



## **ALL IN Democracy Challenge Action Plan - 2nd Submission 2023 - 2024 for Voter Friendly Campus**

**The Office of Civic Engagement was pleased to receive an “Established” designation for our 1st ALL IN Democracy Challenge Action Plan and is excited to submit a 2nd ALL IN Democracy Challenge Action Plan to be considered for the “Highly Established” designation seal. The feedback and resources we received from our originally submitted ALL IN Action Plan has been invaluable. We used the rubric provided to guide our extensive edits to our first submitted ALL IN Action Plan and will continue to use it to guide our focus in the next two academic years.**

### **I. Executive Summary**

The Office of Civic Engagement, housed in the College of Education and Public Affairs (formally the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs), serves the entire Cleveland State University campus community regarding voter and civic engagement. Cleveland State University is an urban, public research university in Cleveland, Ohio. Established in 1964, Cleveland State University has nearly 16,000 students and has one of the most racially and ethnically diverse student bodies among Ohio universities. Our student profile is as follows: 55 percent women, 45 percent men, approximately 27 percent minorities, of which two-thirds are African American. More than 1,400 are international students. The average age of a student is 27. About one-third of the 16,000 students are in graduate school or law school. CSU has 8 colleges and more than 175 academic programs. Engaged Learning and civic engagement is at the center of Cleveland State University’s mission along with creating meaningful, mutually beneficial partnerships with the communities around campus. Preparing students to be active and engaged citizens in the communities they call home is part of Cleveland State University’s mission.

Anita Ruf-Young, Director in The Office of Civic Engagement developed this plan with support from her Graduate Assistant, Gabi Pridemore. The purpose of this plan is to support the civic engagement of Cleveland State University students and is implemented across its 10 colleges and schools. The Office of Civic Engagement drafts and implements an ALL IN Action Plan with the goals of evaluating voter and civic engagement efforts on campus and in the surrounding community and fostering a well-informed student population that understands issues surrounding

voting and why their votes matter. The intended duration of the plan exists in phases. There is the academic year plan as well as plans looking two years and four years into the future in sync with Midterm and General Election schedules.

This plan seeks to implement many different nonpartisan programs and activities to ensure that students are registered, informed, and show up at the voting booth. The Office of Civic Engagement works in partnership with CSU students, faculty, and staff. Our leadership is further partnered with staff from Campus Vote Project, Civic Influencers, the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, Greater Cleveland League of Women Voters, Cleveland NAACP, CSU's Student Government Association, CSU's Diversity Institute, the College of Education and Public Affairs (formally the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs), CSU's Communications and Marketing Department, campaign managers and government officials, National Voter Registration Day, Vote Early Day, and Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates to ensure that the goals of this action plan are met. Resources provided by these partners are volunteers, funds to hire Democracy Fellows and sponsor events, paid opportunities to become Poll Workers & Ballot Box openers, data, marketing collateral, and much more.

## **II. Leadership**

Anita Ruf-Young, Director of the The Office of Civic Engagement, will direct and coordinate all events, programs and activities surrounding voter engagement held at Cleveland State University. She will collaborate with community organizations as well as CSU students, faculty, and staff to create programming surrounding voter issues. In addition to our extensive partner coalition, Anita will be assisted by two Graduate Assistants, one focused on civic engagement (Lisa Rapaszky) and one focused on community engagement (Gabriella Pridemore), Democracy Fellows through Campus Vote Project and Civic Influencers to conduct voter registration events, activities, and programs. Currently, her budget funds a Graduate Assistant who will focus on Civic Engagement 20 hours per week. Depending on the Graduate Assistant's program status, they could work with the department from one to approximately three years. If budgeting permits, The Office of Civic Engagement would like to hire a second full-time employee. This hire would increase our full-time staff from one to two with two Graduate Assistants contributing 20 hours each. Our department is small and mighty and could do so much more with an additional staff member!

Coalition partners are selected by Anita Ruf-Young to ensure they are nonpartisan in their approach and passionate about voter engagement with the CSU community. Partners commit to providing strategies and programs on campus that create involvement for students. These partnerships will vary in their degree of overall mutuality. Partner responsibility will vary depending on the level of commitment agreed upon by Anita Ruf-Young and the partner. Some members may provide resources and data, while other members will volunteer at events or help in launching different programming. This group meets at varying intervals depending on the

partnership. For example, meetings with Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates (NOVA) happen several times a week. Other meetings occur when deemed necessary by Anita Ruf-Young or other coalition partners. A detailed listing of our partnerships is as follows:

### **Leadership Coalition Head**

The Office of Civic Engagement Director, Anita Ruf-Young

### **Cleveland State University Students**

Arab Student Union & Lebanese Student Organization, President Elias Kahwam

College Democrats Club

College Republicans Club

Democracy Fellow, Jack Ryan

Democracy Fellow, Lacie Costello

Democracy Fellow, Marissa Perlatti

Democracy Fellow, Zarai Aquino

221 students recruited to work as ballot box openers in one calendar year

Masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling Graduate Student, Gabi Pridemore

Masters in Urban Studies Graduate Student, Lisa Rapaszky

Student Socialist Society

The Cauldron Student Newspaper

The Political Science Club

The Vindicator - CSU Students' Arts & Culture Magazine

### **Cleveland State University Faculty**

Assistant College Lecturer of Planning Practice, Dr. Beth Nagy

Associate Professor Emerita & Alpha Kappa Alpha Member, Dr. Mittie Jones

Associate Professor of Graphic Design & AIGA Faculty Advisor, Sarah Rutherford

Diversity Institute Director & Assoc. Professor of Urban Studies, Dr. Ronnie Dunn

Dean of the College of Education & Public Affairs, Dr. Roland Anglin

Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Dr. Marius Boboc

### **Cleveland State University Student Affairs**

First Year Experience Program Manager, Samatha Phillips

Resident Life Director, Uliana Spiridonova

Student Government Association (SGA) Advisor, Daniel Lenhart

SGA Former President & Current Intern for Young Latino Network, Sebastian Canal

Sustainability Director, Jennifer McMillian

### **Community/National Organizations**

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Impact & State Networks Director, Ryan Drysdale

Asian Festival

Campus Vote Project

Ohio State Coordinator, Alexis Crosby

Campus Election Engagement Project

State Director, Nate Hall

Civic Influencers

Operations Manager, Brenna Limbrick

Cleveland Mayoral Race Candidate Video Series

Congressional District 11 Campaign Managers

Congresswoman Shontel Brown & Former Ohio State Senator Nina Turner

League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland

Voter Service Coordinator, Catherine Ryan

Mansour Gavin LPA

Attorney, Malek Khawam

Modern Healthcare

Ginger Christ

NAACP Cleveland Chapter

Member, El Jay'em

Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates

Representatives, Susan Alcorn, Fouad Yared, & Meredith Hellmer

NSLVE - Tufts Institute for Democracy & Higher Education

Ohio Environmental Council

Vice President of Public Affairs, Emily Bacha

Ohio Student Association

One World Day Cleveland Festival Sponsor

Spectrum 1 Cable News

Reporter, Ryan Schmelz

The Youth Vote

Host, Isaac Goff-Mitchell

### **Local Elections Office Coordination - Cuyahoga County Board of Elections**

Board of Elections Director, Anthony Perlatti

Board of Elections Human Resource Manager, Lori Acosta

Board of Elections Manager of Candidate & Petition Services, Brent Lawler

### **Cleveland State University Staff**

University Marketing Executive Director, Alison Bibb-Carsen

University Marketing Writer/Content Specialist, Peter Chakerian

### **III. Commitment**

Cleveland State University (CSU) has developed a strong reputation for its level of engagement and commitment to serve the Greater Cleveland Community and Northeast Ohio region. This commitment to work with the community to address its most significant challenges is part of the identity of Cleveland State University and is clearly exhibited by the efforts of our staff, faculty, colleges, student organizations and leadership to focus resources and intellectual capital to make Cleveland an ideal place to live, work and play.

On April 26, 2022, CSU hired a new President, Dr. Laura Bloomberg. The OCE is currently working with her office to sign the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

The Office of Civic Engagement provides support to staff, faculty, students, and administrators by developing, expanding and sustaining collaborative, mutually beneficial partnerships with community residents, organizations, and institutions. Rather than serving as a gatekeeper for all engagement activities, the Office works to create an infrastructure to track our civic and community engagement activities with six key objectives:

- 1) Establishing and upholding an institution-wide framework for defining civic engagement;
- 2) Creating a consistent process to comprehensively inventory voter engagement across campus;
- 3) Developing and tracking metrics that quantify and qualify the internal and external impact of Office of Civic Engagement civic and community engagement activities;
- 4) Communicating Office of Civic Engagement civic and community engagement efforts consistently to the campus community and broader community;
- 5) Encouraging and promoting work of faculty, students and staff who successfully advance civic engagement;
- 6) Continuously work to expand our civic internal and external network.

**The Office of Civic Engagement leads several efforts to achieve these objectives, including:**

Created an action plan for democratic engagement which resulted in our consecutive award of Voter Friendly Campus for 2020-2022.

Consistently increased voter registration and participation earning the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Certificate of Excellence in Student Voter Engagement Gold Campus rating which increased from Silver in 2016.

Continued to hire Democracy Fellows through Campus Vote Project, and this coming Fall 2022, Civic Influencers, who work to provide nonpartisan information, register students to vote, and promote civic engagement on campus.

One of CSU's General Education requirements is Introduction to University Life Seminar, ASC101, which is part of The First Year Experience (FYE). Anita Ruf-Young, with her Graduate Assistants, created a "Vikes! Vote" initiative which includes a curriculum to be taught in all First Year Experience sections to engage CSU's incoming freshman and transfer students with under 30 credit hours. There are 49 sections of this course being taught in Fall 2022. This initiative was implemented in the Spring 2020 semester, updated for 2021, and has been retooled for the upcoming Fall 2022 semester. We are actively working with the FYE Program Manager so that by Spring 2023, the "Vikes! Vote " curriculum will become a mandatory module in The First Year Experience seminar. Anita Ruf-Young and Lisa Rapaszky presented the Vikes! Vote curriculum to all the FYE instructors at their instructor training. The first year we introduced this curriculum to FYE ASC101, 92.8% of all course sections agreed that the curriculum and call to action were, "valuable and should be continued".

In an effort to further weave civic engagement into institutional culture, our Office of Civic Engagement sits on a committee for the creation of a Civic Engagement Certificate with the Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Dr. Marius Boboc, and Senior Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement & Associate Professor, Dr. Mamadou Seck. If approved it will join other skill area certificate programs at CSU. The skill area of civic engagement has also been approved as a Gen Ed area. The mission of the General Education program at Cleveland State is to empower students by providing all undergraduates with the knowledge and skills they need to build successful careers, act as responsible members of our society, and lead fulfilling lives. These skill areas are Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Group Work, Information Literacy, Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and Writing. For a student to receive a Civic Engagement Certificate, they would need to complete four courses on an approved course list and a Capstone project in which students demonstrate mastery of the civic engagement skill area.

Have partnerships with faculty, The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, The League of Women Voters Greater Cleveland, The U.S. Census Bureau, Campus Vote Project, Campus Election Engagement Project, CSU Democrats, CSU Republicans, CSU Student Government, Ohio Student Association, Cleveland NAACP, the CSU Diversity Institute, CSU Office of Sustainability, NOVA, American Institute of Graphic Arts, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and local news media to enhance our efforts within CSU as well as throughout the Greater Cleveland community.

Collaborated with The League of Women Voters Greater Cleveland to create a student chapter at CSU which will allow students to act on issues they are passionate about.

Hosted an annual event for National Voter Registration Day in partnership with The Board of Elections, Greater Cleveland League of Women Voters, Cleveland NAACP, Alpha Kappa Alpha, CSU Student Government, NOVA, and local media where students were registered to vote, applied to vote-by-mail, received nonpartisan information, signed up to be an election day poll worker, or election night ballot box opener.

#### **IV. Landscape**

Cleveland State University has a strong political climate and is passionate about democratic engagement efforts that inform students on voting issues, the process of voting and why their votes matter. CSU is a highly diverse campus with many passionate students who want to have their voices heard. Our student profile is as follows: 55 percent women, 45 percent men, approximately 27 percent minorities, of which two-thirds are African American. More than 1,400 are international students. The average age of a student is 27. About one-third of the 16,000 students are in graduate school or law school.

The university as a whole also stresses the need for civic and community engagement on campus in order to provide students the skills they need to be successful community leaders. NSLVE data shows that Cleveland State University's voting rate is higher than the average institution's. Also, in 2020 our voter registration rates were at an all time high of 89%. This does however pose the question, what is happening to all of the students who register and do not vote? Because of these discrepancies, The Office of Civic Engagement has implemented a voter engagement course within the Introduction to University Life courses that are required for every freshman and transfer student with under 30 credit hours that attends the University. Providing voter information to freshmen and transfer students is a great way to reach the incoming voter population and light a fire of civic passion within these students, so that they will continue to be civically and democratically engaged their whole lives.

Student Profile: 55 percent women, 45 percent men. Approximately 27 percent minorities, of which two-thirds are African American. More than 1,400 international students. Average age 27. About one-third are in graduate school or law school.

Although Cleveland State University is highly engaged democratically, there are a few barriers that prevent the university from reaching as many students as it could. The main barrier that CSU faces is the fact that it is primarily a commuter school. Many students commute to campus from home and are only on campus when they need to be for class. It is difficult to identify times when large groups of students might gather together on campus and plan events around those times. We do use the one time that is designated for this purpose called the Common Hour to hold many of our events and activities. Another barrier is that The Office of Civic Engagement currently has only one full-time employee supported by student assistants. It is difficult to take on additional voter engagement projects on top of all of the other programs run

in the office. With that being said, the office has created many long-term and deep connections throughout the university and with outside organizations that support and volunteer for many of the events we plan. With these partnerships and programs, the university has built a strong civic and democratic presence on campus. With the continued support, democratic engagement will become second nature to all CSU students.

- Promoted our democratic engagement efforts on all of our social media platforms. The data these platforms provide gives us instant feedback as to how our posts are performing as well as opportunities to improve their performance, engagement, and reach.
- Provided community service-learning opportunities for CSU students each academic year that result in thousands of community service hours with thousands of community members by CSU students.
- Created and launched the “Meet the Candidates” video series. First, with the Cleveland Mayoral Race, and most recently with the 11th Congressional District race in Ohio. Candidates’ videos enable CSU students to learn more about candidates in the races and learn how they can get engaged with a campaign.  
<https://cepa.csuohio.edu/oce/2021-cleveland-mayoral-race-information>
- Anita Ruf-Young, Director for CSU’s Office of Civic Engagement, housed in the School of Urban Affairs, was interviewed by Cleveland 19 News in their story about the 2021 Cleveland mayoral election. She discussed candidates who filed to run in the September primary election, and CSU’s efforts in promoting civic engagement on campus. *Making Sense of the Crowded Mayoral Field* <https://youtu.be/6dy3CcFxyXw>
- Regularly and consistently update our Office of Civic Engagement website that provides information on election days, deadlines, vote by mail, where to find nonpartisan information, opportunities to become an election night ballot box opener, election day poll worker, and much more.  
<https://cepa.csuohio.edu/oce/election-resources-and-information>
- We provided **221 ballot box openers** to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections and will strive to increase that number through wider outreach efforts.
- The Office of Civic Engagement at Cleveland State University has and continues to work hard along with our community and university partners to increase democratic and civic engagement on campus by consistently hosting multiple registration tables all year-long.
- Provide parking sponsorship at the Cleveland Asian Festival each year and set up a voter registration table at the event.



## V. Goals

### LONG-TERM GOALS - in the next decade or two election cycles

1. Institutionalize voter engagement efforts through ASC 101: Introduction to University Life courses by providing each class with voter engagement presentations (49 sections for Fall '22 & varies by semester). This course is a General Education requirement for all incoming students and transfer students with under 30 credit hours and is taught every semester. The module includes an evaluation for the participants at the end of the presentation so we can gather feedback and measure our efforts at registering students, updating their information, allowing them to request a vote by mail application, and finding out why they might not choose to vote.
2. In an effort to further weave civic engagement into institutional culture, our Office of Civic Engagement sits on a committee for the creation of a Civic Engagement Certificate with the Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Dr. Marius Boboc, and Senior Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement & Associate Professor, Dr. Mamadou Seck. If approved, it will join other skill area certificate programs at CSU. The skill area of civic engagement has already been approved as a Gen Ed area. The mission of the General Education program at Cleveland State is to empower students by providing all undergraduates with the knowledge and skills they need to build successful careers, act as responsible members of our society, and lead fulfilling lives. These skill areas are Civic Engagement, Critical Thinking, Group Work, Information Literacy, Oral Communication, Quantitative Literacy, and Writing. For a student to receive a Civic Engagement Certificate, they would need to complete four courses on an approved course list and a Capstone project in which students demonstrate mastery of the civic engagement skill area.
3. Continue to find strategies to maximize our small office's ways to reach Cleveland State University students around civic and voter engagement with a primary focus on how to engage voter registration and participation in under-served populations.
4. Partner with other university departments and faculty to plan and execute a "Vikes! Vote Day" where students can come to have fun and learn more about voter and civic engagement.
5. Include "Election Days" as university holidays to give students, staff, and faculty the opportunity to participate in elections with no barriers.
6. In 2024, we will again work with to recruit Work Election Fellows. In 2020, we recruited 187.

## SHORT-TERM GOALS - by next election

1. One of CSU's General Education requirements is Introduction to University Life Seminar which is part of The First Year Experience. Our department created a "Vikes! Vote" initiative which includes a course to be taught in all First Year Experience sections to engage CSU's incoming freshman. This initiative was implemented in the Spring 2020 semester, updated for 2021, and will be retooled for the upcoming Fall 2022 semester. We are actively working with the Academic Planning Staff so that by Spring 2023, the "Vikes! Vote " curriculum will become a mandatory module in The First Year Experience seminar.
2. Aim to have one "Meet the Candidates" video series each election cycle to engage CSU students.
3. We are currently planning an event with the Cleveland Chapter of the LWV based on their model of "Thick Engagement." Local government officials will meet with students to discuss how the students can be effective in advocating for their most pressing issues. The goals are to transform civic engagement from an abstract concept to meaningful, specific actions students can take to effect change about the things that matter to them and give students an opportunity to have a dialog with local elected officials.
4. Keep our website current on local, state, and national elections, deadlines, and how to get civically engaged and keep it one of the highest visited webpages in our Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs.
5. Increase the number of students in STEM majors that are registered and informed on voting as they tend to have low registration and voter turnout rates according to our 2020 NSLVE Campus Report. The specific majors with the lowest rates were Computer & Information Sciences and Physical Sciences. We will schedule voter registration tables at the Monte Ahuja College of Business, the Washkewicz College of Engineering, and the College of Health to expand our reach and increase our voting rates over all majors.
6. Continue to maintain a database of voter registrations we collect every year.
7. Promote a variety of civic engagement opportunities on our social media to increase the high metrics we have already achieved in certain areas like recruiting 221 election night ballot openers for the November 2021, May 2022, and August 2022 Primary elections.
8. Fund and bring on an additional graduate assistant whose focus will be to assist the Office of Civic Engagement with these goals.

9. Continue to fill the Democracy Fellows and Civic Influencers positions at CSU.
10. Continue to have successful NVRD events.
11. Continue with an active social media presence educating the CSU Community and the community at-large on non-partisan voting information, voter registration, and important deadlines and dates. We will continue to promote employment opportunities with the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections.

## **VI. NSLVE**

With record turnout for the 2020 General Election and Midterm Elections right around the corner, it is crucial to implement a plan and to find strategies on how to get students to the polls. These efforts seem to be working when data is considered:

In 2018, a midterm election year, 84% of CSU's students eligible to register to vote were registered to vote compared to 75% in 2014. Even better is that CSU's voting rate of registered students was 58% for the 2018 midterm elections, up from 24% in 2014! That is a double-digit increase in 4 years and nicely above the 39% voting rate for all other institutions in the NSLVE report. Voting rate in presidential election year 2016 for CSU students was 65% compared to 53% voting rate for all other institutions in the NSLVE report. In the 2020 presidential election year, 89% of CSU's students eligible to register to vote were registered, which was a +5 change from midterm election year 2018. The CSU student voting rate in the 2020 presidential election was 73.5% compared to 64.8% in the 2016 presidential election, up +8.7%. CSU's voting rate is +7.5 higher than the voting rate of all institutions tracked by NSLVE which sat at 66% in 2020.

It is clear that the civic engagement work happening in The Office of Civic Engagement and across Cleveland State University's campus, including participating in the ALL IN Democracy Challenge, is working but there are always areas for improvement.

Even more impressive is that 89% of CSU's students who were voting eligible were registered to vote in 2020 and of that percentage, 82.6% actually voted on Election Day. While voting rates are increasing across all age groups, recently, the most significant increases are being seen across all higher education institutions among first-time and the youngest eligible voters. This demonstrates that civic engagement around voter registration and get out the vote efforts on university campuses are having an impact. Voting rates are up among undergraduate (>8%) and graduate (>12%) student populations and all fields of study, except history. This trend is important for two reasons, first, younger voters used to significantly lag behind older voting populations and second, it is proven that if someone is voter engaged at a young age, they are more likely to continue having a voting habit for the rest of their lives. Although CSU does have fairly high voting rates, there is still work to be done so that all students are informed and choose to vote.

The Office of Civic Engagement continues to try to address low voter turnout for off-season elections. The following data is provided to depict the gap between voter turnout in Presidential Elections and Midterm Elections. In the 2014 Midterm Election, 74.8% of students were registered to vote, and 13% of those who were registered, voted. In the 2018 Midterm Elections, 28.2% of youth, 18 - 29, voted according to CIRCLE, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. It is clear that during off-season elections, less people are informed on what is going on or they feel as though it is not important to vote during those times. This plan seeks to bridge the gap and make sure students are staying informed and engaged during Midterm and local elections.

Two Democracy Fellows hired through Campus Vote Project will work with student organizations, community organizations, faculty, and staff to promote the goals of this action plan. In collaboration with The Office of Civic Engagement, the Democracy Fellows will help execute strategies, activities and programs that will target different populations within the university. The Office of Civic Engagement will continue to work to institutionalize voting within freshman Introduction to University Life courses so that students are engaged and informed as they enter their college careers.

In addition to the voter engagement curriculum developed by Anita Ruf-Young, OCE Director, and Graduate Assistant, Gabriella Pridemore, for the Introduction to University Life course, voter registration tabling (39 so far from July 1, 2021 - May 26, 2022), classroom presentations, constantly updated social media and website content, civic holiday events, candidate video series, and other civic engagement events will regularly occur. Through these initiatives, the Office of Civic Engagement will successfully increase voter engagement and participation on campus and create an informed student body that will continue to be civically engaged far beyond their college years.

## **VII. Strategy**

In order to achieve the goals set forth above, it is important to create a strategy for how the work will be accomplished and by whom. For the summer, we already had 3 voter registration tabling events executed for “See You at CSU Days,” and we recruited election night ballot box openers for the August Primary Election. We will again recruit for the November 2022 Midterm Election. The Vikes! Vote curriculum has already been updated for the Fall 2022 semester and presented to ASC101 instructors. Planning for the 2022 - 2023 academic year is well underway as well. We have scheduled 18 voter registration tabling dates, times, and locations for Fall 2022 plus for National Voter Registration Day. We have been offered 3 Democracy Fellows from CVP and Civic Influencers to work with us on campus. We are in the process of recruiting them now. Social media slides have already been put out with information about voter registration and vote by mail deadlines, civic holidays, and races students should be paying attention to. Our community civic partner, NOVA, is already planning on being at Magnus Fest and tabling around

campus to target hard to reach populations like STEM or theater majors so as to ensure all populations are being served. The Office of Civic Engagement will be in charge of overseeing each event and ensuring all resources are distributed for each event.

We are currently planning an event with the Cleveland Chapter of the LWV based on their model of “Thick Engagement.” Local government officials will meet with students to discuss how the students can be effective in advocating for their most pressing issues. The goals are to transform civic engagement from an abstract concept to meaningful, specific actions students can take to effect change about the things that matter to them and give students an opportunity to have a dialog with local elected officials.

### **Short-term tactics for the upcoming school year:**

#### **Multiple Voter Registration Activities**

- Freshman Orientation Tabling at “See You at CSU Days” - voter registration and vote by mail results will be included in our Annual Report in June 2023.
- Tabling at our MagnusFest Back to School event - results will be included in our Annual Report in 2023.
- The OCE along with its community partner NOVA is staffing a voter registration table at One World Day (OWD), Sunday, August 28, 2022, in the Cleveland Cultural Gardens. OWD has been the official event of the Cleveland Cultural Gardens since 1946, celebrating over 100 years of Peace Through Mutual Understanding. This tabling is a new opportunity for The OCE.
- Tabling at the Cleveland Asian Festival - 18 voter registrations & 67 vote by mail forms were collected. We plan on improving upon these numbers in 2023 as we have a better understanding of how the festival runs and who attends.
- In 2022-23, we plan to mimic and expand on our last year efforts of hosting at least 40 table events that brought our 2021-2022 Academic Year total to 285 voter registration cards, 216 vote by mail forms, and interactions with 374 unique voters this year.
- We have signed up to again participate in National Voter Registration Day on September 20, 2022. We had tremendous success in 2021! The OCE reached out and organized a large coalition of partners to join the NVRD events on campus for 2021’s National Voter Registration Day on September 28, 2021. Partners included: Campus Vote Project, Northeast Ohio Voting Advocates, NAACP Greater Cleveland, LWV Greater Cleveland, Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and National Voter Registration Day. The OCE drafted a press release for CSU University Marketing and

Communications contact, Alison Bibb-Carson, to promote the event which was picked up by Cleveland 19 News and Spectrum News 1 Ohio. Both news outlets came to campus to film and interview the OCE. In three hours, the OCE and our partners interacted with hundreds of CSU students and collected 60 voter registrations and 14 vote by mail applications. “CSU Hosts National Voter Registration Day Event on September 28” posted on CSU website September 27, 2021 in the News & Announcement section. <https://www.csuohio.edu/news/csu-hosts-national-voter-registration-day-event-september-28>

### **Multiple Voter Education Activities**

- Curriculum developed called Vikes! Vote that is a module to be taught to all first-year students and transfer students with under 30 credit hours. It provides civic education as well as an opportunity to register to vote.
- Robust social media campaign posting election information and Board of Election Poll Worker & Ballot Box Opener requests on Twitter, Instagram, & Facebook. QR codes utilized to facilitate student sign ups with the Board of Elections.
- Developed a new initiative for the OCE website and social media accounts during 2021 - 2022 called “Meet the Candidates Video Series” as a way to get the CSU Community excited, informed, and engaged with the local elections happening that impact their day to day lives. The series started with the 2021 Cleveland Mayoral Race and was followed up by the 11th Congressional District Race. Candidates were all given the same questions and information for participation. This series and information about the races were linked to our larger Election Resource and Information pages to give visitors a one stop shop for election information.
- We ran an informational Social Media Interview Series related to the 2020 election cycle. Speakers in this series were community professionals who had expertise in a topic related to voting and civic engagement. The series was promoted on our social media pages and over its five week run it received nearly 1,200 views from our campus community. Our social media posts also received support from local and on-campus businesses. The posts covered a variety of important topics and were presented in an informative, nonpartisan, and timely manner.

### **Multiple Voter Turnout Activities**

- Vote Early Day Event promoted on social media. In the past we had the basketball coach take his players to vote at the Board of Elections.

- Election Day Ballot Box Openers - recruited 221 students, faculty, and staff to work for the Board of Elections and witness Democracy In Action.
- Our Work Elections Fellow recruited 187 poll workers in 2020, and we are looking to work with them again in 2024.
- Collaborated with Bird Micro-Electric Mobility: Electric Bikes & Scooters so that students had a free ride to the polls thus eliminating transportation barriers.
- Collaborated with RideShare2Vote so that students had an additional, free way to get to the polls thus eliminating transportation barriers.

### Long-term Strategies

- Many of our students end up staffing polling places & ballot box openings multiple times during their time at CSU. This established relationship is one that we hope they continue after graduating from CSU. We have yet to develop a way to track the continuation of these relationships.
- Reach out to local news media such as Fox 8, Spectrum 1 Ohio, and 19 News that have covered our events in the past to join us again for further promotion and coverage.

### **VIII. Reporting**

This plan along with the NSLVE data cited in the plan will be shared on our Office of Civic Engagement homepage. Any results and accomplishments will be marketed through press releases on the Cleveland State University website Engaged Blog and The Office of Civic Engagement's Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook accounts. It is also highlighted in our Annual Report.

Our Annual Report is posted here:

<https://cepa.csuohio.edu/oce/america-reads-and-viking-corps-year-in-review-2021-2022#end-of-year-statistics>.

One of our many achievements that we were proud to share was the OCE's Cleveland Mayoral Race "Meet the Candidates" video series. It was **the most viewed webpage** on the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs website during the months of August and September 2021, with a combined total of 12,703 page views.

For the months of June, July, October, and November 2021, **the OCE website remained the second most viewed webpage** on the Levin Maxine Goodman College of Urban Affairs, earning nearly 12,000 views combined.

The OCE's "Meet the Candidates Series" for the 2021 Cleveland Mayoral Race was featured on Campus Election Engagement Project's website.

The OCE's "Meet the Candidates Series" was utilized as a template by the University of Cincinnati for their 2021 Mayoral Election.

The work of the OCE led to CSU being named one of, "America's Best Colleges for Student Voting: The schools doing the most to turn students into citizens," by Daniel Block of the Washington Monthly, on August 29, 2021.

<https://washingtonmonthly.com/2021/08/29/americas-best-colleges-for-student-voting-3/>

"CSU Hosts National Voter Registration Day Event on September 28" posted on CSU website September 27, 2021 in the News & Announcement section.

<https://www.csuohio.edu/news/csu-hosts-national-voter-registration-day-event-september-28>

"CSU Rocks the Vote with Critical Civic Engagement," posted on CSU website October 26, 2021 in the News & Announcement section.

[https://www.csuohio.edu/news/csu-rocks-vote-with-critical-civic-engagement?\\_ga=2.128453829.854221109.1655141356-696484580.1622325879](https://www.csuohio.edu/news/csu-rocks-vote-with-critical-civic-engagement?_ga=2.128453829.854221109.1655141356-696484580.1622325879)

"Cleveland State Helps Community Get Engaged In Elections," by Ryan Schmelz published on Spectrum News 1 website October 4, 2021 in the Politics section.

<https://spectrumnews1.com/oh/cleveland/news/2021/10/04/csu-encourages-community-to-vote>

## **IX. Evaluation**

This plan will be evaluated every year to ensure that goals are being met. Annually, we will administer surveys to our students and community and civic engagement partners regarding events to improve our offerings and to get their feedback. If goals and priorities need to be changed, the plan will be altered to meet those changes as needed. Here are some examples of what our civic engagement partners had to say about the Office of Civic Engagements work on our variety of civic engagement activities, efforts, and initiative for the 2021-2022 academic year:

"Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates (NOVA) admires the CSU Office of Civic Engagement for their partnership with civic organizations and commitment to community service, especially concerning voting. In 2021, NOVA registered 187 students and provided Vote by mail applications to 111 students. Overall, 223 students completed either or both forms. CSU's Office of Civic Engagement advances voter education via recruiting poll workers, providing



voter-related student internships, and using strategic social media messages on voting and related civic issues. Their presence on campus is a constant reminder to students about their active role in the community as an educated citizen.”

**-Susan Alcorn, NOVA Volunteer**

“Cleveland State University’s Office of Civic Engagement has continued to push students in their civic growth and democratic engagement while part of the campus community. Under Anita’s leadership, Cleveland State has increased its democratic engagement substantially with students participating as Democracy Fellows and growing their organizing and professional abilities through those experiences. During the 2020 election cycle, OCE directly influenced student engagement, achieving a voter turnout rate of 73.5% which was 7.5 percentage points higher than average. As this team continues to strive for new and innovative opportunities to engage students and community, I look forward to seeing CSU reach even greater accomplishments.”

**-Alexis Crosby, Ohio State Coordinator, Campus Vote Project**

"As the director of The Diversity Institute and the newly reimagined master's degree program in Diversity Leadership and Change Management (DLCMP), I am grateful for our continued collaboration and partnership with the CSU Office of Civic Engagement. During this period of generational change in political and civic leadership across Greater Cleveland, the Office of Civic Engagement has been instrumental in ensuring that CSU students were able to participate in the democratic process. During this past election cycle one of our DLCMP masters students was very passionate about supporting and providing a forum for one of the 11th Congressional District candidates. I referred the student to the director of the Office of Civic Engagement, who along with her graduate assistant, worked with the student and the candidate's campaign in a manner that was nonpartisan and informed, educated, and promoted the CSU campus' involvement in that important 11th Congressional District race."

**-Ronnie Dunn, Director of The Diversity Institute at Cleveland State University**

The relationship between the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections and CSU Director Anita Ruf-Young and her Office of Civic Engagement team is invaluable. The Civic Engagement team has consistently provided on campus voter registration drives as well as assisting us in securing quality election day workers to assist voters. On election night the Board requires over 150 temporary staff to assist in processing election material. Anita and her team have utilized the CSU social media and website to promote student participation with a behind-the-scenes view of election night processes, as well as supporting and safeguarding our county’s voting rights. We look forward to continuing and growing our important relationship with CSU and election-related programs that help bolster our local democratic systems.

**-Brent E. Lawler, Manager Candidate & Petition Services, Cuyahoga County Board of Elections**

“With the future of climate justice and democracy at stake, it is imperative that we involve young people and students in the political process. I am grateful for Anita’s leadership and the help of the OCE when it came to engaging CSU students in the OH-11 primary election — by amplifying our events and opportunities on the OCE social media channels, we were able to plug several students into this race. Although the outcome of the election was not what we had hoped

for, we still activated, educated, and mobilized countless CSU students who can now participate in elections for decades to come.”

**-Naomi Villagomez Roochnik, Director of Student Organizing in the Nina Turner Campaign**

We are creating a library of best practices found on various civic learning and democratic engagement websites and publications such as the ALL IN Challenge’s Strengthening American Democracy Guide, Tufts University’s Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, Civic Influencers, and the Higher Education - Student Voter Engagement Listserv to name a few.

The Office of Civic Engagement collects all voter registrations so that a database can be kept on how many registrations the university has achieved. We will also rely on NSLVE data to provide voter turnout data so that success can be measured based on voting rates. Reports and press releases will demonstrate the results of these evaluations.

We also currently benchmark our social media followers and will take a deeper dive analyzing postings when there is increased engagement.

A.R.Y 2022