

Allegheny College Votes 2024:

Civic Engagement Plan for Allegheny College

**Allegheny College
Meadville, PA**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Allegheny College Votes 2024 is our institution's campus-wide civic engagement plan. This plan is the result of a collaborative effort involving the college's Center for Political Participation (CPP), Center for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Social Justice (hereafter, IDEAS Center), and students affiliated with Andrew Goodman Foundation (AGF) in consultation with the college's senior administration and the Crawford County Office of Voter Services. The purpose of this plan is threefold: 1) to increase the proportion of Allegheny students who have registered to vote; 2) to increase the proportion of registered voters who cast a ballot; and 3) to increase registration and turnout among subsets of the student population that have historically participated at the lowest rates. To implement this plan, the CPP, IDEAS Center and AGF have created civic engagement resources and planned a series of events on campus from August through early November to promote participation in the 2024 general election. This includes a shuttle service to the two polling locations where Allegheny students vote on Election Day. Students, faculty, and staff involved with the CPP, IDEAS Center, and AGF have committed to leading events that help students register to vote and request absentee and mail-in ballots and events designed to help students identify credible sources of information about the candidates running for office in the 2024 general election cycle. The CPP, IDEAS Center, AGF, and the president of the college have also committed to disseminating information to students, staff, and faculty about where to find civic engagement resources throughout the semester. The CPP will convene periodic discussions among the institutional partners involved in civic engagement efforts to assess the effectiveness of actions taken in the service of this plan's three fundamental goals. The CPP will also convene a meeting to discuss evidence of student turnout following Election Day and again when National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for the 2024 general election becomes available. This post-election assessment will provide a basis for the next iteration of the college's campus wide civic engagement plan.

1. Leadership Coalition

The college's leadership coalition for Allegheny Votes 2024 involves several organizations with representatives that include students, faculty, administrative staff, and senior administrators. This leadership coalition also frequently consults with experts from a national civic engagement organization—the Andrew Goodman Foundation (AGF)—and with county-level election officials at the Crawford County Office of Voter Services.

In June 2024, Allegheny College President Ron Cole convened a steering committee to organize Allegheny Votes 2024 civic engagement plans. This steering committee is comprised of the Director of the Center for Political Participation, who supervises six student fellows, including two students who are supported by the AGF. It also includes the Director of the IDEAS Center, who supervises six student fellows, the Program Coordinator for the IDEAS Center, and the Associate Dean in the Office Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This steering committee has several responsibilities. These include creating an Allegheny College Votes 2024 website with civic engagement resources and creating a leadership team that includes students to coordinate non-partisan voter registration and turnout efforts and promote these efforts to the student body. Additionally, the steering committee consults with experts from AGF and the Crawford County Office of Voter Services as needed and coordinates with the college's Dean for Students and Office of Public Safety when organizing on campus events. The steering committee meets periodically with the President of the College, the Provost of the College, the Dean for Students to discuss the progress of civic engagement plans. The President of the College is also involved in disseminating information about civic engagement events to students, faculty, and staff through campus-wide communications (such the State of the College address in August and campus-wide emails about civic engagement events). A list of the individuals involved in the college's civic engagement steering committee and broader coalition appears below.

Allegheny College Votes 2024 Steering Committee (reports to Allegheny College President, Ron Cole)

Andrew Bloeser, Director of the Center for Political Participation (Faculty)
Natalie Brown, Director of the IDEAS Center
Marquel Jeffries, Assistant Director of the IDEAS Center
Jathan Reynolds, Program Coordinator, IDEAS Center
Dom Turner, Associate Dean in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Operational Leadership Team

Center for Political Participation

Andrew Bloeser, Director of the Center for Political Participation (Faculty)
Asaad Bell, CPP Student Fellow
Jess Bickart, CPP Student Fellow
Amani Green, CPP Student Fellow, AGF Ambassador
Caroline Maye, CPP Student Fellow

Inayah Toussaint , CPP Student Fellow, AGF Ambassador
Zula Stenger, CPP Student Fellow

IDEAS Center

Natalie Brown, Director of the IDEAS Center
Marquel Jeffries, Assistant Director of the IDEAS Center
Jathan Reynolds, Program Coordinator, IDEAS Center
Student Fellows–TBD (hiring of this year’s fellows will conclude soon)

Intra-institutional Consultants

Colin Hurly, Associate Dean & Director of Community Engagement
Sarah Young, Program Director for the Office of Community Engagement
Tarah Williams, Director of Project Pericles for Allegheny College
Trae Yeckley, Dean for Students
Jim Bassinger, Director of Public Safety
Penny Drexel , Executive Director of Marketing and Communications

Extra-institutional Consultants

Mia Matthews , AGF National Staff Member, Program Coordinator
Jessalyn McFarland , Director of the Crawford County Office of Voter Services

2. Succession Plan for Leadership Coalition

The members of the steering committee for Allegheny College Votes 2024 serve on the committee due to their institutional positions at the Center for Political Participation and IDEAS Center, respectively. The mission of the CPP is to “to provide opportunities for civic learning and civic engagement at Allegheny College.” The mission of the IDEAS Center is to “provide a space that encourages, educates, and empowers under-resourced student populations.” Accordingly, if an individual affiliated with one of these centers exits their position, the person who succeeds them would serve on the steering committee. Individuals who serve on the steering committee have access to all past planning documents prepared by past steering committees and archived resources (such as previous versions of the college webpage for civic engagement resources).

Additionally, the Center for Political Participation maintains a transition document that details the responsibilities for the center’s director and a timeline for when those responsibilities are to be executed. This includes a description of responsibilities related to organizing civic engagement events during each election cycle (i.e. coordinating with personnel in the IDEAS Center; organizing voter registration events;

organizing events to facilitate applying for and casting absentee and mail-in ballots). The Center for Political Participation also provides its student fellows access to planning materials from previous election cycles. The director and veteran fellows have the responsibility of briefing new fellows on these materials.

Similarly, students affiliated with the Andrew Goodman Foundation receive training to help students register to vote and apply for mail in and absentee ballots. They also meet periodically with an AGF program coordinator who serves as a resource for designing outreach efforts on campus. Additionally, students affiliated with AGF have access to campus action plans that the national organization requires its student fellows to prepare at the start of each academic year. These action plans are specifically designed to guide civic engagement work in the context of elections. Over the past two years, students affiliated with the Andrew Goodman Foundation have also served as CPP Student Fellows to help the CPP build its capacity to execute voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts. The CPP and AGF plan to continue that working relationship.

The CPP and AGF also have standard operating procedures for recruiting new student fellows when positions are vacant. Each entity issues an open call to all students when positions become available. The CPP also oversees the college's Law & Policy Program which exists to help students connect their academic experiences with internship and career opportunities in fields related to law, policy, and civic life. CPP students serve as peer mentors for students entering the program and use their experiences as mentors to identify students who may have interests and skills related to civic engagement. These students are invited to apply for open CPP student fellow positions. As of this year, AGF has begun to work with the Bonner Program through the college's Office of Community Engagement. The Bonner Program aims "to provide diverse, predominantly low-income students with an 'Access to Education and Opportunity to Serve.'" Students enrolled in the program at Allegheny College are required to engage in hours of service each week and can choose to do that service with a variety of organizations on campus and in the larger Meadville community. Working with AGF students at Allegheny College on civic engagement hours is now one of the ways that Bonner students can fulfill their service hours and this provides students currently affiliated with AGF with an opportunity to identify students who can continue AGF-supported work work after they graduate. Taken together, these recruitment procedures help sustain a pipeline of student volunteers who can gain civic engagement experience and become future members of the operational leadership team for civic engagement listed above.

This is the first election cycle in which the IDEAS Center has become actively involved in civic engagement work and its staff have served on a college-wide steering committee on civic engagement efforts. The IDEAS Center is developing its own internal practices for involving its student fellows in voter registration and get-out-the-vote activities.

3. Institutional Commitment

Historical Commitments

The mission statement of Allegheny College begins with an emphasis on “promoting students’ intellectual, moral, and social development and encouraging personal and civic responsibility.” Consistent with its commitment to civic responsibility, the college founded its Center for Political Participation twenty-two years ago to promote civic learning and civic engagement opportunities for Allegheny students. The student fellows who work at the center have served as leaders of voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts throughout the center’s history.

The college’s institutional partnership with the Andrew Goodman Foundation also reflects its commitment to civic responsibility through democratic engagement. The Andrew Goodman Foundation was established to honor the memory of Mr. Goodman who, along with Michael Swerner and James Chaney, were murdered during Freedom Summer in 1964. Today, the foundation provides support to students at colleges and universities across the country. Allegheny College is proud to be among the “Founding 15” educational institutions to forge a partnership with this organization and equally proud to be celebrating the 10th year anniversary of this partnership. For the past 10 years, students supported by the Andrew Goodman Foundation have worked closely with students from the Center for Political Participation to organize civic engagement efforts on our campus and have played a distinctive role in making voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts more diverse and inclusive in their scope. Additionally, students involved with the CPP and AGF have contributed to the creation of campus action plans such as the one that first earned Allegheny a Voter Friendly Campus Designation in 2021.

Additionally, for the past decade, the college has included “civic learning”¹ among its core educational goals and has required students to take at least one course that designates civic learning as its primary purpose. Students who successfully complete this requirement will demonstrate an understanding of economic, political, legal, cultural, natural, historical, or social forces that affect public problems or civic issues. Faculty at the college regularly assess student work from civic learning courses and the college has recently established an institutional framework for periodically reviewing these assessments.

Civic Learning develops the political, ethical, and social capacities citizens need to address the challenges facing local, regional, national, and international communities through community engagement and/or through the cultivation of civic knowledge, skills, motivations, and behaviors.

Learning Outcome: Students who successfully complete this requirement will demonstrate an understanding of economic, political, legal, cultural, natural, historical, or social forces that affect public problems or civic issues.

Deepening Historical Commitments in 2024

In preparation for the 2024 general election, President Ron Cole signed the “Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation” as part of this year’s *All In Campus Democracy Challenge*, becoming the first Allegheny College president to do so. Consistent with this commitment, he

¹ More information about this curricular requirement can be found at <https://catalog.allegheny.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=1249#the-distribution-requirements>

designated the Director of the Center for Political Participation, the Director of the IDEAS Center, and Associate Dean in the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion to lead the Allegheny College Votes 2024 steering committee.

This approach marks a broader institutional commitment to democratic engagement. In past election cycles, the work of planning civic engagement efforts was undertaken by the Center for Political Participation in collaboration with students supported by the Andrew Goodman Foundation. The involvement of the IDEAS Center adds significant capacity to the college's institutional civic engagement work. The IDEAS Center's purpose is to "provide a space that encourages, educates, and empowers under-resourced student populations." Traditionally, this center has focused on academic achievement and social belonging on campus and, under the leadership of its current director and Associate Dean in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the IDEAS Center has expanded its work to include civic engagement. This greater involvement from the IDEAS Center, supported by the office of the college president, is intended to help civic engagement efforts reach students who have historically been less likely to register to vote and cast a ballot (according to NSLVE data).

Since beginning its work in June 2024, the Allegheny College Votes steering committee has created a webpage that connects students to voter registration forms and forms for requesting absentee and mail-in ballots in all 50 states.² The webpage also features deadlines for voter registration, ballot requests, and casting absentee and mail-in ballots. This webpage was publicized to faculty and staff by the president of the college during a "state of the college" address and by email communication in August 2024. The webpage was also promoted to incoming freshmen and returning students as part of the college's "welcome weekend." The college also piloted a new civic engagement event targeted at incoming freshmen. For the first time in the college's history, a session devoted to voter registration and applying for absentee and mail-in ballots was included in orientation programming for incoming freshmen. Led by the IDEAS Center and supported by the Center for Political Participation, all incoming freshmen attended a session that guided them through how to complete registration and ballot request forms.

Throughout the months of September, October, and November, the Center for Political Participation, IDEAS Center, and students affiliated with the Andrew Goodman Foundation are offering a series of co-curricular civic engagement events. This includes a campus-wide voter registration drive to commemorate National Voter Registration Day and subsequent events to promote voter registration, ballot requests, and casting absentee and mail-in ballots. As a result of an initiative led by students affiliated with the Andrew Goodman Foundation, Allegheny College is also piloting a new approach facilitating participation on Election Day. Traditionally, Allegheny College has held a day of college-wide programming called "Gator Day" approximately one week before Election Day. Notably, there are no classes on Gator Day. This year, the college has adopted a proposal first put forward by AGF students, to move Gator Day to Election Day to make it easier for students to get to the polls. Additionally, the CPP, IDEAS Center, and Andrew Goodman Foundation students will be operating a shuttle service to the two polling locations where Allegheny students vote on Election Day.

² The webpage can be found at: <https://sites.allegheny.edu/vote/>

Additionally, the Center for Political Participation, IDEAS Center, and students affiliated with the Andrew Goodman Foundation are co-sponsoring a series of co-curricular events throughout the fall semester. These include a Constitution Day speaker, an event focusing on the political challenges of rural areas (such as the one where the college is located), an event focusing on economic policy (co-sponsored by the college's Center for Business and Economics) and a post-election panel featuring Allegheny faculty. The college will also host the Pennsylvania Superior Court in October. The court will hear oral arguments on Allegheny's campus and participate in programming coordinated by the Center for Political Participation. The Center for Political Participation has also worked with several college faculty and a high school teacher who will bring classes to oral arguments and incorporate lessons about the civic function of the court into their classes.

4. Landscape

Based on discussions with students who have been actively involved in civic engagement efforts over the past five years and on our review of NSLVE data from this same period of time, we have identified three trends that define Allegheny's civic engagement landscape. The first is that social engagement on campus is still recovering after the COVID 19 pandemic. The second is that lower voter registration and turnout rates continue to exist for students of color, consistent with national trends. The third is that an increasing number of students demonstrate a preference for voting via absentee ballot mail-in ballot, while fewer vote in-person on Election Day.

Social Engagement

Students involved with civic engagement continued to report that it was challenging to generate turnout for a number of events during the 2023-24 academic year. One reason for this was that many student organizations had declined in membership during the pandemic. Because in-person meetings were very limited during much of the pandemic (as were many informal occasions for people to meet), many student organizations struggled with recruitment and therefore had fewer members. Relatedly, as students graduated, organizations lost students with pre-pandemic leadership experience. As we entered into fall of 2023 last year, many of the student organizations who participated in voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts were struggling to rebuild and, more generally, students were just beginning to recover the practical skill of harnessing their campus social networks for civic engagement work. In some cases, younger students involved with civic engagement work were still trying to build their own personal social networks and establish a "sense of belonging" on campus. Consequently, turnout at registration events was somewhat lower than what we observed at events prior to the pandemic.

This means that our voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts will also need to identify the most effective means of connecting with the students we want to reach. This is particularly important for encouraging students to cast a ballot after they have registered. NLSVE data (IDHE 2023) indicated that our voter registration rate in 2022 was virtually the same as 2018 at roughly 79%, but our voting rate fell by 6% (when comparing these two midterm cycles). This suggests the importance of helping students feel socially connected to civic life in the lead up to the election. Although our voting rate in presidential

elections increased by 10% from 2016 to 2020 (IDHE 2021), we are not taking it for granted that a presidential cycle will necessarily induce greater participation from our students in the absence of well-coordinated outreach efforts. While working with existing student organizations will remain part of our strategy, we are also intentionally focusing on how institutional partners like the IDEAS Center and the Bonner Program can help us reach students in new ways. We have also developed plans to increase our efforts to locate our civic engagement efforts where students organically socialize for non-civic purposes (such as getting meals and socializing in the Campus Center). This may be more effective than the old strategy of working through social networks created by student organizations.

Racial Disparities in Voter Registration and Turnout

At Allegheny College we have very intentionally worked toward creating a more diverse and inclusive civic culture. For the past 10 years, students involved in the Andrew Goodman Foundation at Allegheny College have played a leading role in this work. Historically and currently, most students involved in AGF are students of color who belong to other organizations in which students of color are very active. Since AGF began its efforts on campus, outreach to students of color has increased and AGF students have prioritized further improving that outreach. The voter participation rate among black students, the largest racial minority group on our campus, climbed from 43.7 % in the 2016 presidential election cycle to 48% in 2020. The voter participation rate among Hispanic students, meanwhile, increased from 53% in 2016 to 62% in 2020 (IDHE 2022, p. 7; IDHE 2021, p. 11). Although many factors likely contribute to these increases, we believe that developing the breadth of our civic engagement efforts is among those factors.

Yet, our campus coalition recognizes that we have much more work to do. According to NLSVE (2020), the voter participation gap between white and black students on campuses that participate in the study is 8% and the gap between white and Hispanic students is 11% (Thomas et. al. 2020, p. 13). At Allegheny College, the voter participation gap between white and black students in 2020 was 28% and the gap between white and Hispanic students was 14% (IDHE 2022, p. 7). Additionally, 2023 NSLVE data indicates that similar racial gaps continued to persist in the 2022 midterm elections.

Our awareness of these trends has already informed our strategy for the current election cycle. As noted earlier, our leadership team in this cycle now includes a prominent role for the IDEAS Center, which we believe has significant credibility with and connection to students of color who were not reached by past civic engagement efforts. In this cycle, the IDEAS Center, in collaboration with the Center for Political Participation and Andrew Goodman Foundation, will train student fellows to help with voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts. Likewise, students affiliated with the Andrew Goodman Foundation are working more closely with campus leaders in the Bonnor Program to recruit students to help with voter registration and turnout. Because many Bonnor students are students of color and/or students with lower incomes, our aim is to make our civic engagement efforts more racially and socio-economically inclusive.

Changing Preferences for Voting Method

Not surprisingly, during the 2020 presidential election cycle, Allegheny witnessed a significant decline in the proportion of students who voted in-person on Election day (-34%) and a significant increase in the proportion of students who chose to vote by mail or absentee ballot (+29%). This reflects the conditions of the COVID pandemic and the voting methods made available to students during this time. Our recent review of NSLVE data pertaining to the 2022 midterm election cycle reveals that this pattern has continued. In-person voting declined by 19% from 2018 to 2022 while voting by absentee and mail-in ballots increased by 28%. This shift in preferences about voting method suggests the importance of helping students request absentee ballots and mail-in ballots and return them prior to election deadlines.

5. Primary Goals

Based on our assessment of the landscape of civic engagement at Allegheny College, the steering committee for Allegheny Votes 2024 has identified three fundamental goals:

- 1) increase the proportion of Allegheny students who have registered to vote
- 2) increase the proportion of registered voters who cast a ballot
- 3) increase registration and turnout among subsets of the student population that have historically participated at the lowest rates

Short-term Goals

In our effort to purpose the three fundamental goals listed above, we have set short-term goals which we aim to achieve during the 2024 general election cycle:

- 1) Increase overall student turnout by at least 5%
- 2) Increase proportion of registered students who cast a ballot by at least 5%
- 3) Increase turnout among students of color by at least 5%

Our short-term goals reflect our consideration of NSLVE data from the 2016 presidential election cycle. This was the most recent presidential election that occurred under non-pandemic conditions. Despite the conditions of the pandemic, record numbers of voters cast ballots in the United States in 2020 and that pattern was also reflected in turnout at Allegheny College. Although we believe that this is partly attributable to our coalition's civic engagement efforts in that cycle, we also believe that students had fewer distractions during this period and the salience of vote-by-mail options was higher for reasons that are, at least partly, beyond our direct control. For this reason, we using the 2016 presidential election as a baseline for our goals in the 2024 presidential election cycle.

In 2016, Allegheny College was 8 points above the national average for student voter turnout at colleges and universities. However, we were 21 points below the student voter turnout rate achieved by the nation's most active colleges and universities (IDHE 2021). Although we are taking 2016 as our baseline, we were also 6 points above the national average in 2020, while being 17 points behind the institutions with higher student voter turnout. Our first short term goal is to reduce the distance between Allegheny and the institutions with highest turnout rates by 25%. This will require us to increase the overall student turnout rate by about 10% relative to our rate in 2016. Ideally, we will do this by both increasing the number of students who register and the number of registered students who vote.

To help us achieve this first goal, our second (and related goal) is to increase the percentage of registered voters who cast a ballot. In 2016, the voting rate among students who were registered indicates that roughly 10% of registered students did not vote (IDHE 2021). We aim to cut that percentage in half in 2024.

Lastly, our third short-term goal is also in the service of our first short-term goal. To increase overall student voter turnout, we are focusing on increasing voter turnout among students of color at our institution, mindful that our racial voter gaps are persistent and higher than the national average. For our civic engagement efforts to be more inclusive and equitable and for our overall efforts to be more successful, meeting this goal will be important. As a first incremental step, we are aiming to increase turnout rate among students of color in all racial demographic groups by 5%.

Long-term Goals

In our effort to purpose the three fundamental goals listed above, we have also set longer-term goals which we aim to over the next two presidential election cycle (2028 and 2032):

- 1) Increase overall student turnout by at least 7.5%
- 2) Increase overall student turnout by at least 7.5%
- 3) Increase turnout among students of color by at least 10%

The long term goals we have created reflect our commitment to incremental progress beyond our short-terms goals for the 2024 cycle. As with our short-term goals, our long-term goals are motivated by our desire to close the gap between our institution and institutions with the highest student voter turnout rates. Likewise, our goals are motivated by our desire to become more inclusive and equitable by closing racial voter turnout gaps. Meeting this specific goal is both important for the overall success of our civic engagement efforts and important in its own right.

We note that, while these are currently our long-term goals, we plan to reassess whether our specific targets appear to be realistic and achievable once we have data from the 2024 election cycle.

6. Strategy

Long-term Strategies

Capacity Building

In the current interaction of our civic engagement work, our long-term strategy focuses on building our capacity for larger, more inclusive voter registration and turnout efforts. To this end we have created a steering committee that involves the Director for the Center for Political Participation, the Director and staff of the IDEAS Center, and the Associate Dean from the Office of Institutional Diversity. Each of these centers works with student fellows who participate in the operational leadership of civic engagement efforts (which includes implementing voter registration and get-out-the-vote tactics). While the CPP and AGF students have been involved with civic engagement over a number of years, the involvement of the IDEAS Center brings a greater number of people into civic engagement planning and implementation. It also contributes to our institution's goal of making our civic engagement efforts more inclusive, given the distinctive reach of the IDEAS Center, which works with historically marginalized students. Notably, this steering committee reports regularly to the president of the college. The president's direct involvement in periodic meetings is a new development at our institution and one that we believe signals a greater institutional priority for civic engagement work.

AGF students (who are part of operational leadership and who have been distinctively active in outreach to students of color over the years) have initiated a partnership with the Bonner Program on our campus to both register students and recruit students to become future participants in civic engagement work.

On a weekly basis, we have created time and space for individuals working with the CPP, IDEAS Center, and AGF to meet, develop plans, and reflect on the execution of those plans. These meetings allow students who are new to voter registration and get-out-the-vote work to be trained on these skills and find their place in on-going collaborative work.

Lastly, the steering committee has begun working with the Director of Project Pericles at our institution, an organization that promotes and supports civic learning and civic engagement in the classroom. This relationship remains in its infancy but our plan is to develop this relationship to connect curricular opportunities (such as class projects) to our institution's civic engagement efforts.

Sustaining Capacity

The Center for Political Participation has built a pipeline for recruiting students to join its organization and participate in civic engagement work. This has largely occurred through mentoring underclassmen in the college's Law & Policy Program which is coordinated by the CPP and its student fellows. Likewise, students involved with AGF have also recruited volunteers among underclassmen over the years with the intention of training students who can replace upperclassmen when they graduate. As noted above,

students involved with AGF have further developed their recruitment strategy by developing a new partnership with the Bonner Program. Students involved in the Bonner Program are required to complete service hours each week and participate in civic engagement work with AGF now counts as a means of completing those hours. The IDEAS Center will be developing its own standard operating procedures for recruiting student fellows who will prioritize civic engagement work in the duties as follows.

Lastly, reviewing past civic engagement plans and assessing the results of our work relative to our goals is becoming a more consistent part of our institutional culture. We anticipate that the creation of a steering committee with representatives from multiple, relevant centers on campus will help anchor this practice in the coming years.

Short-term Tactics

Allegheny College Votes Webpage

The college first created an Allegheny College Votes webpage in 2020, partly in response to the challenges of the pandemic. However, the college has continued to maintain this webpage in subsequent years with the Center for Political Participation taking primary responsibility for gathering resources relevant to voter registration, ballot requests, and voting rights. For the 2024 election cycle, the CPP worked collaboratively with the IDEAS Center, the Dean for Students' Office, and the Office of Public Safety to update resources on this webpage. This includes a greater emphasis on resources for requesting absentee and mail-in ballots for all 50 states in light of recent trends in the voting methods that students prefer. It also includes information about the residential addresses students must use if they intend to vote as a Meadville resident. In the past, many students have used the college's institutional mailing address rather than the address for their own personal residence. The college's institutional address is not recognized by the county as a valid residential address. To address this specific issue, we now provide guidance on this issue on the Allegheny College votes webpage. Additionally, the Office of the President has played a role in promoting this webpage and its resources to students, faculty, and staff.

Voter Registration and Ballot Request Session for All Freshman during Welcome Weekend

For the first time in our college's history, civic engagement efforts included a voter registration and ballot request session for all incoming freshmen. This session was led by the IDEAS Center with support from the Center for Political Participation. The CPP trained orientation leaders (upperclassmen) to help freshmen with voter registration and absentee/mail-in ballot requests. The IDEAS Center created handouts with a QR code linking to the Allegheny College Votes webpage to make it easier for students to access the forms they needed.

National Voter Registration Day

Our college will participate actively in National Voter Registration Day and will hold its NRVD activities one day prior to the official National Voter Registration Day (i.e. September 16 rather than September 17). This is deliberate. In past years, voter registration groups external to our college have come to campus on NRVD to register students. The organizations were apparently unaware that students must use the address of their residency (not the college's institutional address) when completing their voter registration forms. This has resulted in confusion and challenges with getting students properly registered ahead of official deadlines. To preempt this, we are holding NVRD one day earlier than in past years.

Our NRVD activities will be multifaceted. We have reserved the Campus Center lobby during the hours when most students visit the Campus Center for lunch. In the lobby, student fellows with the CPP, IDEAS Center and AGF will register students to vote, help them with change of address forms (if they have moved residences since last year), and help them with ballot requests if they plan to vote absentee. Student fellows will also provide these services at the college's main dining hall (Brooks Hall) and will set up other stations near dormitories. We have planned to promote this day of activities heavily in the week leading up to September 16.

Events for Voter Registration, Ballot Requests, and Reminders to Cast Absentee and Mail-in Ballots

Following NRVD, we have planned a series of events that will also facilitate voter registration and ballot requests prior to official deadlines. We will also run a shuttle service to the two polling locations where Allegheny students vote if they are registered to vote in-person in Meadville.

Civic Learning Events

Throughout the semester, we are offering a series of events about political issues. These include the challenges of rural areas like the one where our college is located (September 5), a Constitution Day address (September 17), an event that focuses on economic policy (October 8), and a student-led event that promotes talking across lines of political interest (October 16). We anticipate that other events will be added to this schedule in the near future. The timing of the events planned so far are aligned with official deadlines for voter registration and ballot requests to create opportunities for reminding students of these deadlines. Following the election, the CPP, IDEAS Center, and AGF have organized a panel of Allegheny College faculty to reflect on election results and their significance of the immediate future of American politics. The panel discussion will include time for questions from the audience.

7. Reporting

We have plans to make our civic engagement plans and data about civic engagement trends on our campus available to our college community. Some of these plans have been executed already. The college has already launched and publicized its Allegheny College Votes 2024 webpage and has publicized it to the college community via the president's "state of the college address" and through campus-wide

communications. The most recent NSLVE data for Allegheny College will be posted on the Center for Political Participation's webpage later this month. The steering committee has plans to discuss plans for reporting progress toward specific short-term and long-term goals scheduled for later this semester.

8. Evaluation

Evaluation of our voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts will occur periodically during the weeks leading up to Election Day 2024. We also review our efforts holistically after Election Day both before and after we receive NSLVE data pertaining to the current election cycle.

More specifically, the steering committee for Allegheny Votes 2024 plans to meet at least twice with the president of the college to discuss challenges and report about progress toward goals. The Director of the Center for Political Participation will meet with CPP student fellows and students affiliated with the Andrew Goodman Foundation each week. This includes meetings after events that promote voter registration and turnout to make note of how many students attended the events and how many registered to vote; requested ballots; used the shuttle bus service, etc. The IDEAS Center (administrators and student fellows) will also be included in these meetings. These post-event assessments will provide information about how many students are directly reached by civic engagement efforts. It will also provide opportunities to adjust tactics as needed to reach more students.

Following Election Day, the operational leadership team will meet to discuss initial impressions of tactical successes and failures, note unforeseen challenges, and generate ideas for improving future civic engagement efforts. Another meeting will be convened to review NSLVE data for the 2024 election cycle when it becomes available. This meeting will be used to measure progress toward short-term voter registration and turnout goals (which require NSLVE data to assess) and to begin outlining the next iteration of a campus-wide action plan.

Works Cited

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