



CEDAR CREST  
COLLEGE



**Democratic Engagement Plan**  
**Election Year 2020**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Cedar Crest College civic and democratic engagement action plan was developed by the Director of Community Service Programs and Ethical Life Site Coordinator through communication with the leadership co-chair and the Civic Engagement Student Advocate. This action plan is used to communicate the strategy for increasing various forms of civic engagement including, but not limited to, college student voter registration, education, and voting turnout rates.

The planned civic engagement opportunities outlined in this document will be carried out over the year leading up to and following the 2020 election on the Cedar Crest College campus in Allentown, PA as well as throughout the Lehigh Valley through face to face and virtual engagement means. Plans included in this document will be implemented by multiple departments and individuals within the campus community. The co-chairs of the democratic engagement action plan will work to recruit various students, faculty, and staff across the campus to accomplish the goals laid out in this document and further institutionalize Cedar Crest College's commitment to civic and democratic learning, engagement, and participation.

# Leadership

The leadership of the civic action plan include individuals and groups from both the campus and local communities. In addition to the leadership listed below, the group will also look to national resources for support and guidance as the leadership team and the campus implement the 2020 democratic action plan.

For the implementation of the action plan, the co-chairs are Tammy Bean, Director of Community Service Programs and Ethical Life Site Coordinator and Dr. Christine Carpino, Assistant Professor of Political Science. These two individuals have been working together to implement civic engaged programming since the 2016 Presidential Election year. During the academic year, meetings happen once a month with the co-chairs and the civic engagement student advocate meeting or corresponding via email weekly.

Additional leadership and support are provided by the following:

## *On-Campus*

### *Faculty and Staff Leadership*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Department</b>
Dr. Megan Monahan	Assistant Professor	History, Literature, and Languages
Dr. Calley Taylor	Dean of Student Success	Academic Services
Tatiana Diaz	Director	Center for Diversity and Inclusion
Andrea Barker	Director	First & Second Year Programming
Kyle Dailey	Dean of Students	Student Affairs

### *Faculty and Staff Resources*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Department</b>
Roxanne Amico	Full Professor, Chair	Performing Arts
Dr. Audrey Ettinger	Associate Professor	Biology
Dr. Scott Hoke	Associate Professor	Criminal Justice
Elizabeth Ortiz	Assistant Professor	Communications
Jessica Croll	Assistant Director	Housing and Residence Life
Susan Barns	Director	Learning & Disability Services
Kellina Yarrish	Assistant Director	Student Activities and Campus Recreation
Kelsey Shaulis	Manager	Grants and Foundations

*Student and Student Clubs/Organizations*

Name	Organization
Sulakshmi Vaid	Lutz Center for Community Service
	Student Government
	Resident Advisors
	History and Political Science Club
	Lutz Center for Community Service
	Alpha Phi Omega

*Off-Campus*

- Lehigh Valley League of Women Voters
- American Association of University Women
- Lehigh Valley Progressive Events
- Make the Road PA

*National Organizations - Resource Support*

- All In Campus Democracy Challenge
- Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Knowledge Community, NASPA
- National Voter Registration Day
- Run With It
- Student PIRGs
- Students Learn Student Vote Coalition

## Commitment

As a college that was founded to educate women in 1867, Cedar Crest College has long believed in women being able to meet the needs of the community. The mission of Cedar Crest College is

A liberal arts college primarily for women dedicated to the education of the next generation of leaders. Cedar Crest College prepares students for life in a global community by educating the whole student at all stages of life and experience.

The campus foundational principles include Scholarship, Liberal Arts, & Creativity, Women's Leadership, Civic Engagement, Global Connectivity, and Health & Wellness. With one of the foundational principles of the college being civic engagement, the ethic of service and community engagement is strong, which can be seen through the celebration of 25 years of the Lutz Center for Community Service during the 2020 calendar year.

The mission of the Lutz Center for Community Service, which houses the civic action plan is as follows:

The Lutz Center for Community Service works to provide the campus community with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to recognize, advocate, and effect positive social change in an ever-transforming global society.

The vision of the department is available through the college's civic engagement definition:

The individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern through the development of the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to effect change. Through varying opportunities for community engagement, individuals progress through several stages, beginning with awareness and resulting in action that will propel them to engaged citizenship beyond the Cedar Crest College experience.

As a college that has a diverse student body, a statement that promotes the values of diversity and inclusion was finalized in 2017. This statement is as follows:

Founded under the mission to expand women's access to higher-education, Cedar Crest College values difference in a diverse, inclusive, and equitable learning environment. The College is committed to educational excellence, leadership, and civic engagement in a pluralistic society. We thus embrace an inclusive community that brings together students, faculty, and staff of different racial and multi-racial, ethnic and multi-ethnic, gender and sexually diverse, economic, religious, and national identities and ages, including students of color, first-generation college students, international students, students of varying ability/disability, and other students underrepresented in higher education.

In addition to the above information, the college embarked on a strategic planning process in 2016 that included four theme areas: Academic Excellence, Transformational Student Experience, Investment in Tomorrow's Education, and A College of Greater Impact. It is the theme of "A College of Greater Impact" where the institution continues to lay out aspirations for engaging students, faculty, and staff in communities beyond the college grounds while also bringing the community to engage with the campus. Programs such as Mayfair Festival for the Arts and majors like Art Therapy and Public Health are just a few of the connection points for civic and community engagement that continue to help the college show the commitment it has to "educating the next generation of leaders."

# Landscape

Engagement in the community has been a strong component of a Cedar Crest College education with the campus community completing just under 100,000 hours of service since the 2014-2015 academic year. During this time same time, the campus has also implemented 35 community engaged courses a year with 84 sections. While community engagement is a long-standing part of the Cedar Crest College culture, becoming a campus engaged in civic and democratic opportunities became a newer initiative during the 2016 election cycle. Since 2016 the college has seen this initiative lead to increased opportunities to engage students in voter recruitment, education, and turnout rates.

Over the last four years the civic engagement work has seen growth in providing voter education resources every year, multiple voter registration tables each semester, and the Cedar Crest College President promoting voting on each election day. Because of these efforts and many more, student voter engagement has increased by 13% from 2012 to 2016 and by 22% from 2014 to 2018 based on the data received from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Additional student voting and registration rates can be seen in the table below. Since the 2014-2015 academic year, students that list political science as a major or minor has grown from just a few to over 40 students.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Registration Rate</b>	<b>Voting Rate of Registered Students</b>	<b>Overall Voting Rate of Student Body</b>
2012	72.70%	69.30%	50.40%
2016	80.70%	79.40%	64.10%
Change	8.00%	10.10%	13.70%
2014	67.50%	25.30%	17.10%
2018	78.70%	50.50%	39.70%
Change	11.20%	25.20%	22.60%

As civic and democratic engagement opportunities increased for the college, which can be seen through programming, interest, and voter engagement numbers, grant funded financial opportunities have also increased allowing for opportunities to host events like #VoteTogether’s Party at the Polls, National Voter Registration Day programming that includes food trucks, and the Allentown Mayoral Primary Debate. Because of all the work that has taken place and the grant funding received over

the past four years, the institution made the commitment to institute a dedicated budget line for civic engagement and election year programming for the 2020-2021 academic year. While funding is currently on hold for the fall due to the impact of COVID-19 on campus and community finances, the commitment of the institution to support the work that is being done on campus is a tremendous institutional step forward.

Additional strengths of the institution include the increase in student action in civic and democratic engagement. During the summer 2019 three students participated in the National Education for Women's (NEW) Leadership Pennsylvania program, a week-long program that engages young women in education for future political participation. The college also had two students participate in Preparing Women to Lead (PLEN): Women in Health Policy seminar in November 2019 in Washington, D.C. While these two experiences are available to students that apply, over 100 students made a pledge to vote in the 2019 election, which was a local election year.

Cedar Crest College has seen a tremendous amount of growth and success in our civic and democratic engagement over the last four years, but there are still some areas of challenge. One of the bigger challenges for the campus community is the mixed messages from faculty members on election day as some give students the day off to participate in voting, some encourage students to vote, but do not relax the attendance policy, and still others schedule tests and quizzes on election day. With the current unknown status of the manner of course instruction (face to face, hybrid, or online) for the campus by November 2020, this issue may or may not have an impact on election day turnout. While not unique to Cedar Crest College at this time, one of the biggest challenges for the fall 2020 election cycle will be the impact that COVID-19 has on voter registration, education, and engagement. Plans are being created that will allow for the greatest amount of flexibility for ensuring a robust program of connection to the opportunity to register, educate, and turnout Cedar Crest College voters.

## **Goals:**

Over the course of 2020 the goals for the college's democratic engagement action plan focus on three primary areas: registration, education, and turnout. The goals for each focus area are listed below.

### Focus Area #1: Registration

*Provide the opportunity for students to take an active roll in the democratic process through registering to vote.*

- Have 50% of the first-year student cohort become a registered voter through one of the campus engaged voter registration strategies.
- Increase registered voters in the 18 to 24 age group by 10% over 2016 registered voter numbers.
- Offer three democratic engagement action plan organized voter registration opportunities to all students by the end of September 2020.
- Increase National Voter Registration Day registrations by 10% over 2019 NVRD levels.
- Increase "I Pledge to Vote..." commitment by 10% over the 2019 pledge campaign.

### Focus Area #2: Education

*Become aware of and ask critical questions about current local, national, and global social justice issues that impact civic and democratic engagement.*

- Offer voter education programs by 10 different campus departments through the 2020 election season.
- Offer training opportunities to student groups interested in hosting virtual voter education programming.
- Increase faculty and staff democratic engagement with scheduled campus programming by 10% over 2016 levels.
- Offer voter education programs to departments that had voting levels by field of study below 60% in the 2016 Presidential Election.

### Focus Area #3: Turnout

*Learn about one's personal sense of community, social responsibility, and active citizenship skills in a democratic society through the development of lifelong habits of democratic engagement.*

- Increase voter turnout by 10% for the 18 to 24 age group over 2016 voter levels.
- Increase the voting rate of registered student voters over the 2016 voter levels by 10%.
- Increase use of the voter van by 10% over 2016 levels.
- Increase voting levels by field of study by 5% for departments below 70% in the 2016 election.

### Long-Term Goals: Institutionalization

- Apply to become a Voter Friendly Campus.
- Begin conversations with administration on creating a voter engagement course in Canvas.
- Begin conversations with administration to list election day on the college calendar each year.
- Develop a Voter Champion program that will engage students in the creation of non-partisan conversations on voter registration, education, and turnout.
- Institute voter engagement material into College Life (first year student transitions course) each year, not just during presidential election years.
- Work with faculty members and administration to develop a campus wide statement on attendance expectations for election day.
- Work with Lehigh Valley Progressive Events to offer programming for college students.

## Strategies:

The strategies listed below provide the opportunity to work towards meeting the goals that this action plan has laid out. All strategies are listed based on the focus area that they support. Due to COVID-19 all programs offered from April 2020 through August 1, 2020 will be offered in a virtual format if it was not canceled or postponed to the fall 2020 semester. All programs offered from August 15, 2020 through December 2020 will be implemented in either a face to face, hybrid, or virtual format based on the status of the campus community when the program is implemented.

### Focus Area #1: Registration

- Host voter registration information at the Student Club and Organization Fair.
- Institute the Ask Every Student campaign.
- Make voter registration forms available at multiple locations around campus.
- Participate in National Voter Registration Day, September 2020.
- Present to all new students during August 2020 Orientation.
- Provide electronic voter registration material through various campus social media pages.
- Provide voter registration forms at the annual Volunteer Fair.

### Focus Area #2: Education

#### *Spring 2020*

- MLK Day: Dream, Act, Inspire (January 2020).
  - Advocacy Workshop with Make the Road PA.
- 2020 Census Education Session with Resident Advisors (January 2020).
- Democratic Debate Watch Party (January 2020, February 2020).
- State of the Union Watch Party and discussion (February 2020).
- Provide information and education on Pennsylvania's new mail in ballot law (April 2020).
- Provide information and education on the changes to the Pennsylvania primary date change (April 2020).
- CCC Radio Interviews on Pennsylvania's voter law changes, mail-in ballots, and primary date change (April 2020).

#### *Summer 2020*

- First Year student summer reading program – “America for Beginners” by Leah Franqui (Summer 2020).
- Democratic National Convention Watch Party (August 17-20, 2020).
- Republican National Convention Watch Party (August 24-27, 2020).
- Faculty/Staff – 1<sup>st</sup> Together - Community Conversations
  - Caring for others During COVID-19 (May 2020).
  - Gender and Sexuality (LGBT) Resource Group (June 2020).
  - Processing Inequity During COVID-19 (June 2020).

## *Fall 2020*

- Host a Constitution Day reading of the Constitution (September 17, 2020).
- Educate students on voter registration: Home vs. School (September 2020).
- Provide information and education on Pennsylvania's mail in ballot law (September – October 2020).
- Social Media campaign on the where candidates stand on the issues (October 2020).
- "Who is Running for Office?" Information sessions on non-Presidential races (October 2020).
- Provide the opportunity for students to learn about various non-partisan and party specific social issues through various political social engagement apps (including Countable and Election Central) (Fall 2020).
- Celebration of Women's Suffrage (Fall 2020).
- Presidential Debate Watch Party (Fall 2020).
- Vice Presidential Debate Watch Party (Fall 2020).
- First Year Friday on civic and democratic engagement (Fall 2020).
- Draw the Lines Gerrymandering 101 event (Fall 2020).
- Civic engagement speaker series:
  - Renita Polk, Ph.D – "From the Bench to the Legislature: Transitioning to a Career in Science Policy" (December 2019).
  - Sockna Momie Cisse – "The Peace Corps and Me" (December 2019).
  - "Get Out the Vote" – political satire guest performance (April 2020 – postponed to fall 2020).
  - Woman In Politics – Celebration of women's suffrage centennial with Scranton, PA's first female mayor and Scranton, PA's first openly lesbian councilwoman (March 2020 – postponed to fall 2020).
  - Working in Politics as a Case Manager (Fall 2020).
  - Running for Office (Fall 2020).
- Talking Circles:
  - Feminism: Yay or Nay? (January 2020).
  - Mass Shootings: Moving Forward (February 2020).
  - Si Se Puede: Lessons from movement leaders (September 2020).
  - Getting Your Voice Heard 2020: Election and Voting (October 2020).
  - Racism During Covid-19 (November 2020).
  - 2020 Election Day Recap (November 2020).
- Faculty/staff book club
  - On Edge: A Journey Through Anxiety by Andrea Petersen (February 2020).
  - Bodies and Barriers: Queer Activists on Health edited by Adrian Shanker (April 2020).
  - There There by Tommy Orange (Fall 2020).
  - How to be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi (Fall 2020).
  - Maid by Stephanie Land (Fall 2020).

- Departmental Lobby Days in Harrisburg
  - Nursing Department – Spring and Fall.
  - Social Work Department – Spring.
  - Criminal Justice Department – Spring.

### Focus Area #3: Turnout

- Provide all faculty members with slide of important election information dates (August 2020).
- Mail In Ballot Party (October 2020).
- “Deliver the Ballot” Party (October 2020).
- Election Day Reminder in Canvas (Week before Election Fall 2020).
- “I pledge to vote” campaign reminders (Week before election – Fall 2020).
- President Meade to send out Election Day voting reminder (Election Day - November 2020).
- Voter Van – rides to the polls (Election Day – November 2020).
- #VoteTogether Celebration at the polls (Election Day – November 2020).
- CCC App “I Voted Today” picture challenge (Election Day – November 2020).
- Election Day Results watch party (Election Day – November 2020).

### Long-Term Goals: Institutionalization

- Assess student interest in developing a voter champion program.
- Establish student leadership to run the voter champion program.
- Assess the possibility for creating a voter engagement course in Canvas.
- Research the departments involved in approving additions to college calendars.
- Work with the First Year Experience Planning Committee to discuss yearly implementation of voter education through the College Life course.
- Work with faculty committees and administration that would be involved in developing a campus wide statement on attendance expectation for election day.

## **Reporting:**

The material in this action plan along with the overall results of the engagement activities will be provided to several stakeholders including the democratic engagement leadership team, the Board of Trustees, President and administrative cabinet, and external organizations including All In Campus Democracy Challenge and Voter Friendly Campus. Some of the goals for this work are part of the Lutz Center for Community Service departmental goals with the information on programmatic implementation reported out through the annual administrative assessment. In addition, the co-chairs will work closely with the campus Marketing and Communications Department to connect the campus, alumni network, and Lehigh Valley communities to the campus accomplishments of the civic and democratic engagement work through press releases, campus website, and social media pages along with promoting civic engagement work through the social media pages of the Lutz Center for Community Service and the History and Political Science Club.

## **Evaluation**

The democratic engagement action plan will be continuously evaluated through regular and on-going program and event evaluations and attendance records. One of the evaluations used will assess a few of the following objectives: the impact of the experience on the attendees' understanding of social issues, ability to consider others' perspectives, opportunity to critically reflect upon personal values and beliefs, and the likelihood of intent to participate in civic activities after graduation. Additional evaluations on the reach of online and social media messages will also be used to help focus the digital efforts of the team.

Additional evaluations that will be used throughout the year will include the Pathways of Public Service & Civic Engagement diagnostic tool which will provide data on a student's perceived interest, strength, experience, and impact on six areas of engagement including community engaged learning and research, community organizing and activism, direct service, philanthropy, policy and governance, and social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility.

Material received from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) will also be used to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the 2020 democratic engagement plan. The results of this report will be used to provide information to the internal Cedar Crest College community as well as the larger community through press release and social media posts created by the campus Marketing and Communications Department.