



University of Nevada, Las Vegas Democratic Engagement Action Plan: 2024-2025 Academic Year

This plan was created using the Votes & Ballots Action Planning Form, and has been further added to.

I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Stine Odegard, Assistant Director for Service, Leadership and Engagement to communicate our strategy for increasing the registration and turnout rates of voters at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Feedback and insights have been integrated from the UNLV Votes Coalition members during a monthly meeting. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2024-2025 academic year, on and around campus in Las Vegas, Nevada.

This action plan is the institution's third, and advances the efforts begun in the previous cycle. It is aligned with our institutional strategic plan, titled Top Tier 2.0(<https://www.unlv.edu/toptier/about>), specifically the core areas of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity; Community Partnerships; and Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion. As an MSI/HSI/AANAPISI designated institution, recognized annually as one of the most diverse doctoral granting institutions in the country, UNLV strives to continuously center our students' diverse lived experience and identities.

The following groups will be leading this work at University of Nevada, Las Vegas in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Government Affairs Staff
- Student Affairs Staff
- Academic Affairs Staff

The mission of our initiative is:

- To increase civic learning and democratic engagement among UNLV students, expanding voter access and student engagement in the civic sphere through education and programming as well as voter registration and turnout efforts.

This plan aims to help coordinate efforts to register, educate and turn out all eligible voters, and to engage all community members around democratic processes. This plan will be implemented by the Assistant Director for Service Learning and Leadership, who will be primarily responsible

for engaging students to plan and implement events and communication, but also to coordinate efforts and engagement from the coalition members. There will be significant support in implementation from the Leadership and Democratic Engagement Program Coordinator, Karly Van Holten. UNLV has built a shared drive with resources and planning guides and tools for all to access, but most of the communication and resources will be concentrated through the Service Learning and Leadership (SLL) Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement website, social media, and staff communication channels. New this year, we plan to link and connect information from the SLL page to the website for the Office of Government and Community Engagement. There will be a fall calendar of events (and any relevant event registrations), campus and community partners, and election information (voter registration, election info, TurboVote platform links). Service Learning and Leadership has allocated annual funding to support the larger National Voter Registration Day, but also has smaller amounts allocated to provide food and supplies for other events (National Voter Education Week, Snacks and Skills Series, Voting Block Party, and more). Additionally, we have specifically assigned our student marketers to develop materials for civic engagement for digital distribution. We are excited to have the recent news that we have secured additional funding from the Ask Every Student Implementation Grants to launch civic engagement fellows to support classroom presentations (specifically targeting the First Year Seminar courses), election year programming, and tabling efforts.

We are starting outreach with community organizations over the summer to communicate our event schedule, share information about tabling and free speech areas on campus, and to invite partnership for significant and smaller events. External organizations do a significant amount of voter registration on our large, urban, commuter campus, so they are key partners in engaging voter registration goals, so we hope to communicate proactively and also to see about sharing information reciprocally (NSLVE data to local orgs if we receive the 2022 data, but also asking partners to share/disaggregate info about canvassing and registration efforts on campus). Several local chapters of national organizations partnered on past events, including: Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), Mi Familia Vota (MFV), Voto Latino (VL), Somos Votando (SV), Asian Community Development Council (ACDC), the Las Vegas Indian Center (LVIC), Next Gen (NG), Clark County Elections Department (CCED), Students Learn Students Vote Coalition (SLSVC), the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) RevUp, and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). We are building relationships with the NAACP recognizing that that has been a gap for our engagement, and an important one to address and bolster. Pizza to the Polls is another partnership to explore this year. We were updated in April that our campus will host a vote early site (as we have in the past), but that we will be adding in an election day voting center, which will facilitate some additional programming and resources to tap into.

Below is a quick summary of the resources, initiatives, and events:

- The Snacks and Skills series started in Fall 2022 and has continued between election cycles with 3-4 events per semester; it will continue into this fall (and beyond) but with election-themed topics and speakers (what are the questions on the ballots and what are some of the pros and cons being argued, how to use the sample ballot/mail-in ballot/polling machines, what are rights and responsibilities at the polls, how can you engage if you are not able to vote, now what after the election). The event series will

seek co-sponsorship from the Office of Government and Community Engagement to open the attendance more widely beyond students and engage more of our campus community.

- National Voter Registration Day will return this fall to create a splashy event with community partners and multiple activities centering on democracy and engagement.
- The Voting Block Party will return outside the on-campus election day voting center.
- Civic Engagement Fellows mentioned above (funded by the Ask Every Student Implementation Grant) will engage students in and out of the classroom.

II. Leadership

Stine Odegard, Assistant Director for Service, Leadership and Engagement will oversee our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. She will be supported in this work by:

- Supervising the Leadership and Democratic Engagement Program Coordinator, Karly Van Holten, who is part of the Office of Service Learning and Leadership.
- Facilitating our UNLV Votes Coalition, our CLDE campus coalition comprised of the following members:
 - Constance Brooks, PhD, Assoc. Vice Pres. of Government & Community Engagement
 - Marni Dow, Associate Director for Student Involvement
 - Daejha Hare, Assistant Director for CSUN Student Government, SIA
 - Bryan Hilbert, Director, UNLV Disability Resource Center
 - Chelsea Heinbach, Teaching and Learning Librarian, UNLV Libraries
 - Theresa Marie, JD, Graduate and Professional Student Association President
 - Tamara Marino, Education and Communication Officer, Government and Community Engagement
 - TBA, CSUN Student Government Government and Community Affairs Chair
 - Erick Ochoa, Service Programs Coordinator
 - Rian Satterwhite, Director of the Office of Service Learning & Leadership
 - Karly Van Holten, Leadership and Democratic Engagement Program Coordinator
 - Jason Wasden, PhD, Executive Director for Government Affairs
- Additionally, we have identified areas of campus that we hope to include representation from in order to partner in this work and expand the capacity of the UNLV Votes coalition, including:
 - Office of Diversity Initiatives
 - Department of Political Science
 - Department of Public Administration
 - College of Education
 - CSUN Student government
 - Registered Student Organizations
 - Community partner organizations

The **UNLV Votes Coalition** was formed as an initial effort to communicate across departments and reduce silos, to share resources and information, and to maximize reach. This committee is coordinated by Service Learning and Leadership staff (Stine Odegard), but has members across campus, including University Libraries, the Disability Resource Center, CSUN Student Government advisors, Student Involvement and Activities, and UNLV Government and Community Engagement. Invitations have been extended to students from CSUN student government and the Graduate and Professional Student Association, as well as some student organization representatives; it has remained difficult to have students engage with the group given their multiple commitments with academics, employment, involvement and more.

This coalition includes representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise, who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus in to our work. Our group will meet monthly on the third Tuesday of the month from 3-4 PM via Zoom; the time can be revisited with members as we enter new seasons to maximize attendance.

In the event that our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. If the Assistant Director position is vacant, then the Director for Service Learning and Leadership will work with the Leadership and Democratic Engagement Program Coordinator to execute and facilitate the plan.

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus: All In Democracy Challenge, the AAC&U, Campus Compact, the Campus Vote Project, Circle (NSLVE campus), Democracy Works (TurboVote), Mi Familia Vota, NASPA, the National Disability Rights Network, Pizza to the Polls, Rock the Vote, Unify America, Voto Latino and additional partners outside of the SLSV networks.

Local partners include: City of Las Vegas Election Clerk, Clark County Elections Department, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN), Mi Familia Vota (MFV), Voto Latino (VL), Somos Votando (SV), Asian Community Development Council (ACDC), the Las Vegas Indian Center (LVIC), Next Gen (NG), Clark County Elections Department (CCED), Students Learn Students Vote Coalition (SLSVC), the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) RevUp, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the NAACP.

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus: CEEP, Every Vote Counts, Voto Latino, Mi Familia Vota (also mentioned above).

We have been coordinating with our local election office for multiple events where they were featured speakers. We look forward to continuing this successful relationship.

We acknowledge that we see gaps in our planning by not having the NSLVE data to inform some of our relationships both on and off campus as we do not know if there are specific majors to target or particular identity groups to seek out and deepen relationships with to increase voter engagement.

III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. UNLV's vision is outlined as improving the lives of our diverse students and transforming our communities through education and engagement.

UNLV's Top Tier 2.0 mission: As a minority-serving institution rich with diversity and committed to equity, UNLV: provides access to world-class educational experiences that are responsive to the needs of our students and stakeholders; engages in groundbreaking research, scholarship, professional, and creative activities that have impact and cross boundaries; and offers high-value, cutting-edge interdisciplinary physical and mental health care to support our community. We create value for the individuals and communities we serve by fostering a climate of innovation, stimulating economic diversification and workforce development, promoting social justice and inclusion of all voices, and enriching cultural vitality.

We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's set of paired values: Access and Equity, Excellence and Integrity, Collaboration and Stewardship, Compassion and Inclusion.

We also have had a senior leader commit to civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- On-campus early voting polling place
- Voter registration tables
- Integration of TurboVote reminders/prompts into online involvement platform
- Presidential signing of Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation
- Integration of civic engagement into co-curricular campus-wide initiatives (i.e. Tradition Keepers Medallion)

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections (could increase these rates)
- Political speakers
- Walks / rides to polls
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Lobbying trips (statewide)
- Voting Block Parties, Snacks and Skills event series

The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased.

1. We realize that the All-In President's Commitment needs a new signature, so we are working to pursue that;

2. Communication from senior leadership that this area is a key focus for the institution, so we will pursue this (via email, but also potentially via audio messages, and video);
3. Integration into the curriculum (potentially the First Year Seminar, New Student Orientation, or First Year Experience)
4. Increasing co-curricular representation and signature traditions (expanding NVRD, Voting Block Party)
5. Broader representation and engagement with the work of the coalition, which will be a primary focus area in the coming months.
6. Sharing the action plan, recognition and initiatives in annual and regular campus communications

IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from Fall 2022 when our total student enrollment was 30,660.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
76.00%	24.00%	23.00%	77.00%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
87.00%	13.00%	3.00%	3.00%	97.00%

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
43.00%	57.00%		

Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+
0.49%	0.22%	0.15%	0.09%	0.03%	0.01%

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
15.00%	0.00%	9.00%	33.00%	1.00%	25.00%	13.00%

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

- Ask Every Student First Step Form
- Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement
- National Survey of Student Engagement
- National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement

They help to inform our institution's civic learning and democratic engagement efforts by We have had a gap in collecting BCSS and NSSE data with some staff transitions around the pandemic, but are hoping to collect again so we can understand students' pre-college experiences and their insights on their college satisfaction. The Ask Every Student First Step form was a good initial reflection to reflect on current status. Like all other campuses, we are still missing 2022 data to inform our campus planning and eagerly await the data to refine planning, and communicate with partners and campus.

The work of CLDE is supported in academic spaces on campus in multiple ways. The UNLV University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/gen-ed/uulo>) articulate 30 learning outcomes in five categories that are measured throughout the university curriculum. Of those, the following directly align with CLDE efforts:

- Demonstrate lifelong learning skills
- Recognize the complexity of problems, and identify different perspectives from which problems and questions can be viewed
- Identify, analyze, and evaluate reasoning, and construct and defend reasonable arguments and explanations
- Collaborate effectively with others to share information, solve problems, or complete tasks
- Respond to diverse perspectives linked to identity, including age, ability, religion, politics, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality; both in American and international contexts
- Apply the concept of social justice
- Function effectively in diverse groups
- Demonstrate awareness of one's own place in and effect on the world
- Acquire knowledge of political, economic, and social institutions
- Identify the various rights and obligations that citizens have in their communities
- Apply various forms of citizenship skills such as media analysis, letter writing, community service, and lobbying
- Explain the concept of sustainability as it impacts economic, environmental, and social concerns
- Examine various concepts and theories of ethics, and how to deliberate and assess claims about ethical issues
- Apply ethical concepts and theories to specific ethical dilemmas students will experience in their personal and professional lives

V. Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration.

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan do not mention civic learning and democratic engagement explicitly, though it is consistent with the culture and identity of the institution.
- The voter engagement work on our campus is siloed within one office, though the ongoing work of the coalition has improved this.
- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding aside from what the Office of Service Learning and Leadership can provide, or what partners on campus can allocate.
- We have trouble engaging student leaders for the leadership of our initiative. Fostering sustained student engagement in the coalition is a top priority for us moving forward.
- As a commuter campus serving a population that primarily comes from the county we are in, student engagement in general can be challenging at UNLV. A high percentage of our students hold one or multiple jobs, and given that they have existing ties in the broader community students often do not prioritize staying on campus for social or involvement reasons.

We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- We have a lot of uncoordinated voter registration efforts with local organizations; this can lead to over tapping students and them becoming disengaged with checking, updating and engaging with their voter registration status. It can also lead to a lack of coordination and communication with all involved parties in local chapters of national organizations.

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- We have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students. We have sustainable or consistent funding.
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We have a working relationship with our local election office.
- We have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement.
- We have an established platform (TurboVote) that eases access to voter registration processes and reminders.

- We have strong data sources such as NSLVE that help shape our work (even though this year has delayed data).
- Nevada has now implemented a fully vote-by-mail system and automatic voter registration via the Department of Motor Vehicles.
- Nevada has also implemented walk-up registration and day-of registration changes.

With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Strengthen the UNLV Votes Coalition
 - Increase the membership and engagement for the UNLV Votes Coalition-- particularly of undergraduate and graduate students, academic faculty, and classified staff members-- invite 10-15 additional members to serve on the coalition by June 15, 2024
 - Send campuswide emails about the Coalition to make meetings public to students and staff monthly starting in August 2024 through December 2024.
2. Increase democratic engagement on campus
 - Increase the voting rates of our campus community (students and staff/faculty), particularly for voters with marginalized identities.
 - Set specific goals and develop specific strategies relating to voting rates once the most recent NSLVE data is released, using data from the recent SLSV research-based strategies. *We anticipate this will particularly impact our students of color, our nonbinary students, and justice-impacted students who may not know their voting rights are automatically restored; again, we eagerly await NSLVE data to inform specific strategies.*
 - Develop and launch voter information for students planning to study abroad to be able to secure their absentee ballot or to vote in their embassy
 - Expand democratic engagement for specific populations who may not be able to vote but still can engage (undocumented students, international students, other populations) via education, organizing, pledges, and election observers.
 - Expand/improve voter information on the website by August 1, 2024
 - Integrate and coordinate voter registration efforts and presence at major events like Premier, Homecoming.
3. Expand programming efforts through on and off campus partnerships
 - Increase visibility and traditions relating to civic learning and democratic engagement.
 - By June 2025, identify 3 existing community partnerships to strengthen connection with and establish communication to build longer-term relationships
 - By June 2024 identify 3 new community partnerships to connect with and reach out to them relating to events like Voting Block Party and National Voter Registration Day and Voter Education events
 - By May 2024, explore 3 campus partnerships for 3 different events that may become long-term relationships (FYE) and establish communication with key stakeholders

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

- Build initiatives with local nonpartisan speakers (i.e. Jon Ralston from the Nevada Independent) to host voter education forums for staff and students.
- Develop plans to host candidate debates or town halls for campus (mayoral or broader).
- Have regular annual communication from the UNLV President about CLDE initiatives; see the positional commitment explicitly reflected in campus strategic plans.
- Explore specific campus-wide or university system-wide assessment relating to CLDE initiatives (national assessment, benchmarks, attitudes) to compare growth.
- *By May 2026, the institution will incorporate voter registration and automatic voting reminders into new student orientation via web and in-person resources, sessions, tabling and potentially an event.*
- *By November 2028, the institution will increase student voting rates to at least 75% as measured by NSLVE.*
- *By 2026, the institution will increase voting rates by students of color by at least 5% as measured via NSLVE.*

VI. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- National Voter Registration Day
- TurboVote
- UNLV Votes Coalition
- Voter registration tabling
- Voter information website
- Voter education workshops continuing beyond and between elections (Snacks and Skills)
- Relationship with the local elections office

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- Expand student staffing to support greater programming and student engagement
- Increase student and faculty representation on the UNLV Votes Coalition
- Collaborate with UNLV Community and Government Affairs on events and initiatives
- National Voter Education Week
- Develop more regular plans for grant-writing initiatives to supplement resources
- Social norming campaigns
- Social media series addressing civic engagement skills and knowledge relating to state and federal legislative processes now that elections are over

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **short term**:

- Social norming campaigns
- Develop more regular plans for grant-writing initiatives to supplement resources

These are tactics that we **are already doing** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

- Build relationships with UNLV faculty to increase engagement with CLDE efforts on campus
- Continue to invest in building relationships with other Nevada System of Higher Education institutions and peers doing this same work
- Developed a staff position that moved CLDE work from 25% to 50% of their role

These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

- Invest in supporting student attendance at CLDE skill-building retreats and training

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- Host candidate forums
- Host candidate debates
- We hope to develop a full-time position fully dedicated to this work on campus, with a sustained budget (rather than a position with split attention to this area)
- Develop an alternative break trip focused on lobbying skills and actions

VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 83.2. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 69.5 and our voting rate among registered students was 83.5. During this year, our voting rate was about the same as the national average.

In our NSLVE report, we had racial data for the following groups:

- Asian
- American Indian / Alaska Native
- Black
- Hispanic
- Hawaiian / Pacific Islander
- White

For the racial groups that have recent voter turnout data, we saw the following groups increase in voter turnout compared to four years ago.

- Asian
- American Indian / Alaska Native
- Black
- Hispanic
- Hawaiian / Pacific Islander
- White

We looked at our voter engagement by college/field of study and were wanting to reflect on updated numbers to understand if we can or should be doing more tailored effort (event or campaign). We are also really curious to understand voting by sex and gender, given recent decisions that might engage folks differently. And of course we are interested in the race and ethnicity rates to be able to share with local partners and decide how to increase participation.

We plan to share the UNLV NSLVE data on our Service Learning and Leadership Civic Engagement and voting resources page in addition to the Action Plan.

VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition
- Email to campus administration
- Add to UNLV Government and Community Engagement departmental newsletter
- Email to the Vice President for Student Affairs, Provost, and University President

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Post on the campus website
- Release in a public statement
- Email to NSHE Board of Regents

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Sending a post-election survey to students
- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year as SLL staff, the UNLV Votes coalition, and student groups and looking for improvements year over year
 - Considering future nonprofit partnerships to specifically boost engagement with marginalized communities, developing resources to support groups potentially experiencing marginalization, seeking support for specific groups
 - Identifying certain majors where focus can be addressed to increase engagement (registration and turnout)
 - Looking to expand the collection groups UNLV tracks via national databases so that UNLV
 - Share this data with local partner organizations such as Las Vegas Indian Center, AsianCommunity Development Council, Somos Votando, Mi Familia Vota, Voto Latino, PLANevada, and more
 - Tie findings back to UNLV Top Tier initiatives to build in campus-buy-in
 - Using this data to make recommendations that we can share with campus senior administration
- Conducting evaluations at individual events and reporting on these lessons on an annual basis, using data and lessons to make future planning decisions
 - Learning outcomes
 - Event satisfaction
 - NSSE analysis

- Holding a student focus group series to collect feedback about the Action Plan and also about specific events or future ideas
- Collect more informal feedback via social media using polling features re: event ideas and questions about legislative processes, redistricting, voter suppression, etc.
- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team (i.e. political science faculty, identity-based student organizations, social media staff and marketing teams, etc.)
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly