

Election@Bard



Bard College's ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan
Created: December 15th, 2021 // Revised: May 31st, 2022

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following plan reflects Bard’s belief that institutions of higher learning have had a role in shaping citizens since the founding of the Republic. As Charles Elliot, Harvard’s long-term President, stated more than a century ago, “At bottom, most of the American institutions of higher education are filled with the democratic spirit. Teachers and students alike are profoundly moved by the desire to serve the democratic community.” Yale University’s former President Bart Giamatti said: “I believe that the formation of a basis for how we choose to believe and speak and treat others—how, in short, we choose a civic role for ourselves—is the basic purpose of an education in a democracy.” It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to be civic actors in their own right as part of their role in modeling what leadership looks like for future generations of student leaders.

Bard’s All-In team reflects that commitment. Election@Bard, launched in 2014, is a student-led initiative that implements Bard’s voter engagement plan. Funded and supported by the Bard Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) and the Andrew Goodman Foundation (AGF).

Election@Bard’s student team is comprised of student staff and volunteers working in five key areas:

1. Voter registration
2. Issue-based voter engagement
3. Voter education
4. Voter mobilization and participation
5. Voter protection

Bard College and Election@Bard believe that voting is one of the most fundamental rights in a democratic society, encouraging all students to exercise the right to vote. Election@Bard and the College together have challenged local efforts to limit access to the franchise for over twenty years. Election@Bard originated from the College’s fundamental belief in the power of young people and the deep commitment to the idea that colleges should be civic actors in the ongoing struggle to expand voter access particularly for young people.

As one of the first AGF Ambassador campuses, Election@Bard has activated its network to work toward 100% participation of eligible voters and to engage beyond voter registration and participation. Election@Bard hosts candidate meet and greet forums for students, lobbies for voter rights with public officials, raises key issues like gun control and immigration rights, sponsors student leadership conferences and makes civic engagement more accessible to the student body. Election@Bard is playing an active role in working to protect voter rights and polling site accessibility for college-age voters in Dutchess County and throughout New York State.

Who developed this plan?

- Erin Cannan, Bard Vice President for Civic Engagement
- Cicily Wilson, Assistant Director for CCE
- Sarah deVeer '17, Bard Outreach Coordinator
- Aleks Demetriades '25, 2022 Leader of Election@Bard
- Oliver Abrams '25, Election@Bard Intern
- Elene Shamanadze '25, Election@Bard Intern
- Roma Taitwood '25, Election@Bard Intern.

What is the duration of our plan?

Election@Bard intends to reevaluate its All-In Challenge plan at the beginning and end of each semester (4 times annually) to ensure that the team is still on-track with their goals and to examine certain sections of the plan with the most current perspective (specifically, re-assess campus and community partners as stakeholders change, student support needs shift, and new initiatives are introduced on-campus, etc.)

II. LEADERSHIP

Election@Bard partners with local non-partisan voter groups, the Andrew Goodman Foundation, and campus partners within the College. Election@Bard also has a strong connection within the college community with the [Center for Civic Engagement](#), [Open Society University Network](#), [Hannah Arendt Center](#), and others. Election@Bard's work is supported by the CCE's and OSUN's presence in the physical and virtual classroom, including these courses from previous semesters.

OSUN

- The Right to Employment
- Free Speech
- A Lexicon of Migration
- Modernism and Fascism
- Leading Change in Organizations Practicum
- Global Modernism

ELAS:

- All Politics is Local
- Digital Literacies
- Action Research
- Environmental System Science
- Civic Engagement

In Engaged Liberal Arts and Sciences (ELAS) classes, students test ideas in the real world and develop creative approaches to social, cultural, and scientific issues. This brings theory to practice by linking coursework, critical thinking, and engagement activities. A significant portion of ELAS learning takes place outside of the classroom: students learn through engagement with different geographies, organizations, and programs in the surrounding communities or in collaboration with partners from Bard's national and international networks. ELAS students and teachers often collaborate with non-profits, community groups, and government agencies whose goal is to serve the public good.

This curriculum commitment is illustrated through a number of courses that are taught and centered on themes of democracy, American government and voter engagement that will be held routinely. Specifically, Jonathan Becker (Executive Vice President and Executive Advisor to Election@Bard) and Erin Cannan (Vice President of Student Affairs and Election@Bard Campus Champion) co-teach classes about civic engagement through the Open Society University Network (Bard is one of 40 international member institutions). Courses relating to voter rights and civic engagement are taught in various departments at Bard's Annandale campus. In addition to this, Election@Bard regularly commits to high school voter registration visits to our domestic early colleges, to ensure that our voter registration efforts are not limited to our Annandale campus.

Election@Bard Core Team:

- Jonathan Becker -- Bard Executive Vice President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Executive Advisor to Election@Bard
- Erin Cannan -- Bard Vice President of Civic Engagement, Election@Bard Campus Champion
- Sarah deVeer '17 -- Bard Outreach Coordinator, Election@Bard Campus Champion
- Aleks Demetriades '25 -- 2022 Election@Bard Team Leader
- Oliver Abrams '25 -- Election@Bard Intern
- Elene Shamanadze '25 -- Election@Bard Intern
- Roma Taitwood '25 -- Election@Bard Intern

Volunteers:

In addition to all of the above named core team, Election@Bard's work could not be done without the work of dedicated volunteers, who join with us to support mobilization efforts.

- Election@Bard has gained 24 volunteers since the beginning of 2022.

Community partners:

Election@Bard liaises with community organizations and local elections officials to monitor and track voter registrations. This helps identify problem areas and develop strategies to improve voter experiences, including litigation.

- The Andrew Goodman Foundation
- Dutchess County Board of Elections

Campus partners:

Election@Bard is extremely grateful for all the support and resources that Bard’s institution supplies the team. They provide vital information on how best to address the needs of the student community.

- The Center for Civic Engagement
- The Office of Student Activities
- The Career Development Office
- The Office of Residence Life
- Center for Student Life and Advising
- Athletics Department
- The Office of Accessibility and Disability Resources
- The Office of Admission

Succession plan:

Because Election@Bard is a student-led initiative, it’s given that yearly graduation means team members must leave after a limited amount of time. To ensure smooth succession and transition, Election@Bard emphasizes peer-to-peer engagement through tabling events, institution-wide days that encourage volunteering and engagement, and targeted recruitment through ELAS and other classes. By connecting with students and strengthening on-campus access to engagement, Election@Bard responds to time and membership constraints, cultivating students’ relationships with the team as volunteers and interns.

Leadership Engagement:

As Nancy Thomas put it in her article “Institution as Citizen,” “when institutional leaders at the very top are involved, the result can transform a community and impact the culture of the institution” Moving institutions to a justice-oriented framework requires a commitment from senior leadership. University leaders seemed to have been largely silent or absent from the debate about the 26th Amendment.

Bard College’s senior leaders make annual statements of solidarity with students and have intervened in efforts to disenfranchise students. This has included speaking out against legislative efforts to limit access to the polls and they have lent their authority to expand the franchise.

Leadership strategies include:

- Campus leaders ensure the regular distribution of campus-wide communications coming out in support of student voting on an annual basis.
- Campus leaders have promoted the view that students not only have the right to vote where they live, work, and study, but that many students in our ultra-mobile society should vote locally because they consider that community home and deserve to be treated no differently from other citizens.
- Campus leaders challenge false claims that students shouldn't participate. Students often engage more than most citizens by working with local governments to address social needs, volunteering in schools and elder care facilities, and participating in community events. Colleges encourage students to contribute to their local communities and in so doing develop common interests.
- Campus leaders have made a public commitment to resource voter engagement and voter protection efforts that include campus teams responsible for the expansion of voter engagement action plans.
- Campus leaders actively encourage and make room for faculty, staff and students to participate in voter registration and election day processes as part of action teams as poll watchers or poll workers.

Bard's Boards of Trustees reinforced senior leadership messaging and reinforced the College's commitment to voter rights. The Bard College Board of Trustees passed a resolution in January 2000 supporting "the rights of students at Bard" and other area colleges to vote "where they study and live" and calling upon the Dutchess County Board of Elections to "change their discriminatory practices that impinge upon student voting rights." Accompanying such statements should be clear policies that support involvement in the electoral process.

III. COMMITMENT

Election@Bard dedicates its work to encouraging and magnifying students' voices when they seek to engage with their local and federal governments. Efforts are geared at reaching out to voting-age students—as of April 2022, the team has held numerous in-person events at locations with high student-traffic to support registration, answer questions relating to upcoming elections, and raise awareness/excitement about local political engagement. Election@Bard is set on a clear, measurable goal: increasing the rate of voter registration and actual participation across campus. Events that reach out directly to students serve the purpose of increasing registered voters and volunteers and awareness of voting. Beyond those "tabling" events that also ensure productive dialogues on civic engagement, E@B also aims to protect students' right to vote with accessibility and ease. Election@Bard maintains a practical list of over a dozen key steps to defend student voters, including the provision of free transportation to polling sites, legal advocacy for an on-campus poll, and tracking voter outcomes to ensure equitable access. All of

these steps are part of a greater goal to guarantee that students can utilize their right to vote without difficulty or discouragement.

Election@Bard aims to make its home somewhere students are not only free to engage with their local and national government through civic engagement and voting, but a beacon of inspiration for the next generation of activists, scholars, and leaders to work together in tandem with their country's democracy. This mode of democratic engagement is emphasized by Bard's curriculum that focuses on providing students with the skills to interact with their communities, develop programs that benefit individuals and groups, and create change beyond the simple act of voting. Election@Bard further provides spaces for discussion of legislation, human rights, intersectionality, and other important topics not only through its connection with institutional and off-campus partners, but throughout its continued efforts to foster conversation between students, faculty, and guest speakers in formal and informal settings. Through these interfaces between the student body and activist leaders, Election@Bard also emphasizes inclusivity on campus and within its team structure. The team is beginning planning and exploring ways to include and encourage international students in dialogues surrounding American politics, as well as aiming expanding outreach to those with the BPI (Bard Prison Initiative) and including their voices in an incipient project that will address mass incarceration.

Bard strives to highlight the fruitful connections between "higher education and civic participation" that "can and should operate in the public interest," goals taken directly from the college's mission statement. Bard provides its students with a *bildung*, an education rooted in the actuality of the real world and the preparation to enter it. This includes an emphasis on the relevancy of current events, inclusivity in all aspects of learning, and nuanced respect in academic language. Part of that standard, educational process is informing students how they can "give back" to their communities, using the knowledge they've gained in their undergraduate studies and applying it to real world situations. Bard doesn't just work to popularize this stature of civic engagement amongst its students, but aims to proliferate the liberal arts experience and its social/political outcomes in local areas. In doing so, Bard is removing the elitist barrier to higher education, as well as making the capacity to work with the public universal for all individuals, regardless of their access. As a microcosm of that broad goal, Election@Bard seeks to raise the rate of voter registration and civic participation on campus, removing barriers for the marginalized or disenfranchised in order to demonstrate to students how much change they themselves can impart in the name of public interest. As they move up within Bard College and eventually graduate out, students' growth into impactful, professional roles as leaders, activists, workers, artists, and scholars is only possible with their first step in registering to vote with Election@Bard.

IV. LANDSCAPE

Area of Study/Overall:

Multiple trends were seen in voting rates on the campus. From 2016 to 2020, Bard college saw an increase of 3.9% in voting rate, bringing the campus to 72.7%. The registration rate increased marginally from 2016 to 2020, reaching 89.9%.

- The Natural Resources and Conservation department saw the highest growth in voting rate. The growth was 17% from 2016 to 2020.
- There was a large decrease in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Humanities department where the voting rate fell by 38%.
- Another decrease in the voting rate was seen in the Business, Management, and Marketing department, having fallen by 4%.
 - Overall, a decline in voting was seen in 2018 during midterm elections. However, during the presidential election in 2020 the rates flattened and managed to increase compared to 2018 election voting rates.

Race/ethnicity:

A positive trend was seen in voting rates across different race/ethnicity groups. However, there is no exact data across the groups. It is apparent that there should be a protocol in place where the team can get the data about the voter's race/ethnicity. Once the guidelines are implemented, it will be easier to analyze trends and incorporate various strategies to facilitate voting across those groups.

- In the Asian demographic, there is a trend of growth across voting rates.
- No data is present for American Indian/Alaskan Native.
- There is a trend of growth across voting rates in the Black demographic.
- There is a trend of growth across voting rates in the Hispanic demographic.
- No data is present for the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander demographic.
- There is a trend of growth across voting rates in the multiracial demographic.
- There is a trend of growth across voting rates in the White demographic.

Age Groups:

A general growth rate has been observed in the data compiled from 2016-2020 of voting trends across the student population at Bard. They include:

- A general trend of growth has been seen across the data, without excluding the decrease of voting rates in ages 30-39 that had a -17% decrease rate, the growth rate is 1.5%.
- However, excluding the decrease, the growth rate across ages 18-29 is 7.7%.
- This data shows that through the years 2016-2020, the student population ages 18-29 has become more facilitated in the elections thus prompting the increase in voting rates across the 4 years.

- However, it is unclear why the voting rate has fallen by 17% in the age group 30-39 in the past 4 years. It is clear, though, that the youngest cohorts also have the highest rates of engagement.

By Sex/Gender:

There is no data present on the sex of the voters on campus. This facilitates the idea that there should be a guideline implemented for data collection about demographics that are excluded from NSLVE data and aren't currently monitored by the Election@Bard team.

V. GOALS

Short term:

Leading into the Fall 2022 semester Election@Bard looks to expand its staff to include seasonal (August-November) workers to help assist with voter outreach efforts leading into the midterms. The team is also working to create more access to media that outlines to newly registered voters (in particular first-year and transfer students) what it means to be a registered voter in Dutchess county and out of the county. Election@Bard aims to increase its social media presence on Instagram and TikTok by the 2022 midterms in order to raise excitement and awareness about Election@Bard and the upcoming election. Then, using its social media presence, the team will reach out to incoming students during this summer to prepare them to register, vote, and engage when they arrive on campus in the fall. With that, the team will advertise poll-worker training that's open to all students through social media and tabling before the 2022 midterms to ensure a full team that wants to be civically engaged. Finally, Election@Bard's core short term goals for the upcoming election are to increase voter registration rate from 90% (2020) to 92% and to raise the rate of voting from 81% (2020) to 83%

Long term:

Over the coming election cycles Election@Bard looks to expand its peer-to-peer network through:

- Continuing to table regularly for voter registration, especially in the weeks leading up to a voter registration deadline and on registration day.
 - (Encouraging civic engagement through tabling is emphasized throughout the year, regardless of elections.)
 - Developing in-dorm table events in dorms with the lowest rates of registration in order to effectively spend time connecting with students. Dorm pop-ups would ideally be organized mainly in the months preceding local and federal elections in order to raise solid awareness.
 - Establishing a relationship between Election@Bard and Residence Life Office allowing Peer Counselors to reach out to Election@Bard for assistance in creating a programming event geared towards voter education/registration in dorm halls.

- Hiring an intern whose main job is to communicate with out-of-state voters via email, Instagram, and other forms of communication to remind them of deadlines, support them with requesting absentee ballots, and provide other important resources.
- Enhancing collaboration with CCE and Career Development Office by promoting research/internship opportunities for students who are seeking employment opportunities with government agencies and elected officials.
 - Enhancing collaboration with OSUN, the ELAS department, and the Language and Thinking program to prepare and develop future civic engagement courses, as well as to create institutional events where students are given the opportunity to register alongside their classmates at every point during the semester.
- Updating the CCE website to provide students with all possible resources to work with Election@Bard.
- Creating a full suite of promotional materials that are branded to the college and Election@Bard. This emphasizes coherence within the team as well as the team's consistent efforts at effective outreach.

VI. NSLVE

Based on the 2020 NSLVE data, Election@Bard aims to increase collaboration with OSUN and ELAS senior leaders and faculty to prevent further decreases in voting from the humanities demographic. This means developing courses in future semesters that appeal to students who major in that department, as well as consistently emphasizing the standard approach of civic engagement. A possible example could be a course designed to emphasize social justice through artistic expression, a synthesis of the core humanities principles with the goals of Election@Bard and the CCE. Other possible approaches to be explored include increased targeted recruitment from OSUN and other civic engagement classes, which would expand student awareness and the reach of the team into classrooms. Further, as stated before, the actual *lack* of information in the NSLVE report on certain demographics informs the team where other forms of data collection and evaluation need to come in. This means expanding team research into racial/ethnic demographics, as well as identified gender or sex, in order to make up for the limits of NSLVE. Finally, efforts need to be made broadly in increasing awareness for midterm elections based on the difference between 2018 and 2020. That's why this time, months before the 2022 election, is so crucial for the team and why this plan is being reevaluated and developed at that specific time.

VII. STRATEGY

Election@Bard's team considered the following questions in planning:

How are voter registration processes tracked? At what rate are voter registration forms rejected and for what reason? What is the experience of students at polling sites during early voting or on Election Day? Do students have to travel far from campus? Are polling sites accessible by public transportation and are they handicap accessible? What is the experience of student voters at the polling site? Are they turned away by poll workers or forced to vote affidavit due to concerns about ID's or for other reasons? Do they know what their rights are if they are challenged? Are student absentee ballot or mail-in forms counted or challenged? Have students been disproportionately purged from the rolls and/or made "inactive"? If so, for what reason?

Practices include:

- **Communication Strategy:** Election@Bard has developed a communications plan that incorporates all level of institutional response including strategies to engage students and to publicly address issues that might arise through the registration and voting process, including explicit statements from the College's leadership; This strategy can include everything from Election Day voter education to public statements from the president affirming student's right to vote.
- **Monitoring Mechanisms:** Election@Bard monitors voter registration to identify challenges to successfully enrolling voters (to educate students whose forms are incorrect and to identify any tactics to suppress voting or purge student voters); monitors voter enrollment following voter registration to track areas of concern: are students successfully being placed on voter rolls after registration forms are submitted? Are students making clerical errors or are student voters rejected? If so, what are the reasons cited? Do voters remain on the rolls long term? How regularly are rolls purged and for what reasons?
- **Advocacy Task Force:** Election@Bard organizes a cross-constituency task force that includes students, faculty and college administrators charged with advocating and expanding voter rights with local officials; identify strategies to address challenges that may emerge during the process of enrollment and voting.
- **Partnerships:** Election@Bard has identified local and national partners focused on voter advocacy and voting rights protection, including a legal team that helps on election day as poll watchers and act as advisors when voting issues arise. Our legal team has helped to determine what other forms of legal intervention are necessary as challenges to voter participation are identified and assessed. Partnerships also take the form of Election@Bard's connections to the curriculum (OSUN and ELAS classes, for example) that encourage civic engagement.
- **Student action:** Election@Bard's student team runs tabling events at least once a month several months prior to elections. Interns provide students with information and

registration resources outside high-traffic areas on campus, such as by the dining hall or in dorms, to emphasize peer-to-peer engagement and outcomes that strengthen student relationships with the team and civic engagement in general.

Monitoring Voter Registration:

Monitoring begins at voter registration. While colleges are obliged to register voters, and Bard does advocate for pro-active efforts which include mechanisms to make voter registration part of the orientation and/or course registration processes, analogous to motor-voter law, Election@Bard has organized an institutionally-sponsored voter registration team to track student voter registration forms after they have been submitted to Boards of Elections. This allows the team to identify problems at two critical times: prior to the end of registration and prior to election day. Early monitoring can allow students to correct clerical errors, like misspelled names. It can also alert them when they have been made inactive, because a postcard from the Board of Elections was returned for instance, so that they can either re-register prior to the deadline or, at least in New York, as for a provisional ballot that should in principle count, if they are not on the roles on election day can also signal the need for organized efforts to fight voter suppression efforts, as happened in Dutchess County in 2012 when the Board of Elections suddenly rejected registrations which did not include dorm room numbers. Students were only reinstated after a federal lawsuit filed by the New York Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the students.

In order to effectively monitor, Election@Bard provides mechanisms for students to indicate if their registrations have been rejected and/or ask students to check their registrations with publicly available state/county databases and inform the institutional team if they have problems. We make FOIL requests for lists of registered voters to compare them with forms collected in registration campaigns. Election@Bard reaches out to voters whose forms were rejected before registration deadlines to ameliorate any difficulties. Tracking the reasons given for those rejections can also help inform future advice given to students during the registration process so that forms are completed accurately.

Monitoring Election Day Voting:

Election Day can be fraught for any voter; however, students, especially students who have been marginalized, can struggle to successfully cast a ballot. To ensure that rights of student voters are preserved, Election@Bard has an extensive election-day strategy and plan for follow-up which involves monitoring and responding in real time to challenges to student voters.

Including:

Mobilizing multiple action teams to manage a variety of interventions on Election Day:

- Clerical errors, like the misspelling of a name, can lead to a voter being sent away; uninformed and poorly trained poll workers can ask for the wrong type of identification;

hostile poll watchers can intimidate student voters by challenging them with or without reason; and election day court-decisions by local judges can disrupt the voting process.

- Encourage students, faculty, and administrators to serve as poll workers and poll watchers at polling sites where students vote;
- Train non-partisan monitoring teams to track student experiences at polling sites;
- Deploye information teams to distribute electronic communications and be available at relevant locations around campus to remind students of requirements vis-a-vis identification and what to do if challenged and provide sample ballots for students to review prior to arriving at a polling site;
- Partner with community organizations to provide support if challenged, including volunteers with legal expertise;
- Provide transportation to and from polling sites as well as transportation for voters who need to affirm their right to vote in front of a judge.
- Provide an election-day hotline via phone or text for students with trouble voting to assist and troubleshoot. Establish a central voter hub to provide in-person resources for voter questions staffed by trained students, faculty, and staff.

The presence of advocates on Election Day accomplishes a few goals. First, it reinforces the institutional commitment and acts as a visible indicator that the institution is not only facilitating the process of voting but protecting voter rights. Second, the process of voting becomes an educational experience as students learn how to vote and what their rights are in the case that they are challenged. Students are often confused by the voting process, even if they are not a first-time voter. Even with campus teams deployed, much of the work of the monitoring teams on election day at Bard have focused on voter education. Many students have confused about where to go to vote, assuming they can show up at any polling location to vote or to fill out same day registration forms (New York State is not a same day registration state). These teams are able to educate and help ensure that students are aware of how the voting process works. Troubleshooting registration issues that include identifying students who may not have been appropriately registered or who did not submit a registration form, can be a powerful tool in reaching future voters. Election@Bard's monitoring teams are unaffiliated and explicitly available to protect voter rights and are not connected to any student club or organizing efforts on behalf of a specific candidate or party. Institutional initiatives are non-partisan and solely focused on youth voting rights and access to polls.

Monitoring Poll Site Assignments:

Poll-site selection, which takes place many months before elections, can be shrouded in secrecy and lead to decisions that do not serve voters. Moreover, selections can be difficult to challenge if there is no public record raising concerns about the compliance of locations with state and federal law on issues such as accessibility of polling places to public transportation and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Monitoring can also expose proposals to

divide campuses into multiple polling districts. Tremendous amount of latitude is given to Boards of Elections over polling places and changes in locations of polling sites requires agreements of two commissioners, one Democrat and one Republican. Thus a decision to place a polling site at an inaccessible location or to divide a campus into multiple polling sites can reverberate for years to come.

Litigation:

The processes of elections in the United States are increasingly under attack. Many officials determined to suppress student voting have acted with impunity, making the protection of student voting rights a form of Whack-A-Mole. The twenty-year battle at Bard suggests that even when student voters get one victory, determined officials shift efforts. In our case, an appointed official has the support of the local party and a tax-payer funded legal team: there are few disincentives to act badly. Over the course of twenty years, different attempts and types of limitations have required constant vigilance and institutional intervention. Questionnaires are eliminated only to have new (and discriminatory) address requirements enforced; once those are removed then the voter rolls are purged; once voters are reinstated then efforts are made to ensure that all student voting, both early and election day, is situated at locations that are the least convenient in terms of access.

We believe institutions must be prepared to support and participate in litigation on behalf of student voting rights. It is the case, though, that decisions about voting are often made by poll workers, local judges and election officials that ignore the 26th amendment and students' right to vote where they live at college and that without institutional support, many ongoing voter suppression efforts will likely succeed. The need for institutional intervention is both practical and symbolic. It is practical because the university has resources, material and human, to achieve salutary results. Successful litigation can depend on early monitoring activities so that there is enough time to intervene when rights are threatened.

Institutional action is an important catalyst for students: when Bard used institutional resources in 2009 to sue to ensure the votes of a dozen students who had been illegitimately and unjustly challenged by poll watchers to vote via affidavit ballots, the institutional actions sent a message to all students that voting rights are important and worth protecting. It is more than just part of their education, it is part of the development of their civic identity. Similarly, the college's participation in the lawsuit can provide the incentive that students need to become student litigants: the fact that Bard's president and vice president for civic engagement served as co-litigants in two major recent lawsuits over the location of a polling place on campus was confidence-building for potential student and staff litigants. On a higher plane, it is the binding of word and deed, the idea that students should not just do as an institution says, but as a civically engaged institution does. As Gourley argued, "We know that the values held by

societies, institutions, and individuals are demonstrated most powerfully through their actions rather than their words.”

Advocacy:

Within the context of lobbying laws, members Election@Bard and senior leadership and faculty play a role in advocating for and against practices and proposed laws that may positively or negatively impact student access to the polls. For example, Bard groups, including its leadership, its Center for Civic Engagement, and students voting rights groups, have been very involved in supporting New York State legislation that would assign polling sites to campuses with 300 or more registered voters. Senior administrators at Bard discussed the bill with a number of assembly members and senators and wrote articles in favor of the bill and other legislative action that would achieve similar ends. Students and administrators reached out to other campuses to raise awareness and encourage other campuses to advocate for the passing of the bill. Not only does this work teach students about legislation, but it also represents the kind of role institutions can play beyond election day.

Other advocacy efforts have included efforts to mobilize neighboring institutions on issues of common interest and state alliances of colleges and universities to join efforts. A future area of advocacy might feature the creation of a national alliance of college presidents similar to the President’s Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, that is dedicated to protecting student voting rights that could help elevate and amplify the work of individual institutions. Alliances dedicated to student voter rights could be a powerful force in commenting on congressional efforts to reinforce the franchise. Some college administrators and faculty participated in hearings in support of the Student VOTER Act in 2008 to designate colleges and universities that receive Federal funds as voter registration agencies. A national coalition of university leaders could be a powerful addition to the collective voices who are speaking on behalf of student voter rights.

VIII. REPORTING

This plan will be shared on campus through social media (specifically the CCE facebook, as well as their other platforms) and through participating institutions like AGF. Students, parents, staff, faculty, and interested local residents will be able to access the plan. NSLVE reports are also shared through Election@Bard’s connections with the CCE and AGF, and the upcoming 2022 report will be treated the same way.

IX. EVALUATION

Besides demographic data from NSLVE, Election@Bard relies on data measured at tabling events and other peer-to-peer engagement activities. The team maintains an active, up-to-date spreadsheet that displays the number of registered voters across campus, adding to it with each registration event. Election@Bard also tracks registration and voting through google forms that also provide the number of registered voters. The spreadsheet and google forms also record certain information from respondents, such as dorm location or graduating class. This allows the team to evaluate discrepancies between student demographics, such as dorms where there is a lower rate of registration compared to other dorms. Using that information, the team selects which dorms would have the best outcomes for registering and engagement when organizing student-centered events. The data is primarily used and analyzed by the Election@Bard interns who organize and run dorm pop-ups, which are always before elections. Evaluation of the data collected from those events is crucial before, in looking at past results, during, and after planning in order to evaluate the efficacy of the strategy. Data collected on the spreadsheets also includes volunteers, which means the outcomes from dorm-events and tabling can be measured by the number of volunteers gained, not just registered voters. Volunteering is independent of the election date, meaning the evaluation of campus response through volunteer numbers happens all year, regardless of the time. Using all these metrics, the team can compare which events garner the most student response and then decide from there which technique is most effective at achieving the principle goal of increasing voter registration.