



CARROLL UNIVERSITY

Carroll University

Waukesha, Wisconsin

2024 ALL IN DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE

Campus Action Plan for the 2024 Election Cycle

Executive Summary

Carroll University is committed to providing our students with opportunities to learn and engage in their civic duties to fulfill our Presbyterian values through our liberal arts education. The leadership for the All In Democracy Challenge will help to implement voter registration programming efforts in hopes to encourage students to vote in the upcoming Presidential Election cycle spanning all of 2024 and addressing both local, state wide, and national elections. The 2024 plan has been developed by the Assistant Director of Student Activities with guidance and input from Dr. Rebecca Imes, and Student Democracy Fellows. The plan revolves around providing multiple opportunities in person and through social media for our students to register to vote, create their personalized voter action plan, and learn about the importance of voting as their civic duty. These opportunities will occur at the undergraduate campus as well as the Center for Graduate Studies approximately three miles away. Carroll University became an NSLVE, Campus Vote Project, and ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge institution in 2020, we plan to use our past action plans and our 2020 and 2022 NSLVE data to set goals to increase voter registration and participation rates across campus. In addition to participating in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Carroll University has committed to being a Day on Democracy campus with the inaugural Day on Democracy being November 5, 2024 in which no classes will be held from 8:00am-4:00pm and offices will have adjusted availability to encourage participation from the entire campus community.

Overall Goals

- We will provide multiple opportunities for students to register to vote or check their voter registration status before each local election/primary and the Presidential election to ensure 100% students are asked about their registration status and plan to vote (Ask Every Student) in 2024.
 - NSLVE Data Goal for 2024: Achieve a voting rate that is two percent higher than the All Institution average voting rate for 2024
- 1. We will host 2 events with at least 50 students in attendance at each in both Spring 2024 and Fall 2024 that provide students with the opportunity to make an



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individual voting action plan for participating in the upcoming election as well as become educated on candidates, the voting process, etc.

- a. NSLVE Data: Increase the voting rate of registered students to 88 percent compared to 85.1 in 2020
2. We will host the inaugural Day on Democracy on November 5, 2024 in which classes will not be held and offices will have adjusted hours to support students, faculty, and staff to vote and participate in celebration and education activities hosted that day.
 - a. NSLVE Data: Increase the voting rate of registered students to 88 percent compared to 85.1 in 2020
3. By November 2024, we will build connections with other areas on campus and increase understanding and support for civic engagement at Carroll University by partnering with at least two program specific professors in majors that saw a large decrease in voting rates from 2016 to 2020.
 - a. NSLVE Data: Increase voting rates by five percent for majors that saw a significant decrease in voting rates from 2016 to 2020 (this may be adjusted based off 2022 data we receive)

Leadership

Project Leadership

- Alex Smith (Chair), Assistant Director of Student Activities, Division of Student Life – Student Activities
- Elizabeth Brzeski, Associate Dean for Student Life, Division of Student Life
- Nate Dehne, Vice President for Student Life
- Dr. Mark Blegen, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Mohammed Bey, Vice President for Institutional Inclusion
- Dr. Rebecca Imes, Professor of Communication, Chair of the Department of Communication, Criminal Justice, and Sociology
- Alli Rygh, Director of Residence Life & Housing, Division of Student Life – Residence Life & Housing
- Jaellah Jones, Campus Center Operations Manager, Division of Finance and Administration – Operations
- Ashley Lubkeman, 2024 Student Democracy Fellow & Student Senate President
- Meghan Matthys, 2024 Student Democracy Fellow
- Sara Smith, 2024 Student Democracy Fellow
- Kristen Hansen, Wisconsin State Coordinator, Campus Vote Project
- Gina Kozlik, City Clerk Treasurer, City of Waukesha



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- Cheri Stoffel, Head Election Official for E&R Church, City of Waukesha
- Ellen Trytek, Voter Services Community Outreach, League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County

Additional Campus Support

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion professional staff and student staff
- Residence Life and Housing professional staff and student staff
- Orientation Mentors
- Student representatives from the University Honors Program
- Professors from College of Arts & Sciences, College of Health Sciences, School of Business & Technology, and School of Education & Human Services for undergraduate and graduate programs
- Student leaders from the Carroll University Leftists, Carroll University Republicans, and identity-based student organizations on campus
- Additional faculty, staff, and students will be added as the University confirms members of the Day on Democracy Committee

Succession & Absence Planning

The chair for the challenge will be on family leave for most of the Summer of 2024 but will be returning prior to the Fall 2024 semester. In the absence of the chair, the Associate Dean for Student Life, Dr. Rebecca Imes, and student workers will be overseeing continued planning for Fall 2024. A large amount of planning and communication will be happening in Spring 2024 in advance of the chair's leave.

If the chair were to leave the Institution or move to a new role, the job responsibilities related to civic engagement and the ALL IN challenge will stay with the role. While the position is vacant during the hiring process, the Associate Dean for Student Life and student workers will continue the plan to achieve the set goals.

Commitment

Carroll University's mission is to "provide a superior education, rooted in its Presbyterian and liberal arts heritage, and draws upon its Christian tradition to prepare all students for vocational success, lifelong learning, and service in a diverse and global society." As the first, four-year institution of higher learning in the state of Wisconsin, we pride ourselves on being pioneers in our community. In the past, we have refocused our efforts to be responsible stewards of our community including all people, animals, and the environment. Our civic duties are intertwined with our value of stewardship as a part



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of our Ethos statement, and we are searching for ways to educate and encourage civic engagement among our students.

Our Presbyterian faith also calls us to be active citizens through participating in opportunities related to public policy and voting. By being active citizens, we can fulfill our mission of providing a superior education rooted in its Presbyterian and liberal arts heritage.

Through partnering with the Campus Vote Project, ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, and NSLVE since 2020 we continue to develop a strategic civic engagement program for our students to feel empowered to be active citizens. This program will continue to grow through curricular and co-curricular elements through the addition of new leadership commitments detailed below.

Dr. Cindy Gnadinger, President of Carroll University, joined 623 other institutions of higher learning in September 2020 in committing to 100% student voter registration and turnout through the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment. Dr. Gnadinger and the senior leadership team continue to show commitment and support for faculty, staff, and student voter engagement by now committing to Day on Democracy to be hosted every other year in November. Day on Democracy at Carroll University is a call to action to the Carroll community to participate in the election process through voting, volunteering, educating, and more. There will be no classes from 8:00am-4:00pm on Day on Democracy with adjusted offices hours to ensure all faculty, staff, and students can participate in some way. A formal announcement was shared with the campus community by the Provost and Vice President for Student Life on December 12, 2023 to showcase the University's unwavering commitment to democracy moving forward.

Landscape

Carroll University is a private liberal arts college affiliated with the Presbyterian Church and located in Waukesha, Wisconsin, a large suburb of Milwaukee. Carroll University is the first, four-year institution of higher learning in Wisconsin founded in 1846, making the mascot of a Pioneer very fitting. The University is most known for its health science offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as providing a strong liberal arts foundation and major offerings. Carroll is home to over 3,300 students with around 525 being graduate students. A large majority (~69%) of students are Wisconsin residents with an additional 25% coming from the state of Illinois to attend. In Fall of 2023, 58% of students were residential, compared to 42% commuting to campus. Lastly, our student body reflects a 3:1 ratio of female to male students enrolled.



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It is important to acknowledge our relationship with the City of Waukesha Clerk's office and their process for early voting to best understand the local landscape and a hurdle for student voters at Carroll University. The Wisconsin State Legislature states that if the early voting location is to be hosted somewhere other than the office of the municipal clerk then the office of the municipal clerk can not also be an early voting location. As a result, the City of Waukesha has typically chosen to host early voting at City Hall where the office of the municipal clerk is located. Carroll University is currently unable to be an early voting location which adds concerns about accessibility for early voting when the location requires transportation. Our partnership with our campus Public Safety will continue to expand to include early voting transportation in addition to voting day transportation.

Past Civic Engagement Efforts

Pre-2020 our civic engagement efforts revolved around the Presidential Election cycle as well as some larger state elections. This has been overseen by a committee of individuals including representatives from our Volunteer Programs/Student Activities, Residence Life & Housing, Library Services, and Campus Center. Efforts included voter registration promotion, day of voting accessibility through van initiatives, programs for value identification through common public policies, student-run partisan events, and more. By partnering with the Campus Vote Project in the Fall of 2020, we have developed a more comprehensive civic engagement plan for students that is inclusive of local elections, year-round voter registration, and civic education. We hope that by consolidating our efforts through the Campus Vote Project and providing the opportunity for Democracy Fellows to lead voter registration initiatives and programs we can increase our student's engagement in voting at various levels.

The 2023 election cycle started with a largely watched race for the Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice opening along with other local openings. To engage with our students, we utilized our Democracy Fellows to provide in class presentations, tabling hours in the Campus Center and Library coffee shop, hosted a trivia night in the dining hall during a popular meal time, and set up displays with candidate information, memorandum questions practice voting, polling locations, and more. In addition, we utilized free, nonpartisan, resources from Guides.Vote which created candidate specific handouts and sent us banners and other resources free of charge. With a slower fall with no city/county specific elections, the team took time to dive into plans for 2024 as well as prioritize education and development for Democracy Fellows by sending our first representatives to the National Student Voting Summit at the University of Maryland.



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The Assistant Director of Student Activities at Carroll University helps to oversee all civic engagement opportunities offered for students. This individual will continue to be the lead for all voting-related initiatives.

NSLVE Data

The 2020-2021 school year was the first year Carroll University participated in the NSLVE project. By receiving this data, we have a better understanding of the level of engagement there is from our students across different areas of study, years in school, etc. We will now use this data to create appropriate goals moving forward for our action plan.

2016 vs 2020

From 2016 to 2020 the student voting rate at Carroll University increased by 4.6 percent (56.3 in 2016 to 60.9 in 2020). Although our voting rate is less than the 66 percent voting rate for all institutions, it is a solid improvement that is reflective of our increased efforts in partnership with the Campus Vote Project. Although our overall registration rate was slightly lower in 2020 compared to 2016, a significant jump was seen in the voting rate of registered students with 85.1 percent in 2020 compared to 76.8 percent in 2016. As we prepare for a midterm election year, we see that we have quite a bit of work ahead of us to ensure our voting rate does not drop as significantly as it did in 2018. Many of our goals and strategies will reflect more education on the specific races occurring, continued voter registration efforts, and easier access for mail-in and day of voting.

As of January 2024, our campus has not received our most recent NSLVE report. We hope to add additional information and adjust goals based off new data from this report.

Goals & Strategies for 2024

1. We will provide multiple opportunities for students to register to vote or check their voter registration status before each local election/primary and the Presidential election to ensure 100% students are asked about their registration status and plan to vote (Ask Every Student) in 2024.
 - a. NSLVE Data Goal for 2024: Achieve a voting rate that is two percent higher than the All Institution average voting rate for 2024

Strategies:



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- Create a tabling calendar in which Democracy Fellows, League of Women Voters, and professional staff table in the Campus Center and higher traffic locations on campus with information on registering to vote, checking registration status, and other resources.
 - This has already been completed for Spring 2024
 - Promote the Democracy Fellows & Campus Vote Project as resources that can be a part of events and other initiatives on campus to provide voting education and promotion.
 - Tabling at events such as Student Involvement Fair, Constitution Day, etc.
 - Add slide on civic engagement to First Year Student and Transfer Orientation presentations
 - Incorporate Democracy Fellow presentations into various classes
 - All CCS100 (required first year experience course) faculty will receive information on this offering and opportunity to schedule a class visit.
 - Provost will send out what resources are available to faculty in the beginning of each semester.
 - Promote the Voting & Civic Engagement Carrollu.edu website to all students across various platforms well in advance of elections as a centralized resource for student voting information.
 - Send out all student emails in advance of elections with information on polling locations, registering to vote, transportation options, and more.
2. We will host 2 events with at least 50 students in attendance at each in both Spring 2024 and Fall 2024 that provide students with the opportunity to make an individual voting action plan for participating in the upcoming election as well as become educated on candidates, the voting process, etc.
- a. NSLVE Data: Increase the voting rate of registered students to 88 percent compared to 85.1 in 2020

Strategies:

- Host a Wisconsin based political commentator/TikTok creator for a comedy/voter education evening event in March 2024.
- Host an election themed trivia night in Spring 2024 to educate on positions up for election and all you need to know to be informed to vote.
- Host a celebratory event on National Voter Registration Day in September 2024.



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- Create a social media campaign that can be promoted through various social media accounts on campus to encourage creating a personal voting action plan.
 - Includes promotion of personal action plans:
 - Are you planning to vote?
 - Are you registered to vote?
 - Where will you be voting?
 - Additional important voting action plan information
 - Encourage students to share their voting plans through their social media accounts to showcase students
 - Celebrate & provide reminders for:
 - National Voter Registration Day
 - Voter Education Week
 - National Vote Early Day
 - Election Hero Day
 - Election Day
 - All local elections, registration deadlines, etc.
- 3. We will host the inaugural Day on Democracy on November 5, 2024 in which classes will not be held and offices will have adjusted hours to support students, faculty, and staff to vote and participate in celebration and education activities hosted that day.
 - a. NSLVE Data: Increase the voting rate of registered students to 88 percent compared to 85.1 in 2020

Strategies:

- Create a committee of students, faculty, and staff to plan and implement Day on Democracy.
- Host a voting access related “A Place at the Table” event in partnership with our department of Institutional Inclusion to allow individuals to participate in a program focused on mutual understanding and respect regarding the upcoming election and how voting systems are not always accessible for all.
- Coordinate and implement a schedule of events that touch on the education, registration, and celebration stages of our Day on Democracy.
 - Registration
 - From August to November, we will focus on registering incoming first year and transfer students along with helping



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students update their registration. Registration opportunities will be presented in orientation events, first-year classes (where applicable), and throughout the months leading up to the election.

- Education
 - During the months of September and October, we may host guest speakers, viewing parties, and other educational programming. This stage focuses on holding events that feature information on the processes of elections, the candidates running, and the upcoming Democracy Day.
 - Celebration
 - The program culminates with Democracy Day. On Election Day in November, classes will not be held and we will encourage students, faculty, and staff to participate in volunteer opportunities, get-out-the-vote activities, and celebratory social events.
4. By November 2024, we will build connections with other areas on campus and increase understanding and support for civic engagement at Carroll University by partnering with at least two program specific professors in majors that saw a large decrease in voting rates from 2016 to 2020.
- a. NSLVE Data: Increase voting rate for majors that saw a significant decrease in voting rates from 2016 to 2020 (this will be adjusted based off 2022 data we receive)

Strategies:

- Present civic engagement information to Orientation Mentors and Resident Assistants during Fall training
- Partner with Athletics, student organizations, affinity groups and academic departments to provide voter registration and civic engagement information to students
 - Academic programs with the largest decrease in voting rate to develop partnerships with:
 - Communication Technology majors
 - English & Literature majors
 - Natural Resources/Conservation related majors
 - Visual & Performing Arts Majors (Theatre, Art)
 - Social Sciences Related Majors
- Build a new partnership with our Center for Graduate Studies which is located three miles from the central campus and has a majority commuter



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population to begin to provide voting registration and education information.

Reporting

Carroll University received our first NSLVE report from the 2020 election that provided us with historical data from 2016 and on. This data report was shared with Carroll's Campus Vote Project committee, Democracy Fellows, and Senior Leadership Team. Portions of the report were submitted as part of the Board of Trustee Report in Spring 2022. On the Carroll University Voting and Civic Engagement page there is a direct link to access our most up to date action plan and NLSVE Reports under Campus Vote Project information (<https://www.carrollu.edu/voting-and-civic-engagement>).

In addition to NSLVE data, our student organization platform, Pioneer Presence, will be utilized to track interactions with students and attendance at events. This will allow us to have a better understanding of the number of touchpoints happening and what areas we are missing. Social media platforms will also be used to track engagement on civic-related postings.

Evaluation

Evaluation of our assessment data and programming provided will be done by the leadership listed above with additional feedback to be collected from faculty, staff, and students for the best reflection of goal achievement. The committee will continue to review the NSLVE data for the University and adjust programmatic efforts to increase voting rates across campus.

Pioneer Presence, the current organization management system, will be utilized to track attendance and analyze the students engaging in our work through the dashboard analytics that the system provides. This will allow us to compare attendance between commuters and residential students, various years in schools, gender, majors, organization involvement, etc.

In addition, Carroll University recently received data from implementing the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The hope is to utilize student response regarding support based on political affiliation to inform our committee on the current student perspective and adjust the ways we support students with varying political viewpoints.



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Summary

Carroll University is committed to providing multiple opportunities for our students to learn and participate in the upcoming elections for 2024. Our continued partnership with the Campus Vote Project will allow us to amplify our civic engagement efforts to best serve our student population. Our programming efforts through events, presentations, tabling, and social media will provide us with an opportunity to connect with students in a more intentional way and ensure each student can engage in the election process.

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