



University of Wyoming 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Celeste Prall

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by University of Wyoming in Wyoming for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goals for University of Wyoming for the 2024 election are: increasing overall voter engagement for students and raise awareness about changes in the voter registration legislation.

The University of Wyoming in Laramie is the only four-year land-grant institution in the state. UW has a primarily white student population with just shy of 12,000 students in attendance. Our mission is to *unlock the extraordinary in every person through education, research, innovation, engagement, and service*. The civic engagement and voter education program, Pokes Vote is housed within the Service, Leadership, and Community Engagement (SLCE) office. In 2023, SLCE expanded this work to include a Civic Engagement Coordinator with experience in the local civic community.

The University has also created the Office of Engagement and Outreach (OEO) which provides leadership to institutional divisions in shaping, supporting, and pursuing the university's goals for advancing community engagement and relationships. Through collaborative efforts with the OEO, SLCE, and other campus organizations we shall strive to increase voter registration and voter turnout for our students.

Leadership:

- Celeste Prall | Service, Leadership, and Community Engagement (SLCE) Office | Civic Engagement Coordinator will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus.

- Shelby Kennedy | SLCE Project Coordinator Senior - Serves as the volunteer coordinator and community partnership coordinator for SLCE office. These campus and community connections will be vital to the coalition.
- Micah Richardson | Laramie City Council Representative Ward 1 - Local elected officials play a vital role in educating students on the importance of local civic engagement
- Kayla White | Albany County Clerk - In Wyoming our county clerks are a huge part of facilitating our elections including voter registration, community education, and Election Day happenings.
- Melanie Vigil | Assistant Dean of Students, Equity & Belonging, Multicultural Affairs – Historically, minority populations are underrepresented and have lower civic participation. By including a staff from our multicultural affairs department we will be able to collaborate and ensure we are welcoming of all students.
- Cameron Craft | Associated Students of the University of Wyoming Project Coordinator - Student government is frequently the beginning of a student’s civic engagement journey
- Lily Leman | ASUW First-Year Senator & Carter Worcester | ASUW Full Senator – Student voice is a vital part of campus-wide voter engagement. Through engaging students involved with student government we will elevate their voices.
- Marissa Carpio | Policy Director, Equality State Policy Center (ESPC) – ESPC is a longtime advocate for fair elections and transparent government for Wyoming’s citizens. Their expertise in the Wyoming election system and community organizing makes them a vital partner.
- Erin Olsen | Director of Community Engagement, Office of Engagement and Outreach - Interactions with the external communities is a vital piece of community and civic engagement.

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, Representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise, Trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy, Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus in to our work

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- League of Women Voters

Commitment:

The University has expanded within the SLCE office and through the creation of the Office of Engagement and Outreach. These expansions have increased capacity for intentional programming around civic and community engagement beyond the election year. SLCE serves a diverse population of students across campus ranging from first-year students to graduate students. Through these programs we shall highlight the importance and impact of programming on campus civic engagement to encourage future participation in the ALL IN Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment.

Our Strategic Plan includes focuses on pursuing institutional excellence through the celebration and support of free expression. This effort is spearheaded by the President’s Freedom of Expression, Intellectual Freedom, and Constructive Dialogue Working Group. The group was formed in late 2022 to develop recommendations on articulating, addressing and enhancing freedom of expression, intellectual freedom, academic freedom and constructive dialogue at UW. This working group consisted of administrators, faculty, staff, and students creates space for discussions around difficult topics that can arise when considering civic engagement in our polarized political environment. As of December 7th the University has adopted new principles that support freedom of expression and constructive dialogue while maintaining institutional neutrality.

The University also houses the Malcom Wallop Civic Engagement Program, a partnership program that host projects and meaningful dialogue on local, state, national, and international issues of significant interest to Wyoming students and communities. The Wallop program hosts a K – 12 Curriculum Project that provides free lessons for Wyoming teachers across the state. This program is the beginning of integrating civic engagement in Wyoming’s education system.

University of Wyoming is not a current signatory to the ALL IN Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement.

On campus, we’ve seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- Voter registration tables
- Protests / rallies / walkouts
- Signage promoting Election Day

On campus, we’ve experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Registering to vote
- Deliberative dialogues

With this foundation and other recent efforts mentioned above, we are well-positioned to expand work focused on civic learning and democratic engagement.

Landscape:

University of Wyoming is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2021. Our institution is designated as the following: Predominantly White Institution, Rural Serving Institution.

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from Fall 2023 when our total student enrollment was 10913.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
75.60%	24.40%	22.60%	77.40%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students
70.50%	29.50%	4.35%

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women
44.90%	54.60%

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
1.36%	0.60%	0.98%	8.87%	0.09%	75.20%	3.52%

In the 2023 Legislative session the legislative body passed HB 103 – *Political party affiliation declaration changes* which changed the deadline for changes in party affiliation to before candidate filing opens. This will create a “blackout” period in which changes to party affiliation and registration cancelation will not be allowed. New voters may still register and affiliate on the day of elections. Additionally, Wyoming does not offer online voter registration or participate in Motor Voter registration. Voters wishing to register in Wyoming must undergo a voter registration process directly with the county clerk. Registration by mail is allowed, but the registration form must be notarized. This can be confusing for students relocating to Wyoming from states with more accessible voting practices. There is not a voting location on the campus nor does Albany County currently utilize poll centers which can create an additional layer of confusion.

Change in Party Affiliation Deadline: May 15th, 2024
Primary Absentee Voting Begins: July 23rd, 2024
Primary Absentee Voting Ends: August 19th, 2024
Primary Election: August 20th, 2024
General Election Absentee Voting Begins: October 8th, 2024

General Election Absentee Voting Ends: November 4th, 2024

General Election: November 5th, 2024

University of Wyoming has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and will receive campus voting data for the 2022 election in fall 2023. However, our NSLVE authorization expires in 2023 and our institution will need to reauthorize NSLVE to receive campus voting data for the 2024 election and beyond.

Our 2020 campus voting rate was 63%.

Our 2020 campus voter registration rate was 75.9%.

Our 2018 campus voting rate was 33.2%.

Our 2018 campus voter registration rate was 61.3%.

University of Wyoming has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals of recognition for past elections: 2016 Bronze, 2020 Silver.

Historically, there has been a significant difference in voter registration and turn out for presidential and nonpresidential elections. This can be seen across the entire state not just higher education institutions.

Goals:

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

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

We know our campus faces the 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 explicitly mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
- We don't have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- Voter engagement is politicized, resulting in potential resistance to large-scale efforts.

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

- Our state laws make it challenging to support student voter registration efforts since the voter registration process in Wyoming does not facilitate student registration as efficiently as other states.

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 ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.

- We use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have sustainable or consistent funding.
- 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.

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

- Collect 300 student commitments to vote
- Increase student voter registration rate by 3% from the 2022 election
- Increase voter turnout rate by 3% from the 2022 election

We plan to reevaluate and adapt as necessary after the release of the 2022 NSLVE data.

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

- Increase availability of voter registration resources to students, staff, and faculty

Strategy:

University of Wyoming will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

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):

- Voter Registration Drives in collaboration with the Albany County Clerk including National Voter Registration Day
- Voter education materials provided through tabling events, social media, and the SLCE newsletter
- Election Night Watch Party/Civic Celebration to celebrate democracy
- Election resources email from the Dean of Students
- ASUW (student government) funded debate watch parties
- University of Wyoming Libraries has released a Civic Literacy and Engagement webpage that allows students to learn more about voting, contacting officials, legislation, and community organizations doing work in this realm.
- The Good Mule project with events that are designed to prepare students to become informed and engaged citizens, capable of meeting the needs of their communities.

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

- Participation in National Voter Education Week (October 2024)
- ASUW sponsored candidate meet & greet from the local level such as hospital board all the way to congressional candidates

- Local officials such as the Mayor are invited to speak with student government leaders
- Election Hero Day event (November 4th, 2024) to highlight the importance of our election teams
- Commit to vote campaign with social media integration and prizes
- Election Trivia Night

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

- Educational trips the Wyoming State Capitol and the Laramie City Council to expose students to different elected officials and identify each role.
- Elections 101 presentation from the Albany County Clerk to demystify the elections process, combat misinformation, and share updates about Wyoming elections
- Provide transportation for students who are on campus during the general and primary elections
- Establish a Circle of Voices in collaboration with the Multicultural Affairs department to spread awareness around ways to be civically engaged other than voting for students who are not eligible to vote.
- Informational presentation on election policy and ways to be civically engaged available for all course on campus.

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

- Voter Registration Drives in collaboration with the Albany County Clerk including National Voter Registration Day
- Voter education materials provided through tabling events, social media, and the SLCE newsletter
- University of Wyoming Libraries has released a Civic Literacy and Engagement webpage that allows students to learn more about voting, contacting officials, legislation, and community organizations doing work in this realm.
- The Good Mule project with events that are designed to prepare students to become informed and engaged citizens, capable of meeting the needs of their communities.
- Annual ASUW Governor's dinner connecting students to elected state officials

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

- Encourage a Presidential sign on to the President's Commitment
- Advocate for a University wide syllabi requirement informing students of important election related dates and information on voter registration
- Continuing and expanding education programs on election processes and security

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 75.9. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 63% and our voting rate among registered students was 83. During this year, our voting rate was lower than 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
- 2 or More Races

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
- White
- 2 or More Races

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

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

- Email to members of our campus coalition

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

- Post on the campus website
- Issuing a press release announcing our All In Plan

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Sending a post-election survey to students
- Sending a post-election survey to faculty
- 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

- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly
- Tracking voter registration numbers, event participation numbers, and commitments to vote.

Reporting:

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

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which can also be found on our campus page above.