



All-In Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan: Winthrop University

SECTION I: Executive Summary

This section provides a summary of the campus democratic engagement action plan.

Located in Rock Hill, SC, **Winthrop University** is a public, comprehensive institution that offers bachelor’s, master’s, and specialized degrees through a combination of on-campus and online programs. It is also committed to preparing the next generation of political and civic leaders in our state. Across the Division of Academic Affairs, the Division of Student Life, the John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy, and more, Winthrop works to achieve this mission through programming on democratic values, civic education, democratic citizenship, and civic engagement.

Data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) demonstrate that, over recent elections, Winthrop students cast ballots at a somewhat higher rate than their peers at other public, Master’s institutions. They also outperformed the national average. Yet, while this is an impressive level of voter participation among college students, we believe there is room for growth. Thus, we hope that the coordinated efforts planned for the 2024 election cycle will generate great enthusiasm on campus for the presidential contest (and down ticket races) and result in higher student interest and voter turnout. As a public college with a diverse student body, we have longstanding commitment to reach all students, and we will continue to do so during this election season with targeted outreach and consideration of the least engaged voting groups according to our NSLVE report.

Evidence of Winthrop’s commitment to civic engagement and political participation is woven into all aspects of student life beginning with the **First Year Experience**, where students embark on their journey of engagement and voting, to several required **General Education** courses where the values of democratic citizenship are taught, to **the Office of Student Affairs** where students have ample opportunities to develop both leadership and political engagement skills through a variety of clubs and organizations.

This report details Winthrop’s Action Plan for the 2024 general presidential election, collectively branded as **DECISION 2024**. This plan was created by the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Steering Committee (members listed in Table 1). Our goal is to continue to strengthen voting at Winthrop and ensure that all students have information about elections and candidates and the opportunity to register and vote. Those mainly responsible for implementation of the Action Plan are the CLDE Steering Committee, which spans both Student Life and Academic Affairs, and it will be under the guidance of Adolphus Belk, Jr. and Katarina Moyon.

We have already launched some critical initiatives, from wide exposure to TurboVote to numerous campus events leading up to the South Carolina Democratic and Republican presidential primaries in February 2024. We intended to be fully geared up for the November election by the time Winthrop students return to campus to start the new academic year. The plan will be implemented on our single campus, mostly in-person. It will run through the end of the 2024 election cycle, with final reporting into early 2025. With so many parts of our campus involved in student civic and voter engagement, we will continue to develop both short- and long-term goals for future years.

SECTION II: Leadership

The leadership section of a campus action plan describes the team that is responsible and accountable for the institution’s efforts to increase civic learning and democratic engagement among its students.

The Winthrop **DECISION 2024** team will be led by a Steering Committee of campus leaders on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE). Established in 2013, the latest iteration of the group was streamlined to include those personnel who play an active role in civic education and community engagement. The Committee will implement the Action Plan and will comprise the core of the **DECISION 2024** team. The tentative membership list is below, but we will also work to recruit students and faculty/staff in underrepresented areas to the group.

| Table 1. Steering Committee on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement | |
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| Adolphus Belk, Jr. | Professor of Political Science and African American Studies, and Director of the John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy |
| Shelia Higgs Burkhalter | Vice President, Division of Student Affairs |

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| Nicole Chisari | Social Media Manager, Office of Communications and Marketing |
| Jennifer Leigh Disney | Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science, Philosophy, Religion, and Legal Studies; and Director of the Women’s and Gender Studies Program |
| Judy Longshaw | News and Media Services Manager, Office of Communications and Marketing |
| Katarina Moyon | Special Advisor, John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy |

This leadership team will work with two larger groups, the Network on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (NCLDE) and Winthrop Student Voting Ambassadors (WSVA). NCLDE is comprised of faculty, staff, and local residents who are dedicated to community and civic engagement. NCLDE will work with the Steering Committee as needed on activities in the Action Plan. Updated 2024 network members are shown below in Table 2. We will reach out to all members, as well as newly hired individuals who may be interested in joining our efforts to ensure continued support for this important collaboration. Thus, NCLDE membership is subject to change.

The second group, Winthrop Student Voting Ambassadors (WSVA), will be selected to work on elements of the 2024 Action plan related to voter outreach and turnout through social media. WSVA will be trained to help students access our TurboVote voter information and registration program. WSVA will also take a leadership role in designing and managing our social media regarding voter registration, elections, and events. All Voting Ambassadors will receive a “Road to the White House” t-shirt to wear when working as Voting Ambassadors. Should WSVA members be interested, they will also be invited to attend Steering Committee meetings as appropriate. We will recruit student voting ambassadors from a variety of backgrounds and fields of study so that a diverse mix of the student body is represented.

The Steering Committee will coordinate a three-pronged approach to voter registration, civic education, and voter turnout, collectively known as **DECISION 2024** activities. In addition, student leaders will be invited to join the **DECISION 2024** team as appropriate (e.g., Council of Student Leaders, College Democrats, and College Republicans). Task Force leadership will also work with the University’s Office of Public Events and local Democratic and Republican party leadership as appropriate.

The Task Force will collaborate with the York County Election Commission throughout this process. In the past, the University has hosted the Commission to train student voting ambassadors on the essentials of South Carolina voting law and we hope to do so again once we establish a new contact in the office.

The Steering Committee will communicate with NCLDE members and WSVA electronically and in-person, as appropriate.

Members of Winthrop’s executive and academic leadership teams support our efforts. This includes the president, provost, and academic deans. Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Shelia Burkhalter is a member of our Steering Committee. Moreover, earlier this academic year, Winthrop president Dr. Edward Serna signed the **All-In Campus Democracy Challenge Pledge**, making plain the university’s commitment to student voter registration and participation.

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| Gregory Bell | Chair and Associate Professor of History, College of Arts and Sciences |
| Leslie Bickford | WRIT101 Director of Composition; Professor of English, College of Arts and Sciences |
| Kinyata Brown | Associate Dean for Engagement, Diversity, and Inclusive Excellence |
| Theophilus Clark | Director, Office of the First Year Experience, University College |
| LaPorcha Ellick | Assistant Director, Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, Division of Student Affairs |
| Michael Gentry | Director, Winthrop Galleries, College of Visual and Performing Arts |
| Margaret Gillikin | Associate to the Dean, Director of Social Studies Education Program, Associate Professor of Social Studies Education |
| Adam Glover | Human Experience Course Director, Associate Professor, Modern Languages |
| Crystal Glover | Associate Professor of Curriculum and Pedagogy, College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences |
| Amanda Hiner | Chair, English Department; Director, Critical Reading, Thinking, and Writing (CRTW); Professor of English, College of Arts and Sciences |
| Allison Mallard | Public Relations & Training Coordinator, York County Board of Voter Registration and Elections |
| Nicholas Moellman | Assistant Professor of Economics, College of Business Administration |
| Claire Mooney-Melvin | Assistant Athletic Director for Academic and Student Services |
| Leigh Poole | Director, the International Center; Acting Dean of University College |
| Tenisha Powell | Director, Human Development and Family Sciences; Professor of Early Childhood Education, College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences |
| Danko Tarabar | Associate Professor of Economics, College of Business Administration |
| Bradley Tripp | Chair and Associate Professor of Sociology, Criminology, Anthropology, College of Arts and Sciences |

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| Ginger Williams | Director, Individualized Studies; Program Coordinator, Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies; Professor of History, College of Arts and Sciences |
| Lisa Griffin | York County League of Women Voters |

We will also continue our partnerships with the Office of Online Learning, which hosts our voter engagement PowerPoints for each election cycle; the Office of University Events, who helps bring in high profile speakers and facilitates our efforts; the College of Visual and Performing Arts for upkeep and maintenance of our voting wall; and other key campus agencies that help facilitate our outreach efforts.

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Succession planning: If there are changes in Winthrop personnel associated with our work, then Steering Committee members will make sure their vacancies are filled so that our student engagement efforts continue. We have considerable experience with faculty/staff turnover and are keen to maintain as much stability as possible in our teams. The Director of the West Forum leads voter engagement initiatives and ensures that there is a succession process when someone leaves.

SECTION III: Commitment

This section describes how the institution demonstrates its commitment to increasing civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation.

Leadership Support: In the past, Winthrop leadership at the highest levels has committed itself to civic learning and democratic engagement. In 2021, the University purchased TurboVote software to help students, faculty, staff, and alumni stay engaged in the voting process. We are working with our new president, Dr. Edward Serna (hired in 2022), on voter engagement initiatives and issues as we have with past administrators. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Serna signed the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge Pledge, making Winthrop’s commitment to student voter engagement explicit. This is notable as the Pledge has not been signed since before 2020. In addition, staff also work with the full support of our new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Sebastian van Delden (hired in 2024), on voter engagement initiatives.

Externally, Winthrop University is a major organizer of political and civic events in York County and in the Charlotte, North Carolina metropolitan area. Although we are in South Carolina, we also share the media market with Charlotte, NC, which brings additional

coverage of our initiatives and events. Our campus programming on civic education, government, and politics draws visitors from across the region.

Integration in the University's Mission and Supporting Documents: The opening sentence of Winthrop University Mission Statement reads, "Winthrop University provides personalized and challenging undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education programs of national caliber *within a context dedicated to public service to the nation and to the State of South Carolina.*" (Emphasis added). Although the University is developing a new strategic plan, draft documents indicate student civic engagement will remain a priority.

Academic Goals and Commitments: Winthrop has four University-Level Competencies (ULCs); skills and habits of mind that transcend undergraduate programs. While all four competencies are important to civic learning and democratic engagement, two are especially germane to our pursuits:

Competency 2: Winthrop graduates are personally and socially responsible. Winthrop University graduates value integrity, perceive moral dimensions, and achieve excellence. They take seriously the perspectives of others, practice ethical reasoning, and reflect on experiences. *Winthrop graduates have a sense of responsibility to the broader community and contribute to the greater good* (Emphasis added).

Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live. Winthrop University graduates comprehend the historical, social, and global contexts of their disciplines and their lives. They also recognize how their chosen area of study is inextricably linked to other fields. *Winthrop graduates collaborate with members of diverse academic, professional, and cultural communities as informed and engaged citizens* (Emphasis added).

To support these ULCs, the Winthrop University General Education program has a three credit-hour Constitution Requirement. Courses where the Constitution Requirement is met are expected to cover the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the "essentials" of the Federalist Papers, the Emancipation Proclamation, and one or more documents foundational to the African American freedom struggle. In addition, students in the required first-year seminar, Academy of Learning 101 (ACAD 101), conduct a food drive for a local charity each year, and one of the ACAD 101 lesson plans is dedicated to political and civic engagement. CLDE member Katarina Moyon helps update and revise that lesson yearly for inclusion in the course.

Co-curricular programming: Winthrop undergraduates must attend 18 cultural events before graduation. These include theatre, dance, and musical performances; gallery talks; films; and public lectures, forums, and discussions on issues of societal concern. Political and

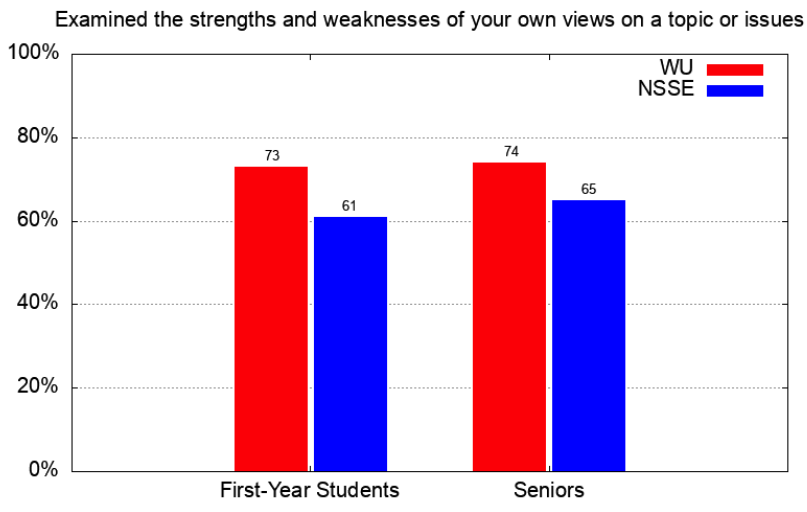
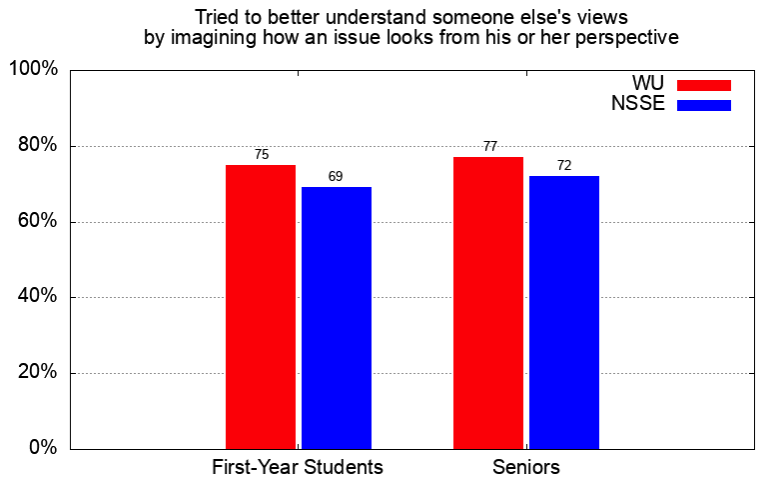
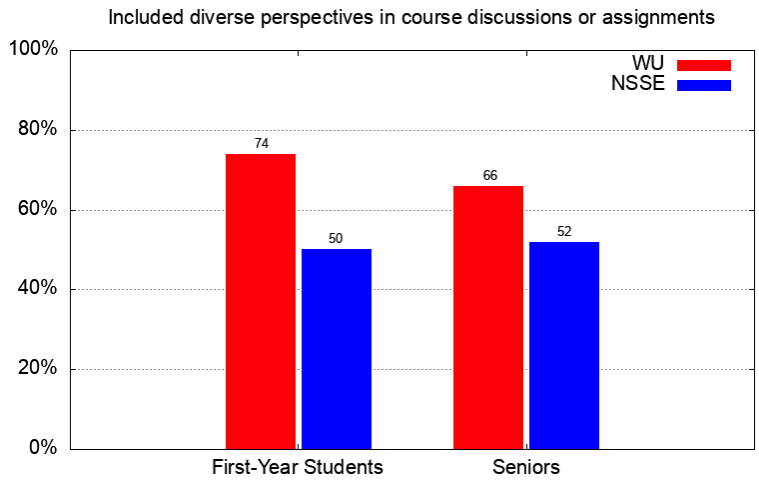
social themes pervade the cultural event offerings and are often organized by those across campus with whom the Steering Committee works.

Civic engagement is infused throughout the co-curricular programs as well. The Center for Career Development and Internships facilitates volunteer opportunities for student organizations across campus. They also collaborate with faculty to incorporate service learning into their classes. Fraternities and sororities regularly raise funds for national causes. Student athletic teams also dedicate thousands of hours to community service projects. Students participate in the Martin Luther King Week of Service, which was extended in 2024 to include an entire week of activities instead of only one day, and included opportunities to engage with a variety of community organizations and was organized by student groups. Finally, Student Life professionals are engaged in voter registration and turnout efforts.

By state law, Winthrop is closed on Election Day during federal elections (presidential and midterm).

Assessment of Civic Learning: Civic learning is assessed in a variety of ways. The University Level Competencies are assessed regularly by personnel in University College. Offices in the Division of Student Life regularly assess their performance and use these results to improve their operations.

Second, Winthrop participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE annually collects information from hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' perspective on their learning. The results are presented to the University community, and they will be published on the university's web site. The latest results indicate that Winthrop is especially strong in offering students a civic education and better understanding of the challenges of living in a democracy. In examples culled from the 2021 report (this is a three-year report that is scheduled to come out again in late 2024), NSSE asked Winthrop students whether their university did the following things and compared them to national NSSE survey results.



Finally, student registration and voter turnout rates are assessed by the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and these data are shared campus wide.

Information regarding Winthrop’s success with student voter registration is sent to local media via press releases. Several members of our steering committee also work in the University media relations office. In this way we can make our reports and information public.

SECTION IV: Landscape

This section offers an overview of the nonpartisan democratic engagement at an institution.

In the 2023-24 academic year, Winthrop University enrolled 3,787 undergraduate and 907 graduate students. This is an increase from our last report. Of our undergraduates, 1,999 are white (52.8 percent), 1,134 are African American (29.9 percent), and 295 are Hispanic (7.8 percent). Approximately 90 percent of the student body are South Carolinians and approximately two-thirds are female. Roughly half of our students receive Pell Grants. The most common degree majors in 2022 were Business Administration (18%), Visual and Performing Arts (13%), Education (12%), and Psychology (8%). Approximately 43% of students live on-campus.

Student Engagement: The NSSE and NSLVE assessment tools show that Winthrop students are more engaged in curricular and co-curricular activities than their peers nationally and at institutions of a similar type, as mentioned above.

Winthrop students are also more likely to be registered and to vote than their peers nationally and at public four-year institutions. Table 3 summarizes student voter registration and turn out rates from 2016-2022.

| Table 3. Winthrop Student Voter Registration and Turnout Rates, 2016-2022 | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----------|---------------------|---------------|----------|
| | Voter Registration Rates | | Voter Turnout Rates | | |
| | Winthrop | National | Winthrop | 4-year public | National |
| 2016 | 83.5% | 70.4% | 58.1% | 49.8% | 48.3% |
| 2018 | 79.4% | 73.4% | 40.1% | 53% | 54.9% |
| 2020 | 89% | 83% | 74.5% | 65% | 66% |
| 2022 | 79.1% | 76.1% | 36.1% | 31% | 30.6% |

Source: National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022 Reports and [this document](#).

While there is room for improvement, these data show that Winthrop students are registered and vote at higher rates than their peers at public institutions, and college students nationally.

Gratifyingly, Winthrop University’s efforts to encourage student voter turnout in 2020, during

the COVID-19 pandemic, led to an astonishing 28.4 percent increase over 2016. The University's Decision 2020 efforts led to its designation as a Voter Friendly Campus and to earning a Gold Seal from the All In Campus Democracy Challenge, this is an improvement from our Bronze Seal in the 2016 presidential elections. In 2022, our voter turnout rate decreased by 4%. This was likely partly due to a transition in staffing, and budget shortfall at the university at the time. Though our overall percentage of voters turning out in the 2022 election did drop, it remained above average nationally and for other four-year public institutions.

Curriculum and Co-Curricular Efforts: Commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is infused throughout the Winthrop student experience. See Section III.

Internal Barriers: Winthrop University identified the following internal barriers to increasing its student voter registration and turn out efforts:

Lack of financial resources: Winthrop's operating budget is spartan and many resources are already committed. Consequently, securing additional resources for new initiatives is difficult and redirecting existing revenues from other worthy efforts can be problematic.

Lack of human resources: Likewise, Winthrop operates with minimal staffing for its size and level of activity. A drop in student enrollment over the past few years has made the financial situation at the university grim. Faculty have substantial teaching and advising responsibilities and Student Life staff have multiple and varied responsibilities. To save money, most positions where people leave have not been replaced. As a result, adding new duties to already full plates is difficult. Additionally, we have lost several key personnel with knowledge and experience with past elections who have not been replaced, and where there are no plans for replacements. Our enrollment has recently ticked upward and there is hope that this trend will continue and therefore alleviate some of these issues.

Faculty and staff morale: More than a decade of lean operating budgets, staffing shortages, heavy workloads, and small-or-nonexistent raises have taken their toll on employee morale. Asking faculty and staff to engage in **DECISION 2024** activities, especially when such activities seem far removed from their primary responsibilities, will be met with resistance by some.

Internal bureaucratic processes: Seemingly simple tasks require multiple approvals and take time. Each hurdle is also a possible "veto point," where a request could be denied.

Student antipathy to "snail mail.": South Carolina allows electronic voter registration; however, requesting an absentee ballot requires downloading and mailing a form.

(Only some county election commissions permit forms to be emailed or faxed.) Absentee ballots must be mailed, or hand delivered by 7 p.m. on Election Day. Students procrastinate and may not send in their absentee ballot request forms or ballots promptly. A TurboVote membership has helped counteract some of this inertia.

Student antipathy to email: Students likewise prefer to communicate over social media, and say they generally check email only when necessary for class. This creates a challenge for voter registration and awareness efforts.

External Barriers: One of the greatest barriers to increasing student voter registration and turnout rates is South Carolina election law. Among the challenges the law poses are:

An early registration deadline: The deadline to register or change registration is 30 days before an election.

Voter ID requirement: Voters must present a government-issued photo ID when voting. Even though Winthrop is a public institution, a student ID is not a valid form of ID for voting purposes.

In addition, **other exogenous factors create barriers**, namely:

Inaccessible Polling Place: In 2016, the York County Election Commission moved the polling place for the precinct that includes Winthrop's residence halls from a building adjacent to campus to one about five blocks away on a remote side street. The York County Election Commission mistakenly believed that the building historically used as a polling place was owned by the University and that the University did not want a polling place on campus. Unfortunately, though there have been conversations in the past few years, there are no plans to change the voting location in the 2024 election cycle.

An historically complicated relationship with the York County Election Commission: Previously, the York County Election Commission refused voter registration applications from Winthrop students living on campus and/or required them to provide proof of residency beyond what was required by state law. This practice has now ended. While the relationship between the Election Commission and the University is improving, memories of this unfortunate history remain.

North Carolina media market: Winthrop is in the Charlotte, North Carolina media market. North Carolina's election laws permit longer early voting and have different deadlines and polling location hours. Despite our best efforts, this can be a source of confusion.

Resources Available: Despite these challenges, Winthrop University has resources

available to help achieve its voter participation goals. These include:

Experienced team members: Almost all members of the CLDE Task Force were engaged in the Decision 2018 and 2020 efforts. The most successful activities will be replicated in 2024.

An engaged student body: As the NSSE data show, Winthrop's students show high levels of engagement inside and outside the classroom. Many of these students are further mobilized by current events. Some of this student energy can be translated into voter registration, education, and turnout efforts.

Effective branding: The Decision 2020 and 2022 activities were unified by effective use of a common logo. This logo will be updated for 2024 and will provide a recognizable graphic for use publicly.

Additional Resources Required:

The West Forum budget for voter engagement has been greatly reduced, and administrative support must be split with multiple other departments due to lower enrollments and cost savings. This will make it difficult to operate at full capacity for the election cycle.

Ideas from faculty and staff who work with relatively low-turnout populations (Computer Information Systems, Family and Consumer/Human Sciences, History, African-American, and Hispanic students) of how to engage with these target groups are needed. We will work include faculty from those departments in our NCLDE and choose students from those majors or ethnic group as Voting Ambassadors as well. With additional collaboration with students and stakeholders in this area, we hope to be able to increase turnout.

Though the landscape can be challenging for a publicly-funded Southern university such as ours to succeed, we will continue to work to take advantage of the energetic, positive voting-related environment we have worked over the years to create. Many staff, faculty, and administrators are by now familiar with our initiatives and willing to assist in our efforts. Having administrative support for our efforts is also helpful in assisting the achievement our aims.

SECTION V: Goals

This section describes what the team (whether that's a few leaders starting this work, a long-standing vote coalition, or anything in between) hopes to achieve.

Winthrop University has short-term (1-2 year) turnout and registration goals for the 2024 election cycle.

Turnout Goals: According to the 2020 National Study on Learning, Voting, and Engagement

(NSLVE) Report, the Winthrop University Student Voter Turnout Rate was 75%, this was an enormous 18% increase from our 2016 voting rate and for the first time, we were able to surpass the percentage of those who voted in the state (72.1%). Our results also surpassed the 66% voting rate of all NSLVE Institutions in 2020.

Since 2024 is a general election year, we will target our goals on the 2020 data. For 2024, Winthrop University seeks to increase student voter turnout to 76%; a 1% increase. This increase might seem to be a modest goal but is in line with our current personnel challenges discussed above. Moreover, the goal was also set considering the extraordinary 28.4 percent increase in student voter engagement from 2016 to 2020. Such an astronomical surge is without precedent for our campus, so it is important to be mindful of that data point when setting new objectives.

Registration Goals: According to the 2020 NSLVE Report, 89.5% of Winthrop University were registered to vote. Our 2024 goal is to raise registration by 2%, thereby breaking all registration records on our campus.

Our work in reaching the registration and turnout goals will be done through strategic use of TurboVote at Orientation, in social media, and at events; and also continuing implementation of voter engagement efforts in the First-Year-Experience course, as well as our signature Sophomore year General Education Course, Critical Reading, Thinking, and Writing. In this way we hope to capture the majority of the students entering the University.

Our long-term (ten year) goal is to have 99% of eligible Winthrop University students registered to vote. In the long term, we would also like to ensure that 100% of students are aware of their right and responsibility to vote in elections, with perhaps close to 95% turnout. With strategic use of TurboVote at first-year student orientation and in the classroom, as well as other curricular modifications, more Winthrop University students should be able to register and vote.

To achieve both long- and short-term goals, the Steering Committee requires a continuation of funding and prioritization by the administration. Leadership buy-in matters and helps us ensure that our initiatives are prioritized on a campus with limited resources. We will target first-year students, as well as student groups with historically low turnout figures. We will appoint student ambassadors to help with each of those groups. We will also continue to roll out TurboVote, voter information in required courses, and voter information on shared platforms and websites. Through the use of social media, Voting Ambassadors are also able to target students in new and unique ways.

For successful implementation of longer-term goals, more financial and personnel resources will be required. We will need to make some additional financial commitments soon, such as renewing our agreement with TurboVote after 2024 and developing new voter educational materials around campus as our current materials become outdated.

Additional Goal: Student voter engagement is a university-wide effort. Therefore, in this election cycle, we would like to engage students from across the campus to act as voting ambassadors. Our goal is to have at least six different majors represented among the ambassadors. We would also like representation from a variety of clubs and organizations on campus. Since we have never quantified this area in the past, we hope to build on this experience in the future when recruiting students with different majors.

SECTION VI: Strategy

The strategy section of a campus action plan summarizes how a campus coalition intends to build a culture and infrastructure that supports nonpartisan civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation.

Winthrop University will pursue a multifaceted strategy to encourage student voter registration and turnout. We will continue our successful initiatives in **DECISION 2024**, including:

- Using **DECISION 2024** logos to unify the disparate campus events and activities.
- Train students as Voting Ambassadors to encourage student voter registration and absentee voting and having the Voting Ambassadors conduct an online social media campaign for voting, with possible occasional visits to courses and attendance of cultural events with relevant content.
- Host candidate visits and forums, discussions, and public lectures on issues on the public agenda.
- Publicizing and participating in National Voter Registration Day 2024 (September 17, 2024).
- Distributing information about TurboVote and encouraging students to register.
- Distributing voting information via to faculty, staff, and students via email, social media, and on the website.
- Writing voting curriculum for several required courses (ACAD101, CRTW 301) and providing materials for additional courses where instructors have the option to incorporate it.
- If necessary, provide transportation to polls on Election Day.
- Including “mail your absentee ballot” reminders to email blasts and on social media prior to elections.
- Securing permission to include voter registration deadline and “mail your absentee ballot” reminders on the Wingspan student portal “Announcements” section.
- Work with Athletic department leadership to help student athletes vote absentee. These students disproportionately represent out-of-state students. Practice and game schedules may complicate their efforts to vote on Election Day.

Targeted efforts: NSLVE data helps the **DECISION 2024** team identify and target low-turnout student demographic groups. They include freshmen and sophomores, who are the least likely to vote. Students majoring in Computer Information Systems, Family and Consumer/Human Sciences, and History are the majors with the lowest voter turnout in 2022. Increasing the voter turnout of these populations even by a few percentage points would have a measurable impact on Winthrop's overall voter turnout rate.

Specific strategies to reach these populations include Student Voting Ambassadors targeting relevant clubs, classes and honor societies, as well as rollout of voting registration and election information to the specific departments where the target students are located.

Timeline:

Most activities will take place between August 15 and November 5, 2024, including Voting Ambassador Activities, outreach to targeted groups, participation in National Voter Registration Day, and continued campus events.

The Steering Committee will meet after the election season to assess successes and challenges during the election season. We will work together to make 2026 even stronger than 2024. When the committee meets to debrief, we will begin working on a new plan moving forward.

Beyond the Election:

Campus partners including the West Forum, academic departments, and the Division of Student Affairs will continue to build programming to provide all students an environment rich in opportunities for political and civic engagement. Voting in an election is only one small part of being an engaged citizen, and we want to make sure that our students have the opportunity to: think about democracy and citizenship through coursework in our required General Education Core courses; volunteer in the community to gain a better understanding of the community's needs; have internship opportunities in politics and government, even for non-majors; engage in clubs and organizations where students have the opportunity to enact democracy through elections, engage in service, and build a community; and attend events and hear speakers discussing politics and policy relevant to our student body.

SECTION VII: NSLVE as a Resource

Run by the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education (IDHE) (<https://idhe.tufts.edu/>) at Tufts University's Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) (<https://idhe.tufts.edu/nslve>) is a one-of-a-kind service to colleges and universities and a national database for research on student participation in democracy.

Winthrop is a participant in NSLVE and we prize the data we receive from the organization. We share it internally with partners, use it to target our resources and initiatives, and to evaluate our success.

Per the information in the Landscape section of this report, we closely follow our NSLVE results and share these results with other to engage in conversations with departments where voter turnout is lower than average, and to share successes with those who work on voter turnout. We regularly use resources and research provided by NSLVE on its website to inform ourselves of national voting trends and to think of new engagement methods.

We additionally collaborate with other national organizations. This election cycle we will be using a personalized syllabus sample statement based on the one distributed by All-In to Vote, we are a part of the National Voter Registration Day initiative and social media campaign, and we celebrate Constitution Day.

SECTION VIII: Reporting

Reporting ensures that people have easy access to your campus action plans, NSLVE reports, and any other civic engagement data set available to the institution.

Our action plan will be shared with members of the University community as appropriate. We will forward a final draft to the Office of the President, as well as to the Special Assistant to the President. We will share relevant information contained in the report via email with all stakeholders who work with us on election initiatives.

Externally, we will share our report with the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the Voter Friendly Campus initiative, where we have been members for years.

The Executive Director of the Institutional Effectiveness Office determines whether our NSLVE data becomes public and whether it is placed on the University's website.

SECTION IX: Evaluation

This section describes how the nonpartisan democratic action plan and its impact will be evaluated, how the institution will know if it is making progress, and when its goals have been reached.

Our team continually evaluates our work in a variety of methods:

- Classroom materials provided to professors are evaluated in the classroom setting.
- NSSE data gathering occurs on a three-year cycle, and we are eagerly awaiting our 2021-2024 data to gain a better understanding of student voter and civic engagement during the COVID period.
- We can access a TurboVote toolbar to see how many students accessed and clicked the site to register to vote.
- We periodically evaluate speaker series and events to determine student engagement.

- We examine available data for engagement in West Forum social media, along with other voting related social media put out by the university.
- We examine engagement with student voting ambassador social media.
- We examine data on our voter information placed on university websites available to students and faculty.
- As mentioned, NSLVE data is a valuable resource as well for our data collection and analysis.

After an election cycle, the Director of the West Forum, along with other members of the Steering Committee, analyze data collected from these and other sources to determine the level of success of our voting engagement activity. This work is usually carried out in December or January after an election. Results are shared with the entire Steering Committee for further review and analysis.