create an elected position for civic engagement, voter registration, and GOTV initiatives. This will create a natural flow of volunteers every year, rather than initiating volunteer recruitment from scratch every year.

Goal #5 above:

- a) Meet with the Registrar's Office to discuss a more prominent space on their new chosen class registration platform to increase traffic to online voter registration.

In addition to voter registration activities, GOTV activities include:

- A very comprehensive social media campaign, including several emails to the whole student body (undergraduate and graduate students= 26,000) with information on voters' rights, same day voter registration, offices and propositions in the ballot, polling places both on and off-campus, and instructions on how to find their polling place. This information is shared in several UCSB departments and student groups' accounts, the UCSB general IG account (with 37,000 followers), and in the parents' newsletter, among others.
- Tabling at several campus locations and events, with information on voters' rights, same day voter registration, offices and propositions in the ballot, polling places both on and off-campus, and instructions on how to find their polling place.
- Email to all Housing leadership, resident directors, assistant resident directors, and resident assistants with information on elections deadlines, polling locations closest to their residence halls or apartments, and on how to find their polling place.
- UCSB has had a voter registration and GOVT dedicated webpage for over 15 years with pertinent information: <https://seal.sa.ucsb.edu/civic-community-engagement/voter-registration>
- In mid-February, we are collaborating with the Office of the External Vice President for Local Affairs in a voter education event that will include tabling by different political parties, the Gauchos Vote Coalition, non-partisan ballot information on candidates and measures for the March election, food trucks, and musicians.
- On March 5, we will offer an election watch party for volunteers and the general student populations.

- The Gauchos Vote Coalition will present non-partisan voter education workshops in conjunction with a newly formed RCO, Latinos for Politics.

Several of these activities include students from the Civic Engagement Scholars Program and other community engagement classes.

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page and on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/university-of-california-santa-barbara/>.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.

UCSB's campus plan and NSLVE reports will be shared with Registered Campus Organizations (RCOs), campus departments, and local community agencies who support our voter registration and GOTV efforts, as well as on Student Affairs announcements and newsletters, and the Civic and Community Engagement website.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

Some of our action plans are easier to evaluate, such as move-in voter registration, tabling, and FSL chapter visits. Since these are in-person activities, there is a spreadsheet with accurate numbers of voter registration cards per outreach event. On-line voter registration can be tracked through the GOLD platform and the Secretary of State's College Bowl competition. Presentation of GOTV programs and activities can be evaluated based on attendance and post event surveys.

UCSB has already authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement.