

STUDENT DEMOCRACY SUMMIT GUIDE



LEADMN
COLLEGE STUDENTS
CONNECTING FOR CHANGE



WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the Student Democracy Summit Guide! Whether you are thinking about bringing together students, campus administrators, and faculty members from across your state, region, community, or conference, this is the guide for you.

If you're reading this, you are probably already somewhat familiar with the Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV) Coalition. The SLSV Coalition was founded in early 2016 to bring together nonpartisan organizations, campuses, and individuals working to design and advance a shared agenda to increase college student voting. Since our founding, the SLSV Coalition has grown to include nearly 400 local, state, national, and student nonpartisan organizations working with over 1,700 campuses and is now the largest network in the country working at the intersection of democracy and higher education.

The SLSV Coalition's work starts with the basic belief that rather than focusing on a single election like we've seen in the past, sustainable increases in voter participation come from local leaders who know their community best, have access to local social networks, and are most culturally equipped to lead the effort. We understand that every campus is different: they have different student populations, different resources available to them, and different challenges.

This is why we believe student democracy summits are invaluable to furthering democratic engagement on college campuses across the country. Since 2018, the SLSV Coalition has funded or supported with programming over 22 state or regional student democracy summits in 15 states. These summits have led to hundreds more colleges and universities making a commitment to engage their students as voters and created ongoing in-state learning networks.

Kassie Phebillo from the University of Texas at Austin, Mike Dean from LeadMN, and Debi Lombardi formerly of the Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project are representatives from just a few organizations that have been at the forefront of hosting student democracy summits for administrators, faculty, and students at college campuses. Each has hosted summits in very different states with very different opportunities and barriers. Kassie, Mike, and Debi came together to develop this resource to make planning an hosting a summit clear cut and accessible for other organizers or college representatives who want to broaden the network of campuses within their community who are institutionalizing voter engagement for the long-term.

As we look at 2020 and beyond, student democracy summits can play a critical role in making sure colleges and universities have access to the support, tools, and information they need to engage students or peers in local, state, and national elections, and in our democracy more broadly.

I hope you find this guide helpful! I encourage you to utilize the tools and resources outlined throughout the document, as well as the checklist to plan and host your own student democracy summit. I also hope you will share your success with the SLSV Coalition and join the broader movement to ensure full student participation in every election.

Sincerely,
Clarissa Unger

Director, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV) Coalition invested in ten Student Democracy Summits to strengthen democratic engagement efforts in higher education. The summits focused on bringing together colleges and universities within their state to learn more about how to institutionalize democratic engagement work from each other and from other leaders in the space. While several states had voter and democracy summits prior to 2018, this was the first major focus on them across the country. As we look to 2020 and beyond, many more colleges, universities and organizations have focused on these convenings to build strategy and promote long-term engagement.

LeadMN, Campus Vote Project and The University of Texas at Austin have partnered to develop a best practices guide for campuses and statewide networks for hosting student democracy summits in 2020 and beyond. This collaboration brings together diverse organizations with experience hosting, developing, and supporting successful summits.

This guide supports the SLSV Coalition goals by:

1. Support the state or regional democracy summits,
2. Leveraging the summits to support campuses executing the SLSV Coalition checklist,
3. Training campuses on how to use the *Strengthening American Democracy* guide (a guide for creating voter engagement action plans) and Votes & Ballots, and
4. Helping campuses share their democratic engagement action plans.

PARTNERS



LEADMN

LeadMN is an association of college students connecting for change in higher education.



CAMPUS VOTE PROJECT (CVP)

Campus Vote Project works with universities, community colleges, faculty, students and election officials to reduce barriers to student voting.

KASSIE PHEBILLO - UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Kassie Phebillo is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin where she has led all voter engagement efforts since fall 2015. In 2018, Kassie coordinated the first Texas Voting Summit, which led to the creation of a Texas Voting Network.

WHY HOST A SUMMIT?

Student democratic engagement summits are a tremendous way to get face-to-face time with campus administrators, faculty, and students. These groups play a critical role in institutionalizing efforts at their college or university. Whether you are with a college or an organization, you can take a leading role in hosting and organizing a summit for your state.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 mandates that certain colleges and universities provide voter registration to their students. In 2013, a Dear Colleague letter from the Department of Education reaffirmed that commitment.² The Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, and its members urge campuses to play a more central role in engaging students as voters and in democracy. That commitment has led to the creation of resources to support colleges and universities including the *Strengthening American Democracy* guide, *Votes and Ballots*, and other initiatives including statewide and regional summits.



If you're reading this, you're already considering hosting a summit, and that's a huge step! In 2018, 40.3% of college students turned out to vote, an unprecedented number for a midterm election.³ At least some of this was due to the rise in institutions taking responsibility for engaging students as voters. To continue this growth, we need more people across the country to step up and support their colleagues, campus staff, and students in continuing this work. Summits are a great way to do this. They create a space where student leaders, faculty, and administrators from across the state can come together, share ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and learn from others who are working within a similar set of election laws.

Every institution has different needs, but a summit allows institutions to connect on their similarities and learn unique approaches to overcoming barriers. Democratic engagement summits encourage exchanging advice, ideas, successes, and failures between campuses of all different sizes. Any campus can benefit from attending or hosting a summit. Post-secondary institutions can use summits as an opportunity to grow their democratic engagement programs and efforts across the state.

2. <https://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1317.html>

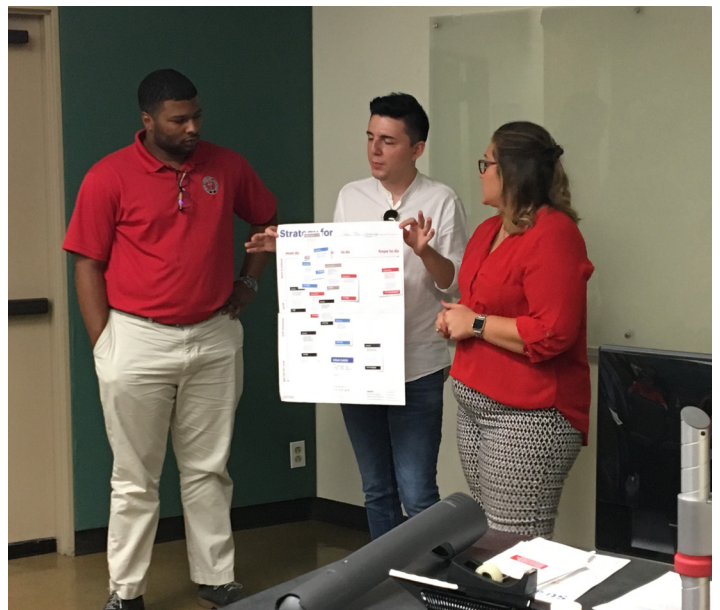
3. <https://idhe.tufts.edu/2018data>

STATE ASSESSMENT

Each democratic engagement summit is unique to its context, so in order to host the most successful summit one must consider what is at play with their specific population or state.

A few items that should be considered are:

- **STATE LAWS** - Think about which laws impact civic engagement the most in your state. If voter registration is difficult, then spend more time training best practices. If the state primarily uses mail-in ballots, spend time considering how to activate around the process of mailing in ballots.
- **WHO ARE YOUR PARTNERS?** - Take a landscape analysis of which partners nationally, statewide, and locally are available to help and how they can best contribute. Many partners bring expertise and networks that will help before and on the day of the summit.
- **PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT (NSLVE)** - If the universities that are attending already receive NSLVE reports, ask for them. Use NSLVE reports to determine where universities need the most help, especially looking at metrics like turnout by area of study, turnout by race, and turnout by year.
- **BUY IN** - How involved are schools already in this work? If the universities that are attending already have campus plans, participate with national partners, and receive NSLVE data, then the summit will look very different from a summit with a number of universities new to political engagement.
- **IF THIS IS THE SECOND SUMMIT, WHAT WENT WELL?** - Learn from past successes and failures to determine how to move forward for a second summit. Use the data that was collected as evaluation from the first summit.



SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR SUMMIT

Setting goals is critical to defining and carrying out a successful, democratic engagement summit. There are two types of goals that are important to consider, qualitative and quantitative.

While qualitative and quantitative goals may serve different purposes, all goals aim to give structure and clarity to the overall purpose of the summit. Consider starting the conversation for setting your goals by giving the problem statement and purpose of the summit. For example:

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Arizona college students are turning out at the polls at numbers lower than the national average.

PURPOSE:

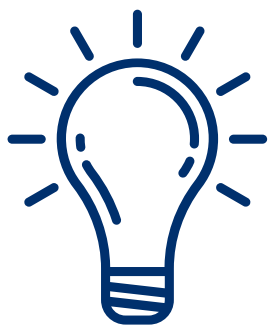
The democratic engagement summit is a call-to-action for Arizona college administrators, faculty, and students to get their institution to commit to increasing student voter turnout numbers.

Your problem statement and purpose will be unique to your state and institutional needs. The goals you set should aim to answer the problem statement and align with the overall purpose of the summit.

QUANTITATIVE

Quantitative goals will help define success when it comes to recruitment, funding, and engagement.

“SMARTIE goals” provide a useful framing for setting goals to make the democratic engagement summit successful. SMARTIE goals ask the goal-setter to consider the following:



Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-Bound
Inclusive
Equitable

For example, a SMARTIE goal for a summit may be, “Recruit 25 colleges and universities to be a part of the summit with at least 5 of the institutions being MSIs and another 5 being community colleges.”⁴

4. <http://www.managementcenter.org/resources/smartie-goals-worksheet/>

Consider setting quantitative goals that answer the following questions:

- How many people will be attending the summit? What proportion of attendees will be administrators, faculty, students, or other organizations?
- How much money will be raised to carry out the summit?
- How many colleges and universities will be at the summit? What proportions of institutions will be MSIs, HBCUs, or community colleges?

QUALITATIVE

Qualitative outcomes are also important to consider when setting objectives for the summit. Often, these goals can focus more on the experience of summit attendees. For example, “Attendees will walk away with an understanding of how to develop an action plan based on the *Strengthening American Democracy* guidelines for their institution.”

Consider setting qualitative goals that answer the following questions:

- What should attendees get out of the summit? Why?
- What is the overall theme for the summit? How does the agenda fit these goals?

Qualitative goals are not always inherently easy to measure so consider developing a post-summit survey for attendees to fill out that helps you determine if these goals were met.



BUDGETING YOUR SUMMIT

FINDING SPONSORSHIP

Creating a sustainable budget can easily become overwhelming. A common method to reach your summit funding goal is to look for sponsors. Sponsorships can come from various civic engagement organizations and centers, local businesses, and partner universities and colleges.

EXPENSES

VENUE: Many summits are fortunate enough to find a space donated by their host institution. If having the space donated is not a possibility, many venues offer combination packages that will provide space, food, and even technology equipment for the day.

FOOD: A day-long summit should provide at least lunch to your guests. Some summits choose to also offer a light breakfast or dinner for their guests. The budget will determine what kind of food or catering can be offered. Many local restaurants are willing to provide discounts to universities and nonprofits, if they are asked in advance.

SPEAKERS: If bringing in a keynote speaker, be prepared to pay for their services and/or accommodations. This cost can play a large role in determining who will be hired to speak at the event, if a summit facilitator chooses to hire anyone at all. Agreeing ahead of time on what you would like speakers to convey will also ensure the summit runs smoothly.

STAFF SUPPORT: It is likely that staff supporting the summit will need to be paid. This may include both a university administrator and student, as well as nonprofit employee support. Be sure to check with all involved to budget proper staff time.

TRAVEL STIPENDS: Travel stipends are useful in recruiting students and administrators to attend the summit. Travel expenses can be costly for individuals. To combat this, many summits choose to offer travel stipends. Most stipends are approximately \$100. These are especially helpful when the summit is in a large state where people may have to travel many hours to attend. Travel stipends can be distributed in a variety of ways including being offered out to anyone traveling from a certain distance, available upon request, or set up as a scholarship that can be awarded.

HOTEL COST: If hosting a multi-day summit, it is highly recommended that the summit cover hotel costs for students who are attending. It is important to recognize that many of the campuses attending the summit, likely do not have the funds to cover a hotel.

PROMOTIONAL/OTHER: This category covers everything from advertising to printing costs. These costs are easily underestimated or missed. However, it is important to account for any extra costs (i.e., pens, printing, folders, etc.).

OVERHEAD: Most universities and nonprofits will charge overhead on any grant or contract that is received or executed in relationship to your summit. Be aware of overhead policies as you are creating your budget.

Reference the appendix for a sample budget and sponsorship email templates.

OUTREACH

A strong outreach plan is essential to recruiting administrators, faculty, and students from a diverse set of institutions. Outreach is most successful when there is a strategy, timeline, and shared messaging.

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

When working with multiple partners or even as a single entity, it is important that you outline a strategy for outreach and recruitment to ensure goals are hit and that there is a diverse set of institutions and representatives at the democratic engagement summit.

- **IDENTIFY TARGET INSTITUTIONS** - Which colleges and universities should you invite to the summit?
How many institutions should you invite?
- **IDENTIFY KEY CONTACTS** - Who are your main contacts at the institutions? How many representatives should attend from each college and university? If there are no known contacts, who is the correct person to reach out to?
- **DELEGATE OUTREACH** - Who is in charge of outreach for specific contacts and campuses?
- **DEVELOP A MESSAGE** - What does your outreach email, social media, and branding look like?
How is that communicated to partners who are supporting your outreach efforts?

TIMELINE UP TO SUMMIT

The timeline may fluctuate depending on when the summit planning begins, but should somewhat follow the flow outlined below.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 4 MONTHS OUT | Develop your list of invitees considering the strategy outlined above and the goals you have set for the summit |
| 3 MONTHS OUT | Send out initial invites to all potential attendees, have key partners post across social media, and ask other collaborators to share out to their networks |
| 1 MONTH OUT | Send out final reminder to invitees |
| 2-3 WEEKS OUT | Close the RSVP form and send final numbers to catering or other entities that need finalized information |
| 1 WEEK OUT | Send a reminder to all attendees who have RSVP'ed with detailed information such as parking, accessibility, agenda, and even the forecast for the day |
| 1 DAY OUT | Send another reminder with detailed information similar to what was provided in the email that was sent one week out |

THE DAY(S) OF THE SUMMIT

There are a few reasons it important to think of the summit as a time for continued outreach.

Attendees will want to have a way to actively engage, connect, and feel like they are a part of something bigger.

It is inevitable that some invitees will not be able to make it, but you will still want them to feel engaged in the process. Consider how they can still be a part of the summit.

You and your team will want to be able to document what happened at that summit.

These are just a few of the reasons you should consider making outreach the day of the summit part of your plan.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN MAKING YOUR PLAN:

- Who are you trying to engage and how?
- What social media or other platforms are available for you to encourage engagement?
- Have you created a common message everyone can share for the summit? This can be a hashtag, groups to tag, or a group they can engage within.
- Do you want to engage those who are unable to attend? How will you do that? What resources can be shared with them?
- How can you build hype throughout the day(s)?

ENGAGING AFTER THE SUMMIT

After the summit, we encourage you to continue engaging attendees. A few ways to continue engagement are:

- Host webinars with topics like “timely next steps” or updates from campuses post summit.
- Create a space for shared ideas, questions, comments, and concerns, like a Facebook group, Google group, listserv, or other platform for shared communication.
- Share the successes of your summit attendees via your event's Facebook page, Twitter, and any other active social pages.

HELPFUL MATERIALS

Once there is a list of target contacts, developing shared materials will assist with the outreach process.

- Social media graphics listing all of the partners or that all of the partners agree to share
- Template recruitment email with important information about the summit
- RSVP form where responses are collected and include pertinent information such as: first and last name, preferred pronouns, email, college/university/organization, dietary restrictions or other assistance required.

ORGANIZING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers will play an integral role on the day of the event. If the summit is during a school year and only a limited number of students are able to attend, utilizing student volunteers will provide an opportunity for more students to attend, but in a different capacity. Consider ways you will need to use volunteers and also if volunteers need to have a special set of skills. Some of the most common jobs for volunteers are check-in and check-out, organizing materials prior to the event, coordinating food pick-up during the event, directing students through event spaces, assisting speakers, and covering social media, like livestreams during the event.

THE WHO'S WHO (SPEAKERS)

There are a number of national partners who summit facilitators can look to for special guest speakers at the event. In order to better get a grasp of the speakers landscape, reach out to the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition at admin@slsvcoalition.org.

Remember, you want speakers who will best fit the needs of your summit. Take into account speaker specializations, as well as the demographic you are working with. For example, if you are working with a number of community colleges, Verdis Robinson at the Campus Compact would be a great resource.

THE AGENDA

To many the most important, and most intimidating, portion of their state summit is the agenda. Building your agenda is when you get to put the ideas you've been excited about throughout the planning process into action. Your agenda should provide guests with a number of informative, yet entertaining sessions so that they can learn new strategies to institutionalize voter registration and democratic engagement at their campus. When developing your agenda, here are a few things to keep in mind:



Who is your
target audience?



How long does
each session need?



How do you ensure
people don't become
too tired or uninterested?



What order of events
makes the most sense?

Your programming should reflect the needs of the majority of attendees at your summit. If you included a question in your RSVP asking what your guests would like to see as part of the summit, check to see if there are any recurring interests or ideas. Your agenda can be customized to craft your vision of an ideal summit. Not every session is useful for every summit. Select programs that you feel will make the most of everyone's time.

Check the appendix here, to see a detailed breakdown of programming.

REGISTRATION

When planning out your day, begin by considering how far people may be traveling from. Then, make a judgment on what time you should start check-ins or registration in the morning and how big of a window you want to allow for it. If people are coming from various distances, we suggest having a window of about an hour available for attendees to arrive and check in. During this time, consider offering coffee and/or a light breakfast (e.g., fruit, donuts, bagels, etc.) for guests to enjoy as they wait for the official start of the program.

During registration, provide attendees with any materials they may need throughout the day. Some things that may be helpful are a copy of the agenda, a map of the surrounding area and of your building, a copy of Votes and Ballots, a name tag with their home institution or organization listed, and a pen to use throughout the day.



WELCOME

Your introduction and welcome speech should be fairly short. Keep in mind that some guests may have been here for about an hour now and are likely ready to get started quickly. This is a great time to thank everyone for coming, announce how many campuses and organizations are represented and list them if possible, give a brief description of your work and goals, and provide a quick overview of the day's agenda.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

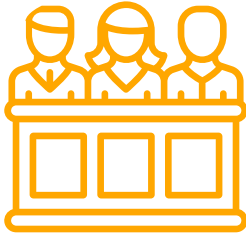
Some summits include or open with a guest or keynote speaker. This is a great way to set the tone for the rest of the summit. Your speaker should connect their area of expertise with the primary goals of your summit. Your keynote speech should serve a purpose and add to your summit. When choosing your speaker, make sure to choose someone you trust to deliver a non-partisan message.

NONPARTISAN EDUCATION

Some summits elect to dedicate time to specifically nonpartisan education. If your political climate is especially polarized or if there is a major election approaching, educating leaders on nonpartisanship may be beneficial. This session may consist of explaining the importance of non partisanship, placing an emphasis on voter turnout and registration, and GOTV strategies that will not discriminate between voters.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Some summit planners opt to open their program with a panel discussion. Panels can sometimes be more engaging first thing in the morning when some people may be tired from traveling. Your panel can include anyone who you think would offer something valuable to your audience.



ONE POPULAR IDEA IS TO HAVE A PANEL FULL OF STUDENT LEADERS THAT HAVE DONE SUCCESSFUL WORK ON THEIR CAMPUSES. THIS ALLOWS STUDENTS TO START THE DAY OFF BY THINKING WHAT IDEAS THEY COULD IMPLEMENT ON THEIR OWN CAMPUSES AND GIVES THEM A TIME TO ASK QUESTIONS TO STUDENT LEADERS WHO HAVE ALREADY SUCCESSFULLY DONE IT.

Another possible panel is one comprised of representatives from various civic engagement organizations. These representatives have experience working on multiple campuses of various makeups and sizes. This allows them to offer opinions and ideas about what the best ways are to institutionalize student engagement. Having the organizational leaders engage in panel discussion also introduces them to the guests at your summit. This way, attendees can get an idea of who or what organizations they may want to speak with before the end of the day.

THE NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT (NSLVE)

Knowing how to interpret and use your institution's NSLVE data is essential in developing a successful campus plan to increase engagement. It's likely that many campuses represented at your summit are already signed up to get their NSLVE data. However, this session gives them an opportunity to ask questions and better learn how to implement changes based on their data. Reach out to The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement at the Institute of Democracy and Higher Education to get a representative from NSLVE to speak at your summit.

STATE AND LOCAL ELECTION LAW

For many administrators, the vast disparities in election law between states -or even between counties- can be overwhelming and confusing. Many summits opt to bring in an official from the state or county Elections Office. If campuses at your summit are representing many different counties, it may be the most beneficial to have someone from the state Elections Office speak. However, if most of your campuses are from one or two counties, it is best to bring in an official from the local county offices. Having an elections official speak is a great way to ensure campuses are confident that their voter registration efforts are being done correctly and being processed as smoothly as possible.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS/WORKSHOPS

Breakout sessions are a great way, especially at bigger summits, to allow your campus representatives to attend sessions that are most specific to their needs. It's important to make sure every session has something valuable to offer; you don't want to waste your resources or your guest's time. The number of sessions offered at your summit should be based on how many people are in attendance. If you offer too many sessions, there may not be enough people to make them meaningful. If you don't offer enough sessions, large crowds can turn an otherwise meaningful discussion into another lecture based program. Another way to look at breakout sessions is labeling them "skill building sessions." This allows campuses to attend the session where they feel they could learn the most. Keep in mind that every campus is at a different step in the democratic engagement process. It's best to have some sessions for beginner campuses and some sessions for more advanced campuses.

Below are some breakout sessions to consider including:

- Political and News Information Literacy
- Further Understanding your NSLVE data
- Get Out the Vote Strategies
- Building Meaningful Coalitions
- Incorporating Voter Registration into Orientation
- Registration Information with Elected Officials
- Pairing with your Administrators

LUNCH

Providing lunch is a must. Make sure to account for food costs in your budget. This time can be used to host some meaningful conversations as well as just getting together to break and eat.

One popular activity for lunch breaks is to host round-table discussions. Have multiple tables set up, each with a different assigned topic to discuss. Guests can then choose which discussion they are most interested in and eat lunch and converse with others who share similar interests. This time is more unstructured than most of the day, which gives people a break to process all of the information they have been given. It is also a great networking opportunity. Consider seating a representative from an organization at each of these tables to lead or contribute to these discussions. The possible discussion topics are endless, but here are a few ideas:

- Voter Registration (For schools who may be new to these efforts or for schools who are looking to share their successes)
- Voter Education
- Voter Turnout
- Hurdles to Voting Rights

If you are located near or at your state capitol, lunch can also serve as a time for students to meet their state legislators or their staff. If you would like to do this, have students email their locally-elected officials in advance with a pre-drafted document. It will be helpful for them if you can provide information on who represents their campuses as well.

VOTES AND BALLOTS/CAMPUS ACTION PLANS

Votes and Ballots is an excellent session for campuses of all shapes, sizes, and experience levels. This activity gives campus representatives a chance to come together with their colleagues and peers and to develop a new campus plan. *Votes and Ballots* can be done during any part of your program and is a good way to add an interactive segment into the day. Many people who have planned successful summits suggest doing the *Votes and Ballots* game at the end of the day. This allows campuses to regroup after breakout sessions and use their newfound knowledge in their campus plans. Additionally, if a campus chooses to depart from the summit early, you can give them the materials for *Votes and Ballots* and they can complete their campus plans on their own. Remember that *Votes and Ballots* takes about two hours to complete. After campuses have finished, you may choose to have each group present their plans to everyone. You can find all of the materials for the *Votes and Ballots* game, as well as an instructional video at <https://www.democracy.works/votesandballots>.

ADAPTING VOTES AND BALLOTS FOR YOUR SUMMIT

SHARK TANK FUNDING OPTION – As a way to support campuses after the event and bring a level of fun competition to the event, you can incorporate a judging component into the game. Once campuses have completed their plans, give campuses 30–45 minutes to prepare a pitch on the voter engagement plan. The judges can use the criteria outlined in the *Strengthening American Democracy* rubric. The campus presentations should be 5 minutes long. Winners can receive anything from the recognition to campus grants that will support the implementation of the action plans.

COACHING TEAMS – We have seen the quality of the plans improve if the *Votes and Ballots* game brings in coaches to assist the campuses in developing their action plans. A coach does not tell them what to do, but just asks the right questions to help the campuses think critically about assumptions that they are making. This is especially valuable in states that have a complicated voter registration process.

VOTES AND VIDEOS – At larger summits, there is not necessarily time for every school to present campus voting plans in person, so a digital option may be considered. With *Votes and Videos* students are given the opportunity to receive funding to execute their campus plans by creating short videos about those plans. Those videos are then uploaded to the summit's YouTube channel. The top financial awards may be presented to the school with the best campus plan and the school with the most video likes. The top campus plan is determined by judging the plans based on the *Strengthening American Democracy* rubric. Smaller awards may be presented to other universities as well. In addition to making students think about how to best present their campus plans, it encourages them to share their video in order to get the most likes.

CLOSING REMARKS

Start your summit with purpose, end with purpose. Retouch on the highlights of the day and why you convened in the first place, thank everyone for joining you, thank your sponsors, and ensure others on their campuses are aware of their plan and how to plug in.

POST-SUMMIT DINNER/HAPPY HOUR

Some summits—especially those that span over two days or where people travel far distances—choose to host an informal post-summit dinner at a local restaurant. This time allows people to relax and get to know others in the civic engagement community. It provides a meal and entertainment option for those who may be staying the night in the area. If you choose to host a dinner but not cover the price of food, make sure that your restaurant choice is affordable for your guests.

FOLLOW UP/ASSESSMENT AND NEXT STEPS

Once the summit is over, it is important that institutions begin put into practice what they learned at the summit. You can support continued learning by encouraging campuses to convene a campus committee/task force that meets regularly to coordinate execution and review progress of the campus action plan. The ***Strengthening American Democracy Guide*** recommends this as an important step to strengthen a culture of civic engagement on campus.

Second, one of the most beneficial aspects of the summits is that it brings together diverse campuses from across a state or region to share ideas. Being intentional about how campuses can continue to support and learn from each other can really build a lasting community. Summit organizers can encourage campuses to find a buddy that they should check-in periodically with to reflect on progress and troubleshoot any challenges that they may face. Or event organizers could work to hold periodic conference calls as a way to bring the community together after the event. These calls should be designed in a way to provide ongoing value to attendees by sharing additional best practices, an opportunity to troubleshoot issues, and to coordinate joint activities.

Other statewide networks have used Facebook groups, Slack and even GroupMe to stay in touch with one another after the conference. The key thing is to identify what communication tool is the best way to meet members of the group. Facebook groups are helpful because almost everyone is on Facebook, but you can not verify that people will actually see the message because of Facebook's algorithms. Slack is used by many businesses to keep employees informed of what is going on and helps organize different types of communication, but it is a new tool that will require people to download or visit the website regularly. GroupMe is a text messaging tool that does have a high open rate, but the volume of the messages can be high causing people to opt-out.

EVALUATIONS

As you reflect on the summit, revisit the objectives and goals that you set out at the beginning of process. Did you accomplish those objectives? What went well? What could be improved upon? Then begin to evaluate whether you can organize these events annually or every two years. Building in that regularity can help build long-term success for building a culture of civic engagement. Finally, any evaluations should also leverage the **Democratic Engagement Action Plan Rubric** to track success.

SUMMIT PLANNING CHECKLIST

The following checklist is meant to be used after reading and familiarizing yourself with this guide. The checklist aims to be a starting point for individuals, organizations, or coalitions hosting a summit. To plan a successful summit, consider your individual wants and needs.

THE AGENDA

- ☐ Identify a purpose statement
 - ☐ Why are you having a summit?
- ☐ Agree on a structure for the summit
 - ☐ Create a rough sketch of the timeline
- ☐ Create your planning committee
 - ☐ Define the roles and responsibilities of your planning committee
 - ☐ Identify and outreach to keynote speakers and workshop facilitators
- ☐ Determine needs for each section
 - ☐ Printed materials
 - ☐ A/V hookup, extension cord, other electronics
 - ☐ Markers, pens, pencils, paper, etc

ORGANIZING VOLUNTEERS

- ☐ Identify how many volunteers are needed
 - ☐ Define volunteer roles and training for those roles
- ☐ Recruit volunteers
 - ☐ Provide them with training for their role

FUNDRAISING

- ☐ Identify potential funding sources
- ☐ Draft appropriate content for funding source
- ☐ Identify other options for funding

BUDGETING

- ☐ Determine a venue and the costs associated with it
 - ☐ Additional costs for A/V set up
 - ☐ Additional costs for changing room set up
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ Food for [X] amount of people
 - ☐ Breakfast cost (if provided)
 - ☐ Lunch cost (if provided)
 - ☐ Snack cost (if provided)
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ Speakers
 - ☐ Keynote speaker
 - ☐ Travel and hotel for national speakers
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ Staff Support
- ☐ Travel stipends for students and/or administrators traveling a great distance or in need
 - ☐ Cost/individual
 - ☐ Total cost
- ☐ Hotel Cost (if provided)
 - ☐ Total rooms
 - ☐ Extra fees to consider
- ☐ Promotional Materials
 - ☐ Printing
 - ☐ Advertising
 - ☐ Folders, buttons, stickers, etc
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ Overhead
- ☐ Other Budget Needs

CONDUCTING OUTREACH

☐ Recruitment

- ☐ Develop a target list of institutions
- ☐ Identify key contacts at target institutions
- ☐ Delegate outreach to partners
- ☐ Write a timeline for outreach
 - ☐ Deadline for initial outreach
 - ☐ Deadline for follow-up
 - ☐ Deadline for RSVPs
 - ☐ Deadline for final reminder email
- ☐ Develop a template email, social media and other forms of communication with key information
 - ☐ Date and time
 - ☐ Location
 - ☐ Call for breakout session leads (if applicable)
 - ☐ Availability of hotel and travel stipend (if applicable)
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ Create an RSVP form

| | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First and Last Name | <input type="checkbox"/> College, University, or Organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title | <input type="checkbox"/> Dietary Restrictions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pronouns | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Assistance required |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone | |

DAY OF ENGAGEMENT

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a social media plan and strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hashtags <input type="checkbox"/> Groups to tag or participate in <input type="checkbox"/> Outline for attendees on how to engage | <input type="checkbox"/> Outline roles and responsibilities of all staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a registration process <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a plan to receive and prepare lunch |
|--|--|
- ☐ Determine how to engage non-attendees

POST-SUMMIT ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ Send a follow up thank you email that reinforces your purpose of gathering, what you want them to be doing beyond their summit, share the resources and presentations from the summit, and thank them for attending.
- ☐ Create a social media or email group (see pros and cons for both in guide) for attendees
- ☐ Write guidelines for the group
- ☐ Set up some posts in the group
- ☐ Recruit key partners to post in the group and encourage activity

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

LeadMN is an association of college students connecting for change in higher education. We represent 180,000 two-year college students that come from every corner of Minnesota to advocate for opening the doors to opportunity for every person in Minnesota. Voter engagement is core to the mission of LeadMN because we are committed to empowering students to have their voice heard in the political process. Our growing voters program led a youth voter wave across Minnesota that resulted in the highest youth voter turnout in the nation.

Our success stemmed from the Democracy in Action Summit on which we partnered with SLSV Coalition members – Democracy Works, Campus Vote Project, Scholars Strategy Network. This training and action planning event empowered 100 student leaders to use the NSLVE Data to create a plan that worked for their community. Then we supported those plans with 15 campus mini-grants and followed up with campuses along the way. This event sparked a higher level of campus and student engagement than ever before with a higher number of student registrations and pledges. LeadMN Executive Director Mike Dean has served on the SLSV Coalition Advisory Board for two years and represented the SLSV Coalition at a number of conferences and presentations.

Campus Vote Project has a goal to help campuses institutionalize reforms that empower students with the information they need to register and vote. CVP is a founding member of the Students Learn Students (SLSV) Coalition. They helped develop the SLSV Checklist and the *Strengthening American Democracy* action plan guide, jointly meeting with higher education associations to introduce them to the SLSV Coalition, continually encouraging new organization partners to join the Coalition, representing the Coalition at conferences working groups and the Speakers Bureau. CVP supported 9 student voter summits in 2018, hosted a summit in Michigan in Spring 2019, and is supporting the planning of several other summits in 2020 and beyond.

Kassie Phebillo⁵ is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Austin where she has led all voter engagement efforts since Fall 2015. Under her leadership, TX Votes, a nonpartisan voter engagement student organization, has participated in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Voter Friendly Campus designation, and many other Students Learn Students Vote Coalition efforts. Kassie has been a regular participant in SLSV Coalition convenings and with the subcommittees and has frequently brought a campus perspective to SLSV Coalition presentations and projects. In 2016, UT Austin won the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge award for “Most Improved Undergrad Turnout,” along with a bronze seal and numerous other awards for improved turnout. In 2018, Kassie coordinated the first ever Texas Voting Summit, which led to the creation of a Texas Voting Network. The Texas Voting Summit was a two-day conference where a diverse group of students from 35 universities and community colleges gathered to learn about voting in the state of Texas and how to create or improve their own campus plans.

5. Kassie Phebillo is applying individually because she expects to complete her dissertation and leave UT Austin before the end of this granting period and project.

KEY WORDS

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT - any act intended to improve or influence a community through deliberation, collaboration, reciprocal relationships, and community building.

DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT - a combination of promoting the education of students for engaged participation through democratic participation in their communities, respect and appreciation of diversity, applied learning, and social responsibility.

NONPARTISAN - The term nonpartisan is generally used in one of two ways. In the stricter sense, which is used by some government agencies (such as the Federal Election Commission and the Internal Revenue Service), the term nonpartisan may be used to describe a group or individual that does not expressly support one political party or candidate over another. More broadly, the term nonpartisan may sometimes be used to describe a group or individual that does not promote a particular political ideology.¹

NSLVE - The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates and, for interested campuses, a closer examination of their campus climate for political learning and engagement and correlations between specific student learning experiences and voting. <https://idhe.tufts.edu/nslve>

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT - civic engagement that emphasizes governmental institutions and/or power (e.g., voting in a local, state, or federal election). Participating in the political process also occurs by making one's own opinions and beliefs known outside of the electoral process (e.g., protesting, campaigning, performing jury duty, running for office, community organizing).

STUDENTS LEARN STUDENTS VOTE COALITION - Comprised of a diverse group of nearly 400 local, state, national, and student nonpartisan organizations working with over 1,700 campuses, the SLSV Coalition is the national hub and the largest nonpartisan network in the United States dedicated to increasing student voter participation and civic engagement. A fiscal project of the National Conference on Citizenship, the SLSV Coalition is governed by a rotating advisory board of representatives from coalition partner organizations, higher education institutions and associations, local election officials, and students.”

SUMMIT - A summit is a meeting of key players in a given region who are interested in the same goal.

1. <https://ballotpedia.org/Nonpartisan>