

## **Executive Summary**

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. The purpose of this action plan is to increase student voter registration for the upcoming election and to increase student civic education and civic engagement beyond this election year.

This action plan was developed in collaboration with multiple Butler organizations and offices on campus who have a strong commitment to community and student engagement. These groups include the Department of Student Involvement and Leadership, the Office of Service and Community Engagement, the Efroymsen Diversity Center, Student Government Association, Community Engagement Program Council, Residence Life, Compass Center, Diversity Program Council, Academic Affairs, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Each of these campus entities are integral to the curricular and co-curricular implementation of our action plan. Our goal at Butler University is to develop well rounded, civically engaged individuals who are well equipped to enter the workforce and the social world post graduation, and every office on campus is involved in this mission. We developed this action plan to further this goal and ensure the development of our students.

## **Leadership**

Dr. Frank Ross, Vice President Student Affairs

Caroline Huck-Watson, Executive Director Student Involvement and Leadership

Katie Rousopoluos, Associate Director Office of Service and Community Engagement

Jesse Neader, Director of Student Activities

Miah McLaurin, Diversity Programs Coordinator

Daniel Myers, Director COMPASS Center

Marti Wein, Assistant Director of Residence Life

Hanako Gavia, Assistant Director Center for Citizenship and Community

Dr. Ryan Daugherty, Instructor of Political Science and International Studies Affiliate Faculty

Sydney Haworth, Student Government Association President '24-'25, Student

Rylie Swails, Civic Engagement Coordinator, Jan.-Aug. '24, Student

Anna Foster, Civic Engagement Coordinator, Present, Student

Off Campus Partners: Motivote and Headcount

## Commitment

Commitment to civic engagement is not a new concept to Butler University. Founded in 1855 (then, North Western Christian University) by attorney and abolitionist Ovid Butler, its charter proclaimed a “non-sectarian institution free of the taint of slavery offering instruction in every branch of liberal and professional education”— a vision which translated into the admission of women and persons of color on an equal basis. These earliest acts of engagement inform the current mission of our university as we strive to enlarge the definition of a university as a place of learning for scholars, students, and the communities that lie beyond our campus.

The Butler University mission statement is as follows:

*“Butler University, founded on ideals of equity and academic excellence, creates and fosters a collaborative, stimulating intellectual learning environment. We are inspired to boldly innovate and broadly educate, enriching communities and preparing all learners to lead meaningful lives.”*

Ovid Butler’s work as an abolitionist informs our current mission statement as well as the curricular and co-curricular programming as we strive to continue his work and mission in creating an equitable experience and developing civic minded global citizens.

The institution’s mission, coupled with the wide array of curricular and co-curricular programs that are offered, shows the level of commitment and dedication that faculty and staff have towards developing students to become responsible and engaged global citizens.

There are clear commitments to civic learning within curricular areas of the university. Within Butler’s liberal arts framework there are several areas within the [core curriculum](#) specifically which advance the mission of civic learning. Courses such as:

- Social World courses focus on “questions about human beings and the social, cultural, economic and political world in which they’re embedded.” In addition to challenging students to “understand the interaction between society’s values and its definition of social problems.”
- Social Justice and Diversity courses help students “recognize multiple and intersecting dimensions of identity and inequity through the study of critical scholarship on the historical, cultural, political, and/or social experiences of marginalized communities.”
- The Indianapolis Community Requirement courses allow students to build upon “an experience in Indianapolis to further the individual student’s understanding of the nature of community and the relationship between community and the student.”

The commitment continues beyond the core courses. Butler University's Learning Outcomes show the commitment to civic learning as it states: "by graduation, Butler's dynamic academic and co-curricular offerings will prepare our students to demonstrate [...] a capacity to help shape our local and global communities through civic understanding and an appreciation of diverse perspectives."

Alongside a strong commitment to curricular opportunities for civic learning, there are myriad co-curricular opportunities available for students to explore civic engagement in several capacities. The Office of Service and Community Engagement seeks to connect Butler students with service and philanthropy opportunities in the Indianapolis community and beyond, and strives to engage in meaningful work and education around social justice issues and personal development. The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life is home to fourteen Greek-lettered organizations, where members contribute more than 20,000 hours of service to over 200 Indianapolis area nonprofits, while also fundraising year-round for their respective philanthropies. The Efroymsen Diversity Center (DC), which serves as an open and inclusive symbol to the Butler University campus, fosters contributions of intercultural engagement, support, and guidance with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These along with many other offices on campus seek to engage the student body in civic learning and develop engaged and global citizens.

Another example of Butler's commitment is BU BeWell, an initiative and framework of eight dimensions that the entire campus has adopted that helps foster a positive environment to grow, learn, and be the best versions of ourselves. Specifically, the dimensions of "service and community" and "meaning and purpose" are two that point back to civic engagement and show a commitment to our campus community's well being.

Lastly, Butler's president, President Danko, recently signed a commitment called "College Presidents for Civic Preparedness" which is "a new initiative convened by the Institute for Citizens & Scholars. It brings together campus leaders who are urgently committed to preparing today's young people for confident citizenship in our democracy." ([College Presidents for Civic Preparedness - Institute for Citizens & Scholars \(citizensandscholars.org\)](https://citizensandscholars.org))

## **Landscape**

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

Our campus demographic and voting data:

For 2023 Butler University had 4,519 undergraduate students.

The following is information on undergraduate students:

In-State	2,014 (44.6%)
Out-of-State	2,458 (54.3%)
International	47 (1.1%)
Black/African American	187 (4.3%)
Hispanic	293 (6.8%)
Asian	174 (4.0%)
American Indian/Alaska Native	5 (0.1%)
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	N/A
Two or More Races	163 (3.8%)
White	3,417 (79.2%)
Unknown	27 (0.6%)
Live in College-Owned, Operated, Affiliated Housing	2242 -Residential (49.6%) 739 - Greek Housing (16.4%)
Live Off-Campus or Commute	473 (10.5%)
Ages 25 or Older	78 (1.7%)
Average Age of Full-Time Students	20
Average Age of All Students (full- and part time)	20

Butler University has authorized NSLVE until 2033.

**Goals:**

Short Term

- Improve voter registration of the student body for the upcoming November election
- Engage Butler students in voter registration with online platform, MotiVote

- Engage Butler students in voter registration with in-person, peer based voter registration drives

## Long Term

- Build a foundation for ongoing curricular and co-curricular programs that focus on civic education and understanding
- Foster a safe and equitable space to express, discuss, and act on political participation
- Create long term student and community relationships through robust, intentional, and centralized service
- Move students along a continuum of awareness, understanding, and involvement on civic engagement topics that are meaningful to them

## Strategy

Butler University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration:

- We will host in-person, peer led voter registration drives conducted by student organizations
- We will provide electronic links and resources to the online voter registration platform MotiVote to reach not only students who will vote locally but also those out-of-county and out-of-state
- We will develop a website that encourages voter registration and links the Motivote portal in order to simplify the registration process for students

Butler University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan civic education:

- Host two-three campus programs each semester related to political engagement
- Implement MotiVote on campus in Fall 2024 and host voter registration days
- Provide faculty with pertinent voting information to share with students
- Connect with faculty involved in integrating the Social Justice and Diversity core requirement
- Create a website that houses education on a myriad of civic topics including election processes, candidate information, and democratic engagement
- Provide opportunities and tools for self-reflection and discernment of values
- Follow up with opportunities to connect these values to social issues at local, national, and global levels as well as to candidate platforms

## **Reporting**

This Action Plan will be shared with members of the Butler University community, on the Student Government Association online resource hub, and on the webpage for the Office of Civic Engagement. Additionally, it will be shared with the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the other campuses involved in the challenge.

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

## **Evaluation**

The Civic Engagement Committee will continue to meet throughout the 2024-2025 school year to ensure that the strategy is being implemented and the objectives are being completed. There will be monthly formative evaluations of outcomes, as well as a summative evaluation in Spring 2025.

In order to evaluate the progress of this action plan, we will assess the effectiveness of on campus events and programs, based on the number of students attended and voters registered. We will also use data provided from our MotiVote page in order to further evaluate our initiatives. Evaluation of the efforts will be completed by the Civic Engagement Committee throughout the academic year.