

2024 ACTION PLAN



ALL-IN CAMPUS DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary--- pp.1-2

Leadership--- p.4

Commitment & Landscape --- pp.4-5

Goals--- p.6

Assessment & Reporting----p.7

Strategies----pp.8-9



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Baldwin Wallace University is an academic community committed to the liberal arts and sciences as the foundation for lifelong learning.

The University fulfills this mission through a rigorous academic program that is characterized by excellence in teaching and learning within a challenging, supportive environment that enhances students' intellectual and spiritual growth.

Baldwin Wallace assists students in their preparation to become contributing, compassionate citizens of an increasingly global society and encourages their pursuit of personal and professional excellence.

BACKGROUND

Located in Berea, Ohio, Baldwin Wallace University is an independent, liberal arts & sciences university, offering bachelor's and master's degrees, certificates, and professional education programs.

As a result of its 2014 participant and student leader surveys based on the Civic Minded Graduate, which indicated that both student leaders and participants (volunteers) were less motivated to follow politics and participate in elections than other forms of community engagement, the David & Frances Brain Center for Community Engagement (Brain Center) sought ways to engage students in working toward increasing participation in 2015. The Brain Center supported the development of Jackets Engaged, a student leadership team focused on non-partisan political engagement that conducted year-round activities including voter registration and voter education.

The Brain Center's Jackets Engaged collaborated with #BWVOTES, a voter registration initiative by students, faculty, and staff in the Conservatory of Music in 2018. Together these groups answered the call to join the ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge during Fall Semester of 2019 with the support of BW's President and administration.

2024 ACTION PLAN

The 2022 Action Plan was developed by Marsita Ferguson, Director of the David and Frances Brain Center for Community Engagement, with input from students, faculty and staff.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data from the 2016, 2018, and 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), a campus scan of current civic engagements efforts, and consulting from Fighting to Understand were utilized to develop the goals for 2024 through 2026. The Brain Center will provide oversight for the plan, providing a yearly update on progress and opportunity for revision.

The Action Plan builds on Baldwin Wallace University's long history of community engagement through the Brain Center, its deep commitment to assist students in "becoming contributing compassionate citizens of an increasingly global society," and more recent, its work in voter registration and education. In joining the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and forming a Coalition for Democratic Engagement, BW formalizes its commitment to voter engagement and builds a stronger campus support network for this work. The purpose of this Action Plan is to identify short and long-term goals for increasing democratic engagement among BW students, and outline strategies for achieving them.

This Action Plan also continues considers the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted all learning communities and mandated organizations to reconsider how we provided educational services.



LEADERSHIP

The primary responsibility for democratic engagement at BW falls under the Brain Center for Community Engagement, situated in the Division of Student Affairs. The Brain Center's Assistant Director, is tasked with advising the Jackets Engaged program which is a student-led team entrusted with non-partisan political engagement on campus. In 2019 #BWVOTES advisors Dr. Zarina Melik-Stepanova and Danielle Lykins worked with Julie Robinson to convene a Campus Coalition, building on the collaboration between Jackets Engaged and #BWVOTES. The Coalition brings together a diverse set of stakeholders to contribute to the development and implementation of this action plan.

Student voices are central to these efforts, with involvement by Jackets Engaged, #BWVOTES, Student Government and the Honors Program. Outreach is underway to include student athletes, members of the fraternity and sorority life community, and multicultural student organizations. Faculty from the Honors Program, Philosophy Department and Department of Politics and Global Citizenship have pledged support, as have staff from our Center for Inclusion and Student Affairs. Input for the action plan was collected via a team meeting in November 2019, individual conversations throughout 2020-2023, and electronic communications.

The Coalition will meet twice per semester starting in Fall Semester 2024. Members will support democratic engagement initiatives by promoting activities and campaigns throughout their campus networks and attending events when able.

COALITION MEMBERS

Honors Program
Jackets Engaged Student Director
Director of Inclusion Programs
Student Government
Student Affairs
Department of Philosophy Faculty
Department of Politics and Global Citizenship Faculty
English Faculty
Department of Politics and Global Citizenship Faculty
Department of Politics and Global Citizenship Faculty

CONVENERS

Marsita Ferguson, Director, Brain Center for Community Engagement

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COMMITMENT & LANDSCAPE

Baldwin Wallace has long been committed to diversity, inclusion, and civic engagement. Obtaining and education regardless of race, gender, creed, and ability to pay. In 1845, more than 15 years before the Civil War, Baldwin Wallace University was founded as one of the first colleges in the nation to admit students without regard to race or gender. Baldwin Wallace University's earliest classes included nearly as many women as men and students who could not afford an education were offered jobs to help cover the cost of tuition. Embedded in the University's mission is the statement, "Baldwin Wallace University assists students in their preparation to become contributing, compassionate citizens of an increasingly global society." BW lives that mission and supports civic learning and engagement through curricular and co-curricular initiatives, examples of which are included below.

CO-CURRICULUM

- ♦ The David & Frances Brain Center for Community Engagement (Brain Center) is housed in Student Affairs. The Brain Center engages students in the community through co-curricular service, service- learning, philanthropy, voter education and engagement, non-profit internships and leadership training for social change. Brain Center serves as a connector and advocate for campus and community partnerships.
- ♦ Jackets Engaged: Political Engagement Team, a student-led team within the Brain Center has been conducting voter registration and education since 2015. The student director of this program serves as the University's Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow.
- ♦ #BWWOTES is a student organization in the establishment faze that grew out of the #BWWOTES campaign implemented by Conservatory of Music students, faculty and staff in 2018.
- ♦ The Center for Inclusion, led by the Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Randi Congelton, "works to promote community, advance civility and cultural competence, and uphold standards of conduct."
- ♦ Student Government funded organizations focused on service to the community, including Rotaract and Circle K.



COMMITMENT & LANDSCAPE

CURRICULUM

- ◆ A University learning outcome of “Civic Learning” was approved by faculty vote in Spring 2021. Work determine this will be fulfilled by a requirements added to the core curriculum. This will accelerate and amplify current efforts to new levels as we ensure exposure to civic learning content within the curriculum for all BW students. Core components of this new ULO include: civic context, civic identity, information literacy and civic inquiry.
- ◆ From 2021 – 2023 the Brain Center for Community Engagement supported 30 service-learning courses, engaging 296 undergraduate and graduate students, across all 7 schools. This includes the Jacket Philanthropy Program, an academic service-learning program through which students provide direct service to local non-profits and award grant funding to organizations meeting immediate needs within the community. The program has engaged 952 students with more than 52 non-profit organizations and awarded over \$295,000 in 14 years.

BW STRATEGIC PLAN

Two of three commitments made in the 2019-2023 strategic plan emphasize community engagement:

- ◆ Commitment to the student experience: “BW students build profound and connected leadership experiences through personal relationships that carry them throughout their entire lives to connect their learning with the needs of our global community.”
- ◆ Commitment to business and community partners: “BW is the regional leader and is integral in developing workforce strength, organizational capacity, leadership, service, and is committed to supporting the core values of our business and community partners.”

The explicitly stated commitment to civic learning and community engagement in the Baldwin Wallace mission statement and current strategic plan create fertile ground for more pervasive efforts around democratic engagement. The University President, Dr. Robert Helmer, and other key members of the administration have voiced support for BW’s participation in ALL IN-Campus Democracy Challenge. Sustaining our engagement with ALL IN and maintaining Coalition engagement are significant steps in bringing together efforts already in place (Jackets Engaged, #BWVOTES, etc.) and garnering broader support for democratic engagement campus wide.

RESOURCES

In addition to staff time allotted for democratic engagement work, including advising of Jackets Engaged, the Brain Center dedicates a portion of its operating budget to democratic engagement each year. Additionally, BW has previously received support from Campus Election Engagement Project through educational resources, funding for a CEEP Fellowship, and occasional CEEP grants.

GOALS

FOCUS

Baldwin Wallace University's voter engagement efforts will focus on three main areas for 2024:

Increase voter turnout.

Re-establishing campus engagement programs that aid in extraordinary student experiences.

Increase voter registration and turnout for students who turn out at lower rates.

Provide resources to ensure students develop election information literacy.

SHORT-TERM GOALS

- ◆ Increase the visibility of voter registration opportunities during Orientation and Week of Welcome
- ◆ Provide voter registration opportunities throughout campus during various events, such as sporting events, music performances, student organization events and once a week on campus.
- ◆ Develop targeted outreach campaigns to increase voter registration and turnout rates for groups with lower rates, including males and students in the physical and biological sciences
- ◆ Support the continued engagement of students from racial/ethnic minority groups through collaboration
- ◆ Provide easy access to non-partisan educational materials through the CIVIC CORNER and a strategic social media campaign
- ◆ Participate in voter engagement activities with First Year Experience students.

LONG-TERM GOALS

- ◆ Increase student voter participation by 10% by 2024
- ◆ Improve scores on NSSE related to civic engagement
- ◆ Continue to provide opportunities for voter registration year-round
- ◆ Enhance voter engagement programming pertaining to local elections
- ◆ Increase the number of total courses addressing the Civic Engagement student learning outcome

OAC GOALS

- ◆ To recognize the OAC campus with the greatest increase in voter registration and voter turnout
- ◆ To recognize the highest overall registration and turnout rates
- ◆ To recognize the campus with the most unique voter engagement initiative
- ◆ To engage coaches and teams in voter engagement efforts

ASSESSMENT & REPORTING

ASSESSMENT

Currently, Baldwin Wallace University's main data sources to inform our understanding of students' civic learning and democratic engagement is the National Study of Voting, Learning and Engagement. Other sources that will inform this work in the future and the report from the Institutional Assessment Committee following the application of the Civic Learning rubric to courses that include the civic learning undergraduate learning outcome. Additionally, the Brain Center for Community Engagement will track number of registrations, attendance, and voter education materials distributed.

NSLVE DATA

Presidential Elections

- Voter registration rate down 9% in 2020
- Voting rate up 12%
- Absentee voting rate 33% increased by 11%
- Differences in voting rate by gender
 - Women 75%; 10% increase
 - Men 67%; 14% decrease
- Differences in voting rates by Race/Ethnicity
 - Asian 13% increase
 - Hispanic 7% increase
 - White 13% decrease
 - Black 5% decrease
 - 2 or more races 12% increase

Midterm Elections

- Voter registration rate up 9.1% in 2018 compared to 2014
- Voting rate up 28%
- Absentee voting rate = 21.4%, increased by 19.6%
- Voting rates increased among most
- Difference in voting rate by Gender
 - Women 44%; 26.1% increase
 - Men 36.6; 20.8% increase
- Racial/Ethnic categories with the greatest increase among Hispanic population
 - Asian n/a
 - Hispanic 29% increase
 - Black 22% increase
 - White 23.9% increase
 - 2 or more races 22.8% increase

REPORTING

This plan and NSLVE reports will be provided on the University's community engagement webpage. The Coalition will revisit the plan each year and provide updates on progress. Accomplishments will be shared with University Relations for press releases.

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STRATEGIES

A variety of voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote strategies will continue to be utilized at Baldwin Wallace University during 2022 and beyond to ensure progress toward our goals.

New Student Orientation

Jackets Engaged will host voter registration tables during summer orientation, service and resource fairs, and FYE, Week of Welcome, and Welcome Back Week.

Week of Welcome

Jackets Engaged will offer numerous opportunities for voter registration during Week of Welcome. Tabling will be utilized at several widely attended events.

Debate Watch Parties

Jackets Engaged will offer debate watch parties for the Presidential debates during Fall Semester 2024. These will be held via video-chat if gathering in person is not safe.

Voter Registration/Education Tables at Campus Events

The Coalition will capitalize on opportunities to offer voter registration and educational resources at already scheduled including the Student Involvement Fair, Bold & Gold Festival, Saturday of Service, Music Theatre productions, Social Change Summit, MLK Week Celebration, and the Bach Festival Run and Picnic. There will also be monthly tabling in the Union to promote voter registration.



Deep Dive

Jackets Engaged will host an eight-week long discussion that will delve into intense, divisive politics that impact college students' every day lives in order to determine an answer to the question: how can we disagree?

Candidates on Camera

Jackets Engaged will offer all candidates and ballot issue representatives an opportunity to submit a 1-minute videos each election cycle. These videos may be uploaded with a small bio to social media, used for a candidate education watch event, or be the subject of the campus Civic Lead Series.

STRATEGIES

Democratic Engagement AB Trip

In Fall 2022 Jackets Engaged created a staple Democratic Engagement Alternatives Break Trip for BW students. This annual trip includes election education and bi-partisan engagement with law and policy makers at the local, state, and national levels. These trips will continue and expand.

#BWVOTES Event

#BWVOTES held a large concert to register students to vote and offer voter education materials during Fall Semester 2018. As this initiative is reengaged a similar event will be tentatively scheduled in the Fall of 2024.

Class Presentations

Jackets Engaged offers voter education/registration presentations for First-Year Experience and other courses each year. Outreach to faculty will occur during the summer. A video presentation will be created to offer both in-person and virtual presentations.

Brain Student Fellowship

This is a year-long civic leadership program. The program's mission is "student leaders addressing today's most complex and challenging social issues, while working to educate and empower the community to take action."

BW's Annual Social Change Summit

In the spirit and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr, this conference-style event brings together BW students from across campus to explore issues, assets, and opportunities to put ideas into action for social change. During this full-day experience participants have the opportunity to examine their own personal beliefs and commitments related to social justice, learn from community leaders, explore creative approaches to social change and connect with fellow BW students around ideas for action.

Propel Conference

Jackets Engaged Members will receive the change to attend the Propel Conference for civic engagement in Ohio in the fall semester of 2024. This will provide them with connections across the state, new information on how to bring civic engagement to campus, and help provide members with leadership experience.

Civic Corner

Ritter Library purchased a Civic Education Corner (see photo) to provide easy access to voter registration and educational materials in the Student Union. Jackets Engaged will stock the Corner with relevant materials.

STRATEGIES

OAC Votes

BW has committed to the OAC (Ohio Athletic Conference) Votes challenge. Marsita Ferguson represents BW on this committee. She will share updates with the Coalition and seek input as this initiative develops. Outreach to the Athletic Department and coaches will occur during Fall Semester 2024.

UNIFY College Bowl

Members of Jackets Engaged will be collecting signups for a two-week long event that connects college students with opposing viewpoints via video call and leads them through a discussion about dissecting different political viewpoints in America's government. Link to sign up: <https://app.unifyamerica.org/> (begins January 24th)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Jackets Engaged will develop graphics to be shared via social media and campus digital displays to advertise many of the events above, remind the campus community about important deadlines, and provide educational resources. Additionally, campaigns will be launched in celebration of **National Voter Registration Day** and **Vote Early Day**.

