



# Bellarmino Democratic Engagement Action Plan: 2022-2023

*This plan was created using the Votes & Ballots Action Planning Form. We highly recommend editing and expanding upon this draft before submitting for review.*

*Throughout this document, we mention the Strengthening American Democracy Guide as a resource for your review. We encourage you to turn to that resource for guidance and support as you complete your action plan!*

## I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Elizabeth Byron, Associate Director of Community Engagement to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Bellarmine. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2023, on and around our campus in Louisville, Kentucky.

The following groups will be leading this work at Bellarmine in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Undergraduate Students

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the Strengthening American Democracy Guide and review the Guiding Questions to ensure your Executive Summary includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## II. Leadership

Center for Community Engagement and Student Activities Center will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

- Registered Student Organizations - College Democrats, College Republicans, Leading Women of Tomorrow - all student organizations with a focus on civic engagement

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, Representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise, Trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy, Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus in to our work

Our group plans to meet 1 time per semester at Via Teams

In the event that our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. Directors of the SAC and CCE and rising student leaders

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- Circa 2018 Voter Coalition was in place. We assume due to COVID it fell off.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your Leadership Section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

### III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. As stated in our mission statement, We are an inclusive Catholic university that educates students—mind, body, and spirit—for meaningful lives, rewarding careers, ethical leadership, and service to improve the human condition. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. They state, “Bellarmine University finds its Catholic identity in the inclusive spirit of Thomas Merton. We believe in the search for the true self, the interconnectedness of life and the solidarity of the human spirit, which transcends ethnic, religious, and social divisions. We educate the whole person to realize their highest potential as part of an interconnected world. Our values are Academic Excellence, Intrinsic Dignity, Social Responsibility, Integrity, Hospitality, and Stewardship. Academic Excellence: Promoting academic inquiry rooted in the liberal arts tradition—critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and compassion—with an expectation of excellence Intrinsic Dignity: Respecting the intrinsic value and dignity of every individual Social Responsibility: Cultivating grounded citizens who contribute to and advocate for the public good, environmental sustainability, global understanding, and informed civic engagement Integrity: Fostering strong ethical principles, honesty, fairness, transparency, and trustworthiness Hospitality: Creating an inclusive community that welcomes all and models a spirit of goodwill Stewardship: Exercising thoughtful stewardship of our university resources”

In addition, our campus has mentioned civic learning and democratic engagement in their strategic plan, stating Establish a center for civic partnership, building on a model distinctive to Bellarmine that integrates community partnerships, career development, fund- and friend-raising work, and lifelong engagement with alumni. Enhance community and civic engagement work across the university with a goal of obtaining the Carnegie Foundation Classification for Community Engagement. We also have had a senior leader commit to civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- On campus polling place
- Voter registration tables
- Protests / rallies / walkouts
- Signage promoting Election Day
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On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Town halls
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- Deliberative dialogues



The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Commitment Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2022 when our total student enrollment was 2996.

### Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
77.00%	22.00%	10.00%	90.00%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
		0.01%	30.00%	70.00%

### Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
40.00%	60.00%		

### Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+

### Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
0.02%	0.00%	0.07%	0.06%	0.00%	76.00%	0.04%

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

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- National Survey of Student Engagement
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They help to inform our institution's civic learning and democratic engagement efforts by We use the data to inform our voter week registration efforts in the fall.

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Landscape Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## V. Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration.

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

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- We don't have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We don't have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
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- We don't use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
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- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding.
- Voter engagement is politicized, resulting in administrative reluctance to engage.
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We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

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- We don't have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement.
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With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
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- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
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- The voter engagement work on our campus is distributed throughout many offices and areas of expertise.

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- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We are able to engage student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.
- We have a working relationship with our local election office.
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With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Partner with nonprofits
2. Nonpartisan or 3rd party RSO
3. Debate on campus between multiple political parties

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

1. 90% voter registration
2. Voter driving to polls
3. More funding around civic efforts

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Goals Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.



## VI. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- Voter drives, RSO civic group support, political speeches from all parties, civic panel

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- team up with nonprofits to help people get registered in our community and help with driving to polls

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **short term**:

- Potentially more RSOs from third parties and independents

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

- RSO support, voter registration drives, civic dialogues, and Constitution Day efforts

These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

- Amplify local election turnout

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- More collaboration between faculty, staff, and students for planning

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Strategy Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

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

We are not currently enrolled in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE).

***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your NSLVE section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

## VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition
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We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Post on the campus website
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- RSO newsletter

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Sending a post-election survey to students
- Sending a post-election survey to faculty
- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts
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We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year
- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly
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***How can you improve this section?*** Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Reporting & Evaluation Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.