



# CARROLL UNIVERSITY

## Carroll University

Waukesha, Wisconsin

2022 ALL IN DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE

Campus Action Plan for the 2022 Midterm Election

### 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 Midterm Election in November 2022 and various local elections. Our goals revolve 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. Carroll University became an NSLVE and Campus Vote Project institution in 2020, we plan to use the past action plan and our 2020 NSLVE data to set goals to increase voter registration and participation rates across campus.

### 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
- Samantha Werner, Assistant Director of Housing, Division of Student Life – Residence Life & Housing
- Dr. Lilly Goren, Professor of Political Science, Chair of the Department of History, Political Science & Religious Studies
- Susan Hornung, Assistant Director of the Campus Center, Division of Student Life – Student Activities
- Ericka Beckman, 2022 Democracy Fellow
- Emma Handschke, 2022 Democracy Fellow
- Kristen Hansen, Wisconsin State Coordinator, Campus Vote Project
- Noah Foster, Deputy Wisconsin State Coordinator, Campus Vote Project



# CARROLL UNIVERSITY

## *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
- Student leaders from both the Carroll University Leftists, Carroll University Republicans, and identity-based student organizations on campus

## **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 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 and NSLVE we hope to develop a strategic civic engagement initiative for our students to feel empowered to be active citizens.

## **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



# CARROLL UNIVERSITY

residents with an additional 25% coming from the state of Illinois to attend. Lastly, our student body reflects a 3:1 ratio of female to male students enrolled.

## *Past Civic Engagement Efforts*

Pre-2020 our civic engagement efforts revolved around the Presidential Election cycle as well as some larger state/local 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.

Most recently, Carroll University has been put on the map for civic engagement in local elections. In March of 2022, Carroll University successfully hosted all six Waukesha School District Board of Education candidates prior to the election for a public forum. This was the only forum that all six candidates agreed to attend together as the race was very contested with support coming from partisan political organizations being a large talking point. The event was a huge success with 140 in-person attendees and 198 virtual attendees.

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



# CARROLL UNIVERSITY

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.

## Goals & Strategies for 2022

1. Provide multiple opportunities for students to register to vote or check their voter registration status before each local election and the Midterm election
  - a. NSLVE Data: Achieve a voting rate that is two percent higher than the All Institution average voting rate for 2022

### Strategies:

- Create a tabling calendar in which Democracy Fellows table in the Campus Center and higher traffic locations on campus with information on registering to vote, checking registration status, and other resources
  - 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
      - Example: Presenting to all education classes in advance of the school board election in Spring 2022
2. Host 2 events leading up to the midterm Election that provide students with the opportunity to make an individual voting action plan for participating in the upcoming election.
    - a. NSLVE Data: Increase the voting rate of registered students to 60 percent compared to 58% in 2018

### Strategies:

- Host local representative(s) who will be running in the Midterm election on campus for open hours and/or convocation event



# CARROLL UNIVERSITY

- Host a celebratory event on National Voter Registration Day (September 20<sup>th</sup>)
  - 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:
      - Voter Education Week (October 3<sup>rd</sup> – October 7<sup>th</sup>)
      - National Vote Early Day (October 28<sup>th</sup>)
      - Election Hero Day (November 7<sup>th</sup>)
      - Election Day (November 8<sup>th</sup>)
      - All local elections, registration deadlines, etc.
3. Centralize all voting information and resources utilizing either Pioneer Presence or Campus Intranet for easier accessibility for all students. Currently, all information is housed on the Campus Intranet, but the system is going through a remodel this summer by our IT department.
- a. NSLVE Data: Increase Registration Rate of students to 69.5% compared to 67.9% in 2018

#### Strategies:

- Discover the best location to virtually house all voting information and resources as they can currently be found in various locations
  - Organize all information to be loaded onto the centralized location
  - Research ways to track the number of interactions with the specific page to have as a piece of assessment data for the year
  - Look into the carrollu.edu website to see if a more detailed page can be built out with information
4. Build connections with other areas on campus and increase understanding and support for civic engagement at Carroll University



# CARROLL UNIVERSITY

- a. NSLVE Data: Increase voting rate for majors that saw a significant decrease in voting rates from 2016 to 2020

## Strategies:

- Invite University President, Dr. Cindy Gnadinger, to sign the Presidential Commitment for the 2022 challenge (if needed)
- Present civic engagement information to Orientation Mentors and Resident Assistants during Fall training
- Partner with Athletics, Pioneers with ASD, student organizations, and academic departments to provide voter registration and civic engagement information to students
  - Academic departments with the largest decrease in voting rate to develop partnerships with:
    - Visual & Performing Arts
    - Social Sciences
    - Natural Resources and Conservation

## 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. The report will be posted on the Voter Information Page for students and employees to access.

In addition to NSLVE data, our student organization platform, 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.

## Summary



# CARROLL UNIVERSITY

Carroll University is committed to providing multiple opportunities for our students to learn and participate in the upcoming elections for 2022 and 2023. 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 than in the past.

## **Contacts**

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