

# VOTE



## SLCC Voter Engagement Plan 2020-2021

Prepared by Austin Fashimpaur and Deeqa Hamid with the support of the members of the Salt Lake Community College Voter Engagement Committee

# I. Executive Summary

*“Salt Lake Community College will be a model for inclusive and transformative education, strengthening the communities we serve through the success of our students.” - Salt Lake Community College Vision Statement*

Salt Lake Community College, with our over 22,000 students, faculty, and staff, has been dedicated to fulfilling the vision statement published above. We have striven to give our students a transformative educational experience both inside and outside the classroom. The tools for the future success of our students extend far beyond the campus. Students in today’s society must have the ability to be agents of change within their community by understanding the roles they play in local, state, and national issues along with how to encourage that change through engaging in the civic process. The Democratic Engagement Action Plan is the result of the intersection between the need to serve our community and the duty to give our students the tools they need to succeed, and to make positive change, in that community.

The goal of this plan is to encourage voter and civic engagement within the college. Salt Lake Community College has had a history of voter engagement efforts from voting drives to serving as the host of electoral races, however the creation of the Voter Engagement Committee signals a renewed and long-term dedication to advancing civic engagement within the college. This is done through the help of a diverse coalition of stakeholders from all different backgrounds and roles.

In order to achieve the goal of increased democratic participation, we will employ a variety of efforts to encourage civic dialogue, educate and inform about the voting process, and be inclusive to groups that have been historically excluded from the democratic process. All of this will be done with a focus on adaptability as our methods, knowledge and world change.

## II. Leadership

Our country is based on the ideals of a democratic republic where the people elect representatives to serve on their behalf. With this in mind, it is crucial the leadership of any voter engagement initiative have a diverse coalition of individuals with a variety of backgrounds, viewpoints, and knowledge to represent their sector of the college community. The following is a list of stakeholders that shall be involved in the implementation of the Democratic Engagement Action Plan:

### **Students**

To effectively communicate and engage our largest campus community we must invite a diverse group of students representing various college departments and backgrounds. Plans have often had great input from both faculty and staff but failed to engage the main target audience, students, because of a failure to understand the needs or ways of communication of the student body. By inviting students into the conversations we can better identify pathways of communication and avoid confusion or barriers in conveying information.

### **Faculty**

Collaboration with members of the SLCC faculty is imperative in order to effectively target the campus community. Faculty members play an important role in the dissemination of information to their students, as many of those students would not be as receptive to traditional advertising.

### **Student Affairs Staff**

As with most campus-wide initiatives, the support of higher level administrators is crucial for the short-term resources and the long term retention and success of a program such as ours. They must be aware of the progress of such initiatives and the resources required to retain the integrity of the Democratic Engagement Action Plan through a long term basis.

### **Community Organizations**

Often many of the resources or experience required to implement an action plan already exist within a local community organization. These organizations often have a long history of collaboration with colleges and universities in implementing initiatives similar to ours. Our community partners, through the Salt Lake Community College Thayne Center, have been vital in supporting our past

civic engagement efforts through their generous time and resources. They are also a source of the most up to date information regarding the voting habits of various on campus populations.

### **Election Office**

Having a member of the team assigned to communicate and coordinate with the local election office may bring crucial election information as well as possible election resources such as forms, ballot boxes, etc. It is important that the college maintain up to date information and deadlines as to help keep accurate project timelines and accurate communications.

### **2020 Leadership Group**

#### **Students**

- Austin Fashimpaur (Thayne Center SLiCE)
- Deeqa Hamid (Thayne Center SLiCE)
- Coleman Moss (Thayne Center SLiCE)
- Amie Schaeffer (The Globe Executive Editor)

#### **Faculty**

- Alison Arndt-Wild (Communication Department)
- Marcie Young Cancio (Communication Department)
- Shannon Mullins (Applied Technology Department)

#### **Student Affairs**

- Sean Crossland (Thayne Center / Student Life and Leadership)
- Brandi Mair (Student Life and Leadership)
- Sarah Reale (Director of Digital Marketing)
- Samantha Collins (Thayne Center)

#### **Community Organizations**

- Hope Zitting-Goeckeritz (Voterise)
- Janice Mosby (League of Women Voters)

#### **Election Office**

- Tim Sheehan and Scott Brown (Office of the Vice President of Government and Community Relations)

These individuals shall all be invited to be a part of the voter engagement committee at-large and will be a part of smaller sub-committees based on their availability and expertise.

### III. Landscape

With the creation of the Salt Lake Community College Voter Engagement Committee, SLCC is committed to providing resources and support to the cause of civic engagement as well as upholding the seven SLCC values of collaboration, community, inclusivity, learning, innovation, integrity, and trust.

This section will address the current efforts on our campus to help identify areas of improvement.

#### National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement

As a commitment to improving the rates of civic engagement on campus Salt Lake Community College has for the past several years received campus-specific voter and turnout data from the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE), a service launched in 2013 by the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University. Here are some overview statistics from the 2012 - 2016 election years report:

Year	Student Registration Rate	Voting Rate of Registered Students	Voting Rate (All Students)
2012	67.2%	66.7%	44.8%
2016	61.7%	73.5%	45.3%
Change	-5.5%	+6.8%	+0.5%

With this data as well as the rest of the data supplied with the NSLVE report the follow conclusions can be drawn from the data:

- Salt Lake Community College’s registration and voting rates have consistently fallen under the 2016 average of all higher education institutions.
- Our voting rate of registered students jumped significantly from 2012 and 2016. This high turnout rate is also reflected in the 2014 - 2018 NSLVE report.

- The trade schools (Construction Trades and Mechanic and Repair Technologies) have consistently been underrepresented in voter turnout.

What strategies that can be drawn from this data will be covered in the later section V. Strategies.

### **Past Campus Efforts**

Salt Lake Community College, in addition to receiving the NSLVE report data, has had numerous on-campus efforts before to engage students in the voting process. Here are some of those efforts:

Salt Lake Community College Collaboration with Community Partners:

- In the past Salt Lake Community College has, through the Thayne Center for Service and Learning, invited and worked with outside organizations to help engage students such as Voterise and The League of Women Voters of Utah.

Campus Cup:

- Through the department of Student Life and Leadership, Salt Lake Community College partnered with the Utah Lieutenant Governor's Office to increase voter participation through the Campus Cup Initiative. This initiative was designed to involve all the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) institutions in increasing voter turnout among college students. This program was first implemented by the Lieutenant Governor's office in 2012 and has been renewed for the 2020 election cycle.

Constitution Day:

- All schools receiving Department of Education funding are required to hold an educational event on the United States Constitution on September 17th of each year. In 2019 this took the form of a luncheon with a variety of speakers as well as a table dedicated to registering students to vote.

Debates:

- In the past Salt Lake Community College has been the host to a variety of local and federal politicians events and debates. An example of such a debate was the 4th district debate hosted by the college in 2016.

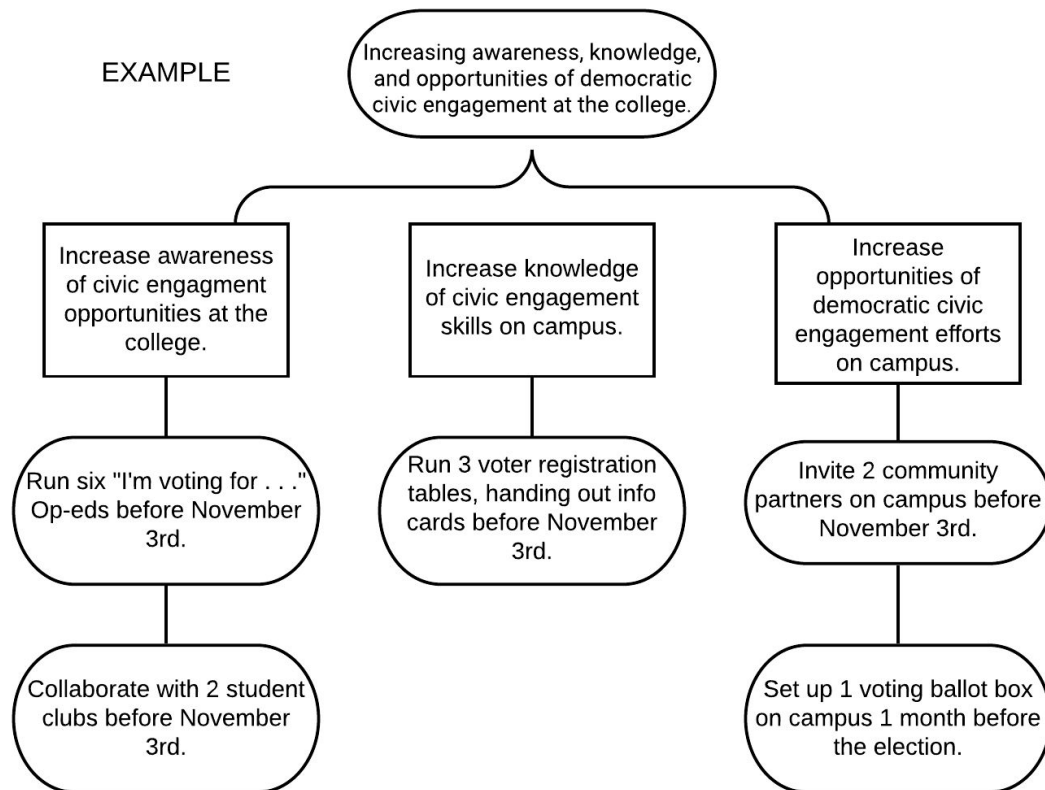
These efforts can serve as a great compliment to the committee's efforts through past reflection of program effectiveness as well as continued involvement with community partners and the Campus Cup initiative. Strategies derived from these past efforts can be found in section V. Strategies.

## IV. Goals

The overarching goals of the Democratic Engagement Action Plan, and in turn, the SLCC Voter Engagement Committee can be defined as follows:

- Increasing awareness, knowledge, and opportunities of democratic civic engagement at the college.
- Increasing overall voter participation rates as well as targeted efforts towards underrepresented sectors in the college.
- Promotion of an ongoing presence of infrastructure dedicated to voter engagement efforts.

The path to achieving these goals will be a multi-year process with success defined by sub-goals following the S.M.A.R.T objective system (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). These sub-goals will be defined by sub-committees within the larger Voter Engagement Committee. An example of this system is described below by the project outcome map:



A very important component of the Voter Engagement Action Plan is that the goals, as with the document as a whole, can and should change as data and tactics change and the efforts of previous years are analysed for success.

## V. Strategy

This section shall focus on the short and long term institutional efforts to achieve the democratic engagement goals defined by section IV Goals.

**Historical Note: At the time of the creation of the Democratic Engagement Action Plan (August 2020) the college, along with the rest of the world, is experiencing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the strategies outlined here have been created with this in mind and may need future revision**



**for more effectiveness. Please refer to the most recent college information concerning crowd gathering, contact tracing, etc.**

**Short-Term Tactics:**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE GROUP /PEOPLE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
Club Voter Registration Contest.	Club VP/ Nick	Varies	ASAP - 11/3	Engage students through their peers by inventivising clubs to register voters through prizes.
Presidential Debate Watch Party.	SLiCE/Action Committee	Virtual	9/29, 10/7, 10/15, 10/22	Engage dialogue on campus and use it as an opportunity to register voters.
Create a communications timeline for media releases, op-eds, etc.	Communications Committee	Virtual	9/22	Spread awareness about our mission and the resources available to help voters register.
SLCC Vote Website	Lesa/Sarah	Virtual	ASAP	Consolidate online resources for students.
Partner with community partners to host election panels.	SLiCE/Action Committee, SUWA, PIK2AR other community partners	Virtual	October	Create conversation throughout campus about local issues and energize voter groups on campus.
Voter Registration Events (Virtual or In Person)	SLiCE/Action Committee	Hybrid	ASAP - 11/3	Help give our community the tools to register to vote.
4th District Debate, produce 20 questions for debate use.	SLiCE/Action Committee/SL&L	Hybrid	ASAP	Create conversation about local issues and engage students in the community conversations.

#### Long-Term Tactics:

- Focus groups between students, faculty, and staff.
- Documentary Watch Party Series.
- Create resources to help students with disabilities.
- Create a tabling series with community partners.
- Assessment and evaluation discussions.
- Create a civic outreach program for the local community.

## VI. Evaluation

A critical component of reaching the goals of the Democratic Engagement Action Plan and the institution as a whole is the successful evaluation, and subsequent revisions, of this action plan. Evaluations shall take place on a yearly basis preferably soon after the release of any current NSLVE reports. A sub-committee shall be formed to compare NSLVE data to the set goals, and revise the Democratic Engagement Action Plan as goals and methods change. This sub-committee shall then prepare a report for the committee concerning progress towards specific and overarching goals as well as proposals for any changes to the action plan.

## Conclusion

The world that this plan exists in is constantly changing. Issues that dominate the headlines today change at a speed never before seen by our democracy. For a Democratic Engagement Action Plan to be effective, we must embrace this change. This plan has been designed to support a long-term ongoing civic engagement process while being flexible in its ability to change with the issues and times that we live in.

As we strive towards our national values to a more perfect union we must be propelled by those willing to be the change they want to see in our nation. We must have, from sea to shining sea, patriots willing to give a voice to those without, to rally their fellow citizens to make change, and to put wind into the sails of our democracy.

*"What we seek to develop in all of our colleges and universities, are educated men and women who can bear the burdens of responsible citizenship, who can make judgments about life as it is, and as it must*

*be, and encourage the people to make those decisions which can bring not only prosperity and security, but happiness to the people of the United States and those who depend upon it." - Address at the University of North Dakota" September 25, 1963*