



Albion College

**All In Action Plan
2024**

I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Kelly Finn, Assistant Dean for Student Development, to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Albion College. While the Division of Student Development, Gerald R. Ford Institute for Leadership in Public Policy and Service and President's Office will be facilitating and leading these efforts related to voter registration and engagement, they will also be joined by many different departments and off-campus partners. In 2022, the Voting Initiatives Coalition was established to synergize groups of students, faculty, staff and partners focused on democratic engagement and voting. This group will continue our work as we approach the 2024 election cycle. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over the summer and fall of 2024, for the 2024 election, on and around our campus in Albion, Michigan. Albion College has seen significant demographic shifts in our student body over the past 6+ years. Our coalition and efforts must reflect our current student body.

This action plan builds off of previous work that has taken place at Albion College in the 2020 and 2022 election cycles. We plan to continue this advocacy with a focus on improving student voter turnout in this upcoming cycle. Our college mission states "...that valuable learning takes place in and outside the classroom, on and off campus" which makes voting integral, not only to democracy but to our institution as well. To do this, we have four specific goals, both long-term and short-term, that we would like to achieve for the 2024 Election. The four short-term goals that we will be most focused on for this action plan are:

1. Raise the voter turnout on Albion's campus for the 2024 election to 65%. In 2020, our voting rate was 61.7%, an 18.4% increase from 2016. We intend to continue this positive trajectory forward in this upcoming election cycle.
2. Share broad and regular campus communication about our voting efforts throughout the summer and fall 2024 to provide relevant and timely information to our campus community.
3. Share information about the upcoming election cycle and voter registration information in all syllabi for fall 2024.
4. Host 3-5 programs focused on democratic engagement, civic engagement and the importance of voting throughout the fall 2024 semester.

Over the past few years, we have engaged a Voting Initiatives Coalition representative of students, faculty, staff and community partners to lead this work. This coalition will remain in place moving forward into the 2024 election cycle.

II. Leadership

Kelly Finn, Assistant Dean for Student Development, is leading the College's voter engagement action plan for this election. Kelly is facilitating the creation of Albion College's Action Plan, overseeing the Voting Initiatives Coalition, and ensuring the voting plan is carried out. This coalition represents all major constituent groups at the College and important campus partners. The representatives below are all committed members of the Voting Initiatives Coalition. Some

members were previously serving as part of this group in the last election cycle. New members have been recruited to fill open positions since then. The voting initiatives coalition is made up of the following staff, faculty, students and partners:

- Kelly Finn, Assistant Dean for Student Development, Committee Chair
- Leroy Wright, Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students
- Eddie Visco, Executive Director, Gerald R. Ford Institute for Leadership in Public Policy and Service
- Emily DiRado, Head Women's Lacrosse Coach, Coordinator of Student Athletic Advisory Council
- William Rose, Professor and Chair, Political Science Department
- Kara Anderson, Student Senate President
- Andrew Renner, Student-Athlete Advisory Committee President
- Lori Kline-Closson, League of Women Voters
- Bob Dunklin, President, Albion Chapter of the NAACP
- Representative from Student Group, Diversability
- Representative from Student Group, College Democrats
- Representative from Student Group, College Republicans

We will continue to work closely with local partners to utilize some of the excellent resources in our local community. Our group plans to meet once a month throughout the summer of 2024 and more frequently in the fall semester.

III. Commitment

Our institution and campus leadership demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. Our President has signed the ALL IN Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation and is committed to increasing Albion's voter turnout. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. Our [values](#) include: a diverse community of learners, teachers, scholars, and thinkers who share and promote a passion for learning and innovation in teaching and scholarship; diversity as an expression and affirmation of the human condition and as a source of strength and celebration for all members of the community; fairness, justice, ethical development, and personal responsibility; intellectual, personal, social, ethical, and spiritual development within our local and global communities that prepares graduates for productive lives and careers; a breadth and depth of opportunities and experiences; and, the drive to help each other make meaningful and educated contributions to our world. All of these values align with our institutional desire to support the democratic and civic engagement of our student body.

Over the past few election cycles, we've seen:

- Creation of additional voter education materials and communications, continuing to utilize our [voting website and TurboVote resources](#).
- Increase use of our voter communication toolkit which has helped campus leaders feel confident in their ability to reach students using a variety of templates.

- Student organizations host a variety of events in election and non-election years. These events have included Constitution Day celebrations, National Voter Registration Day, and debates – both with local candidates and politically engaged student organizations.
- Consistent voter registration and voter participation events on campus.

On campus, we've experienced:

- Students engaged and voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Town halls
- Voter registration events
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Deliberative dialogues across lines of cultural and political difference

IV. Landscape

Albion College is a small private liberal arts residential college. It has approximately 1,300 students. While we are a small institution, this has served as an asset for us as we have mobilized our campus around civic engagement. Over the past 6+ years, the demographics of our student body have shifted significantly and grown in racial, ethnic and geographic diversity. We intentionally collaborate with students, faculty, staff and community partners that represent our major constituent groups to ensure that we are connecting with our entire population. Over the past year, we have welcomed our 18th President, Dr. Wayne Webster, who has provided stable leadership and a [Pathway Forward](#) for our campus. Part of that pathway forward lays out a plan to enhance experiential learning opportunities for our students, which provides a unique opportunity to mobilize students civically. We are excited about the President's commitment to civic learning, engagement and voting initiatives at the College.

V. Goals

We know our campus faces the following challenges internally when it comes to voting efforts:

- Although we have made progress, there has been a history of siloed work related to voter engagement on campus.
- We do not currently have consistent funding for this work. The Voting Initiatives Coalition will be working with the College Cabinet to secure funding to address this to support our voter engagement efforts.
- Our 2022 NSLVE report indicated that our first-year students had the lowest voting rate of our entire student body. We believe that we need to focus efforts, particularly with our first-year and second-year students early in their Albion College journey to encourage their civic engagement and voter participation.

We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to voting efforts:

- We have faced significant leadership and staff turnover in the past few years, which has impacted the staff and faculty working on voting. This year, we have stabilized our team and received support from the President's Office to continue this important work.
- In the past, some of our voting work has not been as inclusive of departments on campus as we would like it to be. The Voting Initiatives Coalition helps to address this by having representation from across campus.

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- Our new President, Dr. Wayne Webster, has supported our civic learning and democratic engagement efforts and has strengthened our institutional commitment to this work.
- We have a coalition of people positioned to work on civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have processes and practices in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We have bolstered communication specific to voting for our community over the past few years.
- We utilize resources through All IN, TurboVote, the local chapter of the NAACP, League of Women Voters and other partners to share with our campus community.
- The voter engagement work on our campus is distributed throughout many offices and areas of expertise.
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We have engaged student leaders within the coalition.
- We have a working relationship with our local election office.

With this in mind, we have set the following goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Raise the voter turnout on Albion's campus for the 2024 election to 65%. In 2020, our voting rate was 61.7% which was an 18.4% increase from 2016. We intend to continue this positive trajectory forward in this upcoming election cycle.
2. Share broad, on-going campus communication about our voting efforts throughout the summer and fall 2024 to provide relevant and timely information to our campus community.
3. Share information about the upcoming election cycle and voter registration information in all syllabi for fall 2024.
4. Host 3-5 programs focused on democratic engagement, civic engagement and the importance of voting throughout the fall 2024 semester.

We have also set the following goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

1. Raise voter turnout on Albion's campus above the national average (midterm or presidential).
2. Maintain a consistent plan for voter engagement and civic engagement efforts from election cycle to election cycle.

3. Maintain consistent web presence related to our efforts on an ongoing basis.
4. Develop and secure consistent funding for voting initiatives.
5. Identify a consistent leadership model for civic engagement efforts
6. As the College works to revitalize our core curriculum over the next academic year, make recommendations to include and prioritize civic and democratic engagement as part of our new core.

VI. Strategy

This election cycle, we are focusing on a three-pronged approach to civic engagement and learning on our campus. We are focused on the following three prongs: voter registration, civil dialogue, and issue awareness. We have engaged various departments on taking a lead with programming respective to each of these three areas to support our overall goal of increasing civic engagement, learning and ultimately, voter turnout. These are tactics that we are already doing in the short term (within the next year):

- Voter registration events on and off campus
- Maintain consistent and up-to-date web presence with voter information
- Ongoing passive engagement utilizing our campus communication toolkit
- Ads in our student newspaper, the Albion Pleiad
- Debate watch parties
- Debates with local candidates
- Non-partisan voter information about candidates
- Maintain contract with TurboVote to have a dedicated website to register, request ballots, and election reminders and direct students to utilize it
- Encourage faculty and staff to talk to students about their plan to vote
- Encourage students to hold their peers accountable
- Utilize NSLVE data to share with campus community through ongoing communications
- Encourage staff and faculty to register and vote through campus communications
- Voter registration information added to syllabus guidelines
- Encourage friendly competition utilizing TurboVote among student organizations

These are tactics that we are already doing for the long term (beyond the next year):

- Maintain Voter Friendly Campus designation
- Publishing of NSLVE reports on a regular basis on our website
- Working to institutionalize civic learning and democratic engagement work
- Engage in Great Lake College Association (GLCAs) Get Out the Vote group to collaborate and work with local and regional campuses on our voting efforts
- Work closely with College Republicans and College Democrats to enhance programming related to civic and democratic engagement throughout the academic year

VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2018 and 2020. In 2018 our registration rate was 64.8%. While we don't have data for midterm elections before 2018, our registration rate did go up in 2020 to 84.7%. In 2020, Albion College had 1,444 eligible voters and 890 voted (62% voting rate). In 2020, the national average for private, undergraduate institutions voting rate was 70%, while Albion College's voting rate was 62%. We know that we have work to do to increase our voting rate.

In 2020, we know that the large majority of our students (66%) voted not-in-person and this is important for us to keep in mind as we prepare for the fall 2024 election cycle, to ensure that students have relevant information about voting absentee.

Looking at the field of study data in our 2020 NSLVE report, students in our education program and physical sciences voted at the highest rates (over 74%). We know that we need to continue building partnerships with our faculty so they can encourage student voter participation in their classes throughout the fall semester.

We also know that we need to keep our focus on first-year and second-year students who consistently vote at the lowest rates on our campus.

VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

This Action Plan will be shared internally with all members of our Voting Initiatives Coalition, the President's Cabinet and a variety of key constituents involved in voting work on our campus.

We plan to share the 2024 NSLVE data when it is complete by posting it to our albion.edu/vote webpage and share major highlights of our 2024 data in broad campus communications.

We will collect feedback on this Action Plan by gathering our Voting Initiatives Coalition to debrief and reflect on our progress, gaps and items we need to address. We will also collect feedback from key student groups who are deeply engaged in this work (College Democrats, College Republicans, Student Senate, etc).

We plan to evaluate our success by: reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year and revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly.