

Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan

SUNY Buffalo State University

May 2024

Executive Summary

SUNY Buffalo State seeks a Voter Friendly Campus designation as evidence that signals to our students, faculty, staff, and surrounding community that the institution is living out its values as SUNY's urban-engaged institution. In the last two decades, our campus has seen a tremendous shift to expand and live out our community-focused values through curricular and co-curricular experiences, culminating in the establishment of a Civic and Community Engagement Office on the campus.

Fall 2024 top four goals:

- By September 2024, finalize a 7–10-person, student-led, equitable, diverse, and inclusive on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership for full participation comprising students, faculty, staff, and community partners to develop the Ask Every Student strategic partnership action plan and implement 2024-2025 Voter engagement programs.
- By August 2024, initiate the embedding of voter registration and education in the New Student Orientation (NSO) by distributing registration forms with instructions in NSO folders, tabling, and workshops.
- By October 26, 2024, increase the number of students registered to vote by 2% (75% → 77%);
- by November 5, 2024, increase the voting rate of Buffalo State students by 5% (51% to 56%).

SUNY Buffalo State's ALL-In/Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan has been developed by various stakeholders, who reviewed current activities, identified gaps, adjusted, and committed to a voter engagement plan that builds from a spring 2020 initial application to the Voter Friendly Campus designation.

The action plan seeks to expand a roadmap for the university to expand civic engagement activities throughout our students' academic and co-curricular experiences. It also aims to deepen institutionalization efforts of civic engagement. In collaboration with our community partners, the university's action plan will be carried out by employing the Ask Every Student strategies and utilizing resources in Academic Affairs and Students Affairs. This cycle's All-In/Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan activities begin in the summer of 2024 and continue until August 2028.

Leadership

As an institution designated with the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, a founding member of the Anchor Learning Network, and one of the original institutions to create a campus-wide Civic Action Plan through Campus Compact, SUNY Buffalo State University is a leader in civic and community engagement in higher education. In 2017, SUNY Buffalo State's Volunteer and Service-Learning Center, founded in 2003, was renamed the Civic and Community Engagement Office to more accurately reflect the value of our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement. It was also reorganized in Academic Affairs and the office now reports directly to the Provost.

Buffalo State has completed one cycle of Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan implementation and has also utilized an anchor institution strategic plan and a Campus Compact Civic Action Plan which have advanced our commitment to and impact on student civic engagement.

Stakeholders from the campus and community have been involved in developing and implementing actions to further civic and community engagement initiatives including faculty, deans, and directors in Student Affairs, Marketing and Communications Office, Institutional Effectiveness Office, Student Accessibility Services, and Academic Affairs.

The Voter Friendly Campus Work Group, formed in the Spring of 2020, served in a leadership capacity for three years to further specific voter engagement efforts and integrate across campus.

Voter Friendly Campus Workgroup Transition

In Spring 2020, Aurora Schunk, Assistant Director of the Civic and Community Engagement Office (CCE), chaired the work group responsible for creating a Voter Friendly Campus (VFC) Action Plan. The small workgroup was positioned to take new steps in its civic engagement initiative, and it was seen as a subgroup working on a goal of the campus-wide Civic Action Plan Implementation Committee. Membership included students, representation from the CCE, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and community partners.

In the fall of 2022, there was a staff change, both students graduated, and the Program Coordinator of the Buffalo State Chapter of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) left the campus which ended our community partnership, putting the VFC Working Group initiative on hold. NYPIRG served as a bridge to Student Affairs, student organizations, and several student interns with whom the ideas and workgroup plans were shared and fueled much of the conversation on voter registration and engagement initiatives, as that has been one of its primary focuses since joining the campus in 1973. The voter engagement work began to be rebuilt when a new Assistant Director, Lisa Kragbé, was put into place in fall 2022 and established a secondary ALL-in/VFC Strategic Plan contact, Laura Hill Roa, the Director of Civic and Community Engagement, to help with leadership turnover. The student voices were extremely critical to the success and inclusivity of the voter engagement work, especially students who had not been active in voter education and mobilization, Lisa prioritized the efforts to recruit new engaged students this past year. In spring 2024, she adopted a new strategy, and transitioned the workgroup model to an on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership, to implement the All-In/VFC strategic plan and to address leadership turnover which caused some loss of momentum on the work started by the VFC Workgroup.

We aim to develop a student-led on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership. The foundational committee includes four undergraduate students majoring in Social Work and Africana Studies, one of which is a Federal Work-Study Student designated to voter registration initiatives, representatives from two Academic Affairs departments, Mehwish Sarwari, Assistant Professor from the Political Science Public Administration and Planning department, and Jessica Fitzpatrick, Associate Professor from the Social Work department, and the CCE Assistant Director who convenes the group. As we look to the future of integrating civic and democratic engagement more intentionally within our institution, we will identify and invite other on-campus departments, student groups, as well as off-campus organizations to safeguard that all efforts remain inclusive, equitable, collaborative, and that different perspectives are taken in consideration. It is a priority to intentionally develop a group over time that reflects the campus community.

The Student-Led On-Campus Voter Engagement Coalition Partnership Role

The student-led on-campus Voter Engagement Coalition's role will be similar to the VFC workgroup, tasked with updating and creating an action plan to educate, invite students to take part in the democratic process, and support student voting in all elections (city, county, state, and federal). Endeavoring to develop an inclusive diverse leadership team with descriptive roles and leveraging strengths and individual contributions will be a priority. Members will serve as a bridge to their department to facilitate communication and collaboration. Coalition members are also responsible for researching and developing strategies employed at other higher education institutions through the [Ask Every Student](#) initiative and the [Student Learn Student Vote Coalition](#), identifying strengths and areas of opportunities within current campus civic engagement efforts, setting short and long-term goals for the VFC and All-In action plan, and assisting with data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Commitment

Buffalo State University is a leader in civic and community engagement. Buffalo State is the only comprehensive college in the SUNY system in a city and takes its role as a citizen and partner seriously. As a result of its deep and broad civic engagement efforts, Buffalo State earned Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement in 2015, was awarded the Washington Center Higher Education Civic Engagement Award in 2016, became a founding member of the Anchor Learning Network, was among the first institutions to create a campus-wide Civic Action Plan through Campus Compact, and has been appointed to the President's Community Service Honor Roll eight times. The 2023-2028 Buffalo State Strategic Plan identifies the institution as SUNY's urban-engaged campus and emphasizes community engagement and diversity as core values to strengthen both the college and the surrounding community.

The university is committed to continuing its leadership regionally and nationally in meaningful forms of civic and community engagement that clearly contribute to the public good and create active global citizens who respect diversity and individual differences. This commitment reflects an already robust effort at the institution to develop civic-minded programming, curriculum, teaching, research, and community service. Examples include the Dr. Katherine S. Conway Turner Office of Civic and Community Engagement, the Community Academic Center, the Professional Development Schools, the Anne Frank Project, the Great Lakes Center, the Monroe Fordham Regional History Center, and the Anchor Learning Network.

The university has a long-standing tradition and commitment to act to improve the community through collaboration, reciprocal relationships, and community-building. Since 2003, the Volunteer and Service-Learning Center, now the Dr. Katherine S. Conway Turner Office of Civic and Community Engagement (CCE), has assisted faculty in integrating community engagement/service-learning experiences in their course curriculum. The department continued efforts to expand on the mission, to develop civic learning and democratic engagement across the campus.

The CCE oversees curricular community engagement/service-learning courses, assisting faculty with pedagogical training, partnership development, and logistics to ensure high-quality, reciprocal partnerships are the basis of student civic learning. In 2022-2023, 1,114 students enrolled in 131 community engagement/service-learning courses across the campus. Co-curricular civic engagement is also housed within the office, and it has engaged an additional 897 Buffalo State students in 2022-2023. Long-standing co-curricular civic engagement has taken the form of coordinating annual community service days, volunteer opportunities, and a student-led Alternative Break service experience. The CCE has also

- Utilized Federal Work-Study and student internships to facilitate the development of student-led voter registration, and civic and community engagement experiences for the campus;

- Facilitated the Complete Count Committee to educate and engage students, faculty/staff, and community members around the 2020 Census;
- Grown a partnership with the League of Women Voters and campus chapter of New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) before it was dissolved to collaborate on civic engagement programming, including voter registration, census, and advocacy;

In January 2019, the New York State governor signed into law a SUNY Election Law, mandating each SUNY campus to disseminate election participation information and create an annual campus-level reporting on dissemination efforts. Each SUNY institution must submit a report to the State Board of Elections that includes:

- Efforts of the institution to register voters in the preceding calendar year and the number of students registered as a result of those efforts;
- Efforts or recommendations the institution plans to implement to improve access to voter registration and absentee ballot voting for students at the institution.

Building upon the work and commitment within the Buffalo State Civic Action Plan, Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, and Anchor Learning Network, the All-In/Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan will build upon and deepen our civic engagement work. The goals set forth in the action plan will create a more purposeful structure and give added intentionality to engaging students in civic learning and democratic engagement while furthering the strategic and public purpose of the university.

Landscape

Utilizing National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data, SUNY Buffalo State University has a lower voting rate than peer institutions but recent efforts to expand voter engagement supports have improved the landscape shown in the graphs below from the 2022 NSLVE data report.

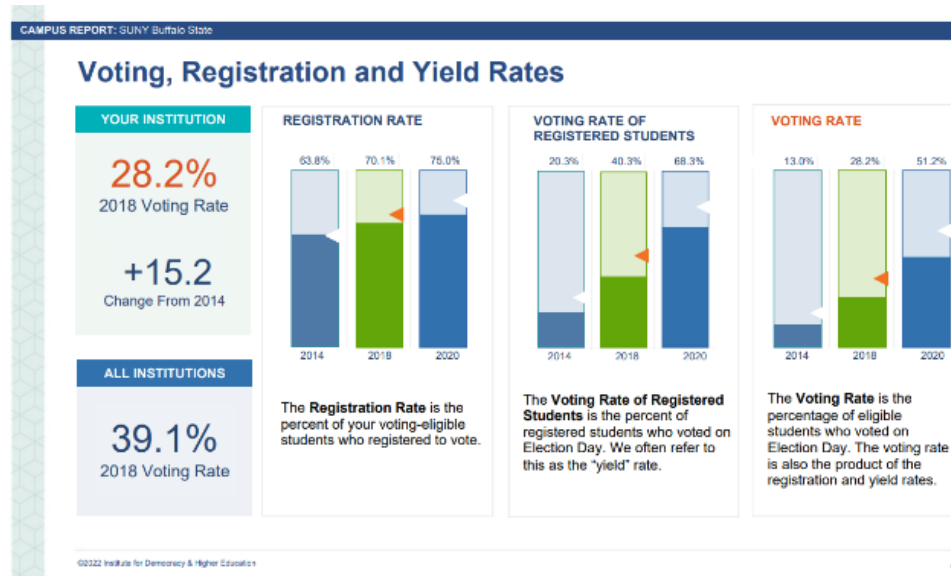


Figure 1. Voting, Registration, Yield Rates

- Voter registration rates have increased from 63.8% in 2014 to 70.1% in 2018 and 75% in 2020.
- Voting rates of registered students have increased from 20.3% in 2014 to 40.3% in 2018 and 68.3% in 2020.

By Institution Types



These are estimated voting rates of your institution compared to the average voting rates of similar institutions in NSLVE. For Associate institutions, we only share public associate institutional averages due to sample size. **Your Institution* chart is presented at a different scale.

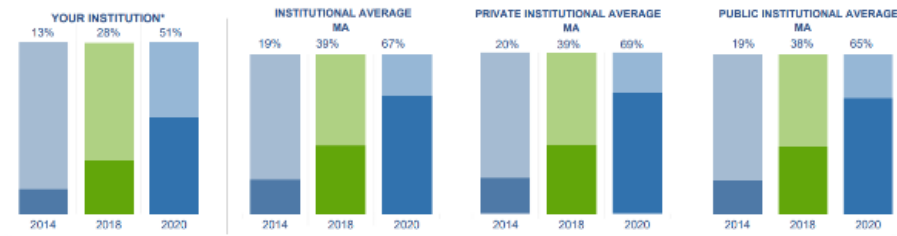


Figure 2. By Institution Type

Although the 2020 voting rate of Buffalo State students was 51.2% compared to 67% of public masters institutions, the demonstrated increase in student voting rates of 38% in 10 years demonstrates that SUNY Buffalo State University students will engage when supports are in place and accessible to them.

By Age Group

| | 2014 | 2018 | 2020 |
|-------|------|------|------|
| 18-21 | 8% | 20% | 45% |
| 22-24 | 13% | 31% | 57% |
| 25-29 | 16% | 40% | 61% |
| 30-39 | 21% | 40% | 56% |
| 40-49 | 24% | 45% | 56% |
| 50+ | 43% | 59% | 65% |

Voting is habit-forming and young voters will usually continue as voters in subsequent elections. Also, elected officials and public opinion polls solicit opinions from people they can locate - people in the voter files. In 2020, the youngest students on campuses voted at the highest rates, giving them increasing voice and power. Government officials should take note of this data point, as the viewpoints of young voters may prove influential in future elections. Candidates should be cautious about remaining distant and unresponsive to the perspectives of young voters.

Figure 3. By Age Group

Using NSLVE data, we have learned that age has a critical role in our university’s voting rate as students ages 18-21 vote at a rate of 45%, whereas 22–24-year-old students vote at a rate of 57% and those over the age of 25 vote at a rate of over 56%.

CAMPUS REPORT: SUNY Buffalo State

By Field of Study

| FIELDS | 2014 | | | 2018 | | | 2020 | | | 2014-2018 |
|--|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Rate Change |
| Biological and Biomedical Sciences | - | - | - | 404 | 65 | 16 | 388 | 150 | 39 | - |
| Business, Management, and Marketing | - | - | - | 1,082 | 254 | 23 | 967 | 390 | 40 | - |
| Communication and Journalism | - | - | - | 380 | 121 | 32 | 323 | 209 | 65 | - |
| Communications Technologies/Technicians | - | - | - | 142 | 30 | 21 | 113 | 66 | 58 | - |
| Computer and Information Sciences | - | - | - | 212 | 70 | 33 | 194 | 105 | 54 | - |
| Education | - | - | - | 1,848 | 723 | 39 | 1,879 | 1,273 | 68 | - |
| Engineering and Engineering Technologies | - | - | - | 451 | 95 | 21 | 366 | 179 | 49 | - |

Figure 4.1 By Field of Study

CAMPUS REPORT: SUNY Buffalo State

By Field of Study

| FIELDS | 2014 | | | 2018 | | | 2020 | | | 2014-2018 |
|---|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Rate Change |
| English Language and Literature | - | - | - | 83 | 28 | 34 | 59 | 33 | 56 | - |
| Family and Consumer/Human Scienc... | - | - | - | 287 | 60 | 21 | 199 | 89 | 45 | - |
| Foreign Languages, Literatures, and .. | - | - | - | 32 | 16 | 50 | 25 | 12 | 48 | - |
| Health Professions | - | - | - | 102 | 28 | 27 | 97 | 51 | 53 | - |
| History | - | - | - | 114 | 52 | 46 | 128 | 84 | 67 | - |
| Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and P... | - | - | - | 418 | 91 | 22 | 390 | 200 | 51 | - |
| Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Huma... | - | - | - | 1,282 | 219 | 17 | 1,059 | 391 | 37 | - |
| Mathematics and Statistics | - | - | - | 70 | 16 | 23 | 65 | 34 | 52 | - |
| Multi/interdisciplinary Studies | - | - | - | 558 | 158 | 28 | 451 | 131 | 29 | - |
| Philosophy and Religious Studies | - | - | - | 22 | 11 | 50 | - | - | - | - |
| Physical Sciences | - | - | - | 132 | 32 | 24 | 128 | 68 | 54 | - |
| Precision Production | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Psychology | - | - | - | 484 | 120 | 25 | 485 | 200 | 41 | - |

Figure 4.2 By Field of Study

CAMPUS REPORT: SUNY Buffalo State

By Field of Study

| FIELDS | 2014 | | | 2018 | | | 2020 | | | 2014-2018 |
|---|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Enrolled | Voted | Rate(%) | Rate Change |
| Public Administration and Social Service Profe... | - | - | - | 171 | 63 | 37 | 180 | 111 | 62 | - |
| Social Sciences | - | - | - | 591 | 182 | 27 | 489 | 216 | 46 | - |
| Visual and Performing Arts | - | - | - | 464 | 174 | 38 | 451 | 269 | 60 | - |
| Unknown | 10,779 | 1,320 | 12 | 22 | 11 | 50 | 28 | 14 | 50 | 38 |

Figure 4.3 By Field of Study

We also know, represented by Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, that the student's field of study has an impact on voting rates, with education, communication, journalism, and history students having the highest turnout,

and multidisciplinary studies, liberal arts and sciences, business, and biology students needing to be focus areas for outreach to increase their turnout.

Although much work remains to be completed, we are enthusiastic about the steady progress made reviewing the NSLVE data showing a gradual increase in SUNY Buffalo State University students' voting rates. It will be important to focus our attention on the outreach to the students ages 18-21, and those majoring in multidisciplinary studies, liberal arts and sciences, business, and biology, while maintaining a strong strategic outreach to the remainder of the student population. We gather that it will be important for us to expand our partnerships with New Student Orientation, Academic Affairs, and First Year Experience programs like Roar to Success to help increase voting rates.

Curricular

Civic learning and democratic engagement manifest in the curriculum of SUNY Buffalo State through community-engaged learning pedagogy. This expression of civic and community engagement has been integrated into institutional curricula since the creation of the Volunteer and Service-Learning Center (VSLC) in 2003. Through the efforts of this office, now Civic and Community Engagement, and committed faculty, over 28,504 students have enrolled in more than 1,880 service-learning courses. Each year, nearly 25% of all Buffalo State University students engage in community-engaged learning through academic coursework and co-curricular activity. Reciprocal relationships and community-building distinguish a Buffalo State University graduate.

Through the Anchor Learning Network and Civic Action Planning committees, stakeholders from across the campus and community are involved in further developing and implementing civic and community engagement across the curriculum.

Civic learning and democratic engagement skills are also found in our institutional learning outcomes and can be found as part of three out of four outcomes for graduates of Buffalo State:

- I. Cultural fluency - Graduates will be aware of how ideas are shaped by cultures and social norms and be able to engage with ideas different from or in conflict with their own. Students will be aware of cultural, societal, and institutional factors influencing assumptions, prejudices, and privileges.
- II. Urban engagement - Graduates, leveraging their experiences in Buffalo State's distinctive urban setting, will understand how to interact meaningfully in their communities and possess the skills to be wise, productive, and responsible citizens.
- III. Ethical reasoning - Graduates will deliberate ethical values and principles and apply them in ambiguous, complex, and controversial contexts. They will be conscientious persons, students, and professionals.

Models for the assessment of ILOs include:

- Cultural fluency: Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (M-GUDS-S) (short form);
- Urban engagement: Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric and Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS-R2);
- Ethical reasoning: Ethical Reasoning VALUE Rubric and Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2).

Co-Curricular

As civic and community engagement has expanded as part of service-learning within the curriculum, civic learning and democratic engagement have been a part of several co-curricular initiatives, including:

- National Voter Registration Day (1973-present)

- New York Public Interest Research Group student leadership roles (1973-2022)
- Alternative Break week-long service experiences (2010-present)
- Campus-wide annual community service days (2003-present)
- Citizenship classes to New Americans (2014-present)
- Student Civic Leadership Board (2017-2023)
- **Voter Engagement (2020-present)**
- Citizenship and Constitution Day (2016-present)
- Walk to the Polls (2022-present)
- Voter Education Week (2022-present)
- Voter Engagement Community Panel (2023-present)

In 2019-2020, with the addition of an associate director in the Civic and Community Engagement Office and the reorganization of responsibilities, new co-curricular civic learning and democratic engagement program initiatives were able to be supported by the assistant director. This included

- formation of a campus and community Complete Count Committee to engage and educate students and West Side community members about the 2020 Census and its role in our lives;
- initiation of a Civic Engagement Week of activities and workshops that engaged Buffalo State students in voter registration, advocacy, activism training, blood donation, and the 2020 census;
- establishment of a partnership with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance and its Facilitated Self-Assistance tax preparation program to assist students and community members in filing their state and federal taxes;
- collaboration with the School of Education, History and Social Studies, Political Science, Erie County, and 1stAmendment 1st Vote to facilitate a civic education conference;
- creation and facilitation of six workshops for students (five virtual during Covid-19) to educate students about voter registration and mobilization, 2020 Census, how volunteers impact nonprofit organizations, activism, how students can impact social issues; and how to coordinate a service project.

In 2024-2025, new and revised civic learning and democratic engagement initiatives will include:

- Voter Registration (See Strategy.)
- Voter Education - (See Strategy.)
- Voter Mobilization - (See Strategy.)

Barriers to Success

Internally, the largest barriers preventing the institution from being successful are tied to budget and staffing. The institution is facing a \$16 million deficit for the coming year. Financial support of the ALL-in/Voter Friendly Campus action plan will not be possible given this fiscal situation and there lies the potential for staffing to be eliminated and responsibilities to be shifted once again in the Civic and Community Engagement office, as well as elsewhere on campus. The CCE does plan to apply for grants to provide some finances to implement All-In/Voter Friendly Campus action plan goals.

Externally, the college has sought the ability to take on the role of polling site. While the proposal to serve as a polling location was supported by multiple campus stakeholders, including the president, the proposal has been deadlocked at the Erie County Board of Elections. Having the opportunity to serve as a polling location would impact more than 2,000 students who live on campus and in the neighborhood immediately surrounding the campus, demonstrating evidence on Election Day or Early Voting period that the university is committed to its value of civic and community engagement.

Resources

Resources that are available to assist the institution in being successful in impacting the All-In/Voter Friendly Campus action plan goals include:

- New York Public Interest Research Group partnership
- Campus Compact membership
- The National Study of Learning Voting and Engagement data
- Voter registration and engagement tools provided by the American Democracy Project, NASPA, Democracy Works, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, Ask Every Student, The Civic Holiday Partnership, and +1 to the Polls
- Availability of students to serve as interns in civic learning and democratic engagement initiatives.
- A campus office devoted to developing students as active citizens (Civic and Community Engagement Office)
- existing appointed committees and their strategic plans (Civic Action Plan Committee, Anchor Learning Network Committee)
- League of Women Voters partnership

Additional resources needed to be developed or accessed to help the institution be successful include:

- Partnerships with additional Academic and Student Affairs units
- Deeper partnerships with the Student Political Society, Phi Alpha Kapa Omega Social Work Honors, Roar 2 Success, and other student organizations
- Expanded partnerships with the Political Science department
- Expanded partnerships with the Social Work department
- Expanded partnerships with the education department
- Expanded partnerships with the communication department
- Expanded partnerships with the journalism department
- Expanded partnerships with the history department
- Focused outreach to multidisciplinary studies majors
- Focused outreach to liberal arts majors
- Focused outreach to science majors
- Focused outreach to business majors
- Focused outreach to biology majors
- Develop a partnership with the Africana Studies Department
- Develop a partnership with the Erie County Board of Elections
- Develop additional partnerships with community nonpartisan groups such as the Buffalo Urban League, NAACP, Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team – BUILT Buffalo, the Anne Frank Project, PUSH, Open Buffalo, Daughter of the Revolution, etc.
- Expanded partnership with Student Leadership and Engagement
- Grants and external funding to ensure that initiatives can be carried out and to support leadership turnover.

Goals

Short-Term Goals

- By June 2024, finalize a procedure to implement regular annual reporting which includes submitting an Information Technology ticket in October each year to identify what percentage of our students are eligible to vote (based on citizenship) to help guide future civic engagement planning.

- By August 2024, initiate the embedding of voter registration and education in the New Student Orientation (NSO) by distributing registration forms with instructions in NSO folders, tabling, and workshops.
- By August 2024, initiate the embedding of voter registration and education in the New Student Orientation (NSO) by distributing registration forms with instructions in NSO folders, tabling, and workshops.
- By August 2024, investigate voter registration software including the ALL-In Voter registration portal and/or Bengal Connect to support CCE voter education efforts.
- By August 2024, identify funding for two Fall 2024 student voter engagement ambassadors, potentially using SUNY internship funds and/or federal work-study.
- By September 2024, update and distribute voter education resources through CCE website, social media, and to campus department websites or other digital platforms to include information about candidates; issues; advocacy; policy/ballot measures, civic action, etc.
- By September 2024, finalize a 7–10-person, student-led, equitable, diverse, and inclusive on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership for full participation comprising students, faculty, staff, and community partners to develop the Ask Every Student strategic partnership action plan and implement 2024-2025 Voter engagement programs.
- By October 26, 2024, increase the number of students registered to vote by 2% (75% → 77%);
- by November 5, 2024, increase the voting rate of Buffalo State students by 5% (51% to 56%).
- By November 2024, implement voter engagement strategies around the civic holidays which may include registration tabling, advocacy workshops, voter education panels, Living Library, Walk to the Polls, an election watch party, and partnerships with community partners like CAC, League of Women Voters, Buffalo Immigrant Leadership Team – BUILT Buffalo, the Anne Frank Project, PUSH, the Buffalo Urban League, NAACP, Open Buffalo, Daughter of the Revolution, etc..
- By March 2025, investigate the opportunity to apply for the [2025 Ask Every Student Implementation Grant](#) to support person-to-person nonpartisan voter registration, implement and institutionalize voter registration strategies, and strengthen civic-learning and democratic engagement work being done at Buffalo State.
- By May 2025, develop a succession plan for the on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership members.
- By May 2025, create a plan to implement three of the six [Ask Every Student Toolkit](#) sections in the voter engagement strategies including registration, education, and mobilization in order to “ask every student” on the campus to participate in our democracy.
- By August 2025, update and revise a communication plan to map out how to incorporate civic engagement education and mobilization into the entire academic year.
- By August 2025, Complete the [Strengthening American Democracy Action Planning Process](#) to create a baseline of the voter engagement work completed by the institution.

Long-Term Goals

Over the long-term, the institution seeks to educate and mobilize student voters, knowing that voting at a young age is habit-forming and part of active citizenship. By engaging students in civic learning and democratic engagement on the curricular and co-curricular levels, students will achieve and practice the institutional learning outcomes of cultural fluency, urban engagement, and ethical reasoning. The institution seeks to graduate students who are:

- able to engage with ideas that are different from or are in conflict with their own;
- aware of factors that influence assumptions, prejudices, and privileges;
- able to understand how to meaningfully interact in their communities;
- possessing of the skills to be wise, productive, and responsible citizens;
- applying their values and principles in ambiguous, complex, and controversial contexts.

As there are many Buffalo State students who are immigrants, refugees, and undocumented, a long-term goal of the institution's on-campus voting coalition partnership will aim to ensure that all students, regardless of citizenship status, are able to learn how they can amplify their voice and engage in civic and democratic engagement while in higher education and after graduation. We seek to create opportunities for these students to be able to learn about the political process and civic life, and to teach them the skills to advocate for and work in collaboration with their peers who can access the polls.

The long-term goals of the ALL-In/Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan carry the institution to 2027, which coincides with a similar timeline for the next iteration of the Civic Action Plan. This date will allow for the potential for the action plan to be incorporated and adjusted as a new institution's strategic plan is implemented.

- By August 2025, submit grant applications to support and deepen civic learning and democratic engagement work being done at Buffalo State.
- By September 2025, transition the on-campus voting coalition partnership from faculty/staff leadership to student leadership.
- By January 2026, create a plan to expand the student ambassador initiative with a team of student leaders to build capacity for student voter engagement.
- By August 2026, create a plan to bring civic dialogue train the trainer model to campus.
- By August 2026, investigate partnerships with New Student Orientation to embed voter registration in NSO to have 100% of the undergraduate class all be registered in four years.
- By August 2026, expand and update programming and training that can be provided to resident assistants, Athletics, student organizations, Greek Life student organizations, organization leaders, and the United Students Government to support the registration, education, and mobilization efforts of the students in their resident halls, student organizations or athletic teams.
- By September 2026, expand the student ambassador program to include 5-10 students to engage their peers in conversations about civic engagement, and different types of elections including primary, local, mid-term, special, and general elections.
- By May 2027, expand the on-campus voting coalition partnership from 2 academic departments and one community partner to 5 academic departments and 2 community partners.

Strategy

The strategy to achieve our goals will be similar to successful strategies used previously to institutionalize community engagement/service-learning and applied learning, by collaborating with members of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and with students. We will continue to build our partnership with community partners like the League of Women Voters and NYPIRG, to amplify the work they have implemented on the campus for decades. We will aim to maintain participation with the SLSV Coalition, accessing valuable partners and resources as we develop the initiatives. We will also incorporate our work within the Community Partnership Council initiative to champion the voter engagement strategic plan goals to ensure that the goals outlined in the ALL-In/Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan are complementary to other civic engagement initiatives.

Due to the post-pandemic challenges and the resulting threats to budget and staffing at the college, we will remain flexible in our strategy, utilizing new methods of delivery and identifying new partnerships. We will build capacity for carrying out the goals of the All-In/Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan by applying for grant funds and continuing to utilize NSLVE data and national best practices to deepen the civic learning and democratic engagement of SUNY Buffalo State University students.

As an institution, our tactics and activities fall into seven goals:

1. Educate students about the processes and implications of engagement and non-engagement in civic learning and democratic engagement.

2. Demonstrate the university's commitment to developing and educating active citizens.
3. Make voter registration forms and absentee ballot request forms accessible to all students. The CCE created a permanent "voter station" inside its main office where students can stop in to pick up, complete, and drop off forms.
4. Provide support and opportunities for students who want to engage in civic activities.
5. Increase the number of students who are registered to vote.
6. Increase the turnout rate of registered student voters.
7. Create opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement and conversations about civic engagement.

Reporting

The Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan will be available and shared with the campus and the larger community. The action plan will be forwarded to the provost and president of SUNY Buffalo State University, who have been kept up to date during its Spring 2024 formation.

A digital copy of the action plan will live on the Civic and Community Engagement Office's website under our initiatives section. The NSLVE data that helped to inform the goals of the plan will also be shared on this website. The All-In/Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan will also be submitted as part of the Civic and Community Engagement's annual report and Civic Action Plan biennial report. Each member of the on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership will also receive a final copy of the report, including the League of Women Voters. Additionally, pieces of the plan will be shared with audiences on our social media and e-newsletter platforms, with links to the entire digital copy of the document.

Evaluation

Our work to register and mobilize student voters will be evaluated by comparing NSLVE data of voting rates in the 2022, 2020, 2018, and 2016 elections with a goal of increasing these numbers. Program attendance and turnout will also assist in determining whether Buffalo State is making progress toward achieving these goals.

With this evaluation, the on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership will take on the VFC workgroup responsibilities and will be able to improve civic and democratic engagement efforts on the campus and achieve the long-term goals identified in the VFC Action Plan. Continuous evaluation and process improvement will allow the on-campus voter engagement coalition partnership to adjust short- and long-term goals to embed civic engagement and democratic learning into the curricular and co-curricular activities across institutional departments.

Results of efforts will be shared with the president, and provost, on social media, and in the university's Daily Bulletin campus-wide email communication, the CCE departmental annual reports, and the SUNY Election Law Report. The evaluation of fall 2024 activities will be available on the CCE website, under the VFC initiative for students, faculty, staff, and community members to access.

We will know that we have reached our initial Voter Friendly Campus goals when

- the number of students registered to vote increases by 2% (75%-77%);
- additional opportunities are created and expanded to engage students in experiences where they can build their civic skills and when student engagement in these opportunities increases;
- the voting rate of Buffalo State students increased from 51% to 56%.

Overall, the evaluation of this work will be a continual process and the methods employed to achieve Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan goals will be adjusted so that we can meet institutional goals.