



Millersville University

**All in Campus Democracy Challenge  
Action Plan Fall 2016**



## Fall 2016 Action Plan

### Introduction

#### **Choosing and the Work of the Steering Committee**

Definitions, background and examples

Reflection on MU community engagement activities and best practices- such as ADP, Constitution Week, Congress to Campus, Election education and Election Day assistance  
Community perceptions

#### **Vision and Mission Statement for Community Engagement**

**Community Engagement:** “describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”

**-From the *CARNEGIE ELECTIVE CLASSIFICATION IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT***

#### **University – Community Engagement Strategies**

#### **Action Steps and Learning Outcomes**

1. Formally recognize MU strengths
2. Communicate MU current events, programs and success story
3. Support faculty interest and new ideas
4. Encourage curricular engagement with communities' current organizations

#### **Strategies and Action Steps for the Future**

## Introduction

Joining the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge affords Millersville University an opportunity to have our campus be recognized for its commitment to improving democratic engagement, increasing student voter participation rates, and graduating students with a lifelong commitment to being informed and active citizens prepared to engage in society.

*Preparing graduates for their public lives as citizens, members of communities, and professionals in society has historically been a responsibility of higher education. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge recognizes those postsecondary campuses committed to improving democratic engagement, increasing student voter participation rates, and graduating students with a lifelong commitment to being informed and active citizens. It also awards exemplary efforts in these same areas.*

## Definitions, background and examples

### By joining the 2016 ALL In Challenge our campus commits to:

- Improve democratic engagement, increasing student voter participation rates, and graduating students with a lifelong commitment to being informed and active citizens.
- Convene a campus a campus-wide committee that includes members from academic affairs, student affairs, and the student body. This committee will develop and implement an action plan that will be submitted to Civic Nation, to be shared publicly on its website.
- Participate in the [National Study on Learning, Voting, and Engagement \(NSLVE\)](#) in order to our measure our student voter participation rates. NSLVE is a part of Tufts University's [Institute for Democracy and Higher Education](#) which studies student political learning and engagement in democracy.
- Share our campus' 2016 NSLVE results with Civic Nation in order to be eligible for a recognition seal and/or award and allowing those rates to be shared publicly.
- Ensuring a vigorous discussion and timely analysis of major public policy issues affection the nation and the world through our annual International Policy Conference, this year entitled *Justice...For All?*
- Sustaining a public policy leadership program for highly talented and civically engaged juniors and seniors who show a deep commitment to the ideals of the **All In** Democracy Challenge.

## Steering Committee

- The steering committee on Millersville's campus is comprised of Faculty, Staff and Students in collaboration with Student Affairs on campus as well as our Student Senate.

### Faculty and Staff:

Dr. Adam Lawrence, Professor of Political Science.

Dr. Robert Spicer, Assistant Professor of Communication and Theater

Dr. Victor DeSantis, Associate Provost for Civic and Community Engagement, Professor of Political Science

Dr. Diane Umble, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Ms. Lori Leaman, Assistant to the Associate Provost and Events Coordinator

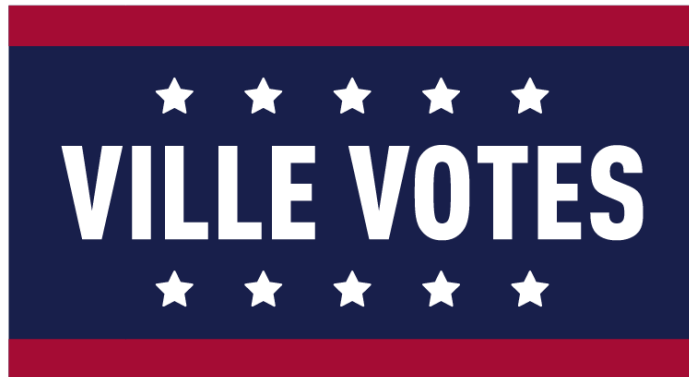
Ms. Melissa Wardwell, Director of Experiential Learning and Career Management (ELCM)

Mr. Abraham Mahdally, Graduate Assistant

### **Student Representatives**

Our Student representatives on campus are a cohort of 10-12 students selected annually to be Walker Center Fellows. These students are generally leaders on campus in various organizations and share an interest in civic leadership and public policy

- Set goals, plan events, and create marketing plan announcing programming and goals.
- Run blast email campaigns and social media coordination
- Meet (monthly) to assess events, gauge participation and areas for growth.



**#VILLEVOTES16**

### **MU Steps and Recent Best Practices and Learning Outcomes**

- **Constitution Week**
  - Millersville University plans multiple events for Constitution Week. We have lectures given by professors on the modern day importance of the Constitution and the historical importance of the Constitution. We have giveaways such as t-shirts and pocket Constitution's for students when they come to the events, free candy and snacks. We also had a week long voter registration drive where we got seventy new students to register to be able to vote. We created a MU constitution board where students committed their support to the US Constitution and signed it with an authentic quill pen. We created a social media presence and photo opportunity outlet for all students.
- **Voter Registration Tabling**
  - Help students register to vote, understand the process, determine where to find additional party information and provide them with absentee ballot forms if they need them. We have had many students register to vote. We have themed days to encourage participation as well and give away items to students who are registered to vote.
- **Voter Van transporting students to local polls**
  - As our university is spread out among three potential polling locations, we encourage students to educate themselves to their correct poll location, and provide transportation on Election Day.

- **Debate night**  
Host watch party and Debate live stream. Roundtable discussions with Campus party representatives.
- **Election Night**
  - Games that relate to politics/ elections
  - Live stream the election coverage
  - Get students involved in the election process
  - Get students to understand why the election process is important to them and the country
  - Discuss why the issues are important to discuss and why it is important to be civically engaged
  - Invite local legislators and policy makers to greet students on campus in a casual atmosphere
- **Legislative Speaker Series**
  - Pennsylvania Legislators are invited to campus to speak with students on what they do as legislators, their aspirations, and their recommendations for those aspiring to public service careers, and to give students a better idea of how legislating and legislators impact their lives.
- **Congress to Campus**
  - Two former members of Congress, one representing each major party, come to campus and speak to students in their classrooms during the day and then speak to students, faculty and the campus and regional community in the evening. These former members of Congress discuss what they did while in Congress and what it was like to be in public service and to represent their constituents. Students also have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have of the former members of Congress.
- **Inauguration 2017 events**
  - Host a forum on the presidential transition and the peaceful transfer of power and reflect on the policy issues facing the new administration.
  - Plan and execute a Washington DC day trip for interested students to attend the inauguration of the new President.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The Learning outcomes for all of these engagement events assure that all students:

1. Understand the formal actors in the public policy process (executive, legislative, and judicial branches)
2. Understand the external actors in the public policy arena (lobbyists, media, interest groups, parties)
3. Be prepared to participate in democratic processes such as voting, lobbying, protesting, and understand how these participatory mechanisms impact the policy process
4. Examine the careers and experiences of professionals in the policy arena
5. Disseminate this information to make responsible decisions that will affect their future career, familial and life goals.

### **Strategies and Action Steps for the Future**

This is Millersville's inaugural year with NSLVE. Its will be our goal to use the information that we will be provided to gain insight to needs of students in forthcoming years. We will continue to monitor and measure these successes.

Millersville will continue to engage students in the process of voter registration, as well as education and engaging their peers.

Millersville will continue to collaborate with curricular, and co-curricular programs campus wide to encourage voting and student engagement within the political arena.

Our University will continue and expand our commitment to educating and engaging all of our students and the members of the MU community to participate in the democratic process. It is our hope that all students will graduate actively engaged, productive citizens who are willing to face challenges, and to create solutions, to improve themselves and our global society.