**Elections, Voting, and Civic UPPS No. 06.02.10**

**Engagement On-Campus Issue No. 1**

**Revised: 12/01/2023**

**Effective Date: 09/02/2020**

**Next Review Date: 03/01/2025 (E5Y)**

**Sr. Reviewer: Vice President for Student Success**

1. **POLICY STATEMENTS**

01.01 This policy establishes procedures and defines responsibilities relating to elections, voter registration, and civic engagement on the Texas State University San Marcos and Round Rock campuses.

01.02 The university supports political engagement as part of a democratic society and as an educational activity.

01.03 The 1998 reauthorization act of the Higher Education Act of 1965 included a mandate that requires institutions of higher education to engage in voter registration activities [[HEA 487(a)(23)](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjny7Ci3-3rAhXshK0KHfEuDcoQFjAAegQIAxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.naicu.edu%2Fgetmedia%2F7d0b0176-022b-4c23-a416-9ceecf348c53%2FHEA101-voterreg.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2jVzWpzXSSjOVw_B2w6YLr)]. An amendment through the [Higher Education Opportunity Act Section 493(a)(1)](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjUwPnI4O3rAhUKLa0KHS9jDb0QFjABegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.govinfo.gov%2Flink%2Fplaw%2F110%2Fpublic%2F315&usg=AOvVaw3zr3c-7rK2rB_7gp6tESvG) created section (d) which allows institutions to electronically transmit voter registration information so long as the message is exclusively devoted to voter registration.

01.04 Institutions of higher education are expected to make a “good faith” effort to distribute voter registration information and make forms widely available to students. The university will encourage voter registration via physical forms and with electronic communication.

01.05 Specific purposes of this policy are to:

1. ensure that students, staff, and faculty are informed of how to register to vote both in and out of the classroom;
2. ensure that civic engagement is promoted on campus; and
3. ensure that elections held on campus comply with election law and campus procedures.

01.06 Structure and objectives of the standing committee on Voter Registration and Civic Engagement:

In summer 2019, the president of Texas State approved the creation of a standing committee to advise, recommend, and establish procedures and guidelines related to voter registration and civic engagement on campus. Specific objectives of this committee are:

1. to provide a mechanism and guidance to the university community regarding election policy, engagement, and voter registration on campus;
2. to ensure student, faculty, and staff representation in the process;
3. to provide a means for annual updating of procedures and responsibilities; and
4. to provide recommendations periodically to the university administration to evaluate and enhance the initiatives surrounding elections, engagement, and voter registration on campus.

**02. DEFINITIONS**

02.01 Civic Engagement – work that makes a difference in the civic life of communities and develops the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make a difference. It promotes the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes.

02.02Content-Neutral – refers to laws and policies that apply to all expression without regard to the substance or message of the expression. Such laws and policies generally only regulate time, place, and manner but not the content.

02.03Elected Official – any person who holds an elected office, whether partisan or non-partisan, at the federal, state, county, and municipal levels.

02.04Electioneering – includes the posting, use, or distribution of political signs, literature, or promotion for or against any candidate, measure, or political party.

02.05 Elections Division – a division of the county office (Hays or Williamson) that runs and administers the elections at Texas State University campuses.

02.06Endorsement – giving public approval or support to a party, measure, or candidate.

02.07Non-Partisan – a group or individual who does not support or oppose any political party, measure, or candidate.

02.08Partisan Political Organization – a political group that shows support or favoritism of a party, measure, or candidate for office.

02.09 Student Involvement @ the LBJ Student Center (LBJSC) – an office which is a component of the LBJSC department. The primary purpose of this office is to engage students in service, student organizations, and activities. It also oversees electioneering and other related voter registration efforts outside the classroom.

02.10Volunteer Deputy Registrar (VDR) – individuals entrusted with the responsibility of officially registering voters in the State of Texas. They are appointed by county voter registrars and charged with helping increase voter registration in the state. VDRs may be students, staff, and faculty in addition to any member of the public.

**03. PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING THE VOTER REGISTRATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

03.01 Membership on the Voter Registration and Civic Engagement Committee:

1. By July 1 of each year, the president of the university will appoint four faculty members and four staff members to the Texas State Voter Registration and Civic Engagement Committee for the upcoming academic year. Appointments regarding faculty and staff will consist of a two-year term made on a rotating basis, as determined by the co-chairs. They will be:
   1. four members approved by the provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs (VPAA); one of whom will serve as co-chair as appointed by the VPAA:
      * 1. two members as recommended by the Faculty Senate;
        2. one member as recommended by the Council of Chairs and Directors; and
        3. one member as recommended by the Council of Deans.
   2. two members approved by the vice president for Student Success (VPSS); one of whom will serve as co-chair as appointed by the VPSS:
      * 1. two members as recommended by the VPSS.

* 1. two members as recommended by Staff Council.
  2. members will serve no more than two consecutive terms within a ten-year period.

\*b. By May 15 of each year, four student representatives of the student

body will be selected to serve on the committee for the upcoming academic year. Appointments for students will consist of a one-year term and may serve one additional year beyond their initial term. Students must be enrolled in at least six semester credit hours. There will be:

1. two members as appointed by the Student Government; and
2. two members as approved by the committee from the student body at-large.

03.02 An individual appointed to a vacancy in an appointed position will serve the term’s unexpired portion in the same manner as the original appointee.

03.03 Any member of the committee who separates from the university will not serve on the committee.

**04. GUIDELINES TO ENCOURAGE VOTER REGISTRATION**

04.01 Voter registration is required to vote in elections, and it is part of the university mission to encourage students to “participate fully and freely as citizens of Texas, the nation, and the world.” The university will sponsor and encourage initiatives on-campus to increase voter registration of students, faculty, and staff.

04.02 The Dean of Students Office will host and update a website where information related to voter registration can be found, including but not limited to, voter registration information, location, and times for early voting and election-day voting in Hays County and Williamson County (including any on-campus polling place), links to county election websites, and information on what is on the current ballot.

04.03 Departments, offices, and student organizations may participate in voter registration efforts each fall semester hosted on the San Marcos & Round Rock campuses.

04.04 Departments, offices, and student organizations are encouraged to use National Constitution Day and Citizenship Day (Constitution Day), observed annually on September 17, to increase voter registration among eligible individuals as part of the university’s effort to provide educational programming related to the U.S. Constitution and citizenship.

04.05 Departments, offices, and student organizations are encouraged to use National Voter Registration Day, held every fourth Tuesday of September, to encourage eligible individuals to register at designated places on campus (e.g., Honors College, Alkek Library, LBJ Student Center, and the Avery Building).

**05. GUIDELINES FOR DISTRIBUTING VOTER REGISTRATION VIA PHYSICAL FORMS**

05.01 On the San Marcos campus, voter registration forms will be located at the Information Desk on the second floor of the LBJSC, front desk of Student Involvement @ LBJSC. On the Round Rock campus, forms will be located at Student Success Round Rock, Avery Building, Room 265.

05.02 Offices and departments may also provide voter registration forms. Forms may be requested directly from the Texas Secretary of State or Student Involvement @ LBJSC.

05.03 The Department of Housing and Residential Life will make voter registration information and physical forms available at the front desk of each residence hall. The physical address of each residence hall will be posted in a visible area near each front desk.

**06. PROCEDURES FOR VOTER REGISTRATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

06.01 Faculty may use reasonable class time to provide non-partisan information related to voter registration.

06.02 Faculty may host external individuals or groups to provide information and voter registration opportunities to their class if the external individuals or groups are Volunteer Deputy Registrars and non-partisan.

06.03 Student participation in voter registration is voluntary. During the registration period students should not be asked any questions about their decision to participate in voter registration. No student will be identified, rewarded, or penalized based on their participation in voter registration.

**07. GUIDELINES FOR DISTRIBUTING VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND ENCOURAGING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT VIA ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

07.01 The university will communicate voting registration information to students, faculty, and staff via email each year to notify the campus community of federal and statewide elections.

07.02 During the second week of each fall and spring semester, the university will send a message containing an internet address where individuals may download and print a form to register to vote in the state of Texas and locations where a physical form may be obtained at Texas State University, both San Marcos & Round Rock. This message will be devoted exclusively to voter registration.

07.03 Students, faculty, and staff will be sent information about early and election day voting, polling locations, and hours of operation during voting days through email at least one week before early voting begins and at least one day before election day.

**08. PROCEDURES TO ENCOURAGE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ON-CAMPUS AND IN THE CLASSROOM**

08.01 Any department, office, student organization, or faculty member may host events, programs, or activities that encourage civic engagement.

08.02 The university will sponsor and encourage initiatives on-campus to increase civic engagement of students, faculty, and staff.

1. Activities may include, but are not limited to:
2. panel discussions;
3. Common Experience;
4. Philosophy Dialogue series;
5. service learning and volunteer opportunities;
6. classroom learning material and discussions; and

6) internships and job opportunities.

08.03 Civic engagement does not include campaigning or partisan activities.

08.04 Faculty that encourages civic engagement in the classroom will adhere to policies outlined in [AA/PPS No. 02.03.02, Conduct of Classes](https://policies.txstate.edu/division-policies/academic-affairs/02-03-02.html).

08.05 External campus entities wanting to reserve space on campus may contact Student Involvement @ LBJSC.

**09. GUIDELINES FOR ELECTIONEERING**

09.01 On occasion, an area on the university’s campus may be designated as a polling place for national, state, and local elections.

09.02 The VPSS will convene a meeting with the Hays County Election Commissioner, the associate vice president for Student Success and dean of Students, and the associate director, LBJ Student Involvement to discuss electioneering guidelines and the area of the campus that may be designated as a polling place for national, state, or local elections. The Hays County Election Commissioner will disseminate election materials and guidelines to all candidates running for election.

09.03 The guidelines in this policy apply to signs and electioneering near designated polling places during early voting periods and on election day.

1. The dean of Students will designate one or more areas near these polling places where persons may place signs for or against any candidate, measure, or political party. As provided in state law ([Election Code § 62.013),](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/EL/htm/EL.62.htm) these signs must be at least 100 feet from the outside door through which a voter may enter a building in which a polling place is located (more information can be found on the [Student Involvement website](https://getinvolved.lbjsc.txst.edu/)). Walkways or ramps may not be obstructed.
2. The persons who place these signs must remove them immediately after the end of voting at the polling place.
3. The designated area will be large enough to accommodate a reasonable number of signs. In order to accommodate all signs, the dean of Students may limit the number of signs that may be placed in the designated areas by a candidate or by the proponents or opponents of a measure being voted on at the polling place. The dean of Students, or designee, will inform all interested persons of the locations for signs at polling places and any limit on the number of signs.
4. During the time a polling place on campus is open for voting, a person may not electioneer for or against any candidate, measure, or political party within 100 feet of an outside door through which a voter may enter the building in which a polling place is located ([Election Code § 85.036).](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/EL/htm/EL.85.htm#85.036)
5. Within 60 days of an election date, all candidates for public office have equal access to the designated campus grounds for the purpose of electioneering. Candidates may not:
6. disrupt classes or other university activities;
7. violate state law or any university policies, including those in [UPPS No. 07.04.02](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-04-02.html), Posting/Distribution of Literature, Informational Booths & Banners on Campus, Sections 03. and 04.;
8. post signs or electioneer inside university buildings; or
9. post messages on campus electronic message boards.

09.04 It is recommended that individuals planning to electioneer on campus submit an [Electioneering Request form](https://studentinvolvement.txst.edu/Policy-and-Procedures/Electioneering/Electioneering-Request-Form.html) to Student Involvement @ LBJSC to guarantee a designated space on campus grounds.

**10. RELATED POLICY AND LAW**

10.01 Related Policy Statements

1. [UPPS No. 06.02.01, Communication with Governmental Agencies](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/06-02-01.html)
2. [UPPS No. 07.04.02, Posting/Distribution of Literature, Informational Booths & Banners on Campus](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-04-02.html)
3. [UPPS No. 07.04.03, Solicitation on Campus](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-04-03.html)
4. [UPPS No. 07.04.04, External Speakers Using University Facilities](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-04-04.html)
5. [UPPS No. 08.01.01, Scheduling of University Facilities](https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/08-01-01.html)
6. [AA/PPS No. 02.03.02, Conduct of Classes](https://policies.txstate.edu/division-policies/academic-affairs/02-03-02.html)

10.02 Related Law

1. Higher Education Act, [20 U.S. Code § 1094. Program Participation Agreements, Section 23](https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/1094)
2. Constitution and Citizenship Day, [118 STAT.3344, Section 111(b)](https://uscode.house.gov/statviewer.htm?volume=118&page=3344)

**11. REVIEWERS OF THIS UPPS**

11.01 Reviewers of this UPPS include the following:

Position Date

Vice President for Student Success March 1 E5Y

Associate Vice President for Student March 1 E5Y

Success and Dean of Students

Associate Director, LBJ Student March 1 E5Y

Center

Director, LBJ Student Center March 1 E5Y

Dean, College of Liberal Arts March 1 E5Y

**12. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

This UPPS has been approved by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Vice President for Student Success; senior reviewer of this UPPS

President