

University of California, Santa Cruz 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

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In Consultation with: Travis Becker, Assistant Dean of Students, Katherine Canales-Molina, Associate Director SOMECA, and Arlan Mendiola, Program Manager SOMECA



Sammy Slug with the Santa Cruz County Elections team at the polling station at the Bay Tree Conference Center

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by University of California, Santa Cruz in California for the 2022 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase

nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2022 midterm election. Elizabeth Beaumont wrote the plan in collaboration with key leaders from the Student Union Assembly (SUA), the Student Organization Advising and Resources/Student Media/Cultural Arts and Diversity (SOMeCA) and the Dean of Students Office.

The goals for University of California, Santa Cruz for the 2022 election are:

- **Voting:** to help all students who are eligible to vote both register and to vote
- **Democratic Voice and Agency, Informed Engagement, and Leadership :**
 - To give all students opportunities to become informed and engaged in the elections and issues related to their interests and communities
 - To give all students opportunities to develop and express their political views and commitments, and learn from those of others, including those seeking office
 - To give all students opportunities to become active participants in and/or leaders working on the political and social issues and policies that are important to them.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Voting and Democratic Engagement :** to help students from historically disenfranchised and politically underrepresented groups gain a sense of agency, opportunity participate in a spectrum of democratic activities, and vote.

Leadership:

We are fortunate to have multiple people and organizations from across the campus working on many different facets of civic engagement, student leadership, voting, and related activities at UC Santa Cruz. Those helping to organize and support our voting and civic engagement activities include students, faculty, people from student affairs, academic affairs, the office of the president, local election officials, and partner organizations. Our growing constellation and teams of leaders who play roles in this work currently includes the following:
(Please add any additional contacts with names and titles).

- Elizabeth Beaumont - Associate Professor Politics and Legal Studies, leader of Civic Discourse and Democratic Engagement Initiative, and point person for ALLIN Campus Democracy Challenge and NSLVE.
- Travis Becker, Assistant Dean of Students for Strategic Initiatives and Policy Analysis, Campus Representative/Connections to UCOP and California State mandates on voting
- Chris Benner, Director, Institute for Social Transformation (Social Sciences Division)

- Katherine Canales-Molina ,Associate Director, Student Organization Advising and Resources/Student Media/Cultural Arts and Diversity (SOMeCA), point person for outreach to student groups and Election Cohort Committee
- Anna Finn, Office of the Chancellor - Associate Chancellor and Chief of Staff.
- Flora Lu, Provost, John Lewis College, and Professor of Anthropology (JLC has a partnership with the Social Sciences, and also runs the Practical Activism Conference)
- Arlan Mendiola , Program Manager, Student Organization Advising and Resources, SOAR/Student Media/Cultural Arts and Diversity (SOMeCA), point person for outreach to student groups and Election Cohort Committee
- Erin Ramsden, CoCurricular Programs Coordinator [College Nine](#) and [John R. Lewis College](#)
- Student Representative TBD SUA Slugs Vote Coalition representative (selected each year)
- Student Representative TBD from CalPIRG GOTV team
- Tchad Sanger, UCSC University Registrar, point person for providing student voter registration information/links through student enrollment (a requirement of Student e-voter Registration Act of 2007)
- Dave Shaw, Ph.D. Candidate and Right Livelihood College/Program leader - point person for student engagement and activism around environmental and climate change issues.
- Tricia Weber, Santa Cruz County Clerk. point person for Votescount (Santa Cruz County Elections Department). (and/or Santa Cruz County Elections Programs Coordinator or Designate ([Mari Segura](#), [Gina Lapioli](#), [Lynn Stripes](#), [Helen Ruiz-Thomas](#), or [John Beck](#)) <https://www.votescount.us/>.
- Sarah Woodside Bury , Senior Director for College Students Life, John Lewis College (JLC has a partnership with the Social Sciences, and also runs the Practical Activism Conference)
- Melissa Whatley, Executive Director, Government and Community Relations, point person for voting and elections information on UCSC web site

- <https://urelations.ucsc.edu/about/units/government/vote/index.html>
- Mitra Zarinebaf, Student Union Assembly (SUA) 2022-23 Vice President of External Affairs ; Email, suavpe@ucsc.edu (SUA WeVote), point person for connections to Student Union Assembly and UCSC participation in UCVote. (Previous SUA leaders connected to democratic engagement work include Taryn D'Amore, Rojina Bozorgnia , Soren Whiting, Jessica Xu, Alice Malmberg).

In addition to working with a wide range of student groups across the campus, SOMeCA has developed a very important and diverse **Election Cohort Committee**. This Committee includes the following eleven groups, many of which include historically excluded or underrepresented groups in the political process: APISA (Asian Pacific Islander Student Association), Bayanihan (Filipino and Filipino American Community), Black Student Union, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), Chicanx and Latine Educandose (ChALE), UMOJA (African/Black Unity), Community Unified Student Network (CUSN), Kuya-Ate Mentorship Program (KAMP), TWANAS Communities of Color and Native American Students Press, City on a Hill Press (our campus newspaper), and engaging education.

Our campus also works with Student CalPIRG groups, and has had various collaborations with a range of local community organizations, including the Community Action Board (CAB). Moreover, our campus civic engagement and voting leaders have longstanding relationships and productive collaborations with the Santa Cruz County Elections Office and the County Clerk.

Finally, this democratic engagement work has the support of campus administration through multiple offices, including the Registrar, the Dean of Students, and UCSC Chancellor Cynthia Larive.

Commitment:

UC Santa Cruz has an important history of student activism, empowerment, and democratic engagement, and a commitment to both educating and engaging students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. Our campus principles of community emphasize commitments to openness, diversity, justice, care, discipline, purposefulness through an approach that strives for mutual respect for all members. There are many aspects of democratic engagement woven through our campus culture. For instance, at UCSC, each of the ten residential colleges offers its own co-curricular opportunities for students to increase their engagement and develop leadership capacities, although not all of them are explicitly focused on voting or political engagement.

Looking across the campus, we can see a wider range of ways that the campus expresses its commitment to democratic engagement: from the many international, national, state, and local leaders and activists we bring to campus for talks and workshops, to the diverse array of student groups involved in political issues, advocacy, or civic engagement on and off campus, to our vibrant tradition of protest and civil disobedience, to the campus work to promote voting through registration efforts, tabling, organization of candidate forums, creation of voter information guides, and work to create campus polling places. For instance, during the 2020 General Election, campus organizations such as the SUA, SoMECA, NAACP UCSC, & Calpirg to organize informational digital resources around registration, voting, and voter safety awareness. Additionally, we organized opportunities for digital volunteering through working with our organizational allies to assist in phone banking efforts to Get Out the Vote. Moreover, University of California, Santa Cruz has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020.

In addition to our campus commitments, the state of California and the UC System have undertaken important commitments that our campus helps to implement. These include California's 2019 AB 963, which requests that all University of California campuses create a Student Civic Engagement and Empowerment Program to institutionalize, educate, and promote civic engagement, voter turnout, and community building. This legislation encourages creation of online civic engagement campaign, hosting outreach events, appointing a Civic and Voter Empowerment Coordinator, and establishing regular meetings with student and administrative leaders. Thus, UCSC is continuing to build on and expand its campus commitments to meet these important goals.

Landscape:

University of California, Santa Cruz 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. Among its achievements, UC Santa Cruz is a leader in graduating first generation students and is ranked among the top five in the nation for social mobility. UC Santa Cruz is proud to be recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as both a Hispanic Serving Institution (one of only four in the AAU) and as an Asian American, Native American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

University of California, Santa Cruz had 19,842 students in 2020-2021.

- 16,262 are in-state residents, 3,580 are out of state

Demographic breakdown:

Race

- 6357 White
- 921 African American/Black
- 121 American Indian
- 5334 Asian American
- 5003 Hispanic/Latino
- 1589 International
- 67 Pacific Islander
- 450 Unknown

Age

- 11309 17-20
- 6057 21-24
- 1222 25-28
- 613 29-32
- 302 33-36
- 130 37-40
- 130 41-54
- 24 55+

Sex

- 9961 Men
- 9146 Women
- 824 Other/unknown

Background: Economic Status, First Generation, and Historically Underrepresented

- 6222 First Generation
- 4050 Pell Grant Recipients (Undergraduate only)
- 6045 Underrepresented groups
- 4810 EOP Status

University of California, Santa Cruz has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 79.3%.

Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 88.2%.

Our institution had a 2018 overall voter turnout rate of 49.6%, with 44% of enrolled UCSC undergraduate students voting. 62% of our registered students voted.

Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 80.3%.

Since 2014, civic engagement at UC Santa Cruz has been growing significantly with respect to participation in elections, but there is still much important work to be done. The 2019 Report from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) showed that voting on the UCSC campus soared in the 2018 mid-term elections, increasing to nearly triple the campus's 13% voting rate in the 2014 mid-terms. According to the NSLVE, an overall voter turnout at the more than 1,000 institutions participating in the study saw an increase of 21 points, rising from an average of 19% in 2014 to an average of nearly 40% in 2018. Not only were UCSC's 2018 student voting rates even higher than NSLVE campus averages, but Santa Cruz advanced from one of the lagging campuses in 2014, with below average student voting rates, to one of the leading campuses in 2018.

The dedicated work of student groups and a variety of campus efforts supported by staff, administrators, and faculty can be credited for these dramatic gains. This surge shows UC Santa Cruz didn't just fall into the tail of a general national trend of increased student voting in 2018, but that our students helped fuel the trend – their energy and commitment contributed to a higher wave of democratic engagement.

Although UCSC went on to reach an impressive voting rate of 73% among undergraduates in the 2020 election, voting rates still remain low in non-presidential election years or so-called midterm elections, even though these elections are extremely important for local, state, and national politics.

Moreover, at UC Santa Cruz, there are considerable differences in voting rates among students in different fields of study. For example, in 2018 students in Engineering and Technology, Computer Science, and Business fields voted at rates from just 34-35%, whereas students pursuing degrees in fields of Psychology or Politics voted at rates from 64-65%, and those in the field of Education voted at an impressive 79% rate. It is clear through this data that civic engagement is not being promoted at the same levels across UCSC's disciplines. It is also troubling that voting rates among UCSC students differ considerably across racial and ethnic backgrounds. In both 2018 and 2020, NSLVE reported that students identified with the white racial category voted at higher rates (57% and 85%, respectively) than students identified with other racial or ethnic categories. We believe more work should be done to try to reduce this inequality.

Over the past few academic years, we have made significant strides towards mobilizing more students to vote, for example, in 2020 our campus registered 712 new students to vote despite having no opportunity to physically table or canvas. These numbers were successful through collaboration with UC Government & Community Relations to secure a ballot drop-box on campus from Santa Cruz County and student organizations such as UCSC NAACP & CalPIRG. Although 712 is an admirable number, it positions UCSC as being the 8th lowest UC campus to register students to vote.

Thus the numbers from the 2018 midterm and 2020 general election demonstrate that although UCSC has much to be proud of, there are still important areas for improvement, especially trying increase the uneven rates across student backgrounds and majors. We are hopeful that through increased collaboration with campus student government entities, student organizations, and administrative bodies our campus will be able to improve democratic engagement for all of our students.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals:

2016 Bronze

2018 Platinum

2020 Gold

Goals:

Our specific, measurable, inclusive, equitable, and ambitious yet realistic campus democratic engagement goals are:

For 2022 Midterm Elections

- 1) Increase overall student voter registration rate for midterm elections from 80% (2018) to 85% in 2022.
- 2) Increase overall student voter turnout rate for midterm elections from 50% (2018) to 60% in 2022.
- 3) Close gaps in student voter turnout between White students and students from other racial and ethnic groups, reducing them by at least 5% by bringing non-white student voting rates up.
- 4) Close gaps in student voter turnout between students in higher-voting majors (mostly in the Social Sciences), and students in lower-voting majors (mostly in STEM fields), reducing them by at least 5% by bringing rates of low-voting majors up.

Strategy:

The University of California, Santa Cruz has a set of strategical approaches that uses a combination of campus/staff-organized and student-organized or peer-to-peer events and tactics to increase non-partisan democratic engagement and voting. These strategies provide 1) widespread opportunity and access for voter registration on-line and on campus; 2) a broad range of events and activities that provide voter education, help students consider particular issues, policies, or elections, and help students gain interest and motivation in participating and voting; 3) multiple invitations, reminders, encouragements to get out the vote and turnout.

Tactics and Activities for voter registration

- Enable voter registration during Student enrollment - Registrar's office
- Maintain and Publicize UCSC Elections Website with links
- Tabling from Election Cohort Committee with SOMeCA (APISA, Bayanihan, Black Student Union, MEChA, ChALE, UMOJA, CUSN, KAMP, TWANAS, City on a Hill Press, engaging education)
 - started meeting together during the summer, has done a voter registration training, undertaking most of the hands-on labor of SOMeCA democratic engagement and elections activities
- Work with Santa Cruz County Elections Office to host Votemobile on campus every Wednesday (Quarry Plaza W 10am-2pm)

Tactics and Activities for voter education, student interest, and student agency

- Update and Publicize UCSC Elections Website with links
- Promote students leadership on voting and democratic engagement through SOMeCA, including Students with Agency Toolkit
 - Readings, videos, related to democracy, civic engagement, and leadership for students organizations, including "A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future"
- Election Cohort Committee wrote and sent a questionnaire to local candidates, including positions on rental housing, policing, mental health, transportation (SOMeCA)
- Expanding your Political Palate Event (Stevenson College)
 - How to think about your palate, how you talk people who don't share your views, what are conversational tools, examples of how this can work.
- Student-led Campus News/Media - City on a Hill Press: Election Edition
- Brown Bag Discussions
- Tiffany Dena Loftin Talk/Workshop - Alumni connection to NAACP

T-shirt Giveaway - Bright green for Election Day with QR Code

QR code:

- link to vote.org
- Information on where to drop ballots

- Work with Santa Cruz County Elections Office to host Votemobile on campus every Wednesday (Quarry Plaza W 10am-2pm)

Tactics and Activities for voter turnout

- SUA UC We Vote campaign/initiative
- Ask Faculty Senate to encourage faculty to promote student voting during class
- Ask Residential Colleges and Dining Halls to promote student voting
 - Tabling at Dining Halls, Colleges, and Bay Tree Bookstore (SUA WeVote and SOMeCA)
- Make a Note to Vote Campaign - working with Elections coalition (SOMeCA)
- Planning and Coordination of polling sites on campus
 - Stevenson College Event Center (101 McLaughlin Dr, Santa Cruz)
 - Saturday, November 5th: Voting 9am-5pm
 - Sunday, November 6th: Voting 9am-5pm
 - Monday, November 7th: Voting 8am – 5pm
 - Tuesday, November 8th: Voting 7am – 8pm (Election Day)

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

We will use our 2022 NSLVE data to determine how well we were able to meet our concrete goals for increasing registration and turnout. We will also plan post-election debriefing and conversations among the various groups leadership teams involved, as noted above. We will emphasize trying to collect “lessons learned” and to build a set of ideas, strategies, and collaborations for future planning.

Reporting:

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

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

Our 2022 campus action plan and 2022 NSLVE reports will be shared with all of the people listed on our leadership team. We will look into the best place to post this material on-line for people to access. One option might be the UCSC Voting and Elections page run by the Government and Community Relations office.
<https://urelations.ucsc.edu/about/units/government/vote/index.html>