

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Centre College Action Plan Draft

Executive Summary

This action plan is being developed by a planning team that includes students, faculty, staff, and administrators. *We have also invited community members to participate, though no one has yet expressed interest.* This coalition was formed specifically to develop the plan required for participation in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and to apply for the Voter Friendly Campus Designation. In addition to both initiatives focusing on civic engagement and democratic action, they both call for the use of the Strengthening American Democracy guide and have the same plan submission deadline of May 31, 2020. We anticipate that the coalition will grow as our work progresses and we move from goal setting into implementation.

We will be gathering data, identifying goals, and putting preliminary plans into action during Spring 2020. We believe immediate action is needed to prepare us for the 2020 General Election. By Spring 2021 we will implement assessments to identify new resources and measure outcomes, which will aid us in developing new short term goals and progressing towards our long term goals. The action plan will be coordinated by the Office of Community Service, working in partnership with several student life departments, academic departments, student groups, and necessary stakeholders.

The Action Plan aims to increase student voter turnout at Centre College, to centralize civic engagement in the Office of Community Service and institutionalize efforts to engage students in democracy in central Kentucky. Using data from the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE), voting and registration turnout rate for the 2018 Midterm Election was only 34.2% of the 1,400 student population. While students are above the national average for registering, the voting rate for students is under the national average. Centre College's mission is to prepare students for lives of learning, leadership, and service, which begins by sharing the importance of civic engagement and democracy in order to change the world. Using the NSLVE data with the experiences and expertise from the Centre community, our plan will address the goals necessary to increase voter education, voter registration, and voter turnout on campus.

Leadership

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Coalition consists of Centre College staff, faculty, and students and lead by the Office of Community Service. The coalition members are: Director of Community Service, Jessica Weasner; Coordinator of Community Service, Sophia Lombardo; Associate Director of Social Entrepreneurship & Economic Development Center, Andrew Patrick; Director of Residence Life, Brian W. Daniel; Associate Vice President for Diversity Affairs & Special Assistant to the President, Andrea Abrams; Associate Professor of History, Sara Egge; Associate Professor of Politics, Benjamin Knoll; Professor of Sociology, Beau

Weston; Nia Dye '20, Senior Bonner Intern; Vivian Bowles '21, President of Centre Democrats; and Blaise Parker '20, President of Centre Republicans. Both the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of the College, Ellen Goldey, and the Vice President and Dean of Student Life, Randy Hays, have expressed support for the coalition and its work to develop a campus plan for civic engagement.

Centre's Office of Community Service, located in the Student Life Office, coordinates and oversees the institution's work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement. This is a new mission of the office and is not widely known on campus, so it is our hope that this action planning process will educate the campus about this resource. The Director of the Office of Community Service, previously led the civic action planning process at another institution and was the primary author of their ALL IN and Voter Friendly Campus plans. The Coordinator of Community Service was actively involved in student voter registration and education at her alma mater. Given these skills and experiences, and the mission of the Office of Community Service, we believe it makes the most sense to center these efforts here.

Potential coalition members were identified through conversations with a number of faculty and staff on campus. The work of the coalition was also mentioned in a recent article by the college about Centre's ALL IN Silver Seal. We are pleased with the diversity of faculty and staff represented, though would always welcome more. We have regular participation from students who identify as Democrat or liberal, but have not had success recruiting students who are Republican or conservative. This is an absolute must for us and will be a priority at the start of the spring semester. We have invited our local clerk of courts to participate, but have not received a response. We will continue reaching out to community members until we have at least one member on the committee.

Commitment

Centre College's mission is to prepare students for lives of learning, leadership and service. Centre College is a small, independent, and selective educational community dedicated to study in the liberal arts as a means to develop the intellectual, personal, and moral potential of its students. Centre nurtures in its students the ability to think logically and critically, to work creatively, to analyze and compare values, and to write and speak with clarity and grace. It acquaints students with the range of accomplishments of the human mind and spirit in a variety of arts and theoretical disciplines. It enables students to choose and fulfill significant responsibilities in society. In short, Centre's highest priority is to prepare its students for lives of learning, leadership, and service.

A long and rich tradition of tolerance, freedom of enquiry, and community informs all aspects of college life. Centre accomplishes its goals in an atmosphere of caring and respectful relationships among faculty, students, and staff, aided by its broadly conceived, nonsectarian, Judeo-Christian heritage. This tradition commits Centre to a belief in the unconditional value of each human being, to an appreciation of the differences among people, and to a recognition of the close connection between responsible self-development and community well-being.

Curricular

The Centre College curriculum includes general education requirements every student must meet in order to graduate. Each student must take two classes that fulfill the “society” requirement, “To think and act as responsible citizens, we must be able to understand these forces in terms of their historical development and their influence on contemporary life.”

“Courses in this area are divided into two categories: those which stress analysis of social institutions and those which emphasize historical inquiry. To satisfy this requirement, students must take one course from each category. Typically courses satisfying the social analysis requirement a) stress the nature, function, and influence of organizations, institutions, or groups in society; b) illustrate disciplinary methods of inquiry necessary to formulate meaningful conclusions; and c) require students to identify significant social issues and analyze them from the standpoint of various theoretical and historical frameworks. Courses satisfying the historical analysis requirement will: a) introduce students to a coherent body of historical knowledge and the nature of historical inquiry; b) increase the student's knowledge and understanding of the complexity of human experience through the diversity of historical interpretation; and c) illustrate relationships between past events and contemporary ideas, institutions and processes.”

Courses that meet this requirement include POLS 120: Introduction to Political Ideologies and POLS 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics. Centre College is committed to increasing civic learning in the classroom with the implementation of this general education requirement in the curriculum. POLS 120 and POLS 130 specifically address voting rights and education in the modern world. Students who take courses that analysis social institutions and courses that emphasize historical inquiry discuss democratic engagement in the societies they study. In the politics major, courses such as POLS 205: Introduction to Political Analysis, POLS 210: American Politics and Institutions, POLS 323: New American Democracy, POLS 330: Parties, Campaigns, and Elections, and several others. The politics department has a deep commitment to democtatic engagement and civic learning.

Centre is home to the Collaborative Kentucky Exit Poll, which is an extensive academic exit poll with nearly 4,000 participants from eight counties. Led by researchers Benjamin Knoll and Jaclyn Johnson, who teach politics at Centre, along with Ryan Lloyd in international studies, and conducted by students from Centre and other local colleges, the polling tried to make sense of several questions relating to Bevin’s loss to Beshear in the 2019 gubernatorial election. Voters were also asked questions about national politics, including perceptions of President Trump and 2020 Democratic presidential candidates. Researchers considered the impact of numerous demographic factors including race, gender, ethnicity, religion and educational background.

Co-Curricular

Centre College is part of the Bonner Network with 60 students each committing 280 hours per year to serving in the local community. The Centre community benefits from the program by creating a culture of service and social issue awareness that permeates different social groups and academic interests, and Bonners are uniquely transformed through the personal and professional growth that comes from membership and regular engagement in experiential learning through service.

Through the Bonner Program, Centre has established a relationship with the organization Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC), a grassroots community group across the state with local chapters including Boyle County. One of the main issues KFTC addresses is restoring voter rights and spreading democracy. Throughout Fall 2019, KFTC and the Community Service Office partnered to organize and lead a National Voter Registration Day table and staff several voter registration tables and events around campus in October. KFTC hired one senior student as a Voter Empowerment Organizer.

Landscape

On Tuesday, December 10th 2019, 18 Centre students, staff, and faculty attended the inauguration of Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear and lieutenant governor Jacqueline Coleman '04 in Frankfort, Kentucky. There has been three lieutenant governors, 11 state governors, two vice presidents, and one chief justice that graduated from Centre College. The college has also hosted two Vice President debates, the first in 2000 Cheney vs. Lieberman, and the second in 2012 Biden vs Ryan, the second which became the third-most watched VP debate. The historical ties with the 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, carry throughout campus and begin with the 16-foot sculpture of the President outside of the campus library. Civic learning and democratic engagement is a deep part of Centre's history.

Centre College is a residential campus and all students who register with their campus address vote at the same polling location, which is approximately 1 mile from campus. Polls in Kentucky are open from 6:00 am - 6:00 pm. The Student Life Office (SLO) coordinates rides to the polls throughout the day. Students may sign up in advance or stop into the SLO at any time during regular business hours.

Goals

This section describes what the institution hopes to achieve. By setting goals, the institution can plan activities to achieve results and assess impact.

LONG-TERM GOALS

SHORT-TERM GOALS

Through the process of applying for the Voter Friendly Campus designation, we hope to accomplish the following three goals:

Institutionalize voter registration, ideally as a part of new student orientation. This entails exploring the usefulness and affordability of a system like TurboVote. We would also like to identify a process for educating individuals and groups that would like to conduct voter registration drives on campus to ensure that they are in compliance with both campus policies and local, state and federal laws.

Increase voter education, focusing not only on candidates and issues, but also on the process and logistics of voting (where is our local polling location, how will students get there, what hours is it open, how can they request absentee ballots, what ID is required at polling places, what to do if they are told they cannot vote, etc.). We want to develop engaged and empowered citizens.

Increase voter turnout. Through Centre's participation in the NSLVE, we have access to data from 2012 to the present. Centre College recently received a Silver Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for having a 2018 campus voting rate between 30-39 percent in the 2018 midterm election. The College's midterm voting rate increased 14.6 percent from 19.6 percent in 2014 to 34.2 percent in 2018. These are impressive rates in a state with off-year (2019) gubernatorial elections. Looking at presidential election years, our 2012 voting rate was 48% and increased to 60.2% in 2016. Our goal for the 2020 presidential election is 75%.

Strategy

The strategy section of a campus action plan summarizes how the institution intends to build institutional culture and infrastructure that supports civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation. Put simply, it outlines a strategic plan for this work.

SHORT-TERM GUIDING QUESTIONS

- *What is the work? What are the planned activities and initiatives?*
- *Who is responsible for implementing each planned strategy and tactic?*
- *Who is the audience for each strategy and tactic? What methods will be used to make strategies and tactics accessible to diverse populations?*
- *Where will each activity occur on and off campus?*
- *When will the work happen and what preparations are required beforehand to make it happen?*

- *Why is each strategy and tactic being implemented and what is the goal for each activity?*

LONG-TERM GUIDING QUESTIONS

- *How would you describe a campus committed to educating for civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation? What would it look like and how would you know this commitment existed?*
- *How might your institution deepen capacity and competence related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in tandem with civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation?*
- *What will it take to build toward this vision of sustained commitment beyond a single election cycle (e.g., resources, curricular offerings, staffing)?*
- *Where does work need to happen in order to institutionalize this vision (e.g., faculty senate, student government, division of student affairs)? Who is responsible within your working group for catalyzing or leading each effort? One step further, how would you know that this commitment has been institutionalized?*
- *On what timeline will efforts to enact this vision occur? (Think in terms of years; e.g., in year one your institution will accomplish what? In year two your institution will accomplish what? And so on...).*

NSLVE

See attached report.

Centre College recently received a Silver Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for having a 2018 campus voting rate between 30-39 percent in the 2018 midterm election. The organization uses data from the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) to determine designation seals and awards.

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Reporting

As part of the reporting process, it is encouraged for campuses to be continually retooling their democratic engagement action plan to ensure the short- and long-term goals set forth in the plan are being met. If the goals change, these updates should be reflected in the plan in real-time.

- *How will the plan be shared, internally and externally? Please state where the plan will be shared. Keeping in mind to share the report with multiple stakeholders. This could*

take place by posting the report on your institution's website, sharing during departmental meetings, student organization gatherings, and with community partners.

- *Will the plan be made public? If so, how?*
- *Will the data, such as your institution's NSLVE report, used to inform the plan be made public? If so, how?*

There are plans to develop a student voting rights website where both our ALL IN and Voter Friendly Campus plans will be shared publicly. We will also post our NSLVE reports.

Centre College recently featured a story on their website and social media about the ALL IN Silver Seal we were awarded for our 2018 midterm voting rate.

Evaluation

This section describes how the democratic action plan and its impact will be evaluated, how the institution will know if it is making progress, and when its goals have been reached. Included in this section should be what information (data) will be collected, as well as how it will be collected, analyzed, and used for improvement.

- *What is the purpose of the evaluation?*
- *What does the institution want to know and be able to do with the information gathered?*
- *Who is the audience for the evaluation?*
- *Who will carry out the evaluation? Is there an Institutional Research office representative involved? Faculty who are already studying related research questions? Student Affairs educators carrying out programmatic and long-term learning assessments?*
- *When will the evaluation be carried out and completed?*
- *What impact is already being measured for other related initiatives, like the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement?*
- *What information (data, evidence) must be collected and how will it be collected? What are the performance measures and indicators of success?*
- *How will information (data, evidence) be analyzed?*
 - *How will the results of the evaluation be shared?*
 - *How will the success of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within the plan be evaluated, beyond NSLVE race/ethnicity breakdown information?*