



## Centre College 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Jessica Weasner

### **Executive Summary:**

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Centre College in Kentucky for the 2022 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2022 midterm election. The goals for Centre College for the 2022 election are:

1. We seek to increase the presence of the Office of Civic and Community Engagement on campus and in the community. Because this work is still fairly new to the Office of Civic & Community Engagement, many members of our campus community are unaware of our resources and programs. This is especially true because our efforts last cycle were interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is our goal to ensure that everyone on campus knows that we exist and that we are here to support them. We would also like to expand our partnership with the local community, specifically with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.
2. We intend to develop a student leadership team of 3-4 students to support and advance our work. Since beginning this work we have operated with one student civic engagement intern. However, as our work has expanded, the workload has increased. We would like students to play a larger role in our campus coalition and in shaping our VFC plan than they previously did. We would like to have trained student leaders who can conduct voter registration drives, lead deliberative dialogues, and can spearhead our partnership with local community organizations.
3. Our 2018 voting rates earned us a silver seal and our 2020 rates earned us a gold from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. We would like to earn a platinum seal for 2022. Note that Kentucky also has off-year elections and we will be electing a governor in 2023. In order to increase our voting rates we need to further institutionalize voter registration and develop a better strategy for assisting students in securing absentee ballots and getting to the polls on election day. We also need to increase our voter education efforts, so students are aware of the issues and candidates on the ballot and have the desire to have their voices heard.

## **Leadership:**

Our leadership team includes the following:

Director of Civic & Community Engagement, Jessica Weasner; Coordinator of Civic & Community Engagement, Sidney Saxen; Director of Diversity and Inclusion Education, Melinda Weathers; Associate Professor and Chair of History Department, Sara Egge; Professor of Sociology, Beau Weston; President of Centre Democrats, Sarah Matthews '23; President of Centre Republicans, Claire Pellegrin '23; Centre College Civic Engagement Interns, Arthur Jenkins and Hannah Botts; and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth member, Shannon Scott and Shana Goggins.

Our campus works with these following nonprofit partners: Ask Every Student, Students Learn Students Vote, Kentucky Campus Compact, the Bonner Foundation.

## **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 studying 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.

In preparation for the Fall 2022 election Centre College will host the local mayoral and city commissioners forum in our performing arts center.

Centre College has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020.

## **Landscape:**

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

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Centre College has 1,333 students with a gender distribution of 48% male students and 52% female students. The overwhelming majority of Centre College students are "traditional" college students who enroll immediately following high school. We are also highly residential with 98% of students living on campus. 90% of students receive financial aid.

Centre is a PWI with 72% of students identifying as white, followed by Hispanic or Latino (9%) and Black or African American (8%).

Centre College has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 73.3%.  
Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 91.8%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 31.3%.  
Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 82.8%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2016 Silver, 2018 Silver, 2020 Gold

### **Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

Goal 1: Strengthen partnership with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth by increasing their presence on campus and Centre's presence in the org.

Goal 2: Increase presence of the Office of Civic & Community Engagement on campus by securing more staff.

Goal 3: Develop a funded student leadership team to spearhead civic engagement efforts on campus.

Goal 4: Increase voting rates to earn a Platinum Seal from ALL IN

### **Strategy:**

Centre College will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

1. Increase Presence of Office of Civic & Community Engagement
  - a. The addition of a new hire through Americorps member.
  - b. A convocation scheduled for October 25th sponsored by the office will serve as a local candidate forum for students to engage with Mayoral Candidates and local issues.
  - c. Expand partnership with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth by helping them secure summer Americorp member, providing on campus facilities for chapter meetings, and having a student intern placed with them during the Fall 2022 semester. We will also have two members of KFTC serving on Centre's Voter Friendly Campus Coalition.
  - d. Students and staff will register students to vote at Expo, an event for students to sign up for clubs and campus groups, as well as set up a sign-up sheet for students interested in volunteering.
  - e. The Director and Coordinator of Civic & Community Engagement will write all campus emails sharing the information on how to register to vote, apply for absentee ballots, and get to the polls.
  - f. Centre College is a National Voter Registration Day partner. Volunteers will be tabling on National Voter Registration Day to register students to vote in the upcoming election. The table will have National Voter Registration Day stickers

and T-Shirts for the volunteers to wear and give away. The event will also be shared on social media.

- g. We will explore the possibility of adding information about registering to vote in Kentucky into the Centre student handbook.
  - h. Centre College has registered with Ask Every Student.
2. Grow Student Leadership Team
- a. The Office Civic & Community Engagement, created a new student leadership position for a civic engagement intern in 2019. The intern focused on providing students with relevant information and developing educational initiatives to ensure all Centre students have the tools to be informed voters.
  - b. We will add the following positions bringing the total number of student interns to 4 which includes the following positions as well as the existing Lead Intern.
    - i. Research Education Specialist:
      - 1. Research voting laws and procedures for college students voting in KY and surrounding states.
      - 2. Present and share research using infographics and social media (with the help of the Design Specialist), creating [a video](#) about the [voting process](#), and organize and run workshops for groups on campus.
      - 3. Assist Community Outreach Specialist with Voter Friendly Campus Coalition meetings when new laws and policies impact student voting.
      - 4. Co-present Deliberative Dialogues using the [National Issues Forums](#) with the Lead Intern. ([Climate Change](#) and [Free Speech](#))
      - 5. Review [National study of learning voting and engagement Report \(NSLVE\)](#) and see what workshops need to be conducted based on those findings
    - ii. Media and Design Specialist:
      - 1. Run Centre Votes Instagram by sharing important information for Centre students but also resharing info from other organizations and partners.
      - 2. Create graphics and posts using the research found from the Research & Education Specialist.
      - 3. Share events and educational opportunities organized by the Lead Intern and Research & Education Specialist and share Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote Tabling days organized by the Community Outreach Specialist.
      - 4. Update the [Centre Votes CentreNet](#) website.
      - 5. SWAG
      - 6. [Press Releases \(info gathering for the release\)](#) / working with Centre Communications
      - 7. Photos and media at events and making videos
    - iii. Community Outreach Specialist:

1. Representative from Centre at Kentuckians for the Commonwealth Meetings (Wilderness Trace is the name of the chapter here in Danville) on Monday nights at 7pm via Zoom (link to come) and communicate with KFTC lead, Shana Goggins.
  2. Organize ([reserving space](#) and finding volunteers and set up) Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote (informing people about the date of the election and organizing Rides to the Polls) Tabling outside of Cowan and out in the community, make sure to use up to date information provided by the Research & Education Specialist and promote tabling with the Media & Design Specialist.
  3. Take notes and be the student non-partisan representative on the [Voter Friendly Campus Coalition](#).
3. Platinum Seal
- a. We are working with our institutional research office to provide NSLVE with deidentified student level information from the National Student Clearinghouse to ensure accurate data is used in determining our student voting rates.
  - b. The Civic Engagement Interns will coordinate voter education displays/tables and will provide sample ballots for students to learn about the issues and candidates.
  - c. While registering students to vote, volunteers will provide information and assistance on the absentee ballot process.
  - d. The Office of Civic & Community Engagement will provide a driver and a college vehicle on election day to give free rides to the polls. Students will be informed of these free rides through flyers, emails, and social media.

### **Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

- Future 2022 NSLVE voting data
- Civic engagement interns will solicit feedback from their fellow students. Campuswide surveys have an extremely poor response rate, so we will look for more creative ways to gather feedback on our services including analyzing social media interactions and speaking with various student groups.
- We will explore including a question about student's awareness of the Office of Civic & Community Engagement and our services on the annual Student Life survey.

### **Reporting:**

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website

<https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/centre-college/>.

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

Centre College has developed a Centre Votes website and Instagram. Information will be shared with the campus community using both. Additionally, we will utilize our campus communications team to spread the word through web stories and social media.