



## **All In Challenge Action Plan 2022 Bryn Mawr College**

### **Executive Summary**

Bryn Mawr College is a small, historically women's college located on a residential campus just outside of the city of Philadelphia, PA. The College is a leader in academic innovation, with a strong emphasis on putting learning into action through research, fieldwork, civic engagement, and internships. Bryn Mawr's mission states that "the College's rigorous liberal arts curriculum and distinguished graduate programs foster a thirst for knowledge, open inquiry, global perspectives, civic engagement, and innovation through study across the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences" with a goal of preparing students for "lives of purpose." Included in that mission is the belief that participation in civic life through service, activism, advocacy, and political engagement is a key component of life both during and after college.

Our campus action plan is a collaborative effort coordinated by faculty, staff, student, and community members who share a passion for civic engagement. Under the leadership of the Director of Civic Engagement, our team includes campus administrators, faculty members, advising deans, librarians, student leaders, and community partners. Our plan aims to empower Bryn Mawr students to be educated, prepared, and active voters. Through a multi-pronged approach involving outreach in public areas on campus, residential spaces, classrooms, and co-curricular programming, we are striving to increase our institution's voting rate into the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile for 2022. Based on the data collected in our 2020 NSLVE report, this feels like an achievable goal and one we are excited to meet. Our long-term goal is to instill in every student the feeling that civic engagement is important and rewarding and making voting in every election a commitment they will carry with them beyond their time at Bryn Mawr College.

Our efforts will focus on Bryn Mawr students—including undergraduate and graduate students as well as students enrolled in our postbaccalaureate premedical program—the majority of whom vote in the Montgomery County area of Pennsylvania. The action steps detailed in this plan will be executed starting in August 2022 and will run through the November 8, 2022, General Election.

### **Leadership**

Voter engagement efforts are coordinated through the Career & Civic Engagement Center at Bryn Mawr College. The Center has a staff of 16 full time employees, including five who fall under the umbrella of civic engagement. The responsibility of the All In Campus Democracy Challenge committee lead is written into the job description of the Director of Civic Engagement, insuring that the committee and its work will continue on campus no matter who inhabits that position.



**Staff:**

Ellie Esmond, Director of Civic Engagement (Team Lead)  
Lisa Armstrong, Associate Director of Volunteer Programs  
Liv Raddatz, Senior Associate Director of Praxis  
Sydney Robertson, Administrative Program Coordinator  
Mary Beth Horvath, Associate Dean of the Undergraduate College  
Arlene Zimmerle, Humanities & Media Librarian, Library & Information Technology Services  
New Hire in fall 2022, Student Engagement Coordinator  
New Hire in fall 2022, New Student Programs Coordinator

**Faculty:**

Marissa Golden, Associate Professor of Political Science

**Students:**

Isabella Nugent, Student Voting Engagement Coordinator  
Selected in fall 2022, Civic Influencer Student Fellow

**Community Partners/Organizational Partners:**

All In Campus Democracy Challenge  
Johanna Mudry, Statewide Organizer, Civic Influencers  
Jamie Mogil, President, League of Women Voters of Lower Merion & Narberth  
Montgomery County Voter Services Office, Norristown, PA  
PHENND (Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development)

The committee members listed above represent those on the team who hold leadership roles in executing key elements of our action plan, but we also depend on the support of our paid and volunteer student leaders, student campus affinity groups, faculty members who invite us to their classes to assist with voter registration and education, and staff members who help provide rides to the polls via our Election Day Shuttle.

**Commitment**

In January 2022 the College opened the doors to a new building, the Student Life and Wellness Center, creating a dynamic and welcoming space centrally located on campus that joined together three key departments, including the Career & Civic Engagement Center, to create a center that redefined wellness for the Bryn Mawr College community. According to the Dean of the Undergraduate College Jennifer Walters, “The new building makes it possible for us to advance a concept of wellness that includes learning to care for yourself and communities that are important to you.” By placing civic engagement literally at the heart of campus and by connecting it to the concept of wellness, Bryn Mawr College demonstrates how much it sees participation in civic life as an intrinsic part of student development and the student experience.



## **Landscape**

The NSLVE report gives Bryn Mawr College an invaluable tool to use to help guide our efforts to engage student voters. Our 2020 NSLVE report showed that our campus has an 84% voting rate with 92.3% of voting-eligible students registering to vote and 91% of registered students actively voting on Election Day. We've seen a steady increase in our numbers according to the 2016 and 2018 NSLVE data and, based on that increase, are setting the goal of raising our institutional voting rate to at least 90%.

We currently do not share enough of our IPEDS data with NSLVE to provide a report on our campus voting rates for different racial and ethnic groups. One of our goals is to work with our upper-level administration on campus to change our IPEDS data sharing policy and provide this data in time for our 2022 NSLVE report. However, even though we lack this data, we can use more generalized data on youth voting provided by CIRCLE (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) and NSLVE to develop targeted outreach strategies for underrepresented groups on our campus.

Because of the pandemic, we saw a significant increase in students who voted "Not-In-Person." On October 31, 2019, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf signed Act 77 into law. The Act is an historic election reform bill that made the most significant improvements to Pennsylvania's elections in more than 80 years. Act 77 allows for more convenient and secure voting. Most Pennsylvania voters can now vote by mail-in ballot and voters have more time to register to vote and to return their mail-in ballots. Because of the COVID pandemic, many of our students exercised their right to vote by mail and were happy with how seamless the process was for them. In addition to posting their ballots in the mail, Bryn Mawr College is also within walking distance of a secure ballot drop box that many students utilized.

## **Goals and Strategy**

Our overall campus goal as related to voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote efforts centers around making sure students feel confident and empowered in their choice of where to register, knowledgeable about the options available to them for casting their vote and educated about the candidates and issues they are voting on in each election. Our methodology is to engage students through multiple channels—in person conversations, information sessions, online resources, classroom presentations, and peer to peer education. We offer opportunities for voter registration in classrooms, dining halls, community gathering spaces, the libraries, and in the Career & Civic Engagement Center. New this year, we will be collaborating with the Undergraduate Dean's Office to add voter registration information to the website specifically for entering first year students in addition to our already robust student voting information webpage. We will work with the newly hired New Student Programs Coordinator and Student Engagement Coordinator to include information on voter registration and how BMC support student voting in our first-



year orientation programming and THRIVE class. We will also collaborate with the Pensby Center to develop specific outreach strategies for first generation college students and students who are members of marginalized identity groups on campus.

We will continue with the following community outreach and engagement activities that have become institutionalized practices in our Center:

- Voter registration webinars and information sessions in late August/early September targeting incoming students during orientation
- Voter registration webinars presented to all students during September and October 2022
- Appointment options for students to receive one-on-one virtual assistance with the academic librarians and Civic Engagement staff
- Large scale public outreach campaigns utilizing social media on Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day
- Inclusion of a session on voter registration as part of the THRIVE first year seminar curriculum (mandatory for all first-year students)
- Frequent updates on the Civic Engagement voter resources website (<https://www.brynmawr.edu/career-civic/student-funding-and-resources/voting-information>) to offer a consistent source of reliable information for student voters
- Leveraging student leaders through our Civic Influencers Fellow to reach students in affinity groups to provide them with up to date voter registration information
- Tabling events which are a very effective, visible, and popular way to reach students on our campus. Tabling events traditionally involve stationing students and staff members in high traffic areas like our dining halls, campus center, and Pem Arch (the main pedestrian thoroughfare on campus)

We will leverage our newer, more central location on campus to set up a permanent voter registration and mail-in ballot request station where we provide pre-printed forms, free mailing envelopes, and free stamps for student voters.

We will present the 2020 NSLVE report to the faculty at a fall faculty meeting to increase their awareness of student voting rates on campus as well as the current supports in place for student voters and invite their input on our strategy. We will encourage faculty members to include in-class presentations on voter registration and reminders of upcoming election-related deadlines in their classes and share with them a PowerPoint presentation created by Civic Engagement that they can use in their classes to share information about voting.

We will create a social media campaign that will utilize departmental Instagram accounts across campus as well as student affinity group social media channels to educate students about the upcoming elections and alert them about PA deadlines.



We will provide nonpartisan candidate guides for students and provide opportunities for students to reflect on their values and priorities to help them discern which candidates they wish to support. We will partner with our local League of Women Voters office to offer a “Prepping for Election Day” workshop for students and answer any pre-election day questions.

We will publicize local election-related events and candidate forums using our social media channels to encourage students to learn more about the candidates and issues on their ballots.

We will sponsor student participation in regional events, like the Pennsylvania Youth Voting Summit which is open to high school and college students and usually hosted by the University of Pennsylvania.

On Election Day we will provide our traditional Election Day Shuttle service—a campus van driven by staff, faculty, and student volunteers to assist student voters in reaching our local polling place. The shuttle runs on Election Day from 9 am – 8:30 pm.

We will work with the Student Engagement Coordinator to plan Election Night Watch Parties where students can gather to watch the election results together.

### **Reporting and Evaluation**

To evaluate our outreach strategy, we will track our social media accounts and postings to measure engagement with voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote posts. We will continue to use the data collected and reported in our NSLVE report to track our progress toward our goals. We will track the number of riders on our Election Day Shuttle and the attendees at our events to measure campus interest and participation. We will add a link to Bryn Mawr College’s most recent NSLVE report to our student voting website to more publicly benchmark our campus’ engagement levels. Our committee will have a post-Election season meeting to discuss our successes, challenges, and future goals.