

# CAMPUS VOTER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

## 2023-2024

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civic Engagement is engrained into the culture at Frostburg State University (FSU) and is one of the institution's strategic priorities. As part of this effort, the Office of Civic Engagement (OCE) works to foster active citizenship amongst the student body through co-curricular activities and curricular partnerships. A key component of the OCE mission is to engage students in the democratic process, which includes voting. Frostburg State University's Campus Voter Engagement Plan is developed and implemented by the Office of Civic Engagement to guide its efforts in increasing student knowledge and participation in the voting process. The Democratic Engagement Advisory Group will guide the OCE efforts in implementing this plan.

Frostburg State University's Campus Voter Engagement Plan provides a structure for the institution's Voter Engagement activities and strategies that guide the OCE and partnering groups efforts to increase student knowledge and participation in the voting process through the 2024 elections. This plan will be implemented by the OCE and the Voter Engagement Team with input from members of the Democratic Engagement Advisory Group.

The OCE efforts over the past 10 years have led to improved voting rates among the student body. In 2020, NSLVE data shows that student turnout rose by 10% to 65.6%. Additionally, during the 2018 mid-term elections, voter turnout was 38.4%, a 20.1% increase from the 2014 mid-term elections. The OCE's efforts continue to build on its strengths and partnerships as we work toward the 2024 presidential elections, with efforts focusing on education, ballot access, registration, and student turnout.

### GOALS

#### SHORT TERM

- Increase Student Registration to 90%
- Increase student voting rate by 5% in 2024 to 70.6% from 65.6% in 2020 (NSLVE)
- Receive All IN Democracy Challenge Gold Seal
- Increase student confidence in the voting process
- Increase the number of democratic engagement programming events that partner with or are hosted by student organizations

- Increase voter turnout for identified low-turnout majors based on mid-term NSLVE data: Natural Resources & Conservation, Law Enforcement, and Mathematics and Statistics
- Increase First-Year student registration and turnout to the same level as second-year students

## LONG TERM

- Implement an on-campus polling location
- Continued increase of student registration and turnout in National and local elections to achieve 100% student voting rate of eligible students
- Integration of Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement into the General Education Program and curriculum for all students

## COMMITMENT & LANDSCAPE

Frostburg State University is one of twelve institutions in the University System of Maryland and is located in the Appalachian region of Western Maryland with many of its students coming from the greater Baltimore/DC area. FSU serves one of the most diverse student bodies in the system and has the highest minority population outside of the traditional HBCU's. The local region faces challenges including increased poverty, limited public transportation, and reduced resources. FSU strives to engage students in the local community through volunteerism and national service to combat local issues while offering impactful experiences to our students.

The division of Student Affairs at Frostburg State University's mission is to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement to enhance personal and professional growth within supportive and inclusive environments, transforming students into leaders prepared for our complex and changing global society. In line with this mission, the office of Civic Engagement is dedicated to fostering active citizenship and strives to build citizen leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As active citizens, students educate themselves about, and become involved in, their local, national, and global communities. Through democratic engagement, community organizing and inclusivity, these active citizen leaders are enabled to combat public concerns at their core and strengthen their greater community.

This commitment has been strengthened by our more recent emphasis on experiential learning. Our work has also been guided by National Campus Compact, the Corporation for National and Community Service, NASPA's Civic Learning & Democratic Engagement initiative, the American Democracy Project, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative. The overarching theme of our Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement initiative is to foster informed and engaged citizen leaders within their community. Our goals are achieved through our four pillars of Civic Engagement: Democratic Engagement, Volunteerism, Service-learning, and National Service. Through these four programmatic components, we work to engage students in their community; educate them on the political process, and foster life-long involvement as citizen leaders.

## LEADERSHIP

Frostburg State University engages individuals and groups both on and off campus to support our Voter Engagement and education efforts. On campus the Democratic Engagement Advisory Group works together to strategically plan on-going democratic engagement efforts and programming including specific efforts focused on voter engagement. In addition to this group, each election year, the office of civic engagement convenes a Voter Engagement Committee to help organize resources, plan events, find guest speakers, and develop marketing

strategies to engage students in the voting process. The group begins meeting on a monthly basis in July leading up to the election. Finally, the University works with multiple State and National partners to ensure the use of best practices, to identify resources, and to report on our efforts.

## DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

- Dr. Artie Travis, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Robert Cooper, Assistant VP for Student Engagement
- Patrick O'Brien, Director of Civic Engagement
- Timothy Magrath, Political Science Professor and Director of J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs
- Rachael Michalski, President – Student Government Association
- Hailey Unger – Vice President – Student Government Association, Transform Mid-Atlantic Civic Fellow

## VOTER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Participants in this group regularly consist of representatives from organizations such as:

- Office of Civic Engagement
- J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs
- Allegany County Board of Elections
- League of Women Voters
- Women's Action Coalition
- NAACP
- Student Government Association
- Student Athletic Advisory Committee
- Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Voter Engagement Student Employees
- Student Civic Leaders
- FSU Faculty & Staff
- Lewis J. Ort Library Staff
- Student Organizations

## NATIONAL PARTNERS

[ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#)

[Ask Every Student](#)

[Transform Mid-Atlantic](#)

[Campus Vote Project](#)

[Students Learn Students Vote Coalition](#)

[TurboVote](#)

## STRATEGIES

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT STUDENT STAFF

With funding support from the Office of Civic Engagement and Student Engagement, a Civic Engagement Student Staff member will be hired each year to help with voter education, registration, dialogue events, and marketing. In the Fall semester, including the election, additional Voter Engagement Ambassadors will be hired to increase voter engagement efforts leading up to the election. These students will host voter registration tables, work with our Social Marketing Team to develop a series of social marketing campaigns, and present voter information in classes and at student organization meetings.

### VOTER REGISTRATION

#### BOBCATS VOTE WEBPAGE

The [Bobcats Vote](#) webpage is a centralized location for student voter information. This page includes upcoming deadlines, links to voter registration, including TurboVote, our voter engagement plan, NSLVE data, and information on polling locations, mail-in voting, early voting, and election day shuttles. The website also contains information about how to be more engaged in the voting process, including how to become a poll worker for upcoming elections.

#### TURBOVOTE

FSU partners with [TurboVote](#) to offer students an online platform for all their voting needs, no matter where they are registered to vote. TurboVote helps students register to vote, obtain absentee ballots, and offers email and text message reminders about upcoming elections, polling locations, and other important voter information.

#### VOTER INFORMATION TABLES

Each semester, at least one voter registration drive will occur on campus. During the 2024 Fall Semester, the office of Civic Engagement, with help from the Voter Engagement Ambassador Student Staff, hosts weekly voter information tables in the Student Union, the Lane University Center. At these tables, students can learn more about the voting process, register to vote, obtain absentee ballots, find polling locations, and information about early voting and election day activities.

#### FIRST-YEAR STUDENT INITIATIVE

To encourage first-year students to engage in voting and the democratic process, a voter engagement table will be held at the first-year student convocation and organization meet and greet event at the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester. Additionally, voter engagement ambassadors will be available to present to the Introduction to Higher Education classes, a course required of all first-year students.

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## CIVIC HOLIDAYS

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### NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

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Each year in September FSU hosts National Voter Registration Day on campus. Activities for the day include an email from Vice President Artie Travis, a social marketing campaign, voter registration & absentee ballot activities in the Lane University Center and more. Partners for this event include the Office of Civic Engagement, the Allegany County Board of Elections, the Student Government Association, Community Organizations, and student organizations.

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### VOTER EDUCATION WEEK

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Each October, FSU takes part in Voter Education Week and promotes action items through social media each day of the week to prepare students to vote. These action items include Registering to vote, requesting a mail-in ballot, making a plan to vote, learning what's on the ballot, and getting more involved in the voting process.

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### VOTE EARLY DAY

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In October, FSU promotes Vote Early Day to educate students about the early voting process, where they can vote early, when early voting is available, and resources about their ballot. This effort is put out via social media as well as in the student union at one of our many voting tables throughout the semester.

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### ELECTION HERO DAY

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In November, for Election Hero Day, FSU will be recognizing students, faculty, and staff who take the time to act as poll workers and will be working to put together interviews to be shared on the Bobcats Vote page and social media of poll workers discussing their experience, and why they choose to volunteer.

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### OFFICE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WALK-INS

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OCE staff act as an ongoing resource for voter information for students. Staff will be trained in the most up-to-date information and regulations on voter registration, absentee ballots, polling locations, and more. Any student at FSU can come into the OCE located in the student union and receive voter information and assistance with their voting needs anytime during regular business hours.

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## VOTER EDUCATION

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### TIMES TALKS & NEW YORK TIMES SUBSCRIPTION PROGRAM

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As part of its efforts to increase student awareness and education in current events, FSU has purchased a campus-wide subscription to the New York Times. This subscription has allowed the OCE, in partnership with the J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs, to host weekly Times Talk Events. Every week, students, faculty, and staff meet to discuss a current topic focused on politics. A student, staff, or faculty member picks a recent NYT article to act as the basis of discussion. These discussions allow for students to voice their opinions, learn the opinions of others, and take part in a rigorous discussion about the topic for the week.

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## TOWN HALL MEETINGS

In collaboration with the J. Glenn Beall Institute of Public Affairs and the Student Government Association, the OCE hosts three Town Hall Meetings every semester for large group discussions. Each town hall has an overarching theme, but topics for discussion are left up to the students who participate. For the Fall 2024 semester, the themes for these town halls will focus on the upcoming election. The first town hall will be focused on local and state issues, the second on national and global issues, and the third will act as a candidates' forum, where students can come to discuss who they are supporting, their platforms, and why they believe that candidate is the best suited for the position.

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## CANDIDATE & BALLOT EDUCATION

To ensure students are confident when they vote, the OCE will host a special information table during the two weeks leading up to the election. At this table, students can obtain sample ballots from every county in MD, along with some adjacent counties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. There will also be information on how to find details on candidates' platforms for multiple issues, including resources like Ballotpedia and Vote411.

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## CONSTITUTION DAY

In partnership with the Ort Library, the J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs, and the OCE, FSU hosts Constitution Day every year. Events include voter registration information, constitution trivia, and free pocket constitutions. Each year, a special constitution event is planned as part of the day's activities. Past events have included historical reenactments from Ben Franklin and George Washington and a virtual event from a storyteller co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters, Allegany College of Maryland, and Hagerstown Community College.

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## DEBATE WATCH PARTIES

The OCE hosts watch parties for all the Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates in the student lounge of the Lane University Center. Student organizations are encouraged to co-sponsor the event and take part in leading discussions during breaks and at the close of the debate.

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## SPEAKER SERIES

Each year, the Office of Civic Engagement, in partnership with the J. Glenn Beall Institute for Public Affairs, hosts a series of democratic-focused speakers to discuss why they have become involved in the democratic process and the importance of voting. Guest for this series in the past has included U.S. Senator Benjamin Cardin, Sam Novey of TurboVote & Mile 22, an Alumni panel of political operatives, and more. Leading up to the primary and presidential elections efforts will be made to host candidates' forums or other election-related speakers on campus.

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## BALLOT ACCESS

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## TURBOVOTE REMINDERS

Students can sign up with [TurboVote](#) to receive reminders and information on polling locations, registration and absentee ballot deadlines, and election day information.

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## MAIL-IN BALLOTS

With many students registered at their permanent address in other counties in MD or other states, FSU focuses on educating students on the mail-in ballot process and assisting students in obtaining and turning in their mail-in ballots. As part of this initiative, For the first time for the 2024 Primary and General Elections, FSU will host the Board of Elections on campus once a week for four weeks leading up to the elections to collect Mail-In ballots on campus as well as answer questions and help students register and obtain Mail-In ballots.

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## PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

As student voter turnout has increased over the years, FSU and the Allegany County Board of Elections has worked together to better accommodate students on election day. At the closest polling location to the campus, the county has worked to obtain more provisional ballots, more provisional ballot booths, and developed a two-line system to better accommodate local and provisional voters. During election day, the OCE staff and the polling location stay in touch to help troubleshoot any issues that arise. Most recently, this partnership has allowed for discussions on potentially implementing a polling location on campus for future elections.

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## VOTER SHUTTLES

On election day, the OCE, in partnership with SGA's SafeRide program, hosts a voter shuttle from a centralized location on campus to the local polling location starting at 8:00 am and running every 15 minutes. Staff stay in communication with the shuttle driver and the local polling location and work to divert drop-offs to secondary locations if long lines begin to form, or if issues arise, such as voting machines going down, or if provisional ballots run low, to ensure students have the best voting experience possible.

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## ELECTION DAY CELEBRATION

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### STUDENT UNION ELECTION DAY CELEBRATION

On election day, with the help of the Lane University Center Centralized Tech Crew, the student union is transformed with election day regalia. Red, white, and blue lighting and balloons are utilized throughout the union, voter shuttle information is prominently posted, and information about the evening's election night viewing party is readily available.

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### WHY I VOTED ACTIVITY

As part of our Election Day celebration, the OCE hosts a table including a democracy wall where students can write statements about why they voted, and what issues are important to them. The table also includes red, white, and blue cookies and information about voting on election day. Students are encouraged to use the hashtag #BobcatsVote for the day.

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## ELECTION NIGHT VIEWING PARTY

On the evening of the election, the OCE hosts a viewing party in the ballroom where students can watch the election results live. The event includes lounge-style seating, food, a mock voting event, and a democracy wall.

## EVALUATION, NSLVE, & REPORTING

The OCE will work to evaluate its voter programming and efforts during implementation as well as the final results of university efforts after the election. Surveys, attendance counts, registrations, and presentations will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to allow for program and marketing adjustments to best serve and engage the students. Evaluation efforts include:

- Post-surveys focused on knowledge gained and voter confidence at all education-focused events
- Attendance counts at all voter engagement-related events
- Tracking of use, voter registration, absentee ballots, and reminders through TurboVote
- Tracking for special focus areas
  - Number of student interactions and registrations completed at First-Year Student Convocation and student organization meet and greet
  - Number of Introduction to Higher Education class presentations and student count (First-Year Students)
  - Number of Natural Resources & Conservation, Law Enforcement, and Mathematics and Statistics classes presentations and student count
- Tracking of Voter Registration and student assistance during National Voter Registration Day and voter Engagement Tabling
- Involvement in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)
- Tracking of student use of the three local polling locations by the Allegany County Board of Elections
- Tracking of student use of the Election Day Shuttle

The Campus Voter Engagement Report, along with NSLVE Data and evaluation results, will be shared with the campus as well as our community partners. Both the FSU Plan and NSLVE Data will be shared publicly on the FSU website, as well as with our national partners, including the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and Campus Voter Project.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

2023

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|          |    |                       |
|----------|----|-----------------------|
| January  |    |                       |
| February | 16 | Times Talk Discussion |
|          | 28 | Town Hall Meeting     |
| March    | 1  | Times Talk Discussion |
|          | 14 | Town Hall Meeting     |
|          | 16 | Times Talk Discussion |



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|           | 28  | Civic Engagement Table                  |
|           | 30  | Times Talk Discussion                   |
| April     | 4   | Civic Engagement Table                  |
|           | 5   | Times Talk Discussion                   |
|           | 11  | Town Hall Meeting                       |
|           | 27  | Times Talk Discussion                   |
| May       |     |   |
| September | 7   | Times Talk Discussion                   |
|           | 18  | Constitution Day (Celebrated on Campus) |
|           | 19  | National Voter Registration Day         |
|           | 21  | Times Talk Discussion                   |
|           | 27  | Debate Watch Party                      |
| October   | 2-6 | National Voter Education Week           |
|           | 3   | Town Hall Meeting                       |
|           | 17  | Town Hall Meeting                       |
|           | 19  | Times Talk Discussion                   |
|           | 26  | Vote Early Day                          |
|           | 31  | Town Hall Meeting                       |
| November  | 2   | Times Talk Discussion                   |
|           | 6   | Election Hero Day                       |
|           | 7   | ELECTION DAY                            |
|           | 8   | Debate Watch Party                      |
|           | 16  | Times Talk Discussion                   |
|           | 30  | Times Talk Discussion                   |

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**2024 (TENTATIVE)**

|          |     |   |
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| January  |     |   |
| February | 6   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                                  |
|          | 15  | Times Talk Discussion   |
|          | 20  | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                                  |
|          | 27  | Town Hall Meeting   |
|          | 29  | Times Talk Discussion   |
|          | TBD | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting                                      |
|          | TBD | Debate Watch Parties  |
| March    | 5   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                                  |
|          | 12  | Town Hall Meeting   |
|          | 14  | Times Talk Discussion   |
|          | 26  | Board of Elections Early Voting Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|          | 28  | Times Talk Discussion   |
|          | TBD | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting                                      |
|          | TBD | Debate Watch Parties  |

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| April     | 2                    | Town Hall Meeting  |
|           | 2                    | Board Of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 2                    | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 9                    | Board Of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 11                   | Times Talk Discussion  |
|           | 16                   | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 16                   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 23                   | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 25                   | Times Talk Discussion  |
|           | TBD                  | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting                                 |
|           | TBD                  | Candidates Forum   |
| TBD       | Debate Watch Parties |  |
| May       | TBD                  | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting                                 |
|           | 2-9                  | Primary Early Voting – 7:00 am – 8:00 pm                           |
|           | 14                   | Primary Election Day   |
|           | 14                   | Election Day Table (Student Union)                                 |
| July      | TBD                  | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting                                 |
| August    | TBD                  | Voter Engagement Table at First-Year Student Convocation           |
| September | 3                    | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 10                   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 12                   | Times Talk Discussion  |
|           | 17                   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 17                   | Constitution Day Celebration                                       |
|           | 17                   | National Voter Registration Day                                    |
|           | 24                   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 26                   | Times Talk Discussion  |
|           | TBD                  | Debate Watch Parties   |
|           | TBD                  | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting                                 |
| October   | 1                    | Town Hall Meeting  |
|           | 1                    | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 1                    | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 8                    | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 8                    | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 10                   | Times Talk Discussion  |
|           | 15                   | Town Hall Meeting  |
|           | 15                   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 15                   | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 22                   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 22                   | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|           | 24-31                | Early Voting – 7:00 am – 8:00 pm                                   |
|           | 24                   | Times Talk Discussion  |
|           | 29                   | Town Hall Meeting  |
|           | 29                   | Voter Engagement Table (Student Union)                             |
|           | 29                   | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |

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|          | TBD | Vote Early Day   |
|          | TBD | National Voter Education Week                                      |
|          | TBD | Candidate Forum  |
|          | TBD | Debate Watch Parties   |
|          | TBD | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting                                 |
| November | 4   | Election Hero Day  |
|          | 5   | ELECTION DAY   |
|          | 5   | Board of Elections Mail-In Ballot Collection Table (Student Union) |
|          | 5   | Election Day Table (Student Union)                                 |
|          | 5   | Election Day Shuttle   |
|          | 5   | Election Night Watch Party   |
|          | 7   | Times Talk Discussion  |
|          | 21  | Times Talk Discussion  |
|          | TBD | Voter Engagement Committee Meeting – Review and Wrap-Up            |