



Berkeley College 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Heather Eaton-Dwyer

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Berkeley College in New Jersey and New York for the 2022 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2022 midterm election. The goals for Berkeley College for the 2022 election are: to increase both student voter registration levels and student voting rates by 5%, relative to fluctuations in enrollment, from 2020 levels.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following:

Heather Eaton-Dwyer – Dean of Students, chair of this working group

Steven Bruenjes – Dean, Academic Advisement

LaTysha Gaines – Campus Operating Officer, Woodland Park campus; senior administration representation on this working group.

James Marshmon – Director, Student Development and Campus Life for the Woodland Park, NJ and Woodbridge, NJ campuses

Tania Mottos (April 2022 – present) – Student Government Association Ambassador, designated Student Government representative to the Berkeley College Board of Trustees

Gabrielle Peralta (January 2020 – April 2022) – former president of the Student Government Association, former President of the Berkeley College chapter of the Sigma Alpha Pi national leadership honor society, former president of The Spartans club for student veterans, and NJ Ballot Bowl lead for Berkeley College in 2020 and 2021.

Dr. Ralph Peters – Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty, School of Liberal Arts

Suzeana Stewart – Director, Student Development and Campus Life for the Newark, NJ and New York City, NY campuses

Commitment:

Berkeley College has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2021.

Berkeley College's governing board, president and senior leadership demonstrate their commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement by supporting initiatives that educate students about the democratic process and encourage them to become engaged in their communities. The College reinforces its mission of empowering students to achieve lifelong success in dynamic careers by introducing students to civic engagement and providing them with opportunities to develop as responsible and informed citizens. Activities explore topics such as social justice, diversity and inclusion, racial equality, gender equity, women's rights, military and student veterans' affairs, leadership development, prison reform, educational equity and access, immigration, environmental sustainability, and other areas.

Throughout the year, elected officials are invited to visit the campus to meet with the College's leadership and students. These meetings are hosted by President Diane Recinos and Chairman Kevin Luing. During these meetings, students participate in conversations with elected officials who hold local, state and federal office.

Academically, the Interim Provost and School Deans endorse an interdisciplinary approach to civic engagement that provides students with project-based opportunities in their studies. This method allows students to learn about challenges facing communities and provide potential solutions through their coursework.

This approach is exemplified by the Berkeley College Honors Program. Honors students produce projects that address social issues and are involved in field trips, plenary sessions, co-curricular activities, and special events pertaining to their selected topics. Students present their projects in public forums and seminars held on campus on an annual basis. The College's leaders and representatives from throughout the institution attend these seminars, which are open to the general public. These seminars are documented in the College's newsroom and disseminated to the public. President Recinos attends each event, provides remarks and interacts with students.

Berkeley College Honors Program students, along with Student Government leaders, were also participants in the 2021 "Be A Civic Leader" training program to motivate other students. The program was designed for students in the state of New Jersey and involved them taking part in six virtual sixty-minute sessions that were designed to highlight nonpartisan civic learning and democratic engagement efforts in the state. The program was supported by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Berkeley College, Rutgers University: New Brunswick, Princeton University, and the NJ Department of State. Student participants shared what they had learned in this training with classmates and Student Government leaders used strategies learned in the training in their voter registration, vote planning, and get-out-the-vote initiatives.

Berkeley College is also among the sponsors of diversity and civic engagement initiatives such as the American Conference on Diversity's annual Diversity Issues in Higher Education Conference; the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey's 20-Year Summit; the Institute for

Latino Studies Leadership Institute; and the City & State Education Summit. The College participates in the annual New York City Veterans Day Parade and other military and veterans' initiatives throughout the year; sends administrators and students to SOMOS to volunteer in local service projects and attend workshops on topics such as government affairs, public policy and social justice (SOMOS is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization addressing issues facing Hispanic constituents of New York State); and supported the U.S. Census 2020 Census efforts at its campuses. Berkeley also produces annual women's entrepreneurship forums; co-sponsors post-election panel discussions with elected officials and presents panel discussions with elected women in public office. Berkeley College's president, chairman and other Board of Trustee members, and administrators participate in a variety of these initiatives.

Through the Office of Career Services, students can apply for internship and employment opportunities in government. Many students have gained professional experience and enhanced their knowledge of civic engagement by working in internships for elected officials and government agencies in local municipal, borough and state government offices. The placement of students in these positions is documented by Career Services.

These experiences illustrate Berkeley College's mission in action and the commitment of the College's president and leaders throughout the institution to providing students with opportunities to engage in the democratic process. The alignment of civic learning and democratic learning experiences with the Berkeley College mission and Strategic Plan further demonstrates the commitment of the governing board, president, and senior leadership to cultivating student participation in the democratic process.

Landscape:

Berkeley College is a private 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2019.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Berkeley College has 3,468 students who commute to attend classes on campus or attend classes remotely online. Additional data for Berkeley College, New Jersey can be found on the National Center for Education Statistics website [HERE](#) and additional data for Berkeley College, New York can be found [HERE](#).

Berkeley College has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 51.5%.
Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 72.2%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 26.9%.
Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 65%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2020 Bronze

Goals:

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

- To increase student voter turnout rate to 56.5% in 2022 and 61.5% in 2024.
- To increase student voter registration rate to 77.2% in 2022 and 82.2% in 2024.
- To increase co-curricular programming (synchronous, asynchronous, virtual, in-person, and hybrid) by 5% in 2022 and 10% in 2024.

Strategy:

Berkeley College will implement these strategies, initially developed in our 2020 Action Plan, to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

Since our 2020 Action Plan, we have successfully launched and maintained a multi-layered plan incorporating active and passive engagement and education around student voter registration and turnout. We revisit this plan and adjust as needed each semester. In addition to active tabling, internal social media engagement (Yammer), emails, and information shared across platforms regularly accessed by students, we have embedded civic and voter education into on campus, hybrid, and online First Year Seminar courses.

We constantly seek to remove barriers for students, and through feedback from students and direct observation have found that both a lack of time and lack of easily accessible information are two of the most common barriers to voter registration and voter participation. In response to these needs, in August 2022 we developed a centralized site in our internal Libguide platform that directs students to the information and forms they need through links to state electronic voter registration forms, state election information sites, as well as to the ALL IN to Vote site. We then created a QR code that students can easily use and that our voter registration and voter education team members can use to best guide students to the e-forms or information needed.

This QR code link to the Voter Registration and Information Libguide is not only used by student voter education team members but is also posted in high-traffic areas around campuses, is included in weekly event emails in the beginning of every semester (which have a high open and click-through rate) and is also included in our New Student Orientation courses in Canvas.

We kick off our voter registration and education programs and intentional student engagements every year with our Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day tabling and information displays. We don't limit our programming and outreach to the fall semester, however, but continue student civic and voter engagement programs and events throughout the academic year. Our student leaders are essential to these efforts as student-to-student engagement draws larger numbers of students to events and tables, and results in greater participation in discussions on our internal social media platform (Yammer).

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

In addition to using our future 2022 NSLVE voting data, we assess the efficacy of specific programs, classroom presentations, and tabling events through co-curricular program evaluations. Program evaluations are completed electronically by student participants at the end of relevant presentations or programs to help determine if learning outcomes are being met in areas of civic learning and democratic engagement.

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/berkeley-college/>. It will also be shared electronically with the President's Office, the Chairman of the Board, The Provost's Office, and other administrative and academic areas.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.