

## 2024 University of Denver ALL IN Action Plan

### Summary

The University of Denver (DU) is deeply committed to student civic engagement. DU has a demonstrated history of coordinating large-scale voter registration, education, and mobilization efforts across campus that are year-round, in both even-years and odd-years, for state and local elections alike. This work is a great source of pride for our school, and has fostered rich campus culture around voting and civic participation.

DU believes that the most effective way to engage students in democracy is peer-to-peer, face-to-face organizing; in 2024, DU will focus our efforts on engaging additional stakeholders to collaboratively facilitate students engagement and leadership in voter registration. We will apply our learnings from years past to ensure our strategy is holistic and layered. In 2024, we intend to layer in communications from social media and broaden campus visibility to ensure that all students are reached with critical voter registration and election information.

Our ultimate goal is that the DU campus experience is centered around civic participation, and that our voter registration, education, and mobilization efforts will feed into steadily high voter registration and turnout rates. We are committed to continue building on the increases in voter turnout participation for DU's students of color, and will work to ensure that marginalized students are centered in our efforts. We are keenly aware of the importance of this work, especially during the upcoming presidential election year, which provides an amplified voice for our voter engagement messages.

### Point of Contact

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### Coalition Description

The Center for Community Engagement to advance Scholarship and Learning and a nonpartisan community partner, New Era Colorado, are continuing our 9-year-long partnership in 2024 to carry out this plan. Since our last plan was developed in 2022, we added another DU partner, the Center on American Politics, to help strengthen our approach, expand our activities, and leverage work this group is already doing in this space.

**The Center for Community Engagement to advance Scholarship and Learning (CCESL)**'s purpose is to engage the campus community to create meaningful change. One initiative of CCESL is civic development and voter registration.

**New Era Colorado** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to engaging young people in democracy and has expertise in registering students to vote, as well as in educating students about changes to Colorado's new election law (Colorado modernized our elections system in 2013, 2019, and 2021).

**The Center on American Politics (CAP)** is based out of the Korbel School of International Studies and since 2017 has brought important research, political events, and activities to campus for the benefit of students, faculty, and the broader DU community, while seeking to improve scholarly understanding of American democracy. CAP seeks to expand its mission by further developing voter participation initiatives in coordination with CCESL.

**Denver Elections Commission** coordinates with DU's Conferences and Events for a Voter Service and Polling Center on campus during the voting period. Historic collaborations included coordination with DU's Office of Government Relations and Community Affairs to provide a mobile unit on campus to reach students during the concentrated time of voting.



**Formalize Coordination with Other Partners:** We also seek to expand our coalition to coordinate efforts with partners that are already engaged in this work on campus. This includes several professors that already actively instruct classes on civil engagement and require voter registration special projects. We seek to reach out to campus groups such as FIRST@DU and the

Cultural Center to integrate any of their efforts to reach students of color and other underrepresented student populations. Finally, we seek to partner with Marketing and Communications on various marketing strategies.

## Institutional Support

The Chancellor previously made the [All In Presidential Commitment](#) to actively work toward the goal of full student participation in the 2023 election and beyond by committing to the following:

- preparing students to be informed and active citizens;
- educating students on the importance of the student voice in all elections (local, state, and presidential)
- providing both curricular and cocurricular experiences to shape and support the development of college students into becoming lifelong voters and engaged community members.

To Achieve These Goals, The University of Denver will:

- Sign up again as an ALL IN campus — Join the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
- Strive toward Full Student Voter Participation — Designate staff (administration and faculty) to lead efforts to strive for full participation among the campus community.
- Make a Statement — Publish social media posts, modeling after the [All In public statement examples](#) and participate in CAP and voter registration events.
- Integrate civil engagement and voting messages into the Chancellor’s [Freedom of Expression](#) initiative on campus.
- Support our effort to create a “DU Votes” webpage to contain DU-specific voting information, marketing materials (i.e. logos, signage) and communications in the DU Newsroom. We are excited to launch the new logo/branding of this initiative! An example is posted at the top of this document.

## Voter Registration

**The University of Denver will continue to fine-tune and craft powerful voter registration messages.**

- Messaging will be succinct and actionable.
- We will strive to simplify our messages, be more visual and use less text.
- We will deliver information and support student-led engagement earlier in the voter registration process.
- We will connect voters with reputable election partners and clearinghouses, such as the Colorado Secretary of State.
- Educational efforts will be tailored to:
  - **First-time voters** who need information on eligibility, how to register, deadlines. The [2021 Colorado Votes Act \(SB21-250\)](#) is now in effect, which gives first-time registrants the ability to use the last 4 digits of their Social Security Number for online voter registration. This addresses a long-standing barrier to voter registration that disproportionately impacted people of color and students, wherein online voter registration could only be accessed with a Colorado ID for first-time registrants. This update to the law will be communicated to students during tabling, to ensure that students who don’t have time or the proper ID to register using a paper form know that they can simply register online. Students will still be encouraged to register at the table, as in-person voter registration is the preferred, more effective tactic to engage students.
  - **Those that have recently moved** and need to update an address or confirm prior registration.
  - **Those considering** the pros and cons of changing their registration from their home precinct.

**The University of Denver will engage the campus community through various methods to sustain our high voter registration rates.**

- 1. The coalition of partners created a DU webpage to serve as a clearinghouse for all DU community voting information and activities. Lead: Megan Grogan**

Until now, voter registration and voting information for DU lies in disparate locations. We have identified a need to create one location, such as a “DU Votes” website, with a custom URL, that contains specific information for new DU students, how to vote as a college student, how to register or update your address in Colorado, key deadlines and links to important voting partners, such as the [Colorado Secretary of State](#) office and the [Denver Election Commission](#). We have found that many other colleges and universities provide a single location for voting information to their communities, and we would like to explore doing the same.

With help from Central Marketing, we launched this new website, called DU Votes, at the end of August, 2024 with the URL [www.du.edu/vote](http://www.du.edu/vote). We are tracking traffic on the site and we are exploring the opportunity to integrate the All In voting portal in the future to enhance our reporting.

**2. Tabling and providing information during critical calendar dates, and ongoing through the year. Co-leads: John Macikas and Megan Grogan**

We will use **Back to School** events, such as the DU orientation and student involvement fair, as an opportunity to register students to vote with the help of New Era, educate about the fact that you need to update your voter registration each time you move, Colorado students' right to vote in Colorado. By engaging students before school starts, we are able to get through to students before the busy school year begins.

Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024 is **National Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day**, and we will table on campus during that week to register students to vote, and incorporate heavy voter education at a strategic time in the overall election calendar. There may be opportunities to gain media attention for these efforts, as we did in 2020, to continue fostering DU's culture of civic engagement in the broader community.

With the help of New Era, DU provides **ongoing registration opportunities** for students to register to vote or update their address throughout the academic year. In addition, this year we have hired 3 student interns to train under New Era and then are staffing the tables on their own. They are tabling during busy lunch and dinner hours, at various buildings on campus such as the Law School and the Korbel School of International Studies, and at big events and fairs such as Orientation and at the Crimson Classic, 5K Run.

Registration tables, hosted by New Era and student interns, located in high traffic areas are also used as an opportunity to recruit student volunteers to help carry out the work to ensure that the work is effective, peer-to-peer, and builds up students to become leaders in civic engagement on campus. These tabling dates are scheduled strategically throughout the year with a heavy push in the Fall quarter, and leading up to the deadlines for voter registration drives to submit forms in Colorado. We will strive to strengthen our human resources needed to sustain these activities by promoting opportunities to train volunteers in New Era's methods so that we may support their activities as needed.

**3. Voter registration email blasts to all students. Lead: John Macikas**

The [2021 Colorado Votes Act \(SB21-250\)](#) has created a requirement that higher education institutions "provide by e-mail to each enrolled student information on voter eligibility and how to register to vote or update their voter registration in the statewide voter registration database." DU has already been sending student-friendly, fact-checked voter registration email blasts to the student body twice an academic year for a number of years, with election information and student-gear messaging drafted by New Era Colorado and reviewed for accuracy. The goals of these emails are to foster voter registration year-round, and to cut across the noisy environment of misinformation and disinformation with accurate, non-alienating information that helps students feel less confused and more guided. Other primary goals of the emails are to ensure students who have moved to Colorado from out-of-state understand their right to vote in Colorado, and that students understand that voter registration must be updated each time they have a change in address.

**4. Collaborate with the Center on American Politics to disseminate voter registration messages. Lead: Megan Grogan**

The Center on American Politics (CAP) hosts [events throughout the year](#), many designed specifically to engage students in civil discourse and to provide education on the political world, encouraging their participation. In the past several years, we have hosted thousands of participants at events such as candidate debates for local elections, student national debate watch parties, election day watch parties, Politics Hour discussions on current events, scholar and journalist events disseminating research and analysis, and webinars. CAP is also building an educational framework, through social media, to inform our community on how to understand current political events and engage in political activities. We see a great opportunity to leverage our events and social media to broaden DU's reach for voter participation information.

In terms of tactics, CAP will seek to incorporate the following in our events and activities:

- Provide voter registration 'bookmarks' with QR code to find more information.
- Integrate voter registration messaging and our All In participation at events.
- Dedicate a portion of our social media calendar toward voter participation efforts.

**5. Explore the collaboration with departments and organizations across campus to achieve broader voter registration, especially in hard to reach populations and provide Voter Registration Tool Kits that they can deploy. Lead: John Macikas**

- **Tabling stakeholders:** We are interested in working with entities like Housing and Residential Education, Discoveries, and Office of Graduate Education to ensure tabling for voter registration is successful at key, high-traffic times in the academic year, e.g., move-in and orientation.
- **Faculty:** Because professors are a trusted resource for students, we would like to engage faculty who are already connected with New Era and/or supporting students in voter registration. Through this engagement, better collaboration could be pursued.
- **BIPOC-focused Centers:** We would like to work with groups charged with serving students of color and other underrepresented student populations, e.g., FIRST@DU and the Cultural Center, to pursue equity in voter registration and engage BIPOC students in this effort. Additionally, we could provide them with a Toolkit or custom materials that can be deployed through their members. DU Votes will be present to help register voters and troubleshoot voting issues at a new event this year called Rooted Local, for Affinity groups on campus
- **Student Government:** We would like to engage student government as a potential catalyst and hub for student-led voter registration leadership. Through this engagement, we can optimize support for New Era's focus on training student leadership in voter registration.

## Voter turnout efforts

2024 will shine a spotlight on DU's voter participation efforts and we are planning to expand our presence with the help of New Era and CAP's event structure. We are lucky to live in Colorado, a very easy state to vote, where all registered voters automatically receive a ballot in the mail, without needing to request it or register for an absentee ballot. In 2022, DU's Office of Government Relations and Community Affairs worked to establish a Permanent Mail Ballot Drop-Box on campus located on the north side of the Ritchie Center. Ballots can be dropped at ballot boxes throughout the metro area, handed in at drive-thru voting stations, or mailed. Voters can also vote in person at a voting station if they prefer. Therefore, our voting period lasts for several weeks leading up to election day, giving us a longer time to disseminate our messages.

DU Voter turnout efforts will include:

- In the weeks leading up to election day, November 5<sup>th</sup>, we will publish our Chancellor message, send out content via our social media channels with an online 'sticker' that followers can post to share that they voted at DU. We plan to share hashtags with other groups on campus to drive consistency in messaging and integrate more videos. We will continue to update our 'DU Votes' website with activities and information.
- We seek to provide key election-related dates via social media to help inform students of deadlines and how to act. We will disseminate those messages, graphics, links to key social media accounts at DU, namely the Center on American Politics, the Korbel School of International Studies, the College of Arts and Humanities, CCESL, and primary DU student accounts. These dates will include deadlines to register, submit or mail ballots, or how to update an existing registration.
- We will engage with our campus newspaper, the Clarion, and the campus-wide newsletter, The Bridge, to tell stories of voters and how to get out the vote. We plan to highlight the location of our permanent mail ballot drop box on the DU campus that was put into place in June 2022.
- CAP will host several events leading up to the election, such as student watch parties, discussion panels, and potentially candidate debates on campus to provide our community the opportunity to learn about the issues, candidates and inform them of how to complete and submit their ballot. We had over 150 students join us at the Presidential Debate Watch Party on Sept. 10th.
- CAP will add a new 'party-like' atmosphere to Election Day 2024 by providing treats, giveaways, music and fun to students that stop by our Election Day party on the quad where they can complete their vote. We will provide voting flyers across campus to ensure students know what to do with their ballots when they receive them.
- In partnership with New Era Colorado, students who are registered to vote will receive nonpartisan get-out-the-vote calls centered on making vote plans and supporting students with process-oriented election information. Students who have opted into texts from New Era may also receive text messages with similar content, to which students can reply and ask questions about voting and will receive live support.

## Resources

- We consider the CCESL department at DU to be a huge resource; one of the core purposes of this department is to develop students civically, and CCESL has made carrying out and supporting voter registration efforts a priority of the department.
- New Era Colorado has been working on campuses in Colorado for over 10 years, and has unique election law experience and expertise that is specifically geared towards students and centers students of color. New Era

provides high-quality information about the voter registration and voting process, while still making it digestible for students, and is a major partner on executing student engagement efforts.

- Adding CAP to the team will further leverage political events and communications to broaden the message.
- The coalition will look to add other partners, such as the new Freedom of Expression group led by Derigan Silver, under the Chancellor's oversight.
- The Denver County Clerk's Office has expressed support for and commitment to DU's student civic engagement, and has built the Mobile Voter Service and Polling Center into their office's election priorities.

## Evaluation

Using 2020 NSLVE data, DU has identified the following successful outcomes:

- DU students voted at an overall rate of 76.7%, which is 15.1% higher than DU's 2016 voting rate and 10.7% higher than the average voting rate for all institutions in 2020.
- Overall increased student turnout rate in 2020 as compared to 2016 (23% increase for undergraduate students, 12% increase for graduate students).
  - Black student turnout rate increased from 59% to 69%
  - Hispanic student turnout increased from 64% to 76%
  - Asian student turnout increased from 49% to 64%
  - American Indian/ Alaskan Native student turnout increased from 61% to 79%
  - Student of two or more races' turnout increased from 59% to 78%
- Overall increased student registration rate in 2020 as compared to 2016 (76.9% in 2016, 87.1% in 2020).
- Increased student turnout rates for STEM students in 2020 as compared to 2016, across all fields measured (biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, and engineering and engineering technologies, mathematic and statistics, health professions, natural resources and conservation, and physical sciences) at an averaged 16% increase
- Increase utilization of early voting by mail, dropbox, or in-person in 2020 as compared to 2016 (7% increase in early voting, 2% increase in dropbox/ mail voting, and commensurate decrease in reliance on in-person Election Day voting)

We are proud of how far we have come in a relatively short period of time and strive to sustain our efforts through this plan set forth. Because 2024 will be a presidential election year, we do believe we will have more interest in our programming and activities, and ultimately some successes with populations we've struggled to get. We hope to build a strong foundation from which to be very productive, even in off-election cycles. We will continue doing the work that we already know works best, while continuing to adapt to changing needs and growth areas in our programming. Our goal is to instill a sense of civic engagement during the time students begin to identify with other campus values. Our coalition will evaluate and debrief this vote plan after the 2024 election, and we are excited to compare the outcomes to previous years, to best inform the future of our civic engagement work.

## Goals

At the suggestion of New Era, we are focusing on the strength of activities over concrete metrics. That said, here are some potential short-term goals that may be within reach:

Short term goals:

- By November 2024, 90% of students at DU will be registered to vote for the 2024 General Election
- By November 2024, 92% of all registered students at DU will have voted in the 2024 General Election, with an average of 65% of BIPOC students having voted
- By November 2024, 80% of all eligible students at DU will have voted in the 2024 General Election, with an average of 60% of BIPOC students having voted
- By November 2024, early voting by registered students at DU through means of mail, in person or ballot drop box will have increased by 3 pt's from 2020